



# Portland



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VIDEO

## Fearful that investigation will go cold, mother of missing toddler Ayla Reynolds set to make evidence public

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WESTBROOK, Maine — It is said that grief fades with time, but 21 months after her daughter disappeared, Trista Reynolds isn't so sure.

Since January, when state police showed Reynolds photos of a [bloody crime scene](#), the most vivid images Reynolds has of [her daughter, Ayla Reynolds](#), are spattered blood.

"It literally looked like a murder scene to me," Reynolds said Tuesday. "I think just seeing her blood makes me wonder how much she suffered."

In Reynolds' nightmares — when they're not about the blood-spattered basement in Waterville where Ayla allegedly spent her final hours — decades will go by without the case being solved.

For the past nine months, Reynolds has avoided the media, but the prospect of the case going cold has prompted her to again step into the spotlight. Next week, she plans to share evidence shown to her by investigators in hopes of [putting pressure on](#) one of the three adults who police say were with Ayla when she disappeared on Dec. 17, 2011: Ayla's father, Justin DiPietro, his sister, Elisha DiPietro, and his girlfriend, Courtney Roberts. But Reynolds says she knows the truth.

"Justin, Elisha and Courtney are still walking the streets like nothing has happened," said Reynolds. "After seeing [the evidence], it has started to settle in my mind that Ayla more than likely really is deceased and not coming back. I'm

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not just able to close my eyes and not see her blood.”

Reynolds said her relationship with investigators has deteriorated in recent months and that she last spoke with them two weeks ago. After months of weekly contact, they rarely call. She doesn't know whether her planned release of new information will compromise the case, but at this point, she said, she doesn't care.

“I'm hoping by releasing it, it will get the ball rolling on someone being prosecuted,” said Reynolds.

“We've done our best to keep her in the loop and will continue to do so,” Maine Department of Public Safety spokesman Stephen McCausland said Tuesday. The investigation into Ayla's disappearance is ongoing, he said, adding that investigators have “no reaction” to Reynolds releasing evidence to the media.

Reynolds said the evidence, most notably the photographs of blood, make her speculate about her daughter's last moments, even though she tries to avoid it.

DiPietro, who has never granted an interview to the Bangor Daily News, maintains his innocence. He told police after Ayla disappeared that she was abducted. [Police have disputed that claim](#) and said consistently that DiPietro, his sister and girlfriend know more about Ayla's disappearance than they are sharing. In January 2012, investigators confirmed that [they had found Ayla's blood in DiPietro's Waterville home](#) and said that no one has been ruled out as a suspect in the toddler's disappearance.

When police said in May 2012 that they thought it was “[highly unlikely](#)” that [Ayla is alive](#), Reynolds said she thought about arranging a funeral, but didn't.

“I can't go and put something on for Ayla knowing I don't have her body,” she said. “I want to be able to bury her the right way so at least when I go and visit her, I'm not just visiting something empty.”

With school starting this month, each day Reynolds is reminded of all the things she will never be able to do with her daughter.

“I've heard stories from moms who say that taking their daughter to school the first day and all they did was bawl their eyes out,” she said. “They were happy because they got to dress her up, do [her] hair and make her all pretty. I don't get to do any of that.”

However, there is some new joy in Reynolds' life. Last month she gave birth to a baby boy, Anthony. Her days are filled with caring for the infant and her older son, 2-year-old Raymond. The question that haunts her is what she'll tell them about Ayla, someday when they can understand. Raymond is already asking questions.

“He's starting to know that he does have a sister but she's just not at home,” she said. “What do you say to a 2½-year-old when they ask where their big sister is? That breaks my heart a lot. I can't explain to him that sissy is out there but she's just not at home with us. ... I just don't want him to think I'm just not going to let him know or not talk about her.”

Reynolds dreads the day she encounters Roberts or someone from the DiPietro family.

“When I think about it, I think I would just walk away from them because it hurts when I ask the same questions that I've been asking for almost two years and never get a new answer,” she said. “I don't want this anymore. I want Ayla to be able to be home, right here with me.”



'017 from Toronto, Ontario

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