

Vacationing Alberta man dies at Cancun resort

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Family and friends of a southern Alberta man who died while on vacation at a Mexican resort are looking for answers amid conflicting reports about his death.

Chris Morin, a 30-year-old resident of Okotoks south of Calgary, fell to his death early Thursday morning from a fourth-floor balcony. The Cancun newspaper Novedades de Quintana Roo reported that Morin fell after a night of drinking with a friend.

Local authorities are investigating whether Morin may have been pushed off the balcony or whether he jumped, according to the paper.

A Mexican deputy state prosecutor told the Associated Press that authorities suspect Morin's death was a suicide. Luis Canche said forensic scientists found alcohol, cocaine and marijuana in Morin's blood.

"The tourist abused illegal substances and we believe that influenced his fatal decision," he said.

However, Joseph Clayton, who was travelling with Morin, was quoted by the Cancun newspaper as saying that just before he fell asleep, he heard his friend arguing with someone.

Morin's brother-in-law, Kevin Brown, told Calgary radio station CHQR that Morin may have been involved in some sort of dispute at a bar earlier in the evening.

"Our biggest concern is to make sure the investigation goes properly down there ... so if there's any foul play or if there was an accident, or what happened, we just want to make sure we find out."

Brown said the family has tried to enlist the help of the Canadian consulate and local politicians in an attempt to get more information.

Ted Menzies, Member of Parliament for the Alberta riding of Macleod, said he has spoken with Morin's family and with the Canadian consulate in Mexico. He said he will keep in contact to ensure the family remains fully informed.

A manager at the hotel where Morin was staying, the Barcelo Costa Maya Hotel, said he wasn't on duty the night the man died and no one could comment. An officer from the police branch that patrols the hotel district also had no information.

Friends and relatives of Morin's flocked to a Facebook tribute page to post their condolences and seek answers. Some wondered how the man with the "awesome sense of humour" and deep dimples, who was a fixture on the Calgary punk scene, could be gone.

Morin's death is the latest in a number of high-profile crimes and fatal accidents that have befallen Canadians in Mexico.



Chris Morin, seen in an undated photo, died while vacationing at a Cancun resort. (Courtesy Joe Gieni)

Dominic and Nancy Ianiero from Woodbridge, Ont., died in February 2006 after their throats were slashed in their Cancun hotel room. Police have never found their killer.

In January, Woodbridge teenager Adam DePrisco was an apparent hit-and-run victim in Acapulco, although his parents have speculated his death was not an accident.

Just six months ago, another Albertan died after what authorities said was an apparent fall from a resort balcony in Cancun.

An initial autopsy on the body of Jeff Toews confirmed injuries consistent with a fall, including severe head injuries, skull fractures and severe abdominal injuries. But his family suspected the 34-year-old was the victim of a horrific beating.

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