

DETECTIVES CLOSE IN ON SIMS CASE EVIDENCE RE-EXAMINED IN BOY'S DISAPPEARANCE

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A top Detroit Police detective said Wednesday he is confident he and coworkers can crack the 1994 disappearance of 4-year-old **D'Wan Sims**.

"We're close to identifying the perpetrator of this crime," said Ira Todd, a member of the Violent Crimes Task Force and one of the department's leading detectives.

He is part of a reopened investigation of the case.

D'Wan's mother, Dwanna Jackson, told police she last saw her son at Wonderland Mall in Livonia.

The previous investigation had focused on the child's mother.

Todd would not comment on whether Jackson is the prime suspect.

But Jackson said Wednesday she has no doubt that she is Todd's target, after what she described as a recent 14-hour interrogation in a locked room at police headquarters.

"Mr. Todd had assumed he could get me to confess to something that I did not do," Jackson said. "As long as the investigation focuses on me, it will never be solved."

However, Todd said Jackson was free to go at any time during the interrogation. The interview was not focused on her guilt or innocence, he said, but on **D'Wan's** disappearance.

"She is a victim," Todd said. "I want to go into this case with an open mind and look at the totality of the incident."

On Dec. 11, 1994, Jackson told police she and her son walked through the doors of Wonderland Mall's Target department store heading toward the food court when she noticed **D'Wan** had vanished.

In the weeks that followed, law enforcement officials conducted one of southeast Michigan's most intensive searches. Pictures of the boy appeared on 57 million cards in a national mailing about missing children.

Police and community members searched trash containers, abandoned buildings, relatives' homes, along railroad tracks, in alleys and in ditches. They interviewed former baby sitters, relatives, friends, neighbors and others who might have known the family.

D'Wan, who would turn 9 this October, was never found.

Target and mall surveillance tapes showed no sign of him or his mother. Police also said Jackson failed two lie detector tests.

"I take a personal interest in this one, but I take a personal interest in them all," said Todd, a member of the unit known for its ability to solve even the toughest mysteries.

Todd said detectives will look differently at all the evidence that was collected during the initial investigation. They also plan to reinterview Jackson, family members and other witnesses. They will explore phone and financial records and **D'Wan's** family background.

Known pedophiles and child abductors in Livonia will be questioned, and a psychological profile of **D'Wan's** mother and father will be done. Many of those tools were not used during the initial investigation.

"When his mother reported him missing, it was treated as a kid lost in a mall," Todd said.

"There's obviously more here, and the Violent Crimes Task Force will get to the bottom of it."

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D'wanSims

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