



**REVIEW OF NEAR DEATH OF A.O.
OF GARFIELD COUNTY, OKLAHOMA**

Report Release Date: May 20, 2021

General Information

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request regarding the near death of nine-month-old A.O. A felony charge of Child Abuse was filed by the Garfield County District Attorney on December 9, 2020, against the father, Joseph Owens.

Authorization

The following is a summary of the actions taken by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS); the dates and outcome of investigations and actions taken by the OKDHS; the actions taken by the district attorney; the dates and summary of judicial proceedings; and the rulings of the court, as authorized by 10A O.S. Section 1-6-105.

Identifiers:

Child's Name: A.O.
Age at time of Incident: Four-months-old
Date of Near Death: November 16, 2020
Persons Responsible for the Child: Joseph Owens

The Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth did not become aware of this case until after the near death incident of the child.

Near Death Incident

The near death report was received by the Garfield County OKDHS on November 16, 2020. Reportedly, four-month-old A.O. was brought to a medical emergency room unresponsive, with two brain bleeds. The father, Joseph Owens, had no explanation for the bleeds. A.O. reportedly had low oxygen and a low pulse but was breathing and had a heartbeat upon arrival.

The OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority I Investigation. The persons interviewed during the investigation included the father, Joseph Owens, and various collaterals.

The OKDHS documented that a collateral witness brought A.O. to the emergency room reporting that A.O. was unresponsive. The OKDHS documented that a medical professional stated upon intake, A.O. presented with poor neurological signs, low oxygen levels, and a low pulse.

The OKDHS documented a computerized tomography (CT) scan showed there were brain bleeds at varying stages. One brain bleed appeared to be recent and a second bleed between A.O.'s brain and skull appeared to be older and from a previous incident.

The OKDHS documented a collateral witness stated they brought A.O. to the emergency room after A.O. suffered from seizures the previous day, had been throwing up, and not acting normal.

· Continued on Next Page ·



The OKDHS documented the father, Joseph Owens, cared for A.O. during the day. The father stated he did not know how A.O. could have gotten hurt. The OKDHS documented that during an interview between the father and law enforcement, the father report how A.O. “did not like to give up control.” He reported getting into yelling matches with A.O. and how A.O. “usually won because I can’t scream for five minutes.” The father reported there were a couple of incidents where caring for A.O. made him very stressed and when he is stressed, he just wants to be left alone.

The OKDHS documented that during a second interview with Joseph, he was confronted with medical information stating the injuries were a result of child abuse. The father responded by saying, “It had to be me then, because I’m the only option.” The father attempted to offer multiple scenarios for the cause of the injuries; however, law enforcement informed the father that these are not plausible options. The father was arrested on child abuse charges.

The OKDHS made a substantiated finding of Abuse/Near Death by Joseph Owens to A.O.

Prior Involvement of the Person Responsible for the Child with the Department of Human Services

There was no pertinent OKDHS history prior to the child near death report.

Judicial Proceedings Prior to the Child’s Near Death

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

· End of Report ·

