



PUBLIC INFORMATION RELEASE

FROM THE OFFICE OF
WASHINGTON COUNTY ATTORNEY DOUG JOHNSON

For immediate release – February 3, 2010

RAMSEY COUNTY FOSTER CARE PROVIDER CHARGED IN DROWNING OF 18 MONTH OLD FOSTER CHILD

Washington County Attorney Doug Johnson announced that his office is handling a conflict case for the Ramsey County Attorney's Office and has filed a criminal complaint charging Daniel Lee Wright (DOB 04/14/1959) with one count each of Manslaughter in the Second Degree, Endangerment of a Child, and Neglect of a Child. All counts are felony level charges.

On July 1, 2009, at approximately 11:20 a.m., St. Paul Police Officers were called to the foster home of Daniel and Barbara Wright located at 1615 Darlene Street, St. Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota. When officers and medics arrived at the scene, they found Barbara Wright performing CPR on 18 month old B.R.J. (DOB 12/04/2007). Medics transported the child to United Children's Hospital. B.R.J. was pronounced dead the following day at 10:30 a.m.

Officers investigating the case learned that Daniel Wright was giving B.R.J. and another foster child, K.O. (DOB 09/24/2005), a bath. The children were in the corner whirlpool tub in the downstairs master bathroom for approximately 15 minutes. Daniel Wright removed the other child from the tub first and took him to the adjoining bedroom to dry him off leaving B.R.J. unattended in 12 -18 inches of water. Wright's son, Mitchell Azariah, happened to go into the bathroom and found B.R.J. in the whirlpool "kind of on her side". He pulled her out of the water. B.R. J. was limp and not responding. Azariah yelled for his mother, who is a nurse, and carried the child upstairs where Barbara Wright then began administering CPR. Daniel Wright told police that he had left B.R. J. unattended in the tub for just a few minutes.

B.R.J. had a past history of seizure disorder, was developmentally delayed and was in a Special Education program through the St. Paul Public Schools. Special Education teacher, Julie Revoir, worked with B.R.J. and Daniel Wright. She told police that while B.R.J. was able to sit on her own and crawl, her balance was not age appropriate and she was not able to pull herself up to stand from the floor. Ms. Revoir stated that Daniel Wright had last worked with her and B.R.J. on 06/18/2009. At that time they had worked with B.R.J. to attempt to get her to pull herself up. Ms. Revoir said that Daniel Wright knew what B.R.J.'s limitations were in terms of balance and standing up.

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Daniel Wright is scheduled for an initial court appearance in Ramsey County on February 23, 2010. Sentencing Guidelines for a Manslaughter Second Degree conviction, based upon a zero criminal history score, is 41 – 57 months and is a presumptive commitment to state prison.

A copy of the complaint is attached. For further information, please contact Doug Johnson or Susan Harris at the Washington County Attorney's Office, 651-430-6115.