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## Arkansas Parents Charged After Severely Abused Boy Found Locked in Closet

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A disturbing case of child abuse in Arkansas has led to the arrest of two parents after their 7-year-old son was discovered severely malnourished, locked in a closet, and allegedly restrained with ropes. Authorities have charged the couple with first-degree battery and endangering the welfare of a minor following the child's near-death condition.

Chris Freeman, 39, and Katelyn Freeman, 27, of Russellville, Arkansas, were arrested after their 7-year-old son was found weighing just 28 pounds, severely malnourished, and described by authorities as “a skeleton with skin on it.” According to the Russellville Police Department (RPD), investigators were alerted after the boy was rushed to the hospital in critical condition. Doctors said the child was pale, limp, and dangerously underweight. After examining him, medical staff concluded he was a “near fatality” and had suffered years of both physical and psychological trauma.

When officers searched the Freeman home, they discovered a small closet that had allegedly been used to confine the boy. The space was found with urine and feces, and investigators reported rope marks on the child’s body, suggesting he had been restrained. Police reported finding worn walls and a strong odor, with multiple signs suggesting the child had been forcibly restrained. Other children living in the home told investigators that ropes were used to tie the boy as punishment, claims corroborated when officers found rope during their investigation.

Despite the child’s emaciated condition, authorities found both food supplies and a significant amount of cash inside the residence, raising further concerns about the parents’ neglect. Russellville Police Chief David Ewing told local outlet KARK: “There is no denying that this shook us to our core. He was just a skeleton with skin on it... From what we understand, there was also a large sum of money in the residence. So there was no reasonable explanation that we could find why the child would be malnourished or in that condition at all.”

The couple reportedly admitted to locking the boy in the closet and failing to seek medical attention out of fear of being reported to authorities. According to THV11 News, both parents admitted to locking the boy in the closet and failing to seek medical help, but provided no justifiable explanation for his severe malnutrition, despite having the means to care for him.

This case raises renewed concerns about child protection enforcement and the importance of community vigilance. While child welfare systems exist to intervene, such tragedies highlight the limits of oversight without active reporting from those nearby. The Freeman case serves as a grim reminder that abuse can persist behind closed doors even in otherwise stable-looking households.

As investigations continue, the boy remains in medical care, and child protective services have been alerted to ensure the safety of the other children in the home. Both Chris and Katelyn Freeman are currently facing legal proceedings and could face significant prison time if convicted.