



REVIEW OF THE NEAR DEATH OF D.C. OKLAHOMA COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

Report Release Date: March 31, 2023

Overview

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request regarding the near-death of thirteen-year-old D.C. The Oklahoma County District Attorney filed a felony charge of Child Neglect on January 14, 2021 against the mother, Rhonda Collier. Ms. Collier entered a blind plea on September 21, 2022. On February 22, 2023, Ms. Collier was sentenced to twenty years suspended sentence.

Identifiers

Child's Name:	D.C.	Sibling One:	Twelve Years
Age at Time of Incident:	Thirteen Years	Sibling Two:	Fifteen Years
Date of Near-Death:	October 27, 2020		

Person(s) Responsible for the Child (PRFC):

- Rhonda Collier

Actions

The release of the following summary of the actions taken by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) and the proceedings in the District Court is authorized by 10A Section 1-6-105.

The OJSO did not become aware of this case until after the near-death incident of D.C.

Near-Death Incident

The Oklahoma County OKDHS received the near-death report on October 27, 2020. Reportedly, Sibling One discovered D.C. on the floor with a bump on the head and having urinated on themselves. D.C. was taken to a medical facility by an ambulance. Reportedly, D.C. was unresponsive, seizing, and in critical condition. It was reported that D.C. ingested the mother's, Rhonda Collier, Phencyclidine (PCP). It was reported Ms. Collier left the medical facility after D.C. was admitted in order to get high. It was reported Ms. Collier was on her way back to the medical facility. Medical professionals were concerned that if Ms. Collier was high and hallucinating, she may try to harm D.C. Reportedly, D.C. had suicidal ideations in the past, but it was unknown if this was a suicide attempt or not.

The OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority I Investigation.



Investigation

The persons interviewed during the investigation included D.C., Sibling One, Sibling Two, the mother, Rhonda Collier, and various collaterals.

Both siblings spoke about Ms. Collier's drug use. Prior to the event, she had taken them to go buy drugs. They could tell when she was high. She would act slow and forget she was their mother. She would bake bread and leave it on people's doorsteps, become unresponsive, not able to walk, and need to be taken to bed and given milk to bring her down. They found her drugs a few times and it was brown stuff in a tiny glass bottle that smelled. The last time they found her drugs was the week before the near-death event, and the drugs were lying next to Sibling One's phone charger.

Sibling One stated they found D.C. unresponsive in the bedroom on October 27, 2020. Sibling One denied seeing any drugs or paraphernalia when D.C. was found.

The OKDHS interviewed Ms. Collier on October 27 and 28th, 2020. She denied any current or past drug use, but did admit previous marijuana use. Ms. Collier denied knowing how D.C. got ahold of PCP.

At the October 28 interview with Ms. Collier, she was provided a copy of D.C.'s drug screen. Ms. Collier did not believe the results and did not know how D.C. tested positive for PCP. Ms. Collier then stated she used PCP as a teenager and again in 2017. Ms. Collier stated she used PCP maybe two times a month, but it never affected her parenting ability. Ms. Collier then stated she last used PCP in 2019. When asked if D.C. could have found a forgotten stash of her drugs, Ms. Collier denied that was possible.

The OKDHS interviewed D.C. on October 30, 2020. D.C. stated D.C. used the drugs because D.C. wanted to feel the pain Ms. Collier goes through when Ms. Collier takes the drugs. D.C. stated the drugs were in a little bottle with liquid in it. D.C. stated Sibling One brought the drugs to D.C.'s room to hide them from Ms. Collier as they did not want Ms. Collier to take the drugs. D.C. stated a few days later, D.C. drank the bottle and did not remember anything afterwards. D.C. stated Ms. Collier put her cigarette in the bottle and smoked it. D.C. stated when Ms. Collier uses the drugs, Ms. Collier would act like she cannot move and would cuss a lot. D.C. stated Ms. Collier had been using drugs for about two years prior. D.C. denied Ms. Collier used drugs daily and stated she might use drugs once a month or so. D.C. apologized for the incident and did not plan to end up in the hospital.

The OKDHS documented that collateral witnesses reported seeing Ms. Collier high in the past. As an example, the witnesses stated the children found Ms. Collier unconscious and had to put Ms. Collier to bed. The witnesses stated earlier that year, they had an intervention with Ms. Collier about her drug use. Ms. Collier went to rehab after the intervention for a six-month program, but only stayed a few days. The witnesses stated Ms. Collier struggles with both PCP and prescription drug abuse. The OKDHS documented the witnesses' expressed concerns for the children's safety with Ms. Collier and Ms. Collier's drug use.

