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Adoptive Barahona Sister Sues Department of Children and Families

The lawsuit alleges the adoptive sister of an 11-year-old girl who was abused and killed also suffered physical, sexual and emotional abuse.



A lawsuit filed Monday alleges the state willfully neglected the adoptive brother and sister of twin siblings who were severely abused, ending in one of the twin's horrific death.

A lawsuit was filed on behalf of now 11-year-old "J.B." against the Florida Department of Children and Families for abuse that allegedly occurred under the care of Jorge and Carmen Barahona. Family Services Counselor Lacheryl D. Harris and Child Protective Investigators Jean Lacroix and Eunice Guillot are named as co-defendants on the complaint.

The Barahonas are charged in the February 2011 death of 10-year-old Nubia Barahona whose decomposing body was found in her adoptive father's truck alongside Interstate 95 in Palm Beach County. Her twin brother Victor Barahona was found close by, suffering severe chemical burns.



Attorneys are suing DCF on behalf of J.B. for ignoring what they say were red flags. The lawsuit claims DCF should have removed J.B., the twins and a fourth adoptive sibling G.B. from the parents' care.

"DCF had ample cause to remove J.B. and her three adoptive siblings from the Abusive Parents' home, but failed to do so," reads the lawsuit.

The lawsuit says the parents would miss doctors appointments for the children and that Nubia disclosed sexual abuse by her adoptive father to a psychologist that was evaluating her. It says the twins would appear at school with unexplained bruises and scratches and that they appeared dirty and unkempt. The twins had trouble staying awake in class and Nubia was always hungry, so she would hoard food in her backpack, the lawsuit says.

"You name it, it's a horrible disgusting set of facts," said attorney Todd Falzone, who represents J.B. "It's about a systemic failure of DCF and its agency to protect children that they're supposed to be protecting."

The lawsuit alleges DCF investigators knew about the allegations, but still allowed J.B. to be formally adopted by the Barahonas in January of 2007.

J.B. suffered years of physical, emotional and sexual abuse at the hands of her adoptive parents, the lawsuit says. Her attorney is suing for the right to trial by jury. A separate lawsuit was filed in February of 2012 on behalf of Nubia and Victor claiming the state did not do its job in protecting the children.

Jorge and Carmen Barahona have pleaded not guilty in the case.