

Office of Juvenile System Oversight

REVIEW OF THE NEAR DEATH OF R.M. PAYNE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

Report Release Date: June 7, 2024

OVERVIEW

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received a request to conduct a case review of the near-death occurrence of four-month-old R.M. On September 4, 2020, the Payne County District Attorney filed against the mother, Victoria Lewis-Matheson, a felony charge of Child Abuse and Domestic Assault and Battery with a Dangerous Weapon. On November 7, 2023, Ms. Lewis-Matheson entered a guilty plea and received a four-year deferred sentence.

IDENTIFIERS

Child's Name:	Age at Time of Incident:	Date of Near-Death Incident:
R.M.	Eleven Days Old	August 15, 2020
Person Responsible for Child (PRFC):	Additional Identifiers:	
Victoria Lewis-Matheson (Mother)	Sibling One: Two Years Old Sibling Two: Three Years Old Sibling Three: Eight Years Old	

ACTIONS

The release of the following summary of the actions taken by Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) and the proceedings in the district court is authorized by Title 10A O.S. § 1-6-105H.

The OJSO did not become aware of this case until after the near death of R.M.

NEAR-DEATH INCIDENT

On August 15, 2020, the Marshall County OKDHS office received a near-death report. Reportedly, the mother, Victoria Lewis-Matheson, stabbed her eleven-day-old baby, R.M., in the abdomen.

- OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority I Investigation.

INVESTIGATION

Third-party witnesses and Victoria Lewis-Matheson, the mother of R.M. and the siblings, were interviewed during the investigation.

A report provided by OKDHS documented that a third-party witness saw the mother run around the side of the car with R.M. When the witness approached the mother, they saw that she was on top of R.M. The witness pushed the mother off R.M. In the process, the mother stabbed the witness. The witness grabbed the knife and threw it. The witness stated that R.M. was covered in blood. The witness called 911 while another third-party witness transported R.M. to a medical facility.

OKDHS documented that R.M.'s siblings were not present at the time of the incident. They were with a family member. OKDHS contacted the siblings, who appeared healthy and with no concerning marks or injuries.

OKDHS further documented that law enforcement was contacted regarding the incident. Per a statement provided by law enforcement, a third-party witness reported that the mother stabbed R.M. Law enforcement attempted to talk to the mother, but she refused to speak with them and gave them a "blank stare." Miranda rights were read by law enforcement to the mother. When asked if she understood them, she did not respond and continued with a "blank stare."

When OKDHS attempted to speak with the mother, she could not provide pertinent information. The mother stated she remembered trying to protect Sibling One from "the demons." The mother appeared confused when informed that R.M. was stabbed. The mother said she did not remember anyone being stabbed. She only remembered that she tried to protect Sibling One. She stated she believed her family members were demons.

OKDHS documented the mother appeared not to remember R.M. because she asked several times how Sibling One and Sibling Two were but never asked about R.M.

- OKDHS made a Substantiated finding of Abuse/Near Death by Victoria Lewis-Matheson to R.M.

PRIOR INVOLVEMENT OF THE PRFC WITH OKLAHOMA DEPT. OF HUMAN SERVICES

There were two pertinent reports prior to the near-death incident of four-month-old R.M.

Pertinent Investigation 1:

On September 8, 2018, the Marshall County OKDHS office received a report. Reportedly, Sibling One missed an infant weight check. After multiple attempts to reach the family, a third-party witness answered and stated they would try to get Sibling One there.

A third-party witness informed the sheriff that the mother and Sibling One went to a medical facility for a weight check and had been gone since five o'clock that evening. There were no concerns regarding the weight of Sibling One.

During the birth of Sibling One, it was observed that the mother had bruising on her arms.

- OKDHS accepted this report as a Priority I Investigation.

When OKDHS inquired about the bruising on the mother's arms, she stated she bruised easily and had never been abused physically.

Pertinent Investigation 2:

On September 25, 2018, a report was received by the OKDHS office in Marshall County. OKDHS documented that it was reported that the mother was high on a substance and wrecked her vehicle on a bridge. Sibling One was also in the vehicle. It was reported the mother had sent a text message to a third-party witness with the intent of

cutting her wrists.

When asked about the car accident, the mother denied having been under the influence of any substance. She stated Sibling One was coughing, so she turned around to view Sibling One. The car hit the edge of the bridge and went off into a ditch.

When confronted about the text message regarding her plan to cut her wrists, the mother acted confused about it. At first, the mother would not provide a clear answer. The report documented that the mother didn't believe the text message would be taken seriously. She had just been upset. OKDHS documented that law enforcement placed the mother under arrest due to outstanding warrants.

- OKDHS made a Substantiated finding of Abuse/Other by Victoria Lewis-Matheson to Sibling One.
- OKDHS made a Substantiated finding of Neglect/Threat of Harm-Substance by Victoria Lewis-Matheson to Sibling One, Sibling Two, and Sibling Three.
- OKDHS requested emergency custody and that a deprived petition be filed.

JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS PRIOR TO THE CHILD'S NEAR DEATH

The OJSO identified one judicial proceeding prior to the near-death incident. It involved R.M.'s three siblings, who were no longer in the care of the mother at the time of the near-death incident.

On September 27, 2018, Sibling One, Sibling Two, and Sibling Three were removed from their mother's care and placed into the custody of OKDHS. The petition for the removal of the children stated they had been exposed to the possession of and use of controlled dangerous substances by the mother, Victoria Lewis-Matheson. On January 29, 2019, the mother stipulated to the petition, and her Individualized Service Plan was court-ordered.

After the case concluded, the mother completed most of her treatment plan. Sibling One and Sibling Two were in the care of a third-party witness, and their mother lived in the same home. Sibling Three was placed with a different third-party witness, and the mother had visitation rights.