

[Transcript] Crime Junkie / MISSING: Oakley Carlson

Hi, Crime Junkies. I'm your host, Ashley Flowers.

And I'm Brett.

And the story I have for you today is about a young girl whose disappearance from her parents' care in 2021 has sparked a conversation about the state of child welfare agencies across the country. This is the story of Oakley Carlson.

Jessica Swift is deeply invested in the rural community of Oakville, Washington. She's the principal of the town's elementary school. She's a mom. And lately she's been helping a local family of six who has recently been displaced by a house fire.

Now this is happening in 2021. So there's already a GoFundMe page that's up and running in the family's name.

But Jessica has been going the extra mile and like hand delivering supplies to the house and now to the hotel room that they're staying in. But during her recent visits, she has noticed something that's got her really worried.

She hasn't seen the family's second youngest child Oakley.

She's been bringing them food and supplies for almost a month now, like pretty much ever since the fire on November 6th.

And that whole time, four year old Oakley just hasn't been around. And these aren't like quick stand in the doorway type of deals. Like the first time Jessica stopped by, she was there for 45 minutes.

So did she ask anything about Oakley?

She had asked, but Oakley's mom, Jordan Bowers always had a different excuse, like just kind of brushed the question off.

And had Jessica not known the family well, she might not be so worried. But it's precisely because she knows Oakley's family and their history that's making this whole situation just not sit right with her. You see, besides the fire, the family has had their fair share of other problems. Jordan is a convicted felon and has had history of theft and drug charges while her husband Andrew Carlson has been decommissioned as a police officer from another Washington town. Hannah Kim reported for Fox 13 Seattle that he had been let go in 2017 for quote, making false and misleading statements. And both of the parents also struggle with substance use and are well known around the town for loud, often explosive domestic disputes. And on top of that, Jessica knows that they have had plenty of run-ins with the Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families or DCYF, especially when it came to Oakley. She had been placed in foster care as a baby due to her parent's substance use and she was later reunited with her parents. Okay, so she has every reason to be concerned and as a school

principal, I bet her instincts are like super attuned to situations that need attention. Has she brought any of these concerns to anyone else yet, like DCYF?

Well, no, so not at this point. I mean, she doesn't have any hard evidence that something has happened to Oakley, just this bad feeling. And right, like every time she's asking, Jordan and Andrew could have totally valid reasons. I mean, again, they're giving her reasons for the kid not being there for the visits, but at the point where it's been like a month of this, she gets determined to like figure out where Oakley is.

Again, she doesn't feel like she has enough to like go to anyone, but she's like, I'm going to start digging deeper. And today she might have the perfect chance. You see, Oakley's six-year-old sister, who I'll call Jay, is actually close friends with Jessica's own daughter and they're having the sleepover over at Jessica's house. So as they're winding down for the night, Jessica starts kind of dropping Oakley's name into the conversation, but Jay's reaction makes her stomach drop. At the mention of her little sister, Jay just curls up into a ball on the couch and starts shaking. And when she finally speaks, all she can say is Oakley is no more.

What? Jessica was right. Something is wrong here. That is not something a six-year-old should be saying or really any kid for that matter.

A hundred percent. I mean, Jessica is totally shaken by it too. And although I'm sure she's really wanting to ask Jay, okay, what do you mean by that? She doesn't. Like, she's not going to push this little kid to talk about something that has got her like this worked up. So she decides that the best move for now is just to calm Jay down and get her to bed.

So the next day, this is now Sunday, December 5th, Jay tells her that Oakley was bad. So she went to live with her former foster parents. And that's got to be a bit of relief in that moment. Jessica thinks, okay, maybe I'm reading into things. Maybe Oakley's fine and Jay is just really upset because she misses her sister.

Right. And to be fair, kids do say some wild things sometimes. I mean, May is five and the things that she comes up with sometimes are truly baddie. But I mean, Jay's body language is saying so much more than even her words are. Curling up in a ball and shaking. Shaking. Right. That doesn't seem like a reaction you'd have if you were just missing your sister.

