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Family of missing Stoughton man hires private investigator

Ilya Lastovkin has been missing since Nov. 12

By **Kate Sullivan Foley**
ENTERPRISE CORRESPONDENT

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STOUGHTON — The family of Ilya Lastovkin, the Stoughton man missing for more than 11 weeks, has a nationally known private investigator working on the case.

Joseph Moura, president of National Investigation Bureau, took on the case Dec. 21.

An investigative consultant with the NBC television show "48 Hours," Moura has been running his Stoughton-based detective agency for 27 years and has worked on countless missing person cases, including the high-profile disappearance of 3-year-old Madeleine McCann from a resort hotel room in Portugal.

A Stoughton native, Moura accepted a small amount of money from Lastovkin's family to initiate the investigation, but plans to continue the work pro bono. He said his investigation is in its "very initial" stages.

Lastovkin, 22, was last seen leaving his Memorial Drive home at 6 a.m. on Nov. 12. Foul play is not suspected.

Moura said that a credible source reported seeing the man walking on Route 138 in Stoughton on Nov. 15. The information was investigated by Stoughton police at the time, but didn't lead anywhere.

Acting Stoughton Police Chief Tom Murphy said no new leads have come in since.

The sighting has given the family hope that their loved one, who last year suffered from a bout of depression, could be staying with someone or might have checked himself into a shelter or health facility, Moura said.

Last month, the investigator met with Stoughton police Detective Jim O'Connor and viewed the files on the case, including interviews with all of Lastovkin's family, friends and last known associates.

"Detective O'Connor has done a magnificent job," Moura said.

Stoughton police have also conducted multiple land searches and brought the Massachusetts State Police in for an air search in the weeks following the disappearance. The department reviewed phone records and pursued contacts in Indiana, New York and Connecticut. They also brought in a state police forensics specialist to examine Lastovkin's computer.

"They have gone over and above what would normally be done in a case like this," Moura said.

Lastovkin's older brother, Leonid, 27, said the family has not ruled out any possibilities, but continues to be optimistic.

"My mother is very hopeful that he will come home," Leonid said.

The family created a missing person flier and posted it in Stoughton and Brockton. They have also visited homeless shelters and areas Lastovkin was known to frequent, like area lakes, woods and the Blue Hills area. He said everywhere they have gone people have been kind and have agreed to look for his brother.

Lastovkin might not be in his "right frame of mind" and may have left in order to solve a problem he was having, Leonid said.

"It will be easier for him if he has his family on his side to help him solve the problem — his family really cares about him and really wants him to come home," Leonid added.

Moura said it is important to spread Lastovkin's photo around and continue to remind the public to keep an eye out for him.

"The family hopes he is out there someplace and we can find some type of clue to lead us to where he is at," Moura said.

Lastovkin was last employed by the Family Dollar Store on Washington Street in Stoughton. He has lived in Stoughton for the past five years. Before that, he lived in Canton for six years.

He is described as a white male with pale skin and messy brown hair. He is 6 feet 1 inch tall and weighs 135 to 140 pounds. He tends to slouch. Lastovkin has a thick jaw line, wide smile and hazel eyes. He may have been wearing a black jacket and boots when he was last seen. He speaks with a slight Russian accent.

If anyone has seen Ilya Lastovkin since Nov. 12, call Stoughton police at 781-344-2424 or the National Investigation Bureau at 781-344-0384.



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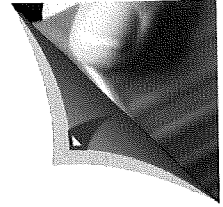
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