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Missing toddler's mother releases new information about Ayla Reynolds

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By Christopher Cousins, BDN Staff
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Posted Sept. 23, 2013, at 10:51 a.m.
Last modified Sept. 23, 2013, at 6:58 p.m.

PORTLAND, Maine — Trista Reynolds said photographs shown to her by Maine State Police investigators in the case of her missing daughter, Ayla Reynolds, showed so much blood that she was unable to look at them all.

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Reynolds and her family hope to disclose the contents of those photos to generate public sentiment for police to charge Ayla's father, Justin DiPietro, in connection with the child's disappearance. No one has been charged in the case.

In a widespread media release Monday afternoon and on websites called [United4Ayla.com](#) and [justiceforayla.blogspot.com](#), Reynolds and supporters who maintain the sites [said investigator s told them that Ayla's blood was found in multiple locations](#) in and around the Waterville home where she was reported missing on Dec. 17, 2011, by DiPietro.

DiPietro told police she had disappeared overnight from his Waterville home at 29 Violette Ave.

The information released Monday was the result of Reynolds' recollections of a meeting she had with investigators from the Maine State Police in January of this year, during which Reynolds, her boyfriend and her boyfriend's mother were shown a slide presentation of evidence.

Reynolds was not given copies of any official evidence or photographs, and neither was the Bangor Daily News, which requested the information.

Stephen McCausland, a spokesman for the Maine Department of Public Safety, confirmed Monday that the meeting between Reynolds and detectives took place but would not comment on what Reynolds was shown nor the version of evidence she released Monday.

"We have no reaction to her releasing this," said McCausland, who added that investigators have seen the document generated by Reynolds and her family. "We're not going to confirm or refute anything that has been published on a website."

McCausland said it's not unusual for investigators to show family members evidence and that DiPietro has seen the same information as Reynolds.

"We do our best to keep family members in the loop as an investigation unfolds, and that's normal," said McCausland.

Reynolds [told the Bangor Daily News last week](#) that she decided to release the information in an effort to pressure investigators to file charges in the nearly 2-year-old case and to keep her daughter's name in the news. She said images of blood spatters that she was shown have to some degree replaced Ayla's image in her memory.

"After seeing [the evidence], it has started to settle in my mind that Ayla more than likely really is deceased and not coming back," said Reynolds. "I'm not just able to close my eyes and not see her blood."

DiPietro, who has never talked to the Bangor Daily News about the case of his missing daughter, has maintained his innocence. However, investigators have put pressure on him and two other adults who were allegedly present when Ayla disappeared — his sister, Elisha DiPietro, and his girlfriend, Courtney Roberts

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— during the investigation.

In the months following Ayla's disappearance, investigators told the media that they didn't believe DiPietro and two other adults who were in the home that night [were being truthful](#) about what happened and that they [found Ayla's blood](#) in DiPietro's home. They also said they had ruled out DiPietro's claim that Ayla was kidnapped and in May 2012, they said they thought [it was "highly unlikely" that Ayla will be found alive](#).

In a statement to reporters [that was posted on the Morning Sentinel's website](#), Phoebe DiPietro of Waterville, who is Justin DiPietro's mother, dismissed Reynolds' statements and questioned why law enforcement officials are not taking more aggressive action if they suspect the DiPietros of wrongdoing.

"Trista can say and do what she wants," wrote DiPietro, who said she has not given up hope that Ayla will be found alive. "To the best of my knowledge, [law enforcement] has not confirmed her allegations nor stated that she has been cleared as a suspect herself. I believe that the focus should remain on finding Ayla."

In the information released Monday, Trista Reynolds alleges that the photos show her daughter's blood was found on her car seat, her clothing, throughout DiPietro's bedroom and on his sneakers.

"After the photos of blood visible to the naked eye were displayed, [Maine State Police] began to show the luminol-enhanced photos, depicting additional blood of Ayla's upstairs and downstairs in the DiPietro's house," reads the document posted online Monday. "Trista was unable to view any more of the horrific display after only two luminol-enhanced photos, and the slide show was stopped."

Investigators allegedly told Reynolds that the spray pattern found in some of the blood stains could not have been produced by a cut and that the presence of saliva in some of it indicated that the toddler was coughing up blood from internal injuries, according to the document.

Supporters of Reynolds presented the Maine Attorney General's Office with a petition Monday containing 2,857 signatures from throughout Maine and the United States.

"We, the undersigned, request that you, the Attorney General for the State of Maine, charge Justin DiPietro and co-conspirators with homicide and hindering a homicide investigation," reads the title page of the petition.

Deputy Attorney General Bill Stokes, chief of his office's criminal division, would not comment on the details of the case.

"We are in the business of solving cases. There's nothing more frustrating to us than not being able to solve a case and bring some closure for anyone involved," he said in a written statement. "However, we cannot let emotion — our own or anyone else's — to enter into an investigation. We appreciate the efforts of a victim's family to raise awareness and encourage anyone with evidence of a crime to come forward. We will not comment publicly on evidence or investigative intelligence of any open cases."

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