

CRIME WATCH

MENU [CRIME MAP](#)

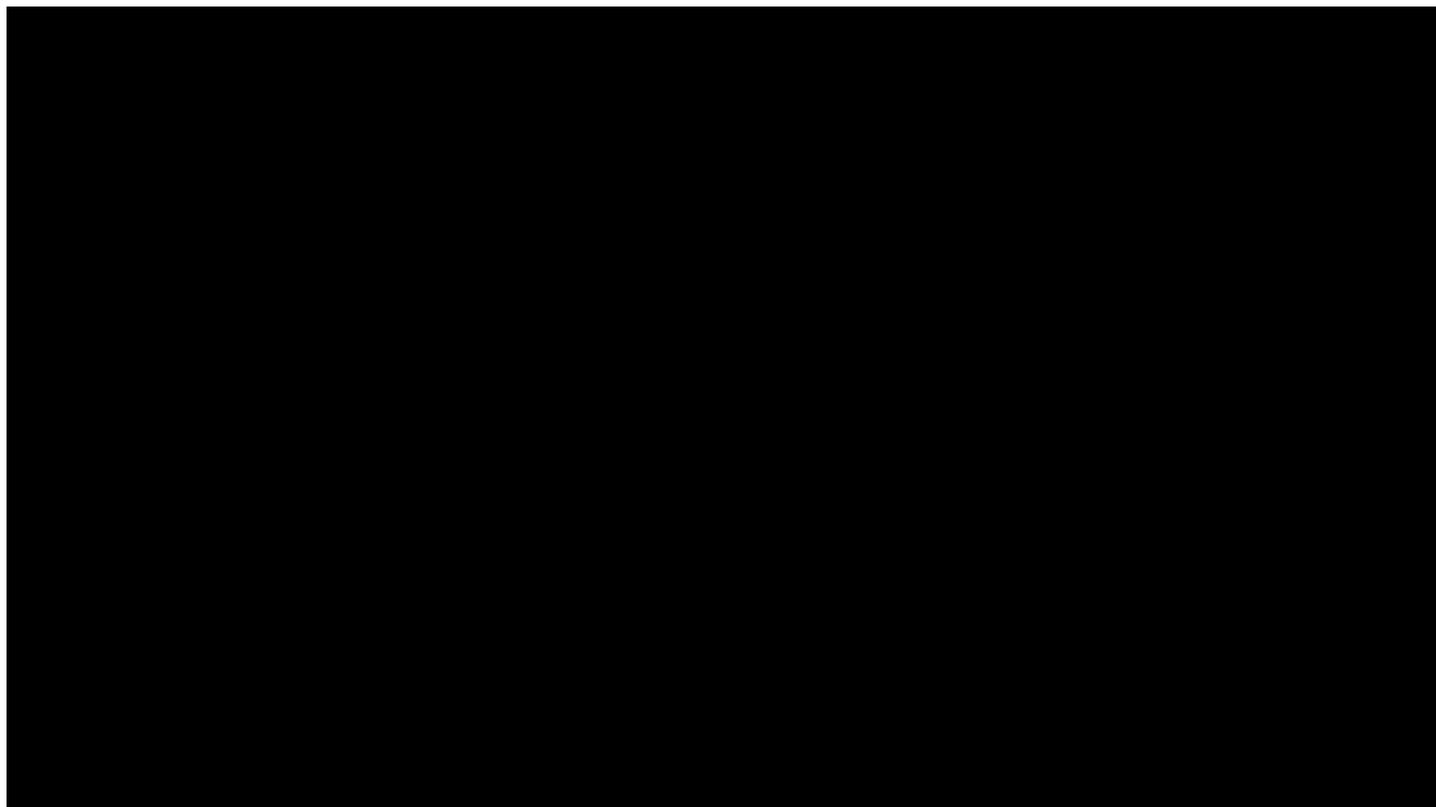
12/15/2017 12:27 pm PST Melissa McCarty

Exclusive: Dad Justin DiPietro talks Ayla Reynolds case with Crime Watch Daily

The father of Ayla Reynolds, [a baby who went missing at 20 months old](#), is finally breaking his silence about what he says happened the day she vanished -- and what he thinks really happened to her.

What happened to the little girl with the big blue eyes? For years Ayla Reynolds' mom has been searching for answers. Now in a Crime Watch Daily exclusive, the girl's father breaks his silence.

Explosive allegations as Justin DiPietro talks publicly for the first time about the night his daughter disappeared.



Nine days before Christmas, 2011, 20-month-old Ayla Reynolds vanished during the night from her father's home in Waterville, Maine. Ayla's mother tells Crime Watch Daily it's a day that haunts her.

According to state police, Justin DiPietro put his daughter to bed around 8 o'clock. When he went to check on her the next morning, she was gone.

Police searched all of Waterville, but Ayla was never found. Then the focus of the investigation shifts when cops find Ayla's blood inside her father's home.

