

12-A Saturday, April 7, 1990 The Philadelphia Inquirer

How the authorities recovered a kidnapped boy

KIDNAPPING, from 1A revealed Kim Hsu's at the China Bakery. "I had no idea."

Everybody in Chinatown was looking for him. You never thought about this (the kidnapping)," said David Chen, a family friend.

The media were also curious about what happened to little Andy.

At 11:30 p.m., a television news van arrived at the store with questions about the kidnapping. The reporters left with no answers. At 12:30 a.m., a newspaper reporter showed up. The reporter was asked to leave.

Less than an hour later, a phone call was received from the kidnapers. Like all six phone calls from the kidnapers, it came on a gray Princeton phone that sits on a cluttered folding table in the store. The table is stacked with papers and receipts from the Sui business.

A voice that they thought sounded Asian said: "We have your son, he's OK. We want \$100,000. We'll contact you in three days. We know you have the money."

This was a clue. The kidnapers knew something. King Sui had recently deposited a \$60,000 check in his bank account, a loan he had taken from a local bank to enlarge his business. White tiles and tools were stacked alongside the two-story building for the planned expansion and renovation.



The Sui family after the rescue: (from left) mother Hsu, brothers Victor and Eric, father King, and kidnapping victim Andy.

On Tuesday morning, FBI Special Agent Linda Vini was driving her 3-year-old son to day care. Her son's Mopett tape was on the car tape player.

When she got to her office at the FBI's Philadelphia headquarters at the Federal Office Building at Sixth and Arch, she was told to attend a special assembly on the building's eighth floor.

"When they showed us the photo of this child, it hit home," she said.

For the next three days, a team of 100 FBI agents and city police used the eighth-floor FBI office as a command post. FBI agents were involved in the case from the Camden, Wilmington, Baltimore, Atlantic City and New York offices.

They worked 12 to 24-hour shifts. Wayne Gilbert, the special agent in charge of the Philadelphia FBI office, walked around clueless with his sleeves rolled up. Police and FBI agents took catnaps in the nurse's office. Vini and other agents called the press, pleading for an embargo on the story. Other agents assembled maps of the areas that the kidnapers were believed to be in.

"It was tense," Vini said. "The room was hot. You had so many people in there."

"I've been in the bureau 10 years and I have never seen a group of people work so cohesively together," she said.

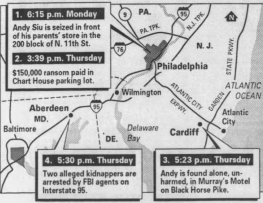
"When people found out a child was involved, there wasn't anybody that didn't want to be a part of it."

As the Sui waited for the phone to ring, they had to act as though nothing had happened. The store stayed open.

Inside, amid the shelves stacked with cans of soy sauce, miso-marinated restaurant plates and painted china tea sets, customers found a drawn, weary Hsu sitting quietly and depressed. She was asked to not talk about the case, so she didn't.

During the days that Andy was gone, Victor worried aloud. "Where's my other brother?" according to Chen, the family friend.

The first day, Hsu Sui "cried all day; all night. Her eyes were red. She couldn't eat. The father didn't eat for



several days."

"We wouldn't believe that would happen," Hsu Sui said through an interpreter.

"Nothing like this ever happened in Chinatown," Chen said. "People don't believe it. This is a first in Chinatown."

Then Wednesday, a few minutes before 7 p.m., the phone rang again. A man said he had Andy. King Sui asked to speak to his son. The man on the other end said he would call again and let Andy speak to his father.

"Please deposit \$100,000," an operator said. As they talked, AT&T was working to trace the call, but there was an equipment failure, and the call was lost.

They waited another long night. At 10:07 a.m. Thursday, the kidnapers called again. This time they spoke to King Sui, and discussed arrangements for picking up the ransom. They said that Andy was at a motel. One of the kidnapers said he would call back to find out whether the proposed plan was acceptable.

He stayed on the line just long enough. This call was traced.

