



INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

David Cook, Inspector General

OFFICE: DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES (DCS)
TITLE: DCS FORMER EMPLOYEE CRIMINAL ACTIVITY
CASE ID: 2024-04-0135
DATE: October 3, 2024

Inspector General Chief Legal Counsel, Tiffany Mulligan, after an investigation by Inspector General Special Agent Michael Lepper, reports as follows:

The Indiana General Assembly charged the Indiana Office of Inspector General (OIG) with addressing fraud, waste, abuse and wrongdoing in the executive branch agencies of state government. Ind. Code §4-2-7-2(b). The OIG also investigates allegations of criminal activity and Code of Ethics violations by state workers. Ind. Code §4-2-7-3. The OIG may recommend policies and carry out other activities designed to deter, detect and eradicate fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement and misconduct in state government. Ind. Code §4-2-7-3(2).

I. Complaint

On April 11, 2024, the OIG received a complaint alleging that a former Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) Family Case Manager (FCM), Todd Aaron Click (Click), falsified records regarding child welfare visits in DCS's Case Management Database, Management Gateway for Indiana's Kids (MaGIK). According to the complaint, Click submitted false information into MaGIK related to family visits and forged the signatures of parents and caregivers on several documents that DCS requires FCMs to submit.

II. OIG Investigation

OIG Special Agent Lepper investigated the allegations. As part of his investigation, Special Agent Lepper interviewed several DCS employees, including Click's supervisors and the Ripley

County Local Office Director. He also interviewed seven family members or caregivers for children involved in reports of child abuse or neglect that DCS assigned Click to assess. Special Agent Lepper also obtained documentation from DCS, including DCS policies; Click's job description; the Preliminary Reports of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect, also known as 310s, for Click's assigned cases; Click's MaGIK entries; and various documents submitted with questionable signatures in Click's assigned cases.

Special Agent Lepper learned that Click began working for DCS as an FCM on July 9, 2023. As an FCM, Click served as an assessment worker. His duties included investigating reported incidents of child abuse, neglect or dependency; making determinations of whether incidents were substantiated; developing recommendations to a Juvenile Court or County Director for disposition; assessing levels of risk to the child; and performing needs assessments to determine treatment options for families and children reported to be abused or neglected. Click resigned from his position at DCS on March 2, 2024.

Under DCS's Child Welfare Policy, DCS FCMs, such as Click, must conduct in-person interviews with the alleged child victims for all assessments.¹ They also must conduct in-person interviews with all other children living in the home; any other children present in the home during the alleged incident; one or both parents, guardians or custodians, including each noncustodial parent; and the alleged perpetrator.² DCS Child Welfare Policy also sets out deadlines for FCMs to initiate assessments under certain circumstances.³

Special Agent Lepper reviewed documentation related to 310s alleging abuse or neglect for several families that DCS assigned Click to assess. Special Agent Lepper also reviewed Click's

¹ DCS Child Welfare Policy, Chapter 4, Section 04; <https://www.in.gov/dcs/files/4.04.pdf>.

² *Id.*

³ See DCS Child Welfare Policy, Chapter 4, Section 38; <https://www.in.gov/dcs/files/4.38.pdf>.

MaGIK entries for these cases and interviewed members of the families involved. In each of these cases, he found that Click disregarded DCS policy and child safety. He found no evidence that his actions resulted in physical harm to the children involved; however, his actions put at least five families and eleven children in danger.

MB Family

Special Agent Lepper reviewed allegations involving MB's family. The complaint alleged that on December 23, 2023, MB was involved in domestic violence incident with one of MB's children present. According to one of Click's MaGIK entries, Click visited MB's home on December 24, 2023, at 11:00 a.m., but no one was home. The MaGIK entry reads that Click called MB on the telephone, and MB told him that she was on the way to Ohio for a family Christmas. During an interview with Special Agent Lepper, MB stated that after the domestic violence incident, she went to her mother's home in another Indiana town. MB said that she has no family in Ohio, and the call that Click reported never occurred.

Click made three additional MaGIK entries that MB stated never took place. First, Click reported that on December 24, 2023, at 5:00 p.m., he made a video call with MB and saw her two children, who appeared healthy. Second, Click reported that he met face-to-face with MB and her children on December 28, 2023, at 3:15 p.m., and the children looked healthy. Third, Click reported that he met face-to-face with MB and her children on January 31, 2024, at 9:30 a.m. During her interview with Special Agent Lepper, MB denied that any of these visits occurred.

Finally, Click reported that on February 15, 2024, at 3:15 p.m. he met face-to-face with MB and her children at their home. MB told Special Agent Lepper this was the only time she saw

Click. Click reported in MaGIK that they discussed a safety plan⁴, one of DCS's required forms; however, MB said Click stood just inside the front door for five minutes, and they never discussed a safety plan.

Special Agent Lepper also found that Click submitted two required forms to DCS that MB reportedly signed; however, MB stated she never signed either form. First, Click submitted a Tribal Membership form to DCS that shows MB as having signed the form on December 28, 2023. This date corresponds to the date in which Click reported visiting MB at her home. MB said the visit never occurred and she never signed any form for Click. When Special Agent Lepper showed her the form, she confidently stated that it was not her signature. According to DCS staff, federal regulation requires this form under the Indian Child Welfare Act.⁵

Second, Click submitted to DCS a Safety Plan form that shows MB as having signed the form on February 15, 2024. This date corresponds to the visit at MB's home that MB said occurred, but only lasted five minutes. She said she never signed or discussed any forms during this meeting. When Special Agent Lepper showed her the form, she confidently stated that it was not her signature. According to DCS staff, the form is required to "develop an agreed action by the parent/guardian/custodian that will allow the child to be safe in their home."

