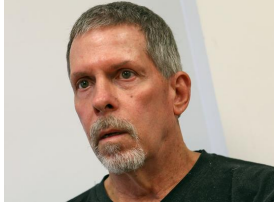


Calif. amnesia patient's sister found in Louisiana

Michael Boatwright was found unconscious in a Palm Springs, Calif., Motel 6 room on Feb. 28 and taken to the hospital, a social worker says.

Kate McGinty, The (Palm Springs, Calif.) Desert Sun 7:42 a.m. EDT July 16, 2013

The Desert Sun located a sister of the 61-year-old who has spent more than 19 weeks at Desert Regional Medical Center insisting he is named Johan Ek and has no memory of his life as Boatwright.



(Photo: Jay Calderon, The Palm Springs, Calif., Desert Sun.)

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PALM SPRINGS, Calif. — The family of Michael Boatwright — who was found unconscious in a Palm Springs motel room four months ago and woke up speaking only Swedish

(http://www.mydesert.com/article/20130715/NEWS01/307150001/Michael-Boatwright-amnesia-Palm-Springs-Sweden?nclick_check=1) — heard about his whereabouts for the first time Monday.

The Desert Sun located a sister of the 61-year-old who has spent more than 19 weeks at Desert Regional Medical Center insisting he is named Johan Ek and has no memory of his life as Boatwright. Despite the Florida identification found in his wallet, he has been speaking only in Swedish and says he does not understand English.

STORY: [Man awakens in hospital with no memory of his past \(http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/07/12/man-awakens-in-hospital-with-no-memory-of-his-past/2513869/\)](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/07/12/man-awakens-in-hospital-with-no-memory-of-his-past/2513869/)

Boatwright's family did not know whether he was alive or dead, his sister Michelle Brewer told The Desert Sun over the phone from her home in Louisiana.

"I haven't talked to him in years. He just disappeared," she said.

Brewer estimated she had last spoken to her brother about 10 years ago. She didn't have any way to get in touch with him, even when their mother died last year, she said.

"He's always been just a wanderer. Then he'd come back when he needed some money or something from somebody. Then he'd take off again," Brewer told The Desert Sun.

Boatwright was overwhelmed by the flood of calls Monday, but wanted to thank those who were helping him piece together his story, hospital spokesman Rich Ramhoff said.

A social worker has struggled to piece together what happened to Boatwright before he was found unconscious in a room at Motel 6 on Feb. 28, as first reported by The Desert Sun. He carried four tennis rackets, two cell phones and a set of photographs.

The story cracked open Monday after media across the world — from the Swedish paper Aftonbladet to the Daily Mail in the U.K. to the Huffington Post — picked up his story. It captured the imagination of amateur sleuths across the country who have sent The Desert Sun photos of people who look like Boatwright, while Internet users in Sweden said they recognized him as an American who moved to Sweden in the 1980s.

"I'm in shock ... having just rediscovered a childhood sweetheart who has lost his memory in the United States," Ewa Espling wrote on her Facebook wall.

Boatwright learned to speak "decent" Swedish and played on a jousting team with a Medieval association, according to Aftonbladet.

"We had played on foot and it was he is on the armor and such. Then he disappeared and was gone for several years," it quoted John Cassel as saying.

The U.S. Navy veteran — who was raised in Florida and often worked on the beaches near his parents' Miami home — first visited Sweden in 1981, according to multiple friends.

Espling said she met Boatwright on his first visit, when he was wandering the street and looking lost. She thought he had "the most kind eyes (she) had ever seen" and invited him to coffee.



Michael Boatwright has amnesia and is staying at the Desert Regional Medical Center until his friends or family can be located. (Photo: Jay Calderon, The Palm Springs, Calif., Desert Sun)

The two fell in love, spent about three years together and planned to marry, Espling told The Desert Sun. But he told her he was haunted by nightmares from what he saw during the Vietnam War, she said.

"He was restless inside and tried to find outside peace, and I do think he found that in me and my family," she said.

Throughout the 1980s, Boatwright lived on a boat called "Honey Bea" off Rhode Island in 1984, according to the postmarks of letters he sent to Espling. He also spent time in Houston, Mexico and Newport, in addition to stints with his parents in Miami, she said.

Boatwright left Sweden for good around 2003, according to several reports.

"No one had heard from him in over 15 years," Aftonbladet quotes friend Olle Sahlin as saying.

Boatwright was likely a 3D graphic designer and had taught English in both Japan for 10 years and China for four years, according to online profiles.

Then Boatwright flew to Palm Springs from Hong Kong on Feb. 24, the day his Chinese visa expired. He was found unconscious four days later.

Guest records at the Motel 6 only go back three months, so the hotel cannot verify whose name was on the room where Boatwright was found, a manager told the Desert Sun on Monday.

Palm Springs police have documented Boatwright's information in case anyone lists Boatwright as missing or wanted, Sgt. Harvey Reed told The Desert Sun on Monday.

Officers helped paramedics on Feb. 28 when they were called to assist with an unconscious man.

The social worker assigned to his case called police March 6 and asked for an incident report to make sure that Boatwright's vital records were noted in case anyone was searching for him, Reed said.

"That's it, as far as our involvement as of now," Reed said Monday.

A psychiatrist and psychologist have diagnosed him with Transient Global Amnesia in a "fugue state," likely triggered by some kind of emotional or physical trauma.

Desert Regional Medical Center moved him to the hospital's skilled nursing facility, where he remained Monday as the medical team decides how to safely discharge him.

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