

(Date)

Dear Mr. Hunter,

I am reaching out to share the story of missing and abused child Oakley Carlson. Oakley Carlson is a 7-year-old little girl from Oakville, Washington, whose last known credible sighting was on February 10, 2021. Sadly, Oakley was not discovered missing until ten-months later on December 6, 2021. In the month prior, there had been a fire at the family home and a school principal became concerned about Oakley's safety after not seeing her when bringing the family donated supplies. After refusing to cooperate, Oakley's biological parents, Jordan Bowers and Andrew Carlson, were then taken into custody and refused to give any credible information about Oakley's whereabouts.

Bowers and Carlson were initially charged with manslaughter in the first degree, however, the charges were later dismissed when there was not enough evidence to move forward. They were then charged and convicted of two counts of endangerment with a controlled substance for exposing Oakley's siblings to methamphetamine. On March 14, 2022, Carlson pleaded guilty to two counts of endangerment. He was sentenced to the maximum twelve-months in jail but was released on August 3, 2022 after serving less than eight-months. On April 22, 2022, Bowers pleaded guilty to two counts of endangerment and was sentenced to twenty-months in prison. Bowers was released from prison on January 15, 2023 but was immediately taken into custody and booked on three counts of identity theft in the 1st degree and one count of identity theft in the second degree in a case unrelated to Oakley. In July 2023, she took a plea deal for the identity theft charges and was sentenced to forty-three months in prison. Although neither of these cases are related to Oakley, Bowers and Carlson remain suspects in her disappearance and refuse to cooperate with law enforcement.

Oakley spent from age 7-months to almost 3-years-old in foster care with her loving foster parents Jamie Jo and Erik Hiles. They provided a safe and happy home where Oakley thrived. The Hiles, along with community members, raised concerns about her safety to the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (WA DCYF) many times while in their care and even after Oakley was returned to her biological parents. The Hiles feel their concerns were not taken seriously and were ignored by social worker Angela Fries and her supervisor Kathryn Eddy. WA DCYF failed Oakley Carlson and I am supporting the Hiles in seeking answers for Oakley by requesting an immediate secondary independent agency review of Oakley's WA DCYF case.

According to police reports and court documents, while in Bowers' and Carlson's care, Oakley was starved, physically abused, and was locked in a cell, as a form of punishment for "bad" behavior. Court documents state that from 2013 to 2021 WA DCYF received eleven intake phone calls about the Bowers/Carlson family regarding domestic violence, physical abuse, parental drug use, and medical neglect. Only eight of those calls were screened in and investigated. In January 2021, WA DCYF received a call that Oakley had scratches and bruising on her face. WA DCYF opened an investigation but both Bowers and Carlson refused to cooperate yet Oakley remained in their care. In November 2021, WA DCYF received three separate calls in two days about the family. Specifically, there had been a fire at the family home, Bowers and Carlson did not call emergency services and the family continued to reside in the home despite an insurance agent advising them it was unsafe to do so. These three calls were screened out and ignored.

There is no excuse for this type of child abuse that Oakley suffered and the blatant disregard for vulnerable childrens' safety by WA DCYF. Court documents clearly state WA DCYF went to investigate the incident in January 2021 but the biological parents refused to cooperate yet Oakley remained in their care and then the department closed that case in March 2021. We also know that Oakley's last known credible sighting was on February 10, 2021. That means your department closed the case without seeing Oakley. It is shameful that there is NO ONE at WA DCYF that can say with certainty that when the case was closed in March 2021 that Oakley was or was not missing at that time. Why was more not done by your state agency and social workers to protect Oakley then and prevent the tragedies that were to come? Who was advocating for Oakley then and who is advocating for Oakley NOW? What is your department doing to make changes so this never happens again?

As the secretary of WA DCYF your job is to protect the vulnerable children of Washington state and in Oakley Carlson's case you have failed at that.

Thank you for your time,

(Insert Name)

<https://justiceforoakley.wixsite.com/home>

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