

AMERICAS | NYT NOW

Remains Thought to Be Those of American Missing in Mexico

By DAMIEN CAVE JULY 11, 2014

MEXICO CITY — Harry Devert left his job as a financial trader in New York for adventure on the road. He planned to ride his motorcycle to the World Cup in Brazil — only to vanish six months ago while heading through a dangerous part of Mexico on his way to the Pacific Coast.

Now, Mexican authorities believe they have located his remains, in two plastic bags discovered Thursday night in La Unión, in the state of Guerrero, about 275 miles southwest of where he was last heard from in January. The police say they received a tip that led them to the discovery, but little else is known.

The identity of the body has not been confirmed; the police said they are conducting DNA tests. No other evidence, and nothing suggesting a cause of death, has been released, but the muddy motorcycle found near the bags matches the model driven by Mr. Devert, the police said. And it had what his family has identified as a personal detail: a globe-trotter sticker on the gas tank.

Ann Devert, Mr. Devert's mother, told a reporter from Borderland Beat, a blog that follows organized crime in Mexico, that the green Kawasaki's vehicle identification number "matches Harry's bike." Referring to the bags, which appeared to have been moved from another place, she added: "The remains are unrecognizable."

If what was found turns out to be Mr. Devert's body, it would mean a crushing end to a relentless search that brought Ms. Devert to Mexico, and included appeals for help in dozens of news media outlets and via social media. A Facebook page called #Help Find Harry has more than 25,000 "likes." Mr. Devert's last communication with his girlfriend in New York was ominous. He had just passed

through part of Michoacán, a lawless state teeming with drug cartels, soldiers and vigilantes, and at 3:18 p.m. on Jan. 25, he wrote her a text message that said: “Just got an hour and a half long escort out of some area it was too dangerous for me to be.”

He added that he would be on the road again soon. “Apparently there’s another military escort waiting for me in some other town,” he wrote.

The Mexican military has denied playing any role in the disappearance of Mr. Devert, 32, who was no novice traveler. He had already completed a five-year trip around the world. An only child who grew up in Westchester County, N.Y., and graduated from Pelham High School there, he was living in New York before embarking on the motorcycle journey to Latin America. He had been on the road for 44 days when he disappeared.

His family said he was looking forward to a rest. His next stop was to have been Zihuatanejo, a beach resort. It sits about 35 miles south of where the plastic bags and the motorcycle were found.

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