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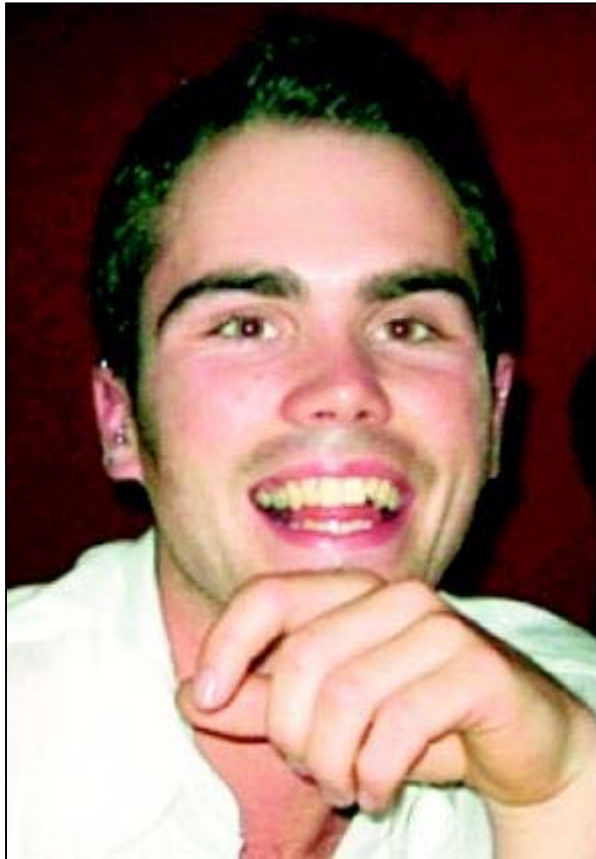
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Amnesia theory over missing man



By Bryan Kay

THE FAMILY of a Belfast man who vanished on New Year's Day will arrive in Dundee tomorrow in the hope of finding clues that could lead to his whereabouts.

Martin Kelly (22), believed to have friends in the city, disappeared at about 7 that night from the docks of Belfast, near where ferries leave for Scotland.

There are strong suspicions he suffered an acute form of amnesia—fuelled by stress, tiredness or alcohol—which led to a loss of memory and, ultimately, a journey to Scotland.

His mother Karen and partner Drew Craig set off on Thursday on board the "Marty-bus," a motor home doubling as the campaign hub, in the hope of retracing his footsteps and raising awareness of his disappearance. They hope to blitz Dundee with leaflets during the height of the Blues Bonanza music festival.

Speaking last night from Glasgow, the first stop on a tour of 14 cities, she said, "Everything was perfect in his life—there's just no other explanation for his disappearance.

"He was about to complete his apprenticeship as a plumber, he had just bought a holiday home in Bulgaria and was getting ready to go to Australia to live and work for a year.

"He had been working on New Year's Eve and then was out on New Year's Day. I had actually been with him.

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"He was last seen near the docks where ferries leave for Stranraer. We took that route last night up to Glasgow."

Ms Kelly said they are working on the theory he boarded a ferry as a foot passenger, then travelled to one of the UK's main cities, possibly with a lorry driver.

She plans to canvass people in Dundee city centre in the hope Martin's picture might jog a memory.

The peculiarity of the amnesia condition Martin is suspected of suffering could mean he is living somewhere in Scotland oblivious to his past.

Ms Kelly said, "Experts have told us that he could have a type of amnesia that is caused by stress, tiredness or drinking. It can mean a loss of memory for a few days or it might not come back for a few years . . .

"It could be that he was talking to people on board the ferry. We know there were foot passengers on the later ferries.

"A few people have not come forward. That is why we think he may have been speaking to lorry drivers."

Residents in Martin's hometown raised £12,500 to fund attempts to find him. It is anticipated the money will be used to cover basic expenses as the Marty-bus crosses the country, and any medical care needed by Martin.

Any excess will be channelled to build an orphanage in Sudan.

Anyone who thinks they may have seen Martin or knows his whereabouts is asked to call a 24-hour hotline on 0800-555-111.

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