No, no, no. And just because Jessica is being cautious about this whole situation doesn't mean that she's not taking it

seriously. She, again, just wants as much information as possible before she does anything. So what she does next is she calls the county sheriff's office and asks them to check their records to see if Oakley is in foster care. Because again, if she's with this other family, okay, then there's not a lot to worry about. But according to what they have on file, she isn't with any other family. And this is enough to convince Jessica that that feeling in her gut is legit. Oakley is not okay. And since she's a principal, she is a mandated reporter. So she has a legal obligation to notify authorities or the child abuse hotline if she suspects any kind of abuse or neglect. Now she also thinks it's best if Jay doesn't go home just until she knows if Oakley is okay or what's going on. So she texts Jordan and is like, Hey, the girls are having so much fun. Can Jay just like stay another night? And even though it's a school night, Jordan says, Yeah, sure, you can just keep her there. So the next day, which also happens to be Oakley's fifth birthday, Jessica gets the kids to school and then calls the sheriff's office again. This time she asked them to do a welfare check on Oakley. Now they agree, but the hotel that the family's staying at isn't in their jurisdiction. It's actually in a neighboring town of Tumwater. So they give Tumwater police a call and those officers head to the hotel. When they get there, Jordan answers the door with her two year old son in her arms. He is the youngest of the four siblings. And as the officers are introducing themselves and explaining why they're there, they look past her into the room and it looks like the family is preparing to go back home. Now they can't see the whole room, but from what they can tell Oakley doesn't appear to be there. So they asked Jordan where she is. And at first Jordan says Oakley is with her mom. So Oakley is with her grandma? No, no, that's what's so weird. According to an article by Emily Fitzgerald for the Chronicle, Jordan is saying that Oakley is with Oakley's mom. Like as in her like Jordan? Yeah, right. So the officers are like, wait, aren't you her mom? And then Jordan just replies, yes. So she's saying Oakley, Oakley's there in the hotel room, right? Or so I don't get it. Yeah, the officers are super confused too. So they try asking her again, is Oakley there in the hotel room or do you know where she is? And this time Jordan leans back into the hotel room and asks someone out of sight if Oakley is with their mom and dad. Now it turns out she's talking to Andrew and when he comes to

the door, he's like, oh yeah, Oakley's with my parents. So the officers like, okay, great, how can we get in touch with them? But Andrew claims that he doesn't know his dad's phone number or his dad's address. Okay, so another lie. No one is sending their kid with someone that they wouldn't be able to get a hold of. Yeah. Let alone his own parents. Yeah, I mean, please don't buy it either. And eventually Andrew admits that he actually does know his dad's number. No. Yeah, so once he coughs that up, police waste no time and they give his dad Fred a call right there at the scene. And what Fred tells them only confirms their worst fears because he says not only is Oakley not with him, but he and his wife Kate haven't seen Oakley in almost a whole year. Fred says that Andrew and Jordan cut off contact with them back around that Christmas. The family had all celebrated the holidays together. But during the visit, Fred and Kate noticed that Oakley didn't look well. She had these dark circles under her eyes, her skin was super pale, and she had like scratches or sores on her face. And it was actually so concerning that Kate had reported Oakley's condition to Child Protective Services, which did not go over well with Jordan and Andrew when they learned about the call because they were pissed. And so basically they haven't spoken to Fred and Kate since that incident. Once the officers get off the phone, they turn back to Andrew and are like, look, man, we know Oakley isn't with your parents. She obviously isn't here. Just tell us where she is so we can go check on her and be out of your hair. But that's when Andrew decides he's done cooperating. That was him cooperating with. He and Jordan both clam up and refuse to answer any more questions. And since the officers are just there for a welfare check, they have no choice but to leave. I guess their hands are basically tied, which to me feels wild. Yeah, but a lot of times without like very specific orders from a judge, doing anything outside of that general reason that they were there, in this case, the welfare check, that really is all they're legally able to do in the moment. But like, it's wild. Like, you know, they're lying about where they're, I don't know. And again, I know everything is like by the book, but to me, I'd want to like stay there and be like, listen until somebody who can do something comes. Like, I'm just going to be hanging out. We're camping out here like the eyes. Yeah.

