



**BALMER SAYS HE HAS NO MEMORY OF DAY (APPEARED IN EDITIONS 1, 2 & 4 ONLY) - BALMER: MEMORY OF DAY IS MISSING (APPEARED IN EDITION 3 ONLY) EