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2 3 4

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THURSDAY
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Alive and Well



Francisco Kjolseth/The Salt Lake Tribune

Elizabeth Smart, holding the hand of her mother, Lois, is rushed into an unmarked van from the Salt Lake City Police Department after she was found alive and well in Sandy early Wednesday afternoon.

Elizabeth Smart found nine months after vanishing from her home

BY KEVIN CANTERA
and MICHAEL VIGH

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Days after her cousin Elizabeth disappeared last summer, Sierra Smart received a bouquet of roses from a stranger at a community prayer vigil.

The stranger was convinced the girl would someday return safely, and asked Sierra to give Elizabeth the flowers when she came home. The now-wilted floral arrangement has hung on Sierra's bedroom wall for over nine months.

"I can't wait to give these flowers to Elizabeth," said Sierra, 21,

fighting jback oyful tears just hours after her cousin was found alive and healthy Wednesday, walking along a Sandy street with her two alleged captors. "This is a miracle. I'm just floating on air."

But there were more questions than answers about how the vagabond couple — Brian David Mitchell, 49, and Wanda Ilene Barzee, 57 — allegedly managed to hold the girl undetected since her June 5 purported kidnapping from her bedroom.

Asked whether he believed Elizabeth had been held against her will, Salt Lake City Police Chief Rick Dinse responded: "I do, at this point, yes I do."

Police, who said they had not recovered the black handgun believed to have been used in the apparent kidnapping, also could not say whether the 15-year-old had tried to escape and where the three have been since the abduction, which sparked a nationwide quest for the girl and a large-scale search up and down the Wasatch Front involving thousands of volunteers.

The girl's first night home since early June was spent with her family at the Federal Heights house from which she was taken.

Elizabeth pored over hundreds of e-mails sent to the Web site <http://www.elizabethsmart.com> from

well-wishers worldwide.

In recent days, the Smart family had pressured the Salt Lake City Police Department, criticizing what they felt was a cavalier attitude about Mitchell, the self-styled fire-and-brimstone preacher who called himself "Emmanuel."

The crime's lone witness, Elizabeth's younger sister, Mary Katherine, had identified Mitchell as the possible kidnapper last October, recalling him from the November 2001 day he worked odd jobs for the Smarts for five hours. The family took the tip to police but it was not

See ELIZABETH, Page A-7

'NOTHING BUT A MIRACLE'

Family, friends and neighbors never wavered in their faith in Elizabeth Smart's safe return **A-4**

Vigilant residents tip Sandy police to whereabouts of Elizabeth, kidnap suspects **A-5**

Happy endings are much too rare in similar disappearances nationwide, children's advocates say **A-6**

The widow of former key suspect Richard Ricci says she does not carry a grudge **A-8**

Women's hoops teams win for BYU and Utes in quarterfinals. **In Sports, C-1**

KUTV closes deal to move station to Salt Lake City's Main Street. **In Business, C-9**

The Kitty Hawk comes to the west desert as the Wright Brothers fly again. **In Utah, D-1**

Advice B-3 Movies B-4
Business C-9 Obituaries C-5
Classifieds D-7 Puzzles B-5,6
Comics B-5 Review B-4
Crossword B-6 Sports C-1
Editorials A-12 Television B-7

Windy, warmer statewide; mid-60s to mid-70s north, mid-60s to upper 70s south. **C-16**



Elizabeth May Have Been Taken to Be a Replacement Daughter

BY PEGGY FLETCHER STACK

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The small-framed, big-bearded man called himself Emmanuel and wandered the streets of Salt Lake City in white robes and linen cap, sandals and a walking staff.

Emmanuel, now suspected of kidnapping Elizabeth Smart when she was 14, looked and spoke like a modern-day prophet, panhandling and preaching to the homeless as if he were a messenger from God.

"Sometimes he was a little incoherent," said Pamela Atkinson, a longtime homeless advocate in Salt Lake City who had many conversations with Emmanuel. "He was more of a talker than a listener."

The eccentric man didn't cause trouble, said Andrew Larsen, a salesman at Edinburgh Castle Scottish

Imports on Main Street. "I just thought he was trying to dress up like Jesus to appeal to the emotions of people."

Emmanuel is a Hebrew name for Jesus; the would-be messiah began life as Brian David Mitchell in a suburban Salt Lake City neighborhood.

Mitchell, 49, attended Skyline High School in the 1970s, was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, married and fathered four children.

Then things fell apart. He and his wife divorced, and in the late 1980s, Mitchell married Wanda Ilene Barzee, who had several children of her own. Barzee's daughter, Louree Gayler, was 12 at the time, and her new stepfather made her uncomfortable.

"He was kissing and holding me the wrong way," Gayler said Wednesday.

See ELIZABETH, Page A-8



Courtesy of KUTV2 News

A photo taken at a party in September shows self-proclaimed prophet Emmanuel (Brian Mitchell) with two female companions: Wanda Barzee, right, and Elizabeth Smart, whom Emmanuel allegedly kidnapped in June. Elizabeth was reunited with her family Wednesday.