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Last Updated: Thursday, 2 November 2006, 17:27 GMT

**Fresh plea in missing man search**

**A police officer investigating the disappearance of a County Down man has said it is the biggest missing persons inquiry he has been involved with.**



Martin Kelly went missing in Belfast on New Year's Day

Detective Inspector Geoff Smith is leading the hunt to find 22-year-old Martin Kelly from Holywood.

He was last seen leaving Pat's Bar in the Docks area of Belfast on 1 January.

His mother, Karen, is touring in England to publicise the story and appeal for information. DI Smith said he empathised with the family.

"In my career, I have to say, that this is the largest missing persons enquiry that I have personal experience of," he said.

"I can understand and empathise with them; it must be terrible what they go through on a day to day basis."

The story was told in a BBC Three documentary, *Runaways*, broadcast on Thursday night.



“ Either, unfortunately he's

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It follows Karen Kelly's four-week search of cities in England for her son.

**not in this world any more or he is out there, and he does need me**

”

Martin, a plumber and part-time barman, was last seen leaving Pat's Bar in Belfast at about 1910 GMT on 1 January.

Karen Kelly  
Mother

Karen and her partner, Drew, are travelling in a motor home covered in photographs of Martin to try to raise awareness of his disappearance.

The couple believe that after leaving the bar, Martin may have embarked on a ferry for England.

Karen said: "If anyone at all has seen him or even think they have seen him... he is such a beautiful guy you will not forget him. For anyone that is out there, just... please leave a message.



DI Geoff Smith said he empathised with the family

"I have to continue on, it's the only thing I can do.

"He hasn't just left for no reason, and I know that in my heart something has happened. Either, unfortunately he's not in this world anymore, or he is out there, and he does need me."

The police have revealed that they have a "significant" piece of CCTV footage of a man in a courtyard at the side of Pat's Bar. They believe that man to be Martin Kelly.

Mr Smith said: "The time of day, is 1920 GMT, New Years Day and that would match in to the last witness statement.

"And that particular frame... the family have seen. And they say that that does look like Martin because of his stature. So I am quite confident that this is Martin Kelly."



The couple are trying to publicise details of Martin's disappearance

The Kelly family have previously enlisted the help of a psychic to try and help them in the search.

Karen admits that not knowing where her son is is difficult to deal with on a daily basis.

"Sometimes you have off days, and down days," she said.

"Days that things just don't go the way you want them to go but you lift yourself back up.. and you start all over again."

**Runaways was screened at 1930 GMT on BBC Three on Thursday 2 November.**

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