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Father explains Ayla Reynolds' broken arm



AP photo from Facebook

Ayla Reynolds

The Associated Press

Posted Jan. 07, 2012, at 11:36 a.m.

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WATERVILLE, Maine — A 20-month-old Maine girl who has been missing for three weeks broke her arm in November when her father, who was carrying groceries in one arm and her in the other, accidentally slipped and fell on top of her, he said.

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Justin DiPietro said he is coming forth with details of the accident to end speculation on how his daughter, Ayla Reynolds, broke her arm. Police continue to investigate her disappearance.

“There’s value in explaining it,” DiPietro told the Morning Sentinel of Waterville. “But to me, I know what the truth is, and it’s unbelievable for people to make the accusations that they’ve made.”

DiPietro reported his daughter missing from his mother’s home in Waterville, where he also lives, the morning of Dec. 17. Despite an intensive search and investigation, her whereabouts are unknown.

DiPietro was taking care of Ayla while her mother, Trista Reynolds of Portland, was in a substance abuse rehabilitation program, which she completed.

DiPietro could not be reached for comment Saturday. His message box on his cellphone was full.

At the time of her disappearance, police said Ayla was last seen the night before her father reported her missing. She was wearing green one-piece pajamas with polka dots and the words “Daddy’s Princess” on them, and she had a soft cast on her left arm.

Waterville Police Chief Joseph Massey has said the girl broke her arm in an accidental fall, but the 24-year-old DiPietro had not offered an explanation until now. He does not mention in the newspaper report why he hadn’t explained the fall earlier.

On a rainy night in November, he said, he walked into his home with a bag of groceries in one arm and Ayla in the other. He slipped while walking up a short set of stairs leading to the kitchen, he said.

“It happened so fast, I don’t know exactly how I fell on her, but I fell on her,” he told the newspaper. “It’s burned into my brain.”

DiPietro’s mother, Phoebe DiPietro, said she was sitting in the next room and came running after hearing a big thump.

She said her son’s wrist was injured in the fall, but that Ayla seemed to be OK. They took Ayla to a hospital the following day after her arm began swelling.

Maine Department of Public Safety spokesman Stephen McCausland said Saturday afternoon that there were no new developments in the investigation.

BDN reporter Alex Barber contributed to this story.

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