

# Martin mystery prompts new police review

by Bernard Johnston

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**THE MYSTERIOUS disappearance of Hollywood man Martin Kelly is being re-investigated by the police, three and a half years after he vanished without trace, it was revealed this week.**

A new officer has been put in charge of the case and his first task has been to review all the information that has been gathered by the PSNI, Martin's father Raymond told the Spectator.

The police move is their latest attempt to find any clue at all about what became of Martin, now 25, since he went missing for no apparent reason from outside a Belfast bar on January 1 2006.

The new development has been welcomed by Martin's family, with his father Raymond insisting that they will never give up hope of discovering what happened to him three and a half years ago.

Raymond Kelly said, "This is the fourth officer to be put in charge of Martin's case and I am delighted that he has already begun to review all the information which the police have gathered to date.

#### FRESH EYES

"I think it's a good idea to have a fresh pair of eyes looking over all the facts in the case at this stage to see if there is anything that could have been missed or overlooked in the past.

"In another hopefully productive new development Martin's details have been included in the Big Issue magazine's missing people's section which is sold all over the UK and could just lead to something."

Earlier this year police investigating the disappearance of Martin, whose 25th birthday was in March, issued another appeal for information to The Spectator about his case as a missing person.

Their appeal began with a brief outline of the facts which are already known about his movements in the hours prior to his disappearance outside a bar in the docks area of Belfast.

It said, "Martin, who worked

as a plumber and a part time bar man in the Priory Inn at Hollywood, worked on New Year's Eve 2006 and then went on to two house parties with friends.

"On New Year's Day he and his friends went to Pats Bar in Garmoyle Street to watch a football match.

"The friends left and Martin remained in the bar talking to other customers. He left at about 7.10pm and has not been seen since.

"Martin, who is about 6ft 1in tall and of a slim build with short dark hair, was wearing a black 'Guinness' T-shirt and blue jeans.

"Over the past three years police have carried out a full and thorough investigation into Martin's disappearance and have carried out extensive underwater and land searches.

"Police remain committed and determined to discovering what happened to Martin and to bringing closure to his family.

"Detectives will continue to follow up all new lines of enquiry and any new information."

#### APPEAL

Meanwhile Raymond Kelly has echoed the police appeal for information, urging anyone to come forward with anything which could be helpful to the police, no matter how small it seems to them.

He said, "In particular I would appeal to the witnesses who were with Martin in the bar that night to revisit the scene in their minds to see if they can jog their memories in any way.

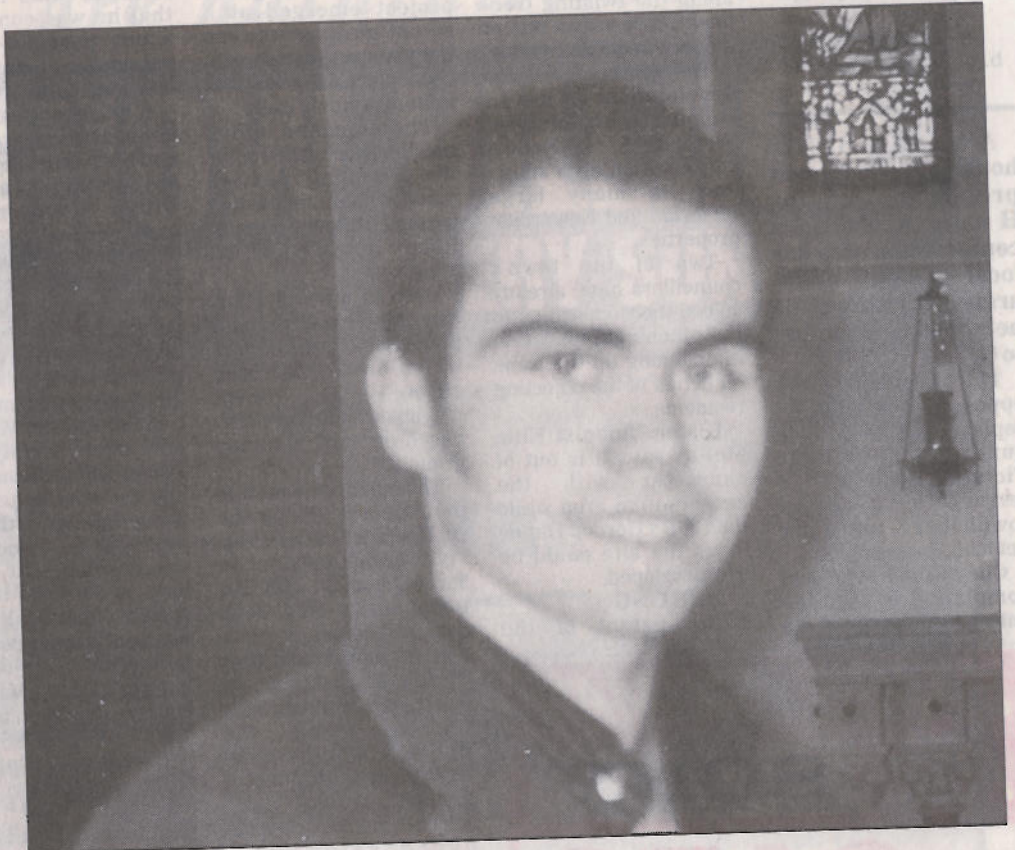
"We don't want people to think that because it is now almost three years down the line that there is no point in coming forward, that it is too late in some way or another to do anything.

