

Child Fatality Summary

Child's Name: Layorah Bell

County: Highlands

Date of Birth: 12/07/2020

Date of Death: 01/12/2022

Report Number: 2021-395654

Family Composition Chart

| Name | Age at Time of the Incident | Relationship with Deceased Child |
|--------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Layorah Bell | 1 year old | Child Victim |
| ██████████ | 2 years old | Half-Sibling by mother |
| ██████████ | 12 years old | Paramour's Child |
| Kaitlyn Bell | 21 years old | Mother |
| Noel Mendez | 29 years old | Paramour |

Circumstances Surrounding Death

On January 12, 2022, the 1-year-old passed away after being found unresponsive in the bathtub by her mother on December 30, 2021.

According to the family, the following information was provided. The incident occurred at the paramour's home. There are inconsistencies in the timelines from the mother, her paramour, and the paramour's 12-year-old child.

On December 30, 2021, the Highlands County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) received a 911 call at 12:07 a.m. indicating that a child was not breathing and had been found face down in the bathtub by the mother. The mother gave the child a pat on the back and then called for her paramour, who started CPR. HCSO and Emergency Medical Services responded to the home, the child was transported to Advent Health Lake Placid and then transferred to Advent Health Orlando.

The mother indicated that she started giving both of her children a bath at approximately midnight on December 30, 2021. She realized that she did not have a towel for them and walked out of the bathroom into the kitchen to grab a towel. When she came back, the child was face down in the bathtub. The mother indicated she walked maybe 50-60 steps to get the towels. She did not provide any more detail and was Baker Acted at the hospital in Orlando.

The mother's paramour indicated that he was watching video games on the PlayStation in the living room and the mother was sitting next to him. The 2-year-old was in the living room playing and the 1-year-old was in the bedroom playing with the 12-year-old. The 12-year-old came out and advised the 1-year-old had pooped her pants. The 12-

year-old told the mother she would put the child in the tub. The 12-year-old put the child in the tub and returned to her room. The paramour could hear the children splashing and playing as the living room is right next to the bathroom. He continued to watch videos and then the mother got up after they could hear no more noise. The mother screamed, came out with the baby who was purple, and stated "I did what I thought was CPR." The paramour did not provide any specific times.

The paramour's 12-year-old child stated she returned to her father's home on December 29, 2021, at 8:00 p.m. and the mother and her two children were there. She indicated they finished dinner at approximately 9:25 p.m. She was then holding the child and realized that she had pooped so she went over to the mother and told her what had happened. The mother realized the child also needed a bath, so she took the child from the 12-year-old and took her into the bathroom to give her a bath. The 12-year-old indicated this occurred at approximately 9:30 p.m. The 2-year-old began running and screaming throughout the house, so the mother grabbed her and put her into the bathtub with the 1-year-old to calm her down. She then went into her room and began watching television on her Xbox as well as being on Facetime. She was in her room for an unspecified amount of time before she decided she was thirsty. She left her room to go to the kitchen to grab a lemonade and while she left her room, she saw the mother leaving the bathroom to go get a towel. The towels are placed in a pile in the corner of the kitchen which is approximately 25 to 30 feet away from the bathroom. The 12-year-old grabbed her drink, and the mother grabbed the towel and they both walked back towards the bathroom. The mother was a bit behind her, so she made it to her room moments before the mother made it back to the bathroom. The entire house seemed to go completely silent which she found odd because the 2-year-old is autistic and always screaming. She then heard the mother scream for her father. When she came out of her room, she saw the child victim on the ground and her father attempting to do CPR. The father started screaming at her and the mother to call 911. They both called 911 and when she realized the mother was already on the phone with them, she ran out of the house to get her neighbor to see if anyone could do anything to help. The 911 call was received on December 30, 2021, at 12:07 a.m.

On January 12, 2022, Layorah Bell was pronounced deceased at 4:17 p.m.

The mother consented to a drug screen and was negative. The paramour consented to a drug screen and was positive for THC.

The Highlands County Sheriff's Office investigated the death of Layorah Bell (21Off010323). HCSO filed charges with the State Attorney's Office and on February 1, 2022, Kaitlyn Bell was arrested and charged with Aggravated Manslaughter as to Layorah Bell and with Child Neglect as to [REDACTED].

On January 13, 2022, District 9 Medical Examiner Rachel A. Lange, M.D., completed an autopsy of Layorah Bell. ME# 22-09-00088.

Cause of Death: Complications of Drowning

Manner of Death: Accident

On April 15, 2022, the Department of Children and Families' investigation was closed with:

- Verified Findings of Death and Inadequate Supervision as to Layorah Bell, with Kaitlyn Bell as the caregiver responsible.

Other Children in the Family:

Grief counseling information was provided to the family.

The sibling was deemed to be unsafe and was sheltered on February 4, 2022.


The paramour's daughter lives with her paternal grandmother and was visiting with the father for Christmas Break. The daughter returned to the paternal grandmother's home.

Summary of Current Agency Involvement with Family

The family did not have any open services.

Summary of Prior Agency Involvement with Family

The blended family has six prior abuse reports from 2009 to 2021. There are three reports in 2021, [REDACTED]. The mother has been identified as a caregiver in two prior investigations in 2018 and 2021. The paramour has been identified as a caregiver in two prior reports in 2021. [REDACTED]



Central Region Child Fatality Prevention Specialist
Kirby Morgan

4/22/22
Date



Central Region Family & Community Services Director
Stephanie Weis

04/22/2022
Date