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Police: Blood found at Ayla Reynolds' father's home

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By Clarke Canfield, The Associated Press

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PORTLAND, Maine — Investigators have been analyzing blood found in the basement of a Maine home where a missing toddler was last seen six weeks ago, an official said Saturday.

The blood was found early in the investigation into Ayla Reynolds' disappearance from her father's home in Waterville, state police spokesman Stephen McCausland said. The state crime laboratory has been running tests on it since then, but it was unclear when results would be available.

Ayla's father, Justin DiPietro, reported her missing Dec. 17. He had put her to bed the night before and said she wasn't there the next morning.

McCausland called the discovery of the blood "troubling." He declined to discuss how much blood was found in the basement or how long it might have been there.

Ayla was 20 months old when she disappeared. She had been staying with her father at the time in the house where DiPietro lives with his mother. Her mother, Trista Reynolds, lives in Portland.

DiPietro told police she was wearing green pajamas with polka dots and the words "Daddy's Princess" on them and had a soft cast on her broken left arm.

DiPietro, his mother and a third adult were home the night of Dec. 16, and police have questioned all three, McCausland said.

"We believe they have not given us the full story," he said.

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Both of Ayla's parents participated in a vigil Saturday on the City Hall steps in downtown Waterville.

It was the first time the two came face to face since their daughter's disappearance, said Bob Vear, a friend of the DiPietro family who organized the vigil. They spoke privately for about 10 minutes before giving each other a hug, Vear said.

DiPietro declined to discuss the discovery of the blood.

"I'm not going to answer any questions about it, but I will say this: If there was something there, I don't think I'd be standing here with you right now," he told the Morning Sentinel newspaper in Waterville.

A woman who answered DiPietro's mother's cellphone hung up after being asked about the blood.

Reynolds could not be reached for comment.

In an interview earlier in the day with the Morning Sentinel, she said she was preparing herself for any outcome.

"As a mother, as a parent, you need to mentally prepare yourself for the good, the bad, the worst," she told the newspaper. "I have been preparing myself for all of it during the last 40 days. I have told myself anything can happen. I could get the greatest news or I could get the worst news ever."

The blood was among hundreds of pieces of potential evidence that were removed from their home as part of a criminal investigation into the girl's disappearance. The discovery of the blood was first reported Saturday by WCVB-TV in Boston.

Ronald Reynolds, who is Trista Reynolds' father, said DiPietro hasn't been forthcoming with his version of what happened or what he knows. DiPietro has said he took a polygraph test, but has declined to say what the results were.

"They haven't given the full story, but this family has gone through so much pain, so much hurt," said Reynolds, who lives in Portland. "We're going into two months now and don't know anything, and all we get is the runaround."

Vear said he was first made aware of the blood sample Dec. 24, but he doesn't think it'll amount to anything.

"I cut myself at home all the time," he said. "It could be Justin's, it could be the baby's. There were five or six people in the house that night."

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