

MISSING BOY SOLD FOR DRUG DEBT? POLICE SEEK 15-YEAR-OLD LOST FOR 6-8 MONTHS

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Detroit police are searching for a 15-year-old boy they believe his mother gave to a **drug dealer** to pay her crack- cocaine debt.

Tazar Carter has been missing for six to eight months, Sgt. Shelley Foy of the child abuse unit said Monday. She said witnesses say the **dealer's** customers are abusing Carter.

Foy said Carter, who is known on the street as "Cash," has been coerced into delivering and selling **drugs**. Witnesses told police Carter was given crack to smoke in place of food, has become addicted and may be starving.

"He's real thin, just bones," Foy said. "A woman who saw him and called us said this child does not look good and that a few times he had knocked on her door asking for a slice of bread.

"Obviously the situation this child appears to be in is of great concern," Foy added. "We need to find him as soon as possible."

Police believe the child is somewhere in southwest **Detroit**. Foy said police went to an abandoned house in the 4900 block of 28th Street where the teenager was last believed to be living with the **dealer**. Neighbors knew Cash but said he and the **dealer** had apparently moved.

Foy said the boy's mother reported her son missing on Sept. 3. "Apparently she didn't think the guy would keep her son so long," Foy said.

"At first she told us her son left willingly with the dope man," Foy said. "But that story didn't check out. Our information is this woman owed the **dealer** between \$600 and \$2,000. To help satisfy that debt, she literally sold her boy."

Police expect to charge the 33-year-old mother, Foy said, but can't until her son is located and interviewed. Foy declined to release the woman's identity until she is charged.

Foy said she investigated a case involving the same woman in 1992. Her four kids were placed with a grandmother after the **Detroit** woman deserted her children in an abandoned building.

Foy said the boy had been living with his grandmother on **Detroit's** east side, but the boy's mother continued to have contact with him. The grandmother said she has received one phone call in the time he's been missing.

"He told his grandmother he can't come because his mother still owes the guy who took him," Foy said. "He's also afraid and said it was too dangerous to try to leave."

Carter has also not been to school in the period he's been missing but had attended before.

"If it's true, and this child has been sold for a **drug** debt, I'm appalled . . . " Foy said. "You wonder how such a thing can happen to a child. My concern is to find him and get this baby some help as soon as possible."

Tazar Carter is about 5 feet, 10 inches, and weighed 135 pounds six months ago, though he may be much thinner now. He has a gap in his front teeth and is dark-skinned. Anyone with information is asked to call the child abuse unit at 1-313-596-2771, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday through Friday; or the sex crimes unit at 1-313-596-1950 anytime.

Caption: Photo

Tazar Carter, now 15, in a picture taken when he was about 11 or 12.

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