



Case of Michael Boatwright

DISSOCIATIVE AMNESIA

Michael Boatwright was taken to the emergency room of the Desert Regional Medical Center in Palm Springs, California. He had been found unconscious in his motel room. When he awoke in the hospital, he said his name was Johan Ek and he only spoke Swedish. He had with him five tennis rackets, two cell phones, a duffel bag filled with casual athletic clothes, some money, photos, and identification cards. Each of the cards—including a passport, a VA card, and a social security card—said he was Michael Boatwright. When asked by a translator about the identification cards, the man reported that he was Johan and did not know Michael. The hospital determined it would be unsafe to release this person without any memory who only spoke Swedish. He remained in a nursing facility for a few weeks so his condition could be evaluated. He had nightmares almost every night. During this time, hospital personnel sought to determine his past through his ID cards. They discovered that he recently flew in from China where he had taught English and was a graphic designer for the previous 4 years. Before that, he had worked in Japan for 10 years. The hospital staff also

found that he did live in Sweden when he was younger. Through contacts in these countries, they were able to obtain some pictures of him with others. He reported that although he did not recognize the pictures, they gave him a sense of comfort and security. The hospital staff also sought to determine if he showed any signs of faking, which he did not. He was diagnosed with dissociative amnesia.

Michael Boatwright then returned to Sweden and worked as a private tennis coach. Some 14 months after he left California, he was found dead in his apartment in Uddevalla, Sweden. The Swedish police described his death as a suicide.

Based on V. Pelham (2013, July 7). Michael Boatwright awakes in Palm Springs with apparent amnesia. *The Desert Sun*. The death was reported in *The Desert Sun*, April 23, 2014.

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