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Family of Ayla Reynolds: 'We cannot truly know the peace of Christmas while our Ayla is out there'



Robert F. Bukaty | BDN

Trista Reynolds, mother of missing toddler Ayla Reynolds, speaks to reporters before the start of a walk in Portland in July of 2012.

By Christopher Cousins, BDN Staff
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Posted Dec. 17, 2013, at 11:58 a.m.

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Last modified Dec. 17, 2013, at 5:15 p.m.

PORTLAND, Maine — Two years to the day after the disappearance of Ayla Reynolds, the missing toddler's family continues to pressure law enforcement and Ayla's paternal family for a resolution in the case.

The girl was 20 months old when her father, Justin DiPietro, reported her missing from his Waterville home on Dec. 17, 2011. Since then she has been the subject of the largest missing person investigation in Maine history, but to no avail.

Maine State Police say the probe into the girl's disappearance and whereabouts is active and ongoing.

"We are aware of the calendar, but it does not affect the investigation," said Maine Department of Public Safety spokesman Stephen McCausland. "This case is open, active and determined. There have been 20 searches, coordinated by the warden service, and although none are planned at the moment, there will be more."

Investigators said more than a year ago that they believe Ayla is no longer alive and that she perished as a result of foul play.

DiPietro and the rest of Ayla's paternal family have been mostly silent to the media about the case and have never granted a request for comment from the Bangor Daily News. The girl's maternal family has been much more vocal, though other than a written statement released last week by Jeff Hanson, the girl's maternal step-grandfather, they have decided to stay silent around the second anniversary of Ayla's disappearance.

"We want our authorities to bring our Ayla home and hold those who stripped her of all the joys life brings accountable for their heinous acts," Hanson wrote. "We cannot truly know the peace of Christmas while our Ayla is out there somewhere, alone, and her killer and accomplices are smirking in their confidence that the law won't catch up with them."

The following is a timeline of events in the case.

October 2011: Trista Reynolds [checks herself into a substance abuse treatment program](#) and 1-year-old Ayla Reynolds goes to stay with her father, Justin DiPietro, at his home at 29 Violette Ave. in Waterville.

November 2011: [Ayla Reynolds' arm is broken](#) while in the care of her father, Justin DiPietro, who says he slipped and fell on top of her while carrying groceries.

Dec. 15, 2011: Trista Reynolds [files for full custody of her daughter](#), Ayla Reynolds, in Cumberland County District Court.

Dec. 17, 2011: Justin DiPietro, Ayla Reynolds' father, [reports her missing](#), kicking off an intense search and investigation that officials eventually say is the largest in Maine history.

Dec. 18, 2011: State and federal investigators and officials from the Maine Warden Service [search Messalonskee Stream in Waterville](#), but [find](#) nothing related to the case. It was the first of several times that investigators have searched waterways and wooded areas for Ayla.

Dec. 26, 2011: Waterville Police Chief Joseph Massey tells reporters that investigators had [ruled out the possibility that Ayla Reynolds had been abducted](#). On the same day, a group of Waterville businessmen [offer a \\$30,000 reward](#) for information that leads to the finding Ayla.



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Dec. 27, 2011: [More than 100 tips about Ayla's location materialize](#) within 24 hours of a group of Waterville businessmen offering a \$30,000 reward in the case.

Dec. 30, 2011: Police say for the first time that [they considered the search for Ayla a criminal investigation](#) and that her disappearance was the result of foul play.

Jan. 2, 2012: [Justin DiPietro makes his first television appearance](#) on NBC's "Today," alleging that his daughter had been abducted. It was one of very few media interviews granted by DiPietro, who has said he doesn't want to interfere with the investigation or add to national media hype.

Jan. 28, 2012: At a "Balloons and Bubbles Vigil" for Ayla in Waterville, [Trista Reynolds and Justin DiPietro meet face-to-face](#) for the first time since Ayla's disappearance. The vigil was held on the same day police announced that [Ayla's blood had been found in DiPietro's home](#).

Jan. 30, 2012: State police detectives tell reporters that they believe Justin DiPietro and two other adults in the home the night of Ayla's disappearance were [not being truthful with police](#).

Feb. 4, 2012: The DiPietro family reports to police that [two windows were broken at their 29 Violette Ave. home](#). No one was ever charged in connection with the crime.

Feb. 7, 2012: [Lance DiPietro, Ayla's uncle, is charged with assaulting Justin Linnell](#), the father of Ayla's cousin, in Waterville. Police say Lance DiPietro, who was walking with his brother Justin DiPietro at the time, told Linnell to stop "saying stuff about my family."

May 31, 2012: Waterville and state police announce for the first time publicly that they [don't expect to find Ayla Reynolds alive](#).

June 30, 2012: The offer of [a \\$30,000 reward expires](#) and the money goes unclaimed.

January 2013: Investigators meet with Trista Reynolds to show her evidence in the case, which [she eventually tells reporters consists of large amounts of blood](#) in and around the DiPietro home. Reynolds claims the same information had been shown to Justin DiPietro in November 2012.

Sept. 17, 2013: Trista Reynolds [releases details of the evidence she'd been shown](#) in January 2013.

Sept. 25, 2013: Trista Reynolds [confronts DiPietro and his mother, Phoebe DiPietro, outside a Portland courthouse](#) where DiPietro was appearing for unrelated charges. Phoebe DiPietro and Reynolds accuse each other of knowing what happened to Ayla.

Oct. 23, 2013: [Police announce a search for Ayla](#) in a wooded area off Hussey Hill Road in Oakland. Nothing was found.

Anyone with information about Ayla Reynolds' whereabouts is asked to call investigators at 624-7076.

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