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Investigators call out adults who were home with toddler Ayla Reynolds



Ayla Reynolds

Facebook

By Glenn Adams, The Associated Press

Posted Jan. 30, 2012, at 11:25 a.m.

Last modified Jan. 30, 2012, at 10:23 p.m.

WATERVILLE, Maine — Unable to find any evidence missing toddler Ayla Reynolds was

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DEAR LIZ



abducted, police on Monday pressed the three adults who were home with her on the night she disappeared to provide a full account of what happened.

State and local detectives believe Justin DiPietro, the girl's father, and two other adults know more than they've told investigators so far, said Stephen McCausland, spokesman for the Maine Department of Public Safety.

The idea that someone sneaked into the small house and took Ayla without awakening any of the adults "doesn't pass the straight-face test," McCausland said.

"We've followed every conceivable piece of evidence that would follow their version of events, and we have found not one piece of evidence that supports an abduction," he said.

Over the weekend, state police confirmed that blood was found in the basement where the father slept and that some of the blood was Ayla's. Relatives reported [on a family-run website](#) that they were told the blood was "more than a small cut would produce," but police on Monday declined to say how much blood was discovered.

McCausland told the Bangor Daily News on Sunday evening that more testing is pending on [blood samples and a slew of other material taken from DiPietro's home](#) in the days after Reynolds' disappearance.

Asked if investigators have found anyone else's blood, McCausland declined to respond, citing the ongoing investigation. He also declined to say how much blood was found or what objects or areas it was found in or on.

Ayla was 20 months old when she disappeared on the night of Dec. 16. She had been staying with her father at the time in the Waterville house where DiPietro lives with his mother. Ayla's mother, Trista Reynolds, lives in South Portland.

DiPietro reported Ayla missing the next day. He said he had put her to bed the night before and she wasn't there the next morning.

On the night Ayla last was seen, DiPietro was in the home with his girlfriend, 24-year-old Courtney Roberts of Portland, and they slept with Roberts' child in the basement, McCausland said. DiPietro's sister Alisha DiPietro, 23, was sleeping with her young child on the main level of the one-story home, and Ayla was in a bedroom by herself on the main level, McCausland said Monday. DiPietro's mother was not home that night.

McCausland said detectives weren't singling out any of the three adults, but "we think they know more than they're telling us," he said.

Justin DiPietro declined to comment Monday, brushing past an Associated Press reporter outside his house without addressing questions before going inside and emphatically closing the door. The AP couldn't find phone numbers for his girlfriend or his sister.

DiPietro has not responded to numerous requests for comment from the Bangor Daily News, including one on Sunday evening. DiPietro has maintained that he is innocent throughout the investigation.

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Ayla was placed in her father's care while her mother, Trista Reynolds, was in a substance abuse rehabilitation program in Lewiston.

When she disappeared, the blond, blue-eyed toddler was wearing green pajamas with the words "Daddy's Princess" on the front. One of her arms was in a soft cast after being broken in what police said was an accident.

In Portland, Ayla's maternal grandfather, Ronald Reynolds, said he took the day off from work on Monday because he couldn't concentrate after incessant news reports. He said that he tries to stay positive but that negative thoughts sometimes creep in. Every night, he said, he gazes at Ayla's photo before going to bed.

"I look at her and wonder why, why, why would anyone want to hurt that little girl?" he said before angrily addressing Ayla's father in Waterville. "He was supposed to protect her. He didn't even do that."

In Waterville, residents seemed perplexed by the developments, which came after massive searches by game wardens, police, the FBI and divers. Searchers went so far as to drain some local streams as part of their search.

"It sounds like something is fishy to me. Somebody's hiding something," Mike King said Monday outside City Hall.

The family of Trista Reynolds of South Portland, who is Ayla's mother, said in a statement Sunday that the news about the blood found in DiPietro's home had been leaked to the media on Saturday just hours before [a Balloons and Bubbles Vigil](#) was held for Ayla Reynolds in Waterville.

The family-run website issued an appeal for anyone with information about Ayla to come forward.

"Even in light of this evidence we are more determined than ever to find out what has happened to Ayla and we still cling to the hope that she is alive and will be returned to us," the website said. "We urge anyone that has information about Ayla to come forward now and unburden yourself of the truth."

Ronald Reynolds added a personal appeal, saying the family has been through too much and needs to know what happened.

"Right now I feel so helpless," the former Marine said. "Enough is enough. I'm tired of it. Someone ought to have enough guts to stand up to the plate and say where she is so we can have closure. If for some reason my little girl is not with us, then we need to bring her home."

Anyone with information about the case is asked to call investigators at 624-7076. A [\\$30,000 reward](#) has been offered for information that leads to Ayla's discovery.

BDN writer Christopher Cousins and Associated Press writer David Sharp in Portland, Maine, contributed to this report.



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