

= Cris and Cru Kahui homicides =

The deaths of brothers Christopher Arepa and Cru Omeka Kahui ( 20 March 2006 ? 18 June 2006 ) , two New Zealand infants from a M?ori family who died in Auckland 's Starship Children 's Hospital after being admitted with serious head injuries , highlighted the fact that M?ori children are more than twice as likely to die as a result of abuse than non @-@ M?ori and that New Zealand ranks fifth highest among OECD nations for child deaths due to maltreatment according to a 2003 UNICEF report .

Their family initially refused to cooperate with police in the homicide investigation into the children 's deaths . The father , 21 @-@ year @-@ old , Christopher Sonny Kahui was charged with their murder . His defence was that the mother was responsible for the deaths . After a six @-@ week trial , the jury took just one minute to acquit him .

A coroner 's report released in July 2012 concluded that the children 's injuries occurred " whilst they were in the sole custody , care and control of their father " .

= = Before deaths = =

Chris and Cru Kahui were the two survivors of triplets born prematurely at 29 weeks on 20 March 2006 at the National Women 's Hospital in Grafton , New Zealand . They spent six weeks at the Kidz First neonatal intensive care unit at Middlemore Hospital . During this time , nurses and social workers at the facility had informally raised concerns with a Department of Child , Youth and Family Services worker , as the parents , Chris Kahui and Macsyna King , did not spend a lot of time with the babies . According to the hospital , parents not visiting is not considered child abuse , but was a " cause for concern " .

Because the infants were still technically patients of Middlemore Hospital , hospital workers regularly visited the family home . During their last visit to the hospital , Chris and Cru were reported to be healthy and well @-@ fed . However , an autopsy showed that the infants had suffered fractured ribs in an incident prior to the fatal injuries .

= = Deaths = =

On 13 June , the infants ' mother , Macsyna King , returned to the house after being away overnight . She found that the boys suffered extensive bruises , and that their grandfather , William " Banjo " Kahui , had performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation on them . Police said the grandfather was not the only person in the house at the time . According to former MP John Tamihere , a member of the Kahui extended family had said " a young relative " was caring for the babies the day they were fatally injured . King and her husband took their children to the family G.P. , who ordered immediate hospitalisation for the infants . The Coroner made a finding that Chris Kahui refused to take the children to hospital , running away from the family car and leaving a distraught Macsyna King carrying two babies in their carriers into the hospital on her own . Doctors immediately discovered that the infants had serious brain injuries . After the infants were transferred to Starship Hospital , hospital workers notified the police . The Kahui infants were ultimately taken off life support , with Cru being the first to die at 5 a.m. on 18 June . Chris died at 6 : 45 p.m. later in the day . The deaths resulted in an initial serious assault investigation by the New Zealand Police before charges were upgraded to homicide .

Both infants had suffered skull fractures from blunt force trauma and Chris Kahui had a broken femur . An orthopaedic specialist told The Sunday Star @-@ Times that in order to break the femur of a baby , the bone would have to bend at a 90 degree angle , ruling out an accidental cause of the injury .

The bodies were released to the family on 21 June and taken to the Manurewa marae for a tangihanga ( funeral rites ) . They were buried at the Manukau City cemetery on 24 June .

While the infants were in hospital , Child , Youth and Family removed a 12 @-@ month @-@ old brother Shane and their female cousin Cayenne , aged six months from two rented Housing New

Zealand homes ? one in Clendon , the other in Mangere ? where the Kahui babies had lived . Police said they were treated in hospital for injuries resulting from " neglect " . They had been found to be malnourished and " dirty " . According to the Herald on Sunday newspaper , the two children were to be returned to the family in September 2006 . But neither the parents or so @-@ called " Tight 12 " of family members who initially refused to cooperate with police , would be their caregivers .

= = Homicide investigation = =

The police believe that , while the infants were in hospital prior to their deaths , the family was uncooperative with any investigation . Pita Sharples , the co @-@ leader of the M?ori Party , said the family had agreed to talk to police on 26 June , but this did not happen . Following the deaths , Sharples said he was disgusted by the Kahui family 's behaviour . He claimed some members of the family were more interested in going " to the pub and have a drink " than coming forward to police . Prime Minister Helen Clark said it was " absolutely shocking " for the family to hide behind the funeral while everyone in the country was " shocked and revolted " by the injuries . There were even reports that gang members were threatening the Kahui family in utu ( or revenge ) over their refusal to speak .