So anyways, these officers go back, they relay this whole story to investigators in Grace Harbor County. And they're like, okay, we got to take a deeper look into this. So they go to Fred and Kate's house just to make super sure that Oakley isn't there. Of course, she's not. And then they call DCYF to double check that Oakley isn't in foster care. And we already know she isn't there either. So at this point, everyone has this sinking feeling that something is very, very wrong here. Andrew and Jordan's behavior has just been red flag after red flag. But as they're trying to figure out their next steps, investigators get notification from dispatch that Andrew has just made a call to 911. And he has reported Oakley missing. According to reporting by Jimmy Bernhard for King 5, Andrew told dispatch that they hadn't seen Oakley since November 30th. So your child has been missing for a week and you only reported after police come knocking at your door? Yeah. Nothing's us there at all. But on the bright side, this means that investigators actually have a case on their hands, right? And they can go back to the hotel and question Jordan and Andrew again. This time when they get there, they separate the couple outside of the hotel room. And while Andrew acts totally indifferent to the fact that his child is quite literally missing, Jordan is getting super angry. Like she starts yelling and once again refuses to answer any questions. Which both of those reactions scream guilty. Yet none of those seem like the actions of somebody who's like frantic or missing their child. So eventually Andrew and Jordan retreat into their room and investigators have to leave again because they're not being detained, at least not yet. So there is nothing that police can do, which again, I just don't understand. Like if you're in charge of the child's welfare and that child is gone, and you're not even answering questions, like someone's in charge, right? Like someone, I don't know, am I being bananas? No, like I see what you're saying. Like if these people who are in charge of Oakley aren't answering questions and the police are in charge essentially of finding out what happened to Oakley, like that seems like the moment that things should maybe escalate to a certain extent. Something should happen. It feels like they should at least be able to hold them on like obstruction charges, maybe like something to be like, okay, well until you start talking because you have to know something, even if

someone else took your kid, like you're not even telling us the last time you saw them or where they were. I don't know. Like contempt of court, but pre-contemptive court. It's obstruction, I think is what it would be. Again, I don't know, podcaster, so let me go back to my job. It isn't long before the sheriff's office gets another call. This time it is from Jessica. Remember, she's the principal that started this whole thing. She's calling from the school and tells them that Jordan just called the front desk and said that she needed to pick J up early due to an emergency, which investigators are immediately like, hell no, do not let her take J if she shows up. But the thing is Jordan never shows up. And when they look into where she went instead, they learned that the couple has mated back to their house on the outskirts of Oakville. So investigators head over there that afternoon to confront the couple for the third time now. Oh boy. At first it's more of the same. There are being like more difficult than ever. But then Andrew just starts rambling. And while I don't know what he says verbatim, he ends up making some comments alluding to the fact that Oakley might be dead. Okay, Ash, I'm with you now. If the police aren't able to do anything again, I'm going to lose it. Okay, well don't lose it because even though Andrew doesn't say anything else about what might have happened or where Oakley's body might be, investigators arrest the couple. For obstructing an investigation and suspicion of first degree manslaughter. There you go. Yeah. So anyway, the suspicion of manslaughter allows them to hold Jordan and Andrew for 72 hours while they gather more evidence. Matthew Smith reported for Fox 13 Seattle that it also allows CPS to step in and get the other children in safe hands. The first thing police do is they get a search warrant for Jordan and Andrew's home and surrounding property. And an extensive search kicks off the next morning and just a quick side note on the condition of the house based on photos from a July 2022 episode of the show never seen again. The fire didn't like completely destroy everything. They actually even continued living in the house for a bit immediately afterwards. But from what I can tell, there's a lot of singeing and smoke damage. There's this like burnt husk of a couch and the walls and the floors surrounding look pretty damaged, but that's kind of it. So it is like habitable whatever. So by the time the police get to the house, I don't know for sure if there have been any renovations or if

