

## MISSING BOY'S MOM APPEALS FOR HIS RETURN REBUKES CRITICS

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Dwanna Harris stood in the chill outside her mother's west side Detroit home Wednesday to appeal for her son's return and discount some inconsistencies that have surfaced since she reported **D'Wan** missing.

It was the first time Harris had spoken publicly since reporting that **D'Wan** disappeared Sunday afternoon at Wonderland Mall in Livonia.

Livonia Police Detective Lt. Pete Kunst said security camera tapes from Target and the mall have been reviewed twice without finding the boy or his mother.

But Harris, 25, insisted she and her 4-year-old son walked from the Target store into the mall about 2 p.m. Sunday. Shortly after, he was gone.

"I was at the mall. Me and my son were at the mall. I don't know about the Target surveillance tapes. We walked through Target's door," she said.

Target spokeswoman Carolyn Brookter in Minneapolis said customers usually are photographed as they enter the store. "But nothing is 100 percent," she said, adding that technological glitches occasionally occur.

Harris also rejected as false a report in Tuesday's Detroit News that police found a letter from an unidentified male friend who said he didn't want a relationship with a woman who had children. She said there is no such letter.

Detective Kunst said, "That letter does not exist." He said he does not know where the story originated.

He said the report was "strikingly similar" to the case of Susan Smith, the South Carolina woman who confessed to drowning her two young sons after insisting for days that they'd been kidnapped by a carjacker. According to reports, the drownings occurred after Smith received a letter from a boyfriend who did not want children.

Smith is facing murder charges.

Harris also challenged the way her story is being covered by the news media.

"You all are focusing on what's this, what's that, who I went with, who I sleep with, who I live with. The focus should be on finding **D'Wan**. He's 4 years old. He's alone and he needs to come home to his mother," she said before walking away in tears from a horde of microphones.

Harris said her sole concern is recovering **D'Wan**. She and her mother, Beverly Harris, issued a plea to whoever might have snatched him.

"If you're scared, you have nothing to be scared of," said Dwanna Harris. "As long as he's OK, it will be fine with me. . . . All I want is for my baby to come home."

She said she has cooperated with police.

There are no plans to reinterview her but it may happen, Kunst said. She "is the best and only witness we have that was at the scene of the incident when it occurred."

Police have received about 120 tips since Monday, but none that have given them any encouragement. Kunst said authorities held a two-hour brainstorming session to come up with new ideas for the 40-50 investigators involved in the case.

Investigators are reinterviewing witnesses and employees at Wonderland and Target. And they continued to search various sites in the Detroit area.

Kunst said at an afternoon news conference that police had combed the Wonderland Mall area and surrounding neighborhood three times and decided to try **D'Wan's** old neighborhood as another alternative.

"We have to still continue with the hope of finding the boy," Kunst said.

Harris complained that police spent a lot of time questioning her early on instead of starting a wider search.

She said she gave police written permission to search her house and car. After the vehicle search, she said, "they told me the car was too clean."

"They don't have any negative evidence to go on. That's why they're digging so hard -- to find something negative and they can't," she said.

## THE SEARCH

Anyone with information about **D'Wan Sims**, below, should call 1-313-421-1920, anytime. Police brainstormed Wednesday, seeking new ideas. They looked in various places in the Detroit area, including a return to Hines Park, because **D'Wan's** mother said the boy enjoyed a lights festival there on the day he disappeared.

Caption: Photo Color; Photo DAYMON J. HARTLEY

: With a picture of her grandson **D'WanSims** , Beverly Harris speaks with reporters in front of her west side Detroit home.

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