"As far as we are concerned everything is still to play for here and I would appeal for anyone with any scrap of information, no matter how small, to let us know about it, whatever it is.

"It could be that someone considers what they know, or have seen, to be of little or no importance or even irrelevant, but they should let others be the judge of that and come forward.

"If anyone has a problem with doing so to the police for any reason they can still give the information through a variety of other channels.

"For example they could go to a priest or a minister or contact the Missing Persons Helpline.



Martin Kelly

The free phone number for that is 0800 700 700."

#### CELEBRATING

Martin, an apprentice plumber and part-time barman in the Old Priory Inn in Hollywood, was last seen on January 1 2006.

He had spent New Year's Eve working in the Hollywood bar and was celebrating the New Year with friends in Pat's Bar in Belfast's Clarendon Dock the next day.

Martin was last seen when he left the bar at about 7.15pm, possibly intending to return to his home in the Kinnegar area of Hollywood.

Exhaustive land and sea searches and a high profile publicity campaign across Britain and Ireland have so far failed to turn up any clues.

The young Hollywood man definitely had everything to live for and was in the prime of his life.

He had embarked on a promising apprenticeship and supplemented that income with part-time work in the Hollywood bar. He hoped one day to buy a property abroad.

Just a few years prior to his disappearance Martin had worked in an orphanage in

Africa and aspired to returning there to help again.

Just a few nights before his disappearance Martin attended a party in Carmichaels of Hollywood, where he was seen chatting, joking and laughing with friends.

There are only theories as to what has become of the young Hollywood man who was then aged 21. Could he have fallen into the docks and tragically drowned, with his body becoming trapped or snagged under the water?

Could he have lost his memory after being innocently injured in some way or even been attacked by persons unknown?

Searches were conducted by police and other divers of the harbour where Martin disappeared. Hundreds of volunteers joined extensive searches along the shores of Belfast Lough and the marshlands, known as the Kinnegar Lagoons, which border the harbour estate.

A one point a specially trained dog, which can sniff out evidence of human remains in the water, was used in additional searches of the harbour.

Martin's family members

conducted their own relentless search for any scrap of information as to what has become of him.

His mum Karen embarked on her own month long search mission to highlight his case across England, Scotland and Wales.

Her trip, during which she fell ill with suspected heart trouble, publicised his case in 14 cities with accompanying TV, radio and newspaper information appeals.

The journey was funded with the proceeds of two charity tribute concerts which were held for Martin in his home town and raised over £12,000.

Martin's dad Raymond extended his own search for his missing son to the south of the border.

He has gone to the Republic on a number of occasions in search of any scrap of information, including trips to Dublin, Limerick and Clare.

Further information can be obtained via

[www.ourmartykelly.com](http://www.ourmartykelly.com)  
The investigation into Martin's case is being conducted by the PSNI at Musgrave Street station in Belfast. It can be contacted on 0845 600 8000.