

## Kienan 'unharmmed' after abduction ordeal, dad says

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Published Sunday, September 11, 2011 10:39PM EDT

The father of three-year-old Kienan Hebert says his boy was not harmed during a four-day abduction that led to an Amber Alert, but police continue to search for the man identified as a person of interest in the case.

The Hebert family's harrowing ordeal came to a close on Sunday morning when Kienan was returned to his home at about 3 a.m. local time, nearly five days after the young boy was first reported missing.

Despite the circumstances, father Paul Hebert said Sunday that his son was in good spirits.

"Kienan is happily home and he's playing with his brothers and sisters, thank you," Hebert said during a tearful press conference Sunday afternoon.

"It was the right thing to do, and I thank God that Kienan was returned unharmmed."

But as the Hebert family and the surrounding community celebrate the boy's safe return, questions continue to arise about the abduction and the way that the case has been handled by police.

The whereabouts of 46-year-old Randall Hopley, identified as a person of interest in the case, also remain unknown.

Speaking to the media earlier in the day, Hopley's mother pleaded with her son to come home and end the ordeal.

"I want him home now, if he can hear me," Margaret Fink said in an emotional statement.

While the police have declined to talk about specifics in the case because the investigation is ongoing, RCMP Cpl. Dan Moskaluk also reiterated the call for Hopley to return.

At around 3 a.m., police received a 911 dispatch call suggesting the boy would be at his family home, which was empty at the time. The Hebert family moved into a neighbour's house shortly after their son was reported missing.

Police arrived at the home to find Kienan sitting alone on a couch with his blanket. There was no suspect on the premises.

When asked why a suspect was able to enter the Hebert home undetected again, Moskaluk said Mounties are still looking at the "sequence of events."

Moskaluk has declined to comment on specifics because of the nature of the investigation.

"We are not in a position to jeopardize this investigation," he said.

Earlier, Moskaluk said that in over 26 years of policing, he has never seen a case like this.

"We've got a child back. We've got a child returned. I've never been able to say that," he said.

### **Investigation continues**

Kienan's return comes a day after the boy's father made an emotional plea to whoever had his child.

And during Sunday's conference, Moskaluk again appealed to Hopley directly.

"Randy, we just want to talk to you," he said. "What we've got left to do is speak with you. It's very, very important that we speak to you right now."

Meanwhile, the Hebert family home has been cordoned off and declared a crime scene as police continue to comb the small B.C. community for evidence.

With Kienan's abductor still unaccounted for, RCMP set up checkpoints around Sparwood. Moskaluk said the physical roadblocks are meant to help investigators search for suspects.

Though RCMP have confirmed that Hopley and Kienan are not related, they have still not said why the man is suspected in the boy's disappearance.

Records show that Hopley has a varied criminal background. He was convicted for sexual assault two decades ago and given a two-year prison sentence in that case.

In 2007, Hopley was also charged with unlawful confinement and attempted abduction during a break and enter.

Police continue to look for Hopley and his vehicle, a brown 1987 Toyota Camry with the licence plate 098RAL.

Hopley's mother said that she hadn't seen her son since Tuesday, when he visited her for the first time in about a year. Their meeting happened hours before Kienan went missing.

Kienan's disappearance prompted a province-wide Amber Alert that was issued on Wednesday and extended into Alberta on Saturday. Hundreds of volunteers spent the latter half of the week helping investigators search for the toddler by combing the rugged terrain near his home.