anything's been fixed. But what they find makes me think that it might not have been renovated yet because just moments after investigators step into the house, they find their first piece of evidence as the front door closes behind them. On the backside of the door are a bunch of small scattered dots, which they recognize immediately as blood spatter. And it's not just on the door. It continues onto the blinds that cover a nearby window. Police continue through the house and in a hallway downstairs, they find even more blood. But this time it is a bloody handprint from like a little kid. Unfortunately, I don't know anything else about the handprint, but I do know that investigators don't find any other blood after they find this. And you know what else they don't find in the house? Any signs of Oakley, like at all, not just her physical presence in the flesh, but there aren't any clothes that look like they would fit a four or five year old. There are no toys for her. Nothing. I mean, it is like she has been erased from the house entirely. But the rest of the house is pretty normal. So while samples of the blood are collected and sent off for testing, investigators move outside and they begin to search the property. Jordan and Andrew own roughly 300 acres actually pulled up this overhead shot that will be in the show notes for this case. But Brett here, I want you to take a look so you understand like what they're working with. Yeah, so you can't see their house in the shot because it's totally covered by a large tree, but it sits at the end of a road which dead ends into a field and then woods following the road away from the house. It looks like their neighbors are a decent distance away from them. I mean, basically the biggest takeaway I get from this plot is that it's massive and has a ton of forested areas. Yeah, and actually David Rose and Hannah Kim reported for Fox 13 Seattle that I mean, you said people look far away from them, but they said that the neighbors like the closest ones are like a quarter mile away. Yeah, so it's definitely pretty secluded and it looks like there's maybe a barn on the property, but from there again, it's just dense woods. Right. Now, the reason I wanted to point that out is because all of those woods that you're seeing, I mean, that has a thick, like super thick underbrush, so it's going to take investigators a while to go through it all. This isn't like a 2000 square foot home in a subdivision with like a teeny fenced in yard. This is going to take a minute. So meanwhile, other officers are trying to spread the word about

Oakley to the public. They post about her disappearance on their Facebook page and they start tracking down people who might be able to shed more light on the situation and they start with these former foster parents, Jamie Joe and Eric Hiles.

Jamie Joe tells investigators that Oakley was only eight months old when she was placed in their care in 2017 and she stayed with them for about two years all the way up to a week before her third birthday. And the Hiles family actually wanted to adopt Oakley, but in October of 2019, their case worker told them that they were going to start the reunification process, which obviously came with a wave of different emotions. But above all, as this process was happening, they became really scared for Oakley. I mean, she had several supervised and unsupervised visits with her family, including an overnight stay. And after one visit, she told Jamie Joe that she witnessed physical abuse between Jordan and Andrew, which Jamie Joe immediately reported to DCYF, but she tells investigators that they just kind of brushed her off.

Yeah. And having been on the foster parent side of things, this is so tough. You know, you're there to help these kids and these families really when they're in a position to need that support. And you are on the team of reunification if possible. And your role is just to be a safe place for the child. So I think it's completely understandable for Jamie Joe to feel like this isn't a stable place for Oakley to be able to go back to. But no, again, having been in her shoes. I also know how her hands are pretty much tied.

Yeah. I mean, it's such a frustrating, and I'm not going to I haven't done it, but I've watched you go through it. It's such a frustrating place to be in where you end up caring for these children so much and to see them go into a situation that you know could be bad for them, but they're quite literally is nothing you can do is heartbreaking, truly, which is exactly the situation that the Hiles family was in. So in November of 2019, Oakley was back in her parents' custody. Now the Hiles hadn't seen Oakley in person since then, but they did receive some pictures of her from someone who knew both families. And I think the pictures they got were like in January of 2021. But even those pictures just made Jamie Joe even more scared for Oakley safety because according to more reporting by Hannah Kim, Oakley looked like sick and gaunt. And once again, Jamie Joe tried to report her condition to DCYF, but they just ignored her.

So timing wise, this would have been around the same time

that Oakley's grandma had made a similar report, right?
The reports that were made by Jamie Joe and the grandparents were only like a month apart.

Okay, so if DCYF is getting multiple tips about the same child, my question is, why are they not checking that out like yesterday?

