

Ayla Reynolds' Aunt Elisha DiPietro Bashes Police Competency

By Carol Bengle Gilbert

PostsWebsiteBy Carol Bengle Gilbert | Yahoo! Contributor Network – Mon, May 7, 2012 This story comes from the Yahoo! Contributor Network, where individuals publish their unique perspectives on some of the world's most popular websites. Do you have a story to tell? Become a Yahoo! contributorEmailShare0Print

COMMENTARY | Ayla Reynolds' paternal aunt Elisha DiPietro spoke out Saturday about the investigation into the toddler's December disappearance. DiPietro told the Morning Sentinel she doubted the adequacy of the police forensic inquiry. Her offense against police follows the lead of her mother, Phoebe DiPietro, and brother Justin DiPietro, who charged in March that police didn't follow up on tips, share investigative results or get facts straight before making public statements.

Elisha DiPietro questioned fingerprint testing. "There were things they didn't fingerprint in (Ayla's) room that we felt they should have," she said. She identified a table below the window and other furniture as items her family thinks should have been fingerprinted.

Elisha DiPietro revealed the bedroom window was unlocked, saying, "We did not know it was unlocked ... which is something we thought was weird because (the window) was always locked."

Department of Public Safety spokesman Steve McCausland suggested in a January WCVB interview the window could not have been a point of entry for a kidnapper. The window did not open from the outside and tampering was not evident, he said.

Since Ayla did not normally sleep in that bedroom, according to ABC News, its window would be an unlikely choice for any theoretical acquaintance bent on kidnapping.

The blogosphere is rife with speculation whether the next seated grand jury will hear the case. Elisha DiPietro speaking out feeds suspicions the investigation might be close to fruition. Maine State Police recovered baby items from a spillway a mile from the DiPietro residence. Those items are being tested.

The timing of the interview and its content indicate an offensive posture, one apparently aimed at discrediting the police work. Elisha DiPietro did not plead for Ayla's release from a hypothetical kidnapper nor did she demand action by police. Instead, she pointed out purported flaws in the investigation. Besides criticizing the fingerprinting, Elisha DiPietro claimed police failed to find DNA of friends visiting before Ayla was reported missing.

Police have not publicly disclosed whether they identified nonfamily DNA in the DiPietro home.

Elisha DiPietro appears to play a key role in the case because she claims to have discovered Ayla was missing, according to family friend Angela Harry. Harry's statement was published and later removed from This Little Light of Maine blog but was preserved on Peter Hyatt's Statement Analysis blog.

Elisha DiPietro was also the only adult on the main floor of the house, sleeping in a room across from where Ayla allegedly slept alone. If anyone entered Ayla's room, she was best positioned to hear something.

Although Harry originally claimed DiPietro rushed downstairs to tell her brother Ayla was gone, she later changed her account to say there was no rushing and it was Justin's girlfriend Courtney Roberts who told him, the Kennebec Journal reports.

With police saying no abduction occurred, Elisha DiPietro's challenge to police competency is a presumptive clue to defense tactics she or another of the adults might take if they face charges