

**Overview of BH Case Closure while Child was
Categorized as Missing**

**Task Force on Child Protection
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Overview of the Closing of BH Case while the Child was Categorized as Missing

BH and his friend were students at a Jacksonville Middle School. On February 10, 2005, the then 13-year-old BH and 12-year-old friend supposedly told other children that they were going to run away. When the two boys disappeared missing child reports were filed with the police by the grandparents and guardian of BH and the parents of Mark. Local law enforcement authorities classified both children as endangered runaways and immediately initiated an area-wide search for the missing boys. Through the course of their investigation law enforcement learned that BH had been seen getting into an unknown vehicle outside of the school on the day of the boys disappearance and there were sightings of the two boys at Jacksonville area trailer park but authorities were unable to locate either of the boys.

BH was an active participant in an in-home post placement supervision case when he went missing. Since the child was an active case participant within an in-home services case the missing child episode was documented within the Department of Children and Families Missing Child Tracking System and transferred for case opening with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement/Missing Children Information Clearinghouse. In addition, the Community Case Care provider that was responsible for the active services case began conducting and documenting all efforts to locate the child on a schedule that met the requirements as outlined in Florida Administrative Rule 65C 30.019 Missing Children.

At a 12/4/2007 judicial review of the case the judge made a decision to close the case while the child was categorized as missing. FSN notes indicated that;

"JR held, PSS and jurisdiction will be closed once DCF files an order. The mother, Ms. BH also request the case be re-opened when BH returns as long as it is before he turns 18, no objections noted, CM will close the case once order is received."

A December 5, 2007 FSN notes state that;

"POA printed the JR order off of the clerk's site, placed in the file, and completed the case closure form. Case will be closed in fsfn today, as the JR order states PSS was terminated on 12/4/07. Jurisdiction remained open to allow the mx to request PSS services upon the cx ever returning to the home off of RAW status."

It appears that the courts decision to close the case while BH remained missing and potentially reopen the case if and when BH should be located was guided by the following factors.

First, law enforcement does not does consider that the family played any roll in BH's disappearance and the family has been aggressively engaged in searching for BH from the start of this case. As such, BH through his family appears to have strong advocates in place that continue to work with law enforcement in an effort to locate BH and bring him back home.

Second, the post placement supervision time line for this case had expired and while it is true that BH had gone missing during the post placement supervision time period there were no indications that grandparents should not considered an inappropriate placement

Americas Most Wanted BH-Missing Child. 25 Oct 06. Americas Most Wanted. 6 May 08
< http://www.amw.com/missing_children/case.cfm?id=30542>

Florida Teen Runs With Friend

13-year-old BH left Paxon Middle School in Jacksonville, Florida, on February 10, 2005. When BH's family heard the news that he had left school early with 12-year-old MD, they just thought he had skipped school. But when BH and MD didn't come home that evening, their families began to worry.

The families of the two boys have been searching relentlessly to find any clues leading to their son's whereabouts. The boys' parents have spent countless hours, sometimes as many as 20 per day, looking for their sons. So far, their efforts have been unsuccessful.

Police say there have been various sightings of the boys. They were apparently seen at the intersection of Main St. and 32nd, in Hammond Park, and again at a trailer park on the Northside. Each of these sightings were followed by an extensive search, complete with a chopper.

Friends Say Boys Planned On Running Away

The boys had apparently told friends that they planned on running away. The parents of both boys say that they had not heard anything to that effect. Also the parents have said that neither boy has run away for more than 24 hours or traveled more than two miles.

Police received a clue from a Jacksonville resident. She claims that her nephew was planning on running away with the two boys. Her nephew knew of a spot where MD and BH might have been planning to hide out. The police followed the boy's advice and searched a rural neighborhood of Jacksonville--"Birdville". Police were again, empty handed when the search ended.

Families Are Worried Sick

Not only is the safety of MD and BH in question, but also their health. Both boys suffer from bipolar disorder which requires medication. Also, both are developmentally delayed. Adding to that, BH also has kidney problems as well as high blood pressure.