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## Mother and Grandfather Plead Not Guilty in Case Involving Presumed Death of Missing Alabama Toddler

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Two family members of a missing Fayette County toddler have entered not guilty pleas in connection to charges stemming from his presumed death. Wendy Bailey, the mother of 15-month-old Kahleb Collins, and John Bailey, the child's grandfather and legal custodian, are facing multiple felony charges following a months-long investigation.

The case began in December 2024 when a fatal vehicle crash claimed the lives of Steven Collins, 40, and his two-year-old daughter, Ryleigh Collins. Wendy Bailey, who

survived the crash, was also in the vehicle. Authorities were informed the following day that a third child—15-month-old Kahleb—had also been in the care of the family and was missing. Law enforcement initiated a search after receiving that report.

John Bailey was arrested on December 11 for failing to report a missing child. Court documents later revealed that Kahleb had sustained physical injuries prior to his disappearance and was allegedly removed from the home without anyone in the household notifying authorities.

In May 2025, human remains were discovered in a burn pile on the family's property during a search. The remains were sent for forensic identification, though law enforcement has indicated that they are believed to be those of the missing child.

Wendy Bailey has pleaded not guilty to charges of criminal negligence and aggravated child abuse by reason of mental disease or defect. John Bailey has also pleaded not guilty to the same aggravated child abuse charge. Both were indicted on additional charges, including domestic violence, abuse of a corpse, and criminally negligent homicide.

Fayette County Sheriff Byron Yerby called the case “heartbreaking” and emphasized the ongoing effort to secure justice. “While this discovery brings a measure of closure, it is also a solemn reminder of the responsibility we all share in protecting our children,” Yerby stated in a public release.

The investigation has drawn attention due to the severity of the allegations and the disturbing circumstances surrounding the child's disappearance and the later discovery of remains on the family's property. Authorities have not confirmed the final forensic results as of the latest updates.

Legal proceedings are ongoing as both defendants await trial in connection with the charges related to Kahleb Collins's presumed death.