

## SEARCH FOR MISSING BOY CENTERS ON MOM, FRIENDS

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The investigation into the disappearance of 4-year-old **D'Wan** Christian **Sims** is focusing on his mother and her closest friends and family.

Police revealed Tuesday that they executed a search warrant at the mother's house in the 6400 block of Vaughan in west Detroit on Sunday night and Monday morning. However, they would not discuss what they found or whether it provided clues to the young boy's disappearance.

Police also interviewed the mother, Dwanna Harris, a second time Tuesday. Law enforcement officials close to the case and privy to the information say she failed two polygraph tests on Monday and one on Tuesday.

The family, though, denies that, and experts note that lie detector tests are far from conclusive.

"Police haven't said that she failed a lie detector test," said Harris' mother, Beverly Harris.

"Nobody said that she failed a lie-detector test. She said that she was scared to death and that's all she said about it."

Police on Tuesday also talked with Harris' boyfriend, Victor Jackson, and Beverly Harris.

Police say they are exploring all possibilities.

"We are not focused on any one possibility," said Detective Sgt. Ken Marlow, of the Livonia Police Department. "We are pursuing every possible theory."

Meanwhile Harris' relatives -- including the boy's father, Zachary **Sims** -- embarked on their own hunt for the boy. They passed out fliers with a picture and description of **D'Wan** and a promise of a \$5,000 reward.

"I love him," **Sims** said of his son. "I just want to hold him."

Dwanna Harris, 25, told police that she and her son arrived at Wonderland Mall in Livonia about 2 p.m. Sunday. Shortly after they walked into the mall from a Target store, Harris said she noticed her son was gone.

Police have looked at surveillance tapes from security cameras fixed on both Target store entrances and they do not show Dwanna Harris or her son. Police have more tapes to view.

Livonia Police Detective Lt. Pete Kunst said police searched the mall a third time Tuesday, including its basement, the surrounding area and neighborhoods. The search has been extended on routes leading away from Wonderland, Kunst said.

A team of seven federal law enforcement officials, including agents from the U.S. Secret Service and Customs, joined police from Livonia, Detroit, Novi, the Michigan State Police and the FBI in the investigation Tuesday.

"We're following what we feel are some pretty good leads in this case," Marlow said. "That's where we are. Are we further? I don't know. The final solution will be whether these tips have paid off."

Beverly Harris said her daughter is depressed and has not been able to sleep or eat much since Sunday.

"She hasn't really been coherent since she left the police station," Harris said. "She's really upset. She keeps saying over and over, 'Please let me get my baby back.' "

Marlow said police talked to Dwanna and Beverly Harris a second time because they were looking for information they may have missed the first time.

"We're talking to people we feel were closest to the missing young man," he said.

Friends were outraged at the flurry of media and police attention on Harris, saying she is a loving and dedicated mother who would never hurt her child. Neighbors on Vaughan Street said they hadn't gotten to know Harris well since she moved in just five or six weeks ago, but she appeared to treat her son well.

Margie Botkins, who lives across the street from Harris, had seen her with **D'Wan** a few times.

"When I've seen her with the kid, the kid's as happy as a lark," Botkins said. "She's a good neighbor and mother from what I've seen."

Neighbors in the west side neighborhood where Dwanna Harris grew up also said she was a good mother.

"I don't think she had anything to do with it because she didn't seem like that type of person," said Bernice Franklin, 49, whose grandchildren used to play with **D'Wan**.

"She took very good care of her son. I was very proud of her. She was a young girl, but she was a mother and she wasn't one of those girls who partied and ran around without her child."

Neighbor Cynthia Williams, 46, who baby-sat Dwanna Harris and her sister Mistalena, said her own grandson has slipped away from her in a crowded mall before and believes that someone could have kidnapped **D'Wan** .

"People pass lie detector tests that have done wrong," Williams said. "Dwanna probably was upset and that could throw a lie detector off. We would have Bible study together. I know she has good inside of her."

Indeed, lie detector tests are controversial. Legally, no one can be forced to take a test and the fact they refused to take a test cannot be used against them in court.

"Overall, due to examiner error, it is possible to fail a test and be truthful," said Sgt. John Tillman, an examiner in the Michigan State Police Department's polygraph unit. "It's possible for an examiner to misinterpret the results."

Tillman said a polygraph records changes in a person's respiration, skin conductivity or sweat activity and heart rate and blood pressure.

"Everyone is unique and everyone responds uniquely," Tillman said. "What we look for is any type of deviation from the person's norm."

He said that if a person is accused of a crime that is highly emotional for them, they may become exceptionally nervous. "That does show up on the polygraph," he said. "It's possible for an examiner to look at those results and say that's a lie when in fact it's a high level of anxiety."

On the other hand, a person could be lying and it not show up on the polygraph.

"A person's physiological reactions depend on a person's fear of detection," Tillman said. "They may not register any responses on a polygraph."

He said different mental illnesses such as sociopathy make it possible for a person to lie without being detected.

Tillman said the 5,000 to 6,000 tests administered by the State Police annually are 98 to 99 percent accurate.

Meanwhile, family and friends are standing by Dwanna Harris.

"I've heard from friends that I haven't heard from in years," Beverly Harris said. "They're keeping me going."

"Just now, I can't break down. I don't have that luxury."

Caption: Map HANK SZERLAG

: **D'Wan Sims**

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