I have the same question. Basically, Jamie Joe says DCYF's inaction continued through 2021 and she doesn't know why. The one thing I can think, I mean, all of this was happening during the pandemic.

So I don't know if that had something to do with it or if there was understaffing issues, which is a nationwide problem. I actually talked about this issue of understaffing in our episode about Hassani Campbell and Tiana Kirchner.

I mean, Tiana's story is super similar to Oakley's.

They're both from Washington.

Both had parents who lied about their whereabouts.

And for that episode, I talked to our researcher here at Audio Check who actually used to work for DHS here in Indiana about how understaffing impacts cases like this.

And she basically said that many older cases can get pushed to the back burner when you've always got these new cases coming in.

It becomes this like never ending cycle.

For sure.

It is a tough job.

And ultimately the final blame is on Oakley's parents or whoever is eventually found responsible for her disappearance. But at the same time, it's impossible to ignore the fact that for whatever reason, the very systems put in place to protect kids really failed Oakley and her siblings.

And we see it happen so many times, right?

Like, I mean, to your point, yes, whoever did something to her is who's ultimately responsible.

But it's kind of how I feel about the justice system as a whole.

Like the same way I feel about childcare services is like, there's always going to be bad people doing bad things.

That's why we put these systems in place to protect people or help correct it or make sure justice is found.

And the disheartening part is not that there is bad people, but again, that's awful, but there always will be the part that feels like gut wrenching is that these systems that are

in place keep failing over and over.

Like we've got these chances to save them and to give them a helping hand.

And whether it's bureaucratic, whether it's understaffing, whether it's financial or whatever, we just keep failing.

Anyway, over the next 24 hours, investigators dig deeper into the family's history and they start by interviewing Oakley's older siblings.

When they first sit down with Jay, she doesn't want to open up. She says that her mom told her not to talk about Oakley, but eventually she does start to speak.

And once she does, the floodgates open.

Jay tells investigators that she hasn't seen her sister in a long time, although she couldn't give them a specific date.

But according to an article by Jennifer Lee and Brittany Perry for Fox 13 Seattle, she does relay a story that Jordan told her about how Oakley had wandered into the woods and was eaten by wolves.

Wolves?

And listen, while there are wolves in Washington, the last recorded sighting in the area that they are was like 2019.

Okay, regardless, that doesn't make this story any less bullshit.

And also, what an awful, horrific, terrible thought to put in your child's head about their own story?

Oh, like a little kid.

Totally.

And listen, investigators don't believe that that's actually what happened, but they think that there are maybe like kernels of truth in there.

Like Oakley really has passed away, just not the way Jay described.

And there are more clues.

Jay only talks about Oakley in the past tense.

And when they ask her if her sister was hurt at all, her only response is to just start crying.

When they talk to Oakley's nine-year-old brother, who is the oldest of the bunch, he says that he hasn't seen Oakley for some time either, but says that when she was with the family, she'd experienced some pretty severe abuse.

Like for instance, he says that Jordan and Andrew used to lock her in closets or under the stairwell, and once they even beat her with a belt.

He also thought that his parents might have been starving

Oakley.

So both siblings paint a clear picture of what life in their house was like and how Oakley in particular was severely abused, which Brent, I don't know if you know more about this than I do, but to me, this is so strange because the other kids, again, this environment is toxic, but the other kids don't seem to be facing the same kind of abuse.

It seems like they're just singling out Oakley, which I didn't really understand.

I thought, I don't know, maybe this is clearly a misconception that abuse is an all-or-nothing thing.

Like that's what I thought, but that's not the case.

Right.

So there's actually this concept called the Cinderella phenomenon, and basically it's when parents zero in on one kid in the family and leave the others kind of alone.

There isn't a ton of information out there about it.

Honestly, it's still really being explored, but it definitely has some validity, as we can see in this case, and even in others like Tiana Kirchner's.

It's so interesting.

I mean, I hope it's something they can study more because I...

It deserves to be studied more, for sure.

Yeah.

