

Brother of missing Inuk woman questions police investigation

Mary Papatsie last seen in Ottawa in late April, police say

Stu Mills · CBC News · Posted: Jun 13, 2017 5:00 AM ET | Last Updated: June 13, 2017



July Papatsie wants to know why Ottawa police waited until mid-June to ask the public for help in locating his sister, Mary Papatsie. (Stu Mills/CBC)

The brother of an Inuk woman missing since April is asking why Ottawa police waited until the middle of June before asking the public for tips to help locate her.

"That was quite a concern. We really had to try to get them involved," said Mary Papatsie's brother, July Papatsie.

- **Ottawa police ask for help to find missing Inuk woman**

Ottawa police issued a news release Monday asking for help to find the 39-year-old woman. According to police, she was last seen in late April.

"It is very concerning," said the missing woman's brother. "We are dealing with a missing women and girls inquiry, and now it so happens that she's another one, which is quite scary."

Ottawa police declined to answer questions posed by CBC News about why they didn't ask until now for the public's help.

However, the police service said in a pair of tweets to a member of the public Tuesday morning that officers were notified in "early June" about Papatsie's disappearance and that investigators don't always immediately seek the public's help in all missing person cases.



Jan Fletcher @FletJan

12 Jun

#Missing - Why did it take so long for police to post this?
@OttawaPolice ask for help to find missing Inuk woman
cbc.ca/news/canada/ot...



Ottawa Police

@OttawaPolice

Police were notified in early June. Investigation lead to information that she was last seen in late April. Please keep an eye out.

7:07 AM - Jun 13, 2017

2 See Ottawa Police's other Tweets



Jan Fletcher @FletJan

13 Jun

Replying to @OttawaPolice
Wouldn't you start investigating/seeking public assistance immediately? You were notified "early June", why the delay?
#MaryPapatsie



Ottawa Police

@OttawaPolice

Each investigation is different. If there are other leads available, we don't always seek public assistance immediately.

7:30 AM - Jun 13, 2017

1 See Ottawa Police's other Tweets

Life unravelled after assault, brother says

July Papatsie, 57, said his sister is the youngest of eight siblings raised in Pangnirtung, Nunavut, on Baffin Island.

The artist and translator said she had worked assisting doctors and nurses in the North. He described her as friendly, happy and easy-going until she was sexually assaulted about 15 years ago.

After the assault, he said she moved south to Ottawa, where her life began to unravel.

"Everything started going downhill," July Papatsie said. "Unfortunately, she got mixed up with the wrong crowd and ended up taking crack cocaine, and that's got her on the streets."

He called his sister a woman with "a lot of demons."

"That made her a very easy target for the predators out there," he said.



Mary Papatsie, 39, was last seen in Ottawa in late April, police say. (Ottawa police handout)

Sister called hospitals, jails

July Papatsie said another sister in Ottawa, Meeka Papatsie, has called hospitals, jails and people who know the missing woman, without luck.

About three weeks ago a group of Mary Papatsie's friends approached him with a story that they had last seen her on Montreal Road in Vanier with two men, he said.

"I'm very worried. She may be down and out and seen as one of the street people, but she's still my sister, still a human being," he said.

Not finding her, like this, and not knowing what's going on — it's really devastating.

- July Papatsie, brother

"The last couple of weeks I've hardly slept."

Outside Tungasuvvingat Inuit Centre in Vanier, David Belanger, who said he knows Mary Papatsie, called her a friendly, kind woman.

He was surprised about the timing of the police investigation because he'd heard a rumour weeks earlier that Mary Papatsie was dead, Belanger said.

"The kind of lifestyle she led, every time she got in a car was dangerous," he said.

'It's really devastating'

July Papatsie said he hopes the police investigation will help turn up tips.

"Even if it's not that positive, at least we would find her. Because not finding her, like this, and not knowing what's going on — it's really devastating."

Mary Papatsie is described as standing five-feet-two to five-feet-three inches tall, weighing about 140 to 160 pounds, with long, straight brown hair. She has a small scar above her left eye from a piercing, police said.

Anyone with information is asked to call the Ottawa police missing persons unit at 613-236-1222, ext. 2355.

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Exhibit: National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls		
Location/Phase: <u>Part III: Quebec City</u>		
Witness: <u>Panel II</u>		
Submitted by: <u>Elizabeth Zarpa,</u>		
Add'l info: <u>Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami</u>		
Date: <u>MAY 17 2018</u> <u>P03P02P0401</u>		
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