After refusing to speak to police in the week after the death , police went to family homes on 27 June . At least four family members , including the children 's mother and aunt , were escorted to police stations . By 4 July , at least 20 extended family members were questioned , as well as 90 medical practitioners and staff who were in contact with the babies . Forensic scientists removed items such as clothing from the Kahui homes . By September , police said that the family was no longer " stone @-@ walling " their inquiries , but a prima facie case had yet to be established . Sunday News reported on 17 September that the list of suspects was down to three and an arrest was imminent . This was followed by a police statement nine days later stating that they now knew who was responsible for the deaths . However , other family members could still be charged with related crimes .

Two half @-@ sisters of the infants ' mother Macsyna King , appeared on TVNZ 's Sunday 23 July episode . They claimed that Macsyna and her brother , Robert King , had told them the name of the killer . TVNZ censored the name when one of the women said it , but the gender was revealed to be male . The infants ' paternal grandmother , who appeared the next day on TV3 's Campbell Live , contradicted this information , stating that the killer was female .

The homes where the babies lived were also home to at least nine adult occupants , eight of whom were on some form of social welfare . They may have been receiving payments totalling between \$ 845 and \$ 1395 a week , depending on their age and circumstances . Work and Income New Zealand launched an investigation to see whether all the payments were legitimate . Two instances of substantiated benefit fraud were found for one individual . The Clendon house had been occupied for two to three months , but neighbours had not noticed that babies were living there . According to the neighbours , Tuesday and Thursday nights were " party nights , " as this was when benefit payments were received . Loud music and fighting were often heard . One neighbour said that a sixteen @-@ year @-@ old female appeared on their doorstep at 3 : 30 a.m. one morning after she said an older man at the Clendon house attempted to sexually assault her .

= = = Murder arrest = = =

The 1 October edition of the Sunday Star @-@ Times newspaper published an interview with the infants ' father , Chris Kahui . Kahui said that he did not kill his sons , but if Police could not find anyone else , " I go down for something I didn 't do " . Investigators called Kahui 's interview with the police on 3 October a " major development " .

On 26 October , a " carload of detectives " had gone to several addresses looking for Chris Kahui , who was brought in for questioning . At 10 p.m. , it was announced in a press conference that a 21 @-@ year @-@ old man had been arrested and charged with the murder of the infants , and would appear in the Manukau District Court the next day . No other family members faced charges with

relation to the deaths .

Contrary to this , the Sunday News reported on 31 December 2006 that , according to an unnamed source , a second arrest was expected . Neither the exact charges that would be laid nor the relationship of the person to the infants were revealed . Three weeks later the same newspaper said four people involved in the investigation had been summoned to the appear at the Manukau district court on 24 January . Sources told the newspaper that the new charges relate to dead infants and a pre @-@ school child . One of those to be charged was Macsyna King , the mother of Chris and Cru . None of these charges eventuated .

According to the Herald on Sunday , the Microsoft Word file containing the press release announcing the arrest of Kahui had actually been created five days earlier , and the last edit was the day before the arrest . In the same article , the Herald reported the Police were questioning whether Kahui was actually the biological father of the infants . DNA tests later confirmed that he was the father .

= = = Court appearances = = =

Kahui appeared in the Number One court of the Manukau District Court on 27 October for a two @-@ minute hearing , where he was formally charged with murder . He was asked not to plead ; however , outside the court , Kahui 's lawyer , Lorraine Smith , said her client would " fight the charges " . He was remanded in police custody until 10 November when he was freed on bail . A pre @-@ depositions hearing was held 17 January .

A second pre @-@ depositions hearing was intended to take place on 21 March . This was so his lawyer could read 60 files of evidence collected by police , and for a medical expert from Australia to become available . This second hearing was delayed because the defence was still waiting for the medical report from Australia . The depositions hearing was finally set for 18 June , with a brief court appearance on 18 April . This date was later changed to sometime on 13 August .

Kahui was found not guilty on Thursday 22 May 2008 , after only one minute of deliberation by the jury . The officer who led the police investigations into the murders , Detective Inspector John Tims , said he was " disappointed " at the verdict , finding " no evidence to support a charge against any other person and that includes the mother , Macsyna King " . He acknowledged the prosecutor , who had " said in his opening and closing address that there is no new evidence to support a charge being laid against the mother , Macsyna King " . No charges were laid against Macsyna King .

Kahui 's lawyer has threatened to lodge a complaint with the Police Complaints Authority over Police handling of the prosecution of her client for the murder of Chris and Cru Kahui .

= = Coroner 's report = =

Coroner Gary Evans released a report into the deaths of the children in July 2012 . He found that the twins had suffered the brain injuries which led to their deaths during the afternoon or early evening of 12 June 2006 , at a time " whilst they were in the sole custody , care and control of their father " , Chris Kahui . He said there was no evidence or fact to support that injuries being caused by the children 's mother , Macsyna King . Chris Kahui , who gave evidence to the coroner 's inquest , attempted to prevent the publication of the report .