Beat: Local

California kidnap victim was unaware mom, brother were slain

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USPA News - A 16-year-old California girl, who was kidnapped by a family friend and held captive for a week, was in "extreme duress" and was unaware her mother and brother were slain until she was rescued a week later in the Idaho wilderness, officials said Monday. Hannah Anderson was debriefed after her rescue on Saturday and was told by investigators that her mother, 44-year-old Christina Anderson, and her brother, 8-year-old Ethan, had been killed by her kidnapper a week earlier, San Diego County Sheriff Bill Gore said during a news conference.

Gore strongly rejected previous suggestions that Hannah may have left voluntarily with 40-year-old James Lee DiMaggio, saying she is a victim "in every sense of the word." "She was not a willing participant. She was in extreme duress from the time she was taken from Boulevard to the time she was rescued in Idaho," he said. The San Diego County Sheriff`s Department said Hannah is back in San Diego with family members and is doing "as well as can be expected after the terrible ordeal she`s been through." She was taken to an Idaho hospital after her rescue on Saturday and underwent a full medical evaluation, but it is unclear if she suffered any physical injuries. Hannah`s father, Brett Anderson, has appealed for time and privacy to allow the family to grieve and begin the healing process. "As for my daughter, the healing process will be slow. She has been through a tremendous, horrific ordeal," he said on Monday. "I am very proud of her and love her very much. She is surrounded by the love of her family, friends and community." The incident began on the evening of August 4 when deputies and fire personnel responded to a residence and garage fire in the rural community of Boulevard, about 48 miles (78 kilometers) east of San Diego. They later discovered the remains of Christina and Ethan inside the burned buildings, and investigators determined both had been murdered. 40-year-old James Lee DiMaggio, a longtime family friend of the Andersons, was the owner of the house and immediately identified as the suspect. It prompted an Amber Alert for California and other nearby states for both Hannah and Ethan as authorities were not immediately able to identify the child`s badly burnt remains. The case sparked an intense manhunt that reached into surrounding states and across the border into Mexico, but law enforcement agencies began focusing on a remote location near the central Idaho town of Cascade on Thursday after witnesses on horseback came across two people who matched the description of DiMaggio and Hannah, leading to the discovery of DiMaggio`s car on Friday. By early Saturday morning, a U.S. Marshal`s plane spotted a tent belonging to DiMaggio in the massive River of No Return Wilderness Area near Cascade. FBI, SWAT and Hostage Rescue Team (HRT) personnel surrounded the area and moved in when Hannah and her abductor were briefly separated, after which DiMaggio was shot and Hannah rescued. Few details about the fatal shooting have been released due to an ongoing FBI investigation, but it is believed DiMaggio fired at least one shot before being killed. "Hannah also revealed DiMaggio had a rifle and he fired at least one round prior to being shot and killed by the FBI`s Hostage Rescue Team," Gore said on Monday.

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