Again, when you talk about the systems that are there to help kids, I mean, I would imagine maybe some of the reason that DCF or whatever agency wasn't giving attention is maybe the other kids seemed okay.

They're showing up for school.

They look healthy.

It's just, it's awful.

But it is good that the other two kids are able to talk because the most chilling admission comes from both of them.

They make a comment about how everyone made it out of the fire except Oakley.

What?

So if neither the principal, Jessica, or any of Oakley's siblings have seen her since the fire, then that means she's been missing for about a month.

Yeah, but here's the thing, she might have actually been missing longer than that.

You see, investigators also talk to neighbors and other people who know the family and they find out that no one has seen Oakley for an entire year.

Now, I don't know where this tip comes from.
Investigators never say, but they learn from a quote,
unquote credible source that the last sighting of Oakley
by someone outside of her family was on January 27th, 2021.
So does this mean the fire was unrelated to her
disappearance?
Like she was already gone at that point?
They don't know.
But at this point, they think that the fire is just like a
piece of the puzzle.
So I mean, they are, they're not ruling it out.
I don't think they believe that's what killed her.
Maybe it was to hide evidence.
They don't know.
They just want to give it a closer look at this point.
And so the first thing they do is they actually pull police
records and they learned that Andrew had been the one to
report the fire.
But here's what's so weird.
He called 911 at 5 p.m.
But he told dispatch that the fire started hours before.
What the f**k were they just roasting marshmallows for a
while?
What?
No, Andrew said that he and Jordan put the fire out before
he called, but he wanted to file a report just so it was
documented, which is like super weird.
And he told them that the reason he didn't call sooner was
that they couldn't find their cell phones.
So two things.
This fire couldn't have been that big if they put it out
themselves.
And yeah, I've never heard of someone calling up just to
document a fire after the fact.
Well, yeah, unless you thought it was like arson or
something, like your insurance, if there was an accidental
fire, your insurance doesn't need a police report.
This isn't like a car accident.
It's so strange.
Right.
Now, the only other information I have from these
records is that Andrew said the fire started when Oakley
got her hands on a cigarette lighter and accidentally lit
the couch on fire.

Right. Oakley, a child no one had seen in some time, but okay.

Mm-hmm.

Now firefighters were sent to the house just to make sure that everything really was okay.

But that same article by Jimmy Bernhard reported that when they arrived, they determined that the fire actually didn't even start on the couch.

Like he said, it started in the microwave.

So Andrew was lying again.

Shocker.

Mm-hmm.

Mm-hmm.

But he isn't the only one with a story that doesn't add up when investigators go back and re-interview some of the people on what they know about the fire, things get messier.

They learn that the couple has been telling everyone that they fought the blaze by themselves for like four hours, and it was so bad that it even spread into the upper floors of their home.

And yet they were able to put a fire this huge out all on their own.

Plus, if it was that big, they would have needed major renovations, which it didn't seem like they had.

Bingo.

Yeah, two people putting out a fire over four hours that's on multiple levels of your home.

You're lying about where it started.

Everything is absurd.

It is not adding up.

So after police learned more about the fire, investigators look at Jordan and Andrew's phone records.

But the only thing they learn is that one of them, I don't know who, did a factory reset on their phone exactly 10 minutes after police did that welfare check on Oakley back on the six.

And truly, these people could not look more suspicious if they tried.

Yeah, I mean, like, listen, sure, there could be a legit reason for resetting the phone, but with everything else, right?

Like this is what circumstantial evidence is.

Each piece is like, no, this isn't a piece of hard evidence, but all together, what the hell is happening?

The good thing is investigators believe that they can get all of the information that was on the phone from before the reset.

It's just going to take the lab a little while to figure it out.

Now, throughout all of this, their search of the property is still going on.

They are going through the land with a fine tooth comb.

And by December 8th, the Washington state patrol troopers and the FBI have joined the effort.

They're digging up portions of the property.

They're using cadaver dogs.

They've got aircraft, and they even have a dive team search a portion of the land that is flooded.

So they're not expecting to find Oakley alive.