"It was found on her slippers, a baby doll, in her car seat," said Trista.

Justin, his sister Elisha and then-girlfriend Courtney were all in the house that fateful night. All three say the toddler must have been abducted.

Two years ago we asked Ayla's aunt Elisha about the blood evidence.

"She had been vomiting quite a lot. She had lactose issues. So she had been sick," said Elisha DiPietro.

"Nothing happened. No foul play in the house that night."

But police aren't buying it. They tell Trista what they believe happened to her only daughter that night.

"They actually think that it ended with them rolling her up in a blanket and sticking her in a tote," said Trista.

"I just think things got really out of hand and he didn't know how to handle it the way that he should," said Trista.

Little Ayla was a surprise pregnancy for Trista and her then-boyfriend Justin. The two split before she was born. Trista kept Ayla the majority of the time, and she claims Ayla often had mysterious injuries after visits with her dad.

"She had bruises like going up her leg, and I said 'What's this, Justin?' And he was like 'Oh, she was playing at Chuck E. Cheese in a ball pit and some little kid was kicking her,'" said Trista. "Problem was there was no ball pit at Chuck E. Cheese."

Just days before she went missing, Ayla's arm was broken in what Justin calls an accident. At the time Justin had been caring for Ayla while Trista dealt with personal issues. When she called to check on her daughter:

"He said 'Well, she's watching *Home Alone* right now,' and I said, 'Really, you're not going to let me talk to her?' And he never did, and then that was it," said Trista.

CWD: [Missing: What happened to Baby Ayla Reynolds?](#)

For months after their child's disappearance, Trista says she tried getting Justin to talk. Then one day she was tipped off about a court date he has for an alleged domestic battery incident. The heartbroken mother's frustration erupted outside a Maine courthouse.

"I just wanted my answers. That's all I've ever wanted," said Trista.

After six long years Trista believes she may finally be close to getting some answers. Even though Ayla's body has never been found, a judge in Cumberland County, Maine has declared her legally dead.

"When I heard the judge's final decision, I kind of lost it," said Trista Reynolds. "I was expecting him to say yes to what we were trying, but a part of me also thought that maybe he wasn't going to declare Ayla dead. It kinda like really hit hard and it made it all real for me."

As difficult as it was to hear, the legal declaration is something Trista asked for.

"We decided to pursue it so we could go after Justin and his family, civilly," said Trista.

She's now planning to file a wrongful death lawsuit against Ayla's father, which would force him under oath to answer questions about the night their daughter vanished.

But Justin DiPietro s ready to talk now.

From the moment little Ayla Reynolds went missing, her story touched a nerve all over the country. Suspicions swirled about what happened. The finger-pointing between her mother and father eventually turned nasty inside and outside of court.

And now in an exclusive new interview, Ayla's father is talking for the first time about the case to Crime Watch Daily.

Six years after little Ayla Reynolds vanished from her father's home in Waterville, Maine, her mother will not give up the search.

Cops have never named a suspect in the case, but have always suspected foul play.

"We have said from the very beginning that the three adults inside that home know more than they've told us," said Maine State Police Public Information Officer Steve McCausland.

One of those three adults in that tiny little house is Ayla's father Justin DiPietro. He recently moved from Maine to Los Angeles, where we tracked him down.

In a Crime Watch Daily exclusive, Justin finally breaks his silence about the night his daughter disappeared.

Although her body has never been found, a judge recently declared Ayla legally dead.

Justin has always maintained that someone broke into his house during the night and kidnapped his 20-month-old daughter.

Do you think that it was from someone that you know, or a stranger?

"Yeah. Someone that, yeah, I know," Justin DiPietro tells Crime Watch Daily.

Justin seemed genuinely interested in telling his story, agreeing to meet later that night after he got off work.

He wanted to meet near his house. He came out, but then left, saying he was uncomfortable. The next day we attempted again but as we set up for the interview at a nearby hotel, Justin backed out a second time. He then agreed to talk only by phone.

When I met you that morning, you said that maybe someone you know had something to do with it. Who do you think would've taken her?

"It's always been the same person that I thought it was from the beginning," said Justin.

Who do you think it is -- is it her mom, a relative?

"Yeah, I think it's someone close to her," he said.

Were there signs in your house indicating that someone was in there?

"Yeah, it's two things that were suspicious, of course," said Justin.

What were those two things? In her room?

"I can't get into exact details with you guys, but," he said.

It was enough for you to think that this was planned and someone broke in and took her that night?

"Absolutely."

Did you tell police, and what was their reaction? Are they looking into that?

"I haven't gotten a lot of answers on a lot of things," said Justin.

From the beginning, Maine State Police have been very clear that they did not find any evidence of a break-in.

They believe if an intruder had gotten into the house, it's so small that someone inside would have heard or seen something.

"We don't think she was abducted, we don't think she wandered off, and we think foul play is involved," said Maine State Police's Steve McCausland.