Police contacted a motel outside of Atlantic City where the telephone company said the call originated. A hotel employee told agents that an Asian man had taken the room. He remembered that the man had asked where he could find a place to buy sleeping pills.

(The boy would later tell his parents that his kidnapers had given him pills.)

The employee referred the man to a nearby Wawa convenience store.

About a half-hour later, King Sui gave a bag containing \$150,000 in marked bills to an Asian man in the parking lot of the Chart House restaurant on Delaware Avenue.

FBI agents were watching. From a distance they saw another Asian male driving a blue car with Florida license plates pick up the first man.

The agents followed the car south on Interstate 76 to an exit near Dilton, Md., where one of the men got out of the car to make a call on a pay phone.

The Gray Princess phone at the

Sui's store rang a final time from the kidnapers. A man said the boy was in a hotel room, and he gave directions.

At Murray's Motel on Black Horse Pike in Cardiff, 10 miles west of Atlantic City, a 16-year-old niece of manager Sam Desai was the first to hear a young boy crying. The motel room, with a single bed and a television, was otherwise empty when the girl let herself in to check on the boy. It was odd. There were no food containers or clothing of any kind left in the room.

She was still puzzling out what to do when police and FBI agents pulled into the motel parking lot at 5:24 p.m.

Back at FBI headquarters in Philadelphia, Special Agent Vini got on the phone to other FBI agents who were escorting the Sui to meet their child.

"We have your son and he is OK," Vini told the agents with the Sui.

Speaking the words, Vini said she felt chills, and tears well up.

There was a round of applause on the other end. Gilbert was ecstatic.

"This is great, this is great!" he said as he wandered around the office.

On 185, the FBI agents moved in on the suspects.

Steve Silver of Wilmington was buying down 145 in his Daltan 300 ZX, late for a business meeting in Baltimore. He witnessed what happened next.

About 20 miles north of Baltimore, near Aberdeen, Md. — a "relatively deserted area," as Silver tells it — a pack of cars began converging on one vehicle.

"We were all traveling at a relatively high rate of speed and then one of the cars in front of a truck beside me started signaling for him to slow down," said Silver, 37, a father of two who works in the health-care field. "Right then I knew something was going on and I looked to my left and there's a guy talking on a

"There was no way these guys were going anywhere. They just forced them to the side of the road."

"And when they came out of the cars they the law enforcement authorities came out with guns out in force. They didn't hide behind their cars, they didn't take cover, they went right in with speed and with what could have been lethal force. They stopped those guys and within seconds they were on top of them with guns drawn right at their windows."

It was 5:30 p.m., just seven minutes after agents had found Andy Sui at the motel.

The two men inside the car — later identified as Wei Hong Chen, 22, of Silver Spring, Md., and Van Ming Lin, 26, of New York or New Jersey — had picked up \$150,000 in cash two hours earlier. The money was found in the car along with a fully loaded .38-caliber, five-shot revolver.

Chen and Lin were awaiting arraignment last night on charges of kidnapping, interstate demand for ransom, using and carrying a firearm during commission of a crime of violence and conspiracy. All are capital crimes, with mandatory sentences of five years and a maximum of life imprisonment without parole.

After the FBI picked up Andy Sui, the agents took him to a McDonald's restaurant and bought him hamburgers. In the heavy rush-hour traffic it took the Sui two hours to drive out to pick up the boy.

Through an interpreter, Hsu Sui described the simple, joyful reunion.

"Money? Money?" he said. "He was real happy."

Staff writer Peter Landry and correspondent William H. Sokol contributed to this article.

SINGLES DANCE PARTY
Saturday, April 7th - Holiday Inn Cherry Hill 9 PM
Rt. 70 & Sayre Avenue, Cherry Hill, N.J. (Across from Race Track)
Sunday, April 8th - Sheraton Poste Inn 8:30 PM
Rt. 70 & 298, Cherry Hill, N.J.
Ages 30 and up \$5.00 Cover
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