AB Family

Special Agent Lepper reviewed an allegation involving AB's family. He found that Click reported in MaGIK that on January 22, 2024, at 3:30 p.m., Click made a face-to-face visit with AB, his wife and their child at their home. During his interview with Special Agent Lepper, AB

⁴ According to a DCS staff member, a safety plan addresses each identified safety concern for the child or children in the home. The safety plan includes details regarding what will be done and by whom to ensure the child's safety in all settings.

⁵ The DCS staff member explained that the purpose of the Tribal Membership form is to identify an Indian child at the onset of DCS involvement, so the child is afforded all rights under the Indian Child Welfare Act.

stated that this visit never occurred. AB stated that his child reported abuse by a family friend to her school on January 21, 2024. The school advised the AB family that they reported the incident to DCS's hotline and that DCS would be out to visit their home. Later the same evening, AB made a second report to the DCS hotline as no one from DCS ever came to their home.

Special Agent Lepper found that Click submitted to DCS a Consent to Interview Children form that AB reportedly signed on January 25, 2024. This date is the same day as a forensic interview with AB's child. AB stated that this was the first and only time he ever saw Click. AB also stated that he did not sign any forms during the meeting. When Special Agent Lepper showed AB the form, he stated confidently that it was not his signature. According to DCS staff, the purpose of the Consent to Interview Children form is to inform a parent, guardian or custodian that DCS would like to interview their child relating to a DCS assessment and to inform the parent, guardian or custodian that the statements can be used in legal proceedings.⁶

MW Family

Special Agent Lepper reviewed an allegation involving MW's family. He found that Click reported in MaGIK that on December 22, 2023, at 4:30 p.m., he had a face-to-face visit with MW, the mother; CW, the guardian of MW's children; and MW's two children at their home. During an interview with Special Agent Lepper, both CW and MW said the visit never occurred. CW said that she has never met Click. MB stated that Click never talked to the children.

Special Agent Lepper found that Click reported in MaGIK that on January 29, 2024, at 3:40 p.m., he had a face-to-face visit with CW and MW's two children. During her interview with Special Agent Lepper, CW stated that the visit never happened. Click also reported talking to the

⁶ According to a DCS staff member, DCS can obtain consent to interview a child in three ways: obtaining a court order, with parental consent by signing the DCS form or in exigent circumstances.

two children and that MW had moved out of the home. Special Agent Lepper learned that this statement was also untrue.

Special Agent Lepper found that Click submitted two required forms to DCS related to the MW family: a Consent to Interview Children form and a Tribal Membership Form. CW reportedly signed both forms on December 22, 2023. This date corresponds with a home visit at 4:30 p.m. that Click reported in MaGIK but that both CW and MW said never occurred. CW said she never met Click and never signed any forms for him. Special Agent Lepper showed CW the signature on both documents, and she confidently stated that it was not her signature on either document.

TS Family

Special Agent Lepper reviewed an allegation involving TS's family. He found that Click reported in MaGIK that on December 21, 2023, at 4:30 p.m., he had a face-to-face visit with TS, the mother; TH, the grandfather; and TS's four children at their home. Both TS and TH told Special Agent Lepper that the visit never occurred. TS also stated that Click has never been to her home.

Special Agent Lepper found that Click submitted two required forms to DCS related to the TS family: a Consent to Interview Children form and a Tribal Membership Form. TS reportedly signed both forms on December 21, 2023. This date corresponds with the date Click reported visiting the family in their home, but TS and TH denied that the visit took place. TS also stated that she never signed any forms for Click and has never met him. She said that he has never been to her home. She said she may have spoken with Click on the phone. When Special Agent Lepper showed TS both forms, she confidently stated that it was not her signature on either form.

EL Family

Special Agent Lepper reviewed an allegation involving EL's family. He found that Click reported in MaGIK that on February 13, 2024, at 4:05 p.m., he had a face-to-face visit with JB at

his home. During an interview with Special Agent Lepper, JB said he has never met Click and Click has never been to his home. JB said he spoke with Click on the telephone once around that time; however, DCS required this interview to be in person.

III. Conclusion

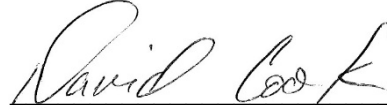
The OIG's investigation found evidence to substantiate allegations that Click falsified at least ten MaGIK entries in violation of Ind. Code §35-33-22-2. This statute makes it a Class A misdemeanor to knowingly or intentionally falsify a child abuse or neglect record. The OIG's investigation also found evidence that Click knowingly and intentionally created written instruments purporting to be signed by parents or caregivers, all without authority to do so, on at least seven DCS forms required during the assessment process in violation of Ind. Code §35-43-4-2, Forgery, which is a Level 6 Felony. As a public servant employed by DCS, the OIG investigation also found sufficient evidence that Click committed the offense of official misconduct, a Level 6 Felony, under Ind. Code §35-44.1-1-1 by committing criminal offenses in the performance of his official duties.

The OIG certified the case to the Ripley County Prosecutor's Office on September 19, 2024. The Ripley County Prosecutor's Office charged Click with one count of official misconduct, one count of forgery and one count of obstruction of a child abuse assessment. The OIG acknowledges criminal charges are merely allegations, and individuals are considered innocent until proven guilty.

Accordingly, this investigation is closed.

Dated: October 3, 2024

APPROVED BY:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Cook". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

David Cook, Inspector General