

## WITNESSES DIFFER ON BABY STRANGER AT BUS STOP MAY BE ABDUCTOR - REWARD OFFERED

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The mystery surrounding the disappearance of a 3-month-old **baby** deepened Tuesday as **witnesses** offered conflicting accounts of his alleged abduction and a local DJ posted a \$5,000 reward for his safe return.

Isaiah Lewis hasn't been seen since 1 a.m. Friday. His mother, Shaniqua Betty, 20, told Detroit police she left the **baby** with a **stranger at a bus stop on** State Fair near Woodward while she walked home for her purse. She said she returned to find the **baby** and the man gone.

An anonymous woman called 911 about 1:10 a.m. Friday to report a suspicious-looking man with a **baby** wrapped in a blue towel near the **bus stop**. Police said Betty and the **baby's** father, Ivan Brown Jr., have passed polygraph tests.

But **witnesses at** a nearby apartment building said Tuesday that Betty never spoke to a **stranger** and never waited for a **bus**. Instead, they said, she walked a blue **baby** stroller to and from the **bus stop** and returned a few minutes later screaming that her **baby** had been taken.

"You wouldn't give your **baby** to a total **stranger**, especially an imaginary **stranger**," said Shawn Stevens, who said he was sitting **on** the building's front stoop **at** the time.

Detroit police interviewed Stevens and other residents who dispute Betty's story, but Lt. James Elliot said Tuesday that investigators are pursuing Betty's account.

" **At** this point, we've got to take the mother **at** her word because we can't find any holes in her story," Elliot said, citing the 911 call and other **witnesses** who said they saw Betty return home for her purse.

Betty's account was further corroborated Tuesday when a man told police he was sitting **at** the **bus stop** while she chatted with the alleged abductor, Elliot said. Although the **witness** boarded the **bus** before Betty left Isaiah, he helped police draw a second composite sketch of a suspect, described as 5-foot-7 and 230 pounds with curly hair. The new composite was not released.

Betty could not be reached for comment Tuesday because she spent the day with police reviewing the suspect's physical description. Brown, reached **at** the couple's home, said their families are supporting them during the ordeal.

Meanwhile, radio host John Mason of WDMK-FM (102.7) offered a \$5,000 reward **on** the air to anyone who safely returns Isaiah, no questions asked.

"The police, mommy and daddy can work it all out, whatever the situation is," Mason told the Free Press. "We just want to know the **baby** is safe and to give the community a sense of peace and resolution."

For police, Isaiah's disappearance has stirred memories of an unsolved 1994 missing child case. Dwanna Jackson said her 4-year-old son, D'Wan Sims, was taken from a Livonia mall, though surveillance cameras did not spot the boy and Jackson failed two polygraph tests. D'Wan was never found.

"We don't want another Sims case, that's for sure," Elliot said of Isaiah's disappearance.

He urged the anonymous 911 caller or anyone with information to call Crimestoppers **at** 800-773-2587 anytime.

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Caption: Photo MANDI WRIGHT/Detroit Free Press

Isaiah Lewis, who is 3 months old, has been missing since 1 a.m. Friday.

The mother of Isaiah Lewis told Detroit police she left her son with a **stranger at this bus stop on** State Fair near Woodward.

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