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A kidnapping undone

The victim was a boy, 3 years old, and law enforcement officers spared no effort to find him.

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Some Chinatown merchants had already closed up shop for the night when the man with long black hair took little Andy Siu.

It was Monday. Andy had been playing with his 5-year-old brother Victor behind a broad storefront window at their family's restaurant supply store, Tung Yate Inc., in the 200 block of North 11th Street. In a back room, the boy's mother, Hsiu Siu, was cooking dinner.

It was 6:15 p.m. when she heard Victor scream.

"They took Andy!"

The 3-year-old boy with fat cheeks and a mop of straight black hair had just become the first kidnap-for-ransom victim in the city in at least 15 years, police would later say. It would all end happily after three hellish days for the hard-working immigrant Cantonese family. Yesterday the family, witnesses and law enforcement officials agreed to describe the rescue of Andy Siu.

When his brother ran screaming to his mother across a tile floor, past rows and rows of restaurant dishes and shelves of iron woks, she at first refused to believe.

The 35-year-old mother never let her children far out of sight. She would not even allow them to play alone on the sidewalk. So she told Victor that one of the Siu's friends must have just taken the boy for a walk.

But Victor insisted. He had never seen this man before. And his mother grew frightened.

She telephoned her husband, King Siu, 39, who came running from a nearby building. Only minutes later, their phone rang.

"We have your son, don't call the police," said what sounded like a young Asian male. Then he hung up.

King Siu knew what he had to do. He immediately walked the one block to the Sixth Police District at 11th and Winter Streets, and told officers of the kidnaping. Quickly, Detective John Merrill of the Central Detective Division was assigned.

Later that night, FBI Special Agent Michael Carbonell showed up at the store and a wiretap was installed on the store's phone lines. Agent Ron Lee of the Attorney General's Office, a Chinese translator, was enlisted to monitor the calls.

Lt. James Downs of the Philadelphia police organized crime unit went to the scene.

And throughout the next 72 hours, Hsiu Siu cried and worried, ate little and slept less. She and her husband wondered over and over again:

Where was Andy, their sweet baby? Who would take him away?

The search for Andy started in Chinatown, where the Sius have run their restaurant supply and bean-sprout business for 10 years — where, by many accounts, the immigrants from Hong Kong were well-liked and well-respected, viewed as a hard-working couple with three polite children.

That night, Hsiu Siu ran out to ask her neighbors if they had seen him. Her 8-year-old son Eric stopped in the bakery two doors down. He pleaded, "Have you seen my brother?"

"I said, 'No, I didn't see him,'" (See KIDNAPPING on 12-A)



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Andy Siu with his father, King Siu, at news conference. Andy was recovered Thursday.

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