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# Commentor's poem leads to subpoena

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BY [DAVID HENCH](#) PORTLAND PRESS HERALD



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 Comment

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The Portland Press Herald

Police are chasing every possible lead to find missing toddler Ayla Reynolds, including seeking out a retired educator from Kennebunk who posted a reader comment on [pressherald.com](http://pressherald.com) that implied the child had been safely relocated out of state.

The woman's four-line poem caught the eye of Waterville police, who got a subpoena from the Maine Attorney General's Office on Wednesday to require the newspaper to disclose the woman's contact information.

Audrey Pamela Jones, who posted the poem, said Friday she has no actual knowledge about Ayla's whereabouts but has been caught up, like so many others in Maine and across the country, in the story of her disappearance. She believes, with no evidence to back it up, that somebody concerned about the girl's well-being took her out of state.

“I don’t believe she’s missing. I believe that family placed her somewhere,” she said. She believes they put her “in a safety network somewhere.”

Ayla’s father, Justin DiPietro, reported his daughter missing from the Waterville house he shares with his mother on Dec. 17. Police have mounted a massive search for the girl involving local police, state authorities and the FBI. Police say they believe the girl was taken from the home.

Police have said both DiPietro and Ayla’s mother, Trista Reynolds, who lives in Portland, have cooperated with the investigation.

State authorities would not comment on why specifically they are interested in speaking with Jones.

“Without getting into our thought process, something like that you need to go to the source,” said Deputy Attorney General William Stokes, who authorized the subpoena. “Obviously, it’s a piece of information law enforcement wants to pursue. Every piece of information, every lead, is being pursued.”

The subpoena presented to the Portland Press Herald requires the media company’s representatives to appear before a grand jury convening in February with Jones’s contact information. Stokes said he cannot individually compel the newspaper to produce documents, but the grand jury can. It does not indicate any indictment is imminent, he said.

The subpoena reads that the newspaper can comply by providing the subscriber and identity information to State Police Det. Darryl Peary. The company did not wait for the grand jury but instead on Friday provided Jones’ email and the internet protocol address of the computer she used.

MaineToday Media, which owns pressherald.com, was initially asked for the information on Wednesday and responded that the state should get a subpoena and then the newspaper would supply the information.

“This wasn’t a newsroom subpoena for a confidential source, so it falls into a somewhat different category than a newsroom subpoena would for sources, particularly confidential sources, which are protected by statutory privilege,” said Sigmund Schutz, a First Amendment lawyer who represents the media company. He said pressherald.com’s user agreement does not guarantee anonymity.

The lack of any impact on the newspaper’s First Amendment protections and the seriousness of the crime meant the company would not fight the subpoena, he said. However, it required one be issued to guard against the state seeking online posters’ contact information without a good investigative reason to do so, he said.

Happy to explain

Jones, 53, said she was happy to explain to police why she wrote the poem. She admits that some of her

assertion that Ayla is safe in another state may be wishful thinking.

“I wish I knew,” she said. “I’m sure a lot of people would like to know she’s in a safe place.”

Members of Jones’ extended family have had custody conflicts and that’s why she believes there are networks to help people seeking to relocate an at-risk child.

Stokes said he knows of no underground network established to help children who are taken from their home. He would not elaborate on the investigation.

Jones has worked for school systems in Westbrook, Augusta and Kennebunkport as a librarian and computer technology instructor and most recently worked as a security officer and dispatcher at the University of New England. She left that job because she has a visual impairment that has left her legally blind, though she’s able to read with the aid of a magnifier.

Jones’ poem, posted in the pressherald.com’s comment section under the pseudonym “Nomainer,” followed a story appearing Monday. It read:

Away where no one can harm her again

Your life will be happy now

Loved by those that took you to safety

A new life far from the insanity in Maine

The first letter of each line in the poem spell Ayla, Jones’ pointed out, an idea she got after receiving a poem from a pen pal.

“I really wrote it for Ayla, because I think she’s in a good place,” she said. “The whole situation doesn’t read death. It reads like somebody saved her.”

Jones conceded that because she is out of work, she has a lot of time to dwell on Ayla.

“She just embodies the innocence of Maine children,” she said, breaking down in tears. “She’s such a small little innocent child. Her pictures just break your heart. You know there are so many children like her suffering in our state.”

Jones says her concern for Ayla is aggravated by her sense that the state is failing to help children in vulnerable situations.

“I don’t think we mediate enough between families of these children to save them,” she said. The

Department of Health and Human Services “is just demoralized at this point and overwhelmed,” and programs like Head Start are being cut, she said.

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