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Windows broken at Waterville home where Ayla Reynolds was reported missing

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Alex Barber | BDN

The Violette Avenue home in Waterville where Ayla Reynolds went missing seven weeks ago was vandalized on the night of Feb. 3, 2012. Waterville police are searching for suspects who broke two windows on the home.



By Alex Barber, BDN Staff
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WATERVILLE, Maine — Two windows were

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broken at the home where a toddler was reported missing seven weeks ago, officials said Saturday.

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The missing girl's grandmother, Phoebe DiPietro, called police at about 11:15 p.m. Friday to report that someone was throwing things through the windows at her Waterville home, police said in a statement.

When officers arrived, they found that two windows had been broken. Police believe the windows were smashed by a bat or something else that was carried away since they didn't find any rocks or other objects at the home.

"The force not only broke the window, it broke the screen. It broke a blind behind the window and it sent glass flying throughout the kitchen area onto the floor, onto the counter and onto a highchair that belonged to the grandchild," said Waterville Police Chief Joseph Massey during a press conference outside Waterville City Hall on Saturday afternoon.

Twenty-month-old Ayla Reynolds was reported missing from the home Dec. 17 by her father, Justin DiPietro, who lives there with his mother. DiPietro told police he last saw Ayla when he put her to bed the night before. Police are calling her disappearance a crime and have said that DiPietro and two other adults in the home that night haven't been totally forthcoming.

After the girl's grandmother called police Friday night, a search of the surrounding area didn't turn up anything, police said. A police dog followed a track that ended at a nearby street.

Phoebe DiPietro told police she thought she heard a car drive off after the incident.

Justin's sister, Elisha DiPietro, along with her daughter, 19-month-old Gabrielle, were also in the home Friday night.

Nobody was hurt, but Police Chief Joseph Massey said somebody could have been injured by flying glass.

"It's pretty disturbing," he said. "I'm simply not going to tolerate having someone go up and harass people, damage their property."

"I say disturbing because whoever went there probably knew that there were people inside the house, including a small child," Massey said. "Breaking the windows with that much force and sending glass flying all over the place, waking up people at that hour of the night, waking a small child, exposing them to the cold and possible injury. I think that's kind of cowardly."

Massey said he believes this is the first time the home has been vandalized and said he isn't aware of any threats towards the DiPietros.

He also said he wouldn't speculate about whether Friday night's incident has any relation to Ayla's disappearance.

"It's totally separate. We got a report of criminal mischief," said Massey. "Everybody can draw their own conclusions, their own opinions about whether it's related to the other case, but again, we are going to focus on criminal mischief until we can find out who's responsible and until we can get motive of why they did it, then maybe we can comment as to why."

Massey urged the public to let the police do their job and not get involved themselves.

"This is not helping," he said. "Whatever the motive may have been, it's diverting



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resources from what we're trying to accomplish. Again, people trying to take issues into their own hands is never a way to go. You're committing another crime, for whatever reason, you're angry, you don't like someone, that just doesn't solve anything. It doesn't help."

Waterville police will step up patrols in the area, which is routine practice in similar criminal mischief cases, Massey said.

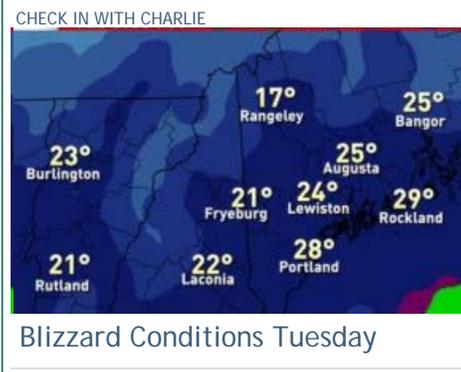
"It's pretty low, pretty cowardly and we'll do everything we can to try to find out who's responsible and keep it from happening again," he said.

State police and warden service divers [searched stretches of the Kennebec River and a nearby stream on Friday](#) as part of the ongoing investigation, but didn't turn up anything new.

At the time of her disappearance, Ayla was living with her father in Waterville. Her mother, Trista Reynolds, lives in Portland, about 75 miles south.

After the vandalism, Reynolds and her family released a statement saying Trista feels "that it is none of her business ... but thinks it to be ignorant and rude."

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