Yeah, I mean, I don't think they want to make any assumptions, but I mean, when you talk about not having seen her in like a year, things are not looking good.

Though that being said, I mean, there, I think some people are still hoping to find her alive because unless there's a confession or a body, they just can't be sure.

So they're using tactics typically applied for the recovery of both living and deceased persons just to cover all their bases.

Now, as if things couldn't get any worse, it is also around this time that they learn Jay was also experiencing some serious neglect.

So it maybe wasn't all Oakley.

You see, she is prescribed a medication that is crucial to her health.

According to that same article by Helen Smith, going without it, quote, puts her at risk of physical impairment, which could eventually result in death, end quote.

Basically, investigators find out that Jordan and Andrew hadn't give Jay any of her medications for about 15 months.

What?

So yeah, so with this, they're able to slap the couple with a new charge, abandonment of a dependent person in a second degree.

And it is just in time too, because their 72-hour hold for the suspicion of manslaughter is up.

But now with this new charge, they're able to keep them in custody for the time being.

For the next four days, investigators pour all of their energy into their search of the property. But by December 13th, they haven't found any more evidence or any signs of Oakley. So they are forced to wrap it up. And frustratingly, this is kind of where Oakley's case hits a wall. Now they do get one more tip. It's actually a sighting of Oakley from before she went missing. Again, they don't ever reveal where this information comes from, but investigators learn that she was actually last seen on February 10th, 2021, not the end of January, like they originally thought. But again, we're talking a span of just a couple weeks in a time that she's been missing for how long, right? But even with this new sighting, they can't fill in all the months between the sighting and when the welfare check happens that following December. So truly, even though she's seen February 10th potentially, the exact date that she disappeared is still a mystery. Weeks start going by without any new leads. And while they're convinced that Jordan and Andrew know what happened to Oakley and were likely involved in what happened to Oakley, they just can't seal the deal without more evidence. What about the blood spatter from the house, then Jordan and Andrew's cell phone data? So from what I can find in the research, the last time the blood is mentioned is in that episode I've never seen again. Investigators say that they are still waiting for results to determine who the blood belongs to. This is actually one of the newer cases we've covered. And as for their phone, GPS and email data, they haven't revealed if any of those results have come back or not. I know it's hard to wait around for closure when it feels like we can already see a really clear picture of what happened. But luckily, in January 2022 investigators do get some other tests back and they result in even more charges for Jordan and Andrew. When Oakley's siblings went into CPS custody back in

December, they were given a full checkup by a doctor, which included taking some hair samples for testing.

Well, Jay and her two-year-old brother's results had both come back positive for methamphetamines.

And it's not like there was just tiny trace amounts in their system, which in and of itself would have been terrible, but these levels were off the charts.

Like experts say the two-year-old would have had to ingest the drugs for his levels to be that high.

Oh my God, that makes me so sick just thinking about it.

I mean, it is beyond disturbing.

The one good thing that comes from this discovery is that investigators are able to charge both Jordan and Andrew with two counts of endangerment with a controlled substance.

So even without any charges in Oakley's case, they're going away for a while, right?

Well, on March 14th of 2022, Andrew pleads guilty to all charges and Jordan does the same in April.

He's later sentenced to 12 months in jail and a chemical dependency evaluation within 45 days of his release while Jordan, since she has a criminal record, got a heavier sentence of a whopping 20 months.

Are you kidding me?

Those both seem pretty light considering all the other circumstances.

Besides their missing child, their two-year-old more than likely ingested methamphetamine on their watch.

This is like the stuff that I like.

It's how I feel about like attempted murder charges, which often are so light and I'm like, but they still tried to murder someone.

Right.

And like this child could have died, but because you got lucky and they didn't die, you get 20 months.

Are you kidding me?

And 20 months only because she had a previous history.

Yeah, and he got 12.

And listen, there's all this like legal mumbo-jumbo surrounding the sentencing that's just like too much to get into.

Basically, all you need to know is that the judge gave them the maximum amount.

It's not like they got some like softy judge.

She gave them the max she could based on the

circumstances, I guess.