What do you say when the other side points the finger at you?

"I don't think it ever feels good for anybody to be accused of something they didn't do," said Justin DiPietro.

"I've never done anything wrong to anybody, to do any of this, and I know for sure my daughter hasn't either."

But then Justin drops another accusation, saying Trista herself was in Waterville the day Ayla went missing. He finds that suspicious, saying she'd only visited once during the two months he'd had custody of their daughter.

"I thought it was kind of weird that Trista passed through Waterville, which is my town, that same morning. But nothing was ever like mentioned about that," Justin tells Crime Watch Daily.

In an earlier interview with our Michelle Sigona, Trista Reynolds did mention being in the area.

"We were driving to Machiasport and we were passing the Waterville exit, and I was thinking in my head 'Maybe on my way back I can stop and see her,'" said Trista.

But she says they didn't even exit the highway. About two hours later she got the call that Ayla was missing.

Do you think she's with her mom?

"I'm not sure," Justin DiPietro tells Crime Watch Daily.

The last time Justin and Trista saw one another, all hell broke loose.

"They had to shut the courthouse down," said Justin. "They had death threats against me that day, apparently."

"She showed up for the court date with a whole army of like 100 people, and then they surrounded me, so of course I'm going to remove myself from the situation," said Justin.

The two will likely face off in court again soon. Neither parent has ever been named a suspect or person of interest in their daughter's disappearance.

Trista Reynolds is planning to file a civil lawsuit against Justin DiPietro now that Ayla has been declared legally dead.

"It's not something that I pushed for. That was something that Trista wanted," said Justin.

Justin says he isn't planning his daughter's funeral.

"Yeah, I still believe she's alive, yeah," said Justin DiPietro.

He's planning to find her.

After six years, Trista Reynolds says she's more determined than ever to uncover the truth.

"I'm not going to stop knocking at Justin's door," said Trista. "We're not going to just step back in the background. We're going to keep going however we have to to make sure that we get what we need for Ayla. She needs to have justice. Ayla needs to be put to rest the proper way."

[PRINT PAGE](#)

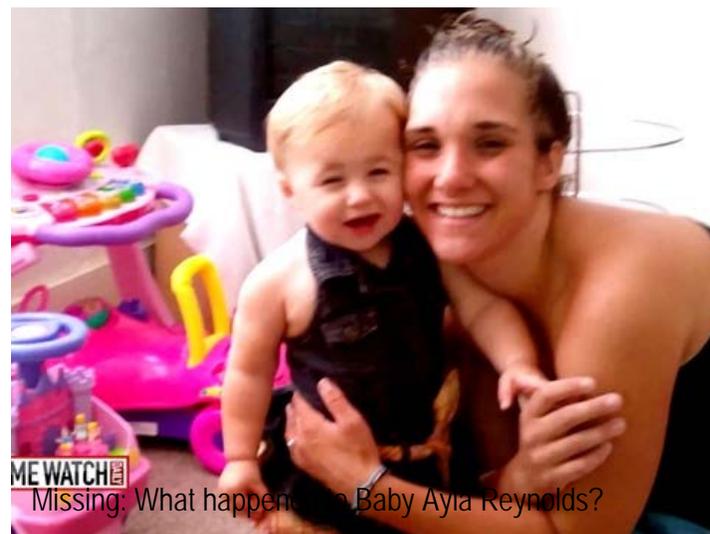
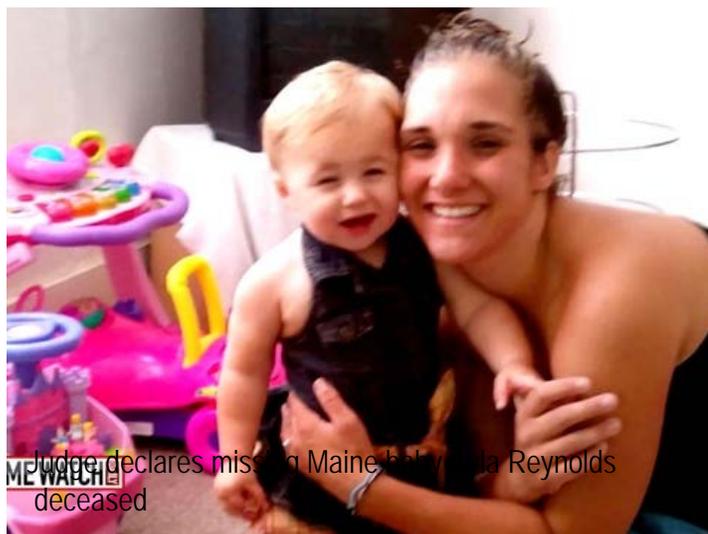
[#Maine](#)

[#Missing](#)

[#MissingPersons](#)

[#Exclusive](#)

RELATED STORIES



COMMENTS

THE LATEST