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New Information Reveals Tragic Oversight in Death of 3-Year-Old Left in Hot Car

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New details have emerged surrounding the death of 3-year-old Ke'Torrius Starkes Jr., who was found unresponsive after being left in a hot vehicle for several hours in

Birmingham, Alabama. Starkes was under the legal custody of the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) and was being transported by a contracted employee of Covenant Services when the incident occurred.

According to a partial audio recording obtained by *WBRC*, the transporter admitted during an emotional conversation with Starkes' family that she forgot the child was still in the backseat. The audio, though not publicly released due to legal reasons, includes a direct admission from the driver that she became sidetracked during her routine and mistakenly believed her workday had ended.

“I went to the daycare,” the transporter said. “And I got sidetracked and stopped off and got something to eat, and when I came out instead of going to the left to the daycare because I got called and said I didn't have a case, I instantly said to myself, ‘Oh, I'm done for the day. I'm going to go home.’”

Starkes' father confronted the driver during the call, questioning how such a critical oversight could happen. The transporter repeatedly apologized and expressed remorse, saying she did not mean to leave the child behind. “There are not enough words to express how bad I feel,” she stated.

A family member also challenged the transporter's lack of awareness, highlighting that the child safety locks were engaged and questioning why she didn't check the back seat. “This baby died in a car. He suffocated. He didn't have no help. No nothing. You didn't think to look in the back seat?!” the relative said.

The Jefferson County Coroner's Office confirmed that the child was left inside the vehicle on Pinetree Drive from approximately 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Starkes was later found unresponsive and pronounced dead roughly 30 minutes after being discovered.

At the time of the tragedy, Starkes was under the care of Covenant Services, a transportation provider contracted by the state. The Alabama DHR has not issued a formal public statement regarding the incident or whether any disciplinary action has been taken in response.

This case adds to the growing number of child hot car deaths across the country, raising renewed concerns over child welfare procedures and accountability within contracted care services.