Which, by the way, again, this is happening in 2022.

As of the recording of this episode, Andrew's like walking around scot-free.

Cool.

Jordan has also been released.

She got out on January 15th of this year, but her freedom didn't last long.

Literally as she walked out of jail, she was arrested again and charged with three counts of first-degree identity theft and one count of second-degree identity theft.

Where did these charges come from?

Well, so these are totally unrelated to Oakley's case.

Basically, there'd been an investigation that centered around some fraudulent bank activity or something.

I mean, I don't know much more because investigators haven't released any of the information about that case.

But pending court proceedings, Jordan might be back behind bars for quite a while.

Again, steal someone's identity quite a while, give a child meth, and it's just like, hey, take a quick vacation.

Yes, seriously.

What a rollercoaster.

Mm-hmm.

In this case is wild.

And we aren't the only ones who have been pulling our hair out over it.

Oakley's story has gripped the nation.

Even public figures like criminal profiler John Kelly have gotten involved.

Michael Ruiz and Stephanie Pagonis reported for Fox News that back in March 2022, he posted a \$10,000 reward for information and said that he believed Oakley was still alive.

And actually, again, even though no one has seen her in so long, he's not the only one who thinks that.

Everyone has a different theory.

And while I don't want to get into all of them, one of the more common ones that I have seen is that Oakley is still alive and that Jordan and Andrew sold her.

Like she was trafficked?

Well, from what I can tell, the theory leans more towards like a sort of illegal underground adoption.

John Kelly said that this story held some weight because investigators couldn't find any of her belongings in the house, remember?

It was like her stuff had been like packed up and gone with her.

But another popular theory is that Oakley was exposed to methamphetamines, like her siblings and her exposure resulted in an overdose that her parents covered up.

But investigators have said that they don't have evidence to support that idea or the underground adoption idea for that matter.

At this point, they've stated that they're operating under the assumption that Oakley is likely deceased.

But dead or alive overdose or not, the one thing that the public seems to agree on is that Oakley's disappearance could have been prevented.

Jamie Johiles and child welfare activists have been pointing their fingers at DCYF for not only reuniting Oakley with her parents when there were concerns about her safety, but also for allegedly dropping the ball on all of those reports filed after their reunification.

DCYF has never commented on Oakley's case due to privacy laws and several public disclosure requests by the media have been denied. But eventually, the public outcry was enough for Washington Governor Jay Inslee to get involved. He requested a formal review of DCYF's case by the Washington State Office's director for the office of the Family and Children's Ombuds.

The organization is independent from DCYF and was set up to investigate complaints within the child welfare system.

But when they concluded their review in the fall of 2022, they said that there were no flaws in DCYF's actions, which didn't sit well with the public.

And activists are taking steps to try and ensure that nothing like this can ever happen to another child.

According to an article by Colleen West for Kyrö 7, they've proposed new legislation in Washington State, House Bill 1397, also known as the Oakley Carlson Act.

It will create a five point system for reunification if it's passed. And these points include long term mandatory drug testing, several court hearings, and tangible proof that the cause for removal has been addressed.

Now, I know a lot of details in this case were hard to hear, but we wanted to cover Oakley's story this month because April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. In honor of this and Oakley's story, we are sponsoring Prevent Child Abuse Indiana. Prevent Child Abuse Indiana is a chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America dedicated to preventing child abuse and neglect right here in the state where Ashley and I call home. However, there are Prevent Child Abuse America chapters all throughout the U.S. So to learn more and to find a chapter near you, you can visit preventchildabuse.org. And please, if you know anything about Oakley's disappearance, contact the Graves Harbor County Sheriff's Office at 1360-533-8765. Or you can find information on how to submit an anonymous tip and send an email directly to investigators in our show notes. You can find all the source material and pictures for this episode on our website, crimejunkiepodcast.com. And be sure to follow us on Instagram at [crimejunkiepodcast](https://www.instagram.com/crimejunkiepodcast). We'll be back next week with a brand new episode. Crimejunkie is an audio chuck production. So, what do you think, Chuck? Do you approve?