The OKDHS made a Substantiated Finding of Neglect/Near-Death by Rhonda Collier to D.C. The OKDHS made a Substantiated Finding of Neglect/Threat of Harm by Rhonda Collier to Sibling One and Sibling Two. The OKDHS requested a deprived petition be filed on behalf of the children. The children were removed from the home on November 2, 2020, and placed in the temporary custody of the OKDHS.

Prior Involvement of the PRFC with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services

There was one pertinent report before the near-death incident of thirteen-year-old D.C. The report was received on May 7, 2019.



Reportedly, Sibling Two got into a fight with Ms. Collier. It was reported Sibling Two and Ms. Collier fight a lot and Ms. Collier would “whop and slap” Sibling Two. Sibling Two stated, in the past, Ms. Collier had tried to hit Sibling Two in the face and all over the body with a belt. Sibling Two stated on April 20, 2019, Ms. Collier “socked” Sibling Two in the face and threw Sibling Two against the wall. Sibling Two stated they started wrestling and ended up on the floor. Sibling Two stated Ms. Collier put her knee on Sibling Two’s face and stomped on Sibling Two’s face with her foot.

The OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority II Investigation.

The OKDHS documented that Sibling One stated Sibling Two and Ms. Collier got into an argument at a store. They then went to their grandmother’s home where Sibling Two got a “whooping.” Sibling One denied that Sibling Two was hurt or had any marks. Sibling One stated that they were aware of past drug use by Ms. Collier. Sibling One stated they found the drug “wet” in a vial in Ms. Collier’s car in December 2018. Sibling One stated they remembered times Ms. Collier took the drug and acted slow. Sibling One denied Ms. Collier was using drugs now (May 2019).

The OKDHS documented D.C. stated Sibling Two had a bad attitude and took it out on everyone. D.C. stated there was an argument between Sibling Two and Ms. Collier recently because Ms. Collier was late picking them up from school. D.C. denied that any of them were physically disciplined. D.C. denied knowledge of drug use.

The OKDHS documented Ms. Collier stated that Sibling Two recently got in trouble and was almost kicked off the school bus for not sitting down. Ms. Collier stated she made Sibling Two write sentences. Ms. Collier did admit to spanking Sibling Two on the butt with a belt but denied hitting Sibling Two on the face or stepping on Sibling Two.

The OKDHS documented that Sibling Two stated Ms. Collier was crazy and the “drugs make her crazier.” Sibling Two stated they felt bad about their attitude but that Ms. Collier did things to cause it. When asked for examples, Sibling Two stated Ms. Collier would call Sibling Two names, would tell Sibling Two to kill themselves, and that Sibling Two was “dead to her.” When asked about Ms. Collier’s drug use, Sibling Two stated “Yes, she’s crazy.” When asked how they knew Ms. Collier used drugs, Sibling Two stated they knew the smell and how Ms. Collier would act when using. When asked when the last time they saw Ms. Collier use, Sibling Two stated two months ago. Sibling Two stated the drugs made Ms. Collier’s “meanness worse.”

The OKDHS documented collaterals reported concern for drug use by Ms. Collier. The collaterals stated they felt Ms. Collier may be getting better but felt Ms. Collier used drugs as recently as a month prior (April 2019). The witnesses stated they did not see Ms. Collier use drugs, but they know when Ms. Collier does by the way she acts. The OKDHS documented other witnesses reported no concerns for Ms. Collier’s parenting or safety of the children. The OKDHS stated one witness did state Ms. Collier had previously gone to rehab for a problem with PCP.

The OKDHS documented they followed up with Ms. Collier on June 19, 2019. Ms. Collier denied current drug use but did admit to a problem when she was younger. Ms. Collier stated she was willing to complete a substance abuse assessment and a drug test. The OKDHS documented they would make a referral for these services.

The OKDHS made an Unsubstantiated Finding of Abuse/Other by Rhonda Collier to Sibling Two. The OKDHS made an Unsubstantiated Finding of Neglect/Other by Rhonda Collier to D.C., Sibling One, and Sibling Two.

Judicial Proceedings Prior to the Child’s Death Incident

The OJSO identified no relevant judicial proceedings prior to the near-death incident.

