

WOMAN CHARGED WITH GIVING POLICE A FALSE TIP

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Saturday, December 31, 1994

Author: DAVID MIGOYA Free Press Staff Writer, Free Press Staff Writer L.A. JOHNSON, contributed to this report.

Phony tips to police are not uncommon, but hoaxers seem to gravitate to high-profile investigations like the search for **D'Wan Sims**, the Detroit boy missing for three weeks.

The result is a weary team of investigators who would rather spend their time chasing solid leads instead of shadows.

Since calling in a fake tip is not illegal in some municipalities, police say they often have little choice other than to check each legitimate-sounding call, cross it off the list and move on to the next.

In the case of **D'Wan Sims**, Livonia police have received nearly 1,000 calls in the 20 days the 4-year-old has been missing.

More calls can be expected now that police have placed nearly 300 laminated color posters on SMART buses. The 11-by-28-inch posters have **D'Wan's** picture, that of his mother, Dwanna Harris, a photo of Harris' red Ford Thunderbird and two telephone numbers to call police.

Detroit police on Thursday ticketed a Detroit woman, Connie Davis, 49, charging her with making a false police report -- a misdemeanor. Davis allegedly called police to say **Sims** was being held hostage by a family in her neighborhood.

But police couldn't do the same with at least two callers they identified from Warren. A false report to police is not a crime there, Warren police said.

"We've had several of those types of calls on this case, but we're pretty sure which ones are which," said Livonia Police Chief Lee Grieve. "Soothsayers and palm readers are among those who have some good information, no matter how insignificant."

"A lot of people see things that in their own mind they believe to be true," Grieve said. "They're not totally wrong in their mind, but we find out otherwise."

Warren Police Sgt. Ed Tomlinson said it really wouldn't help to have the law because it takes so much time to prosecute it. "Sure, we spin our wheels on the phony calls, but then we move on to the next one. I know exactly how Livonia feels right now," he said.

Warren police were flooded with calls two years ago while they investigated the disappearance of 10-year-old Deanna Seifert. Her decomposed body was found in July 1992 in a metal scrap bin behind an industrial park, about a mile from her home. She had been reported missing two months earlier. Andrew Trombley was later convicted in her death.

In the days after Seifert's disappearance was made public, phony tips poured in, Tomlinson said.

"It wasn't so much that it was false reports, but I had just about every fruitcake in the county calling me," he said. "It was just goofy stuff. But you've got to follow through on them. What can you do?"

In Livonia and Detroit, knowingly giving police a false tip is a misdemeanor punishable by up to 90 days in jail and a \$500 fine.

Davis has filed a false police report before. In June 1993, she told police her son had killed her grandchildren. She failed to show up for her court date on that charge.

CUTLINE:

D'Wan Sims

Caption: Photo

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 3A

Index Terms: MISSING ; CHILD ; D'WAN SIMS

Record Number: 9402160760

Copyright (c) 1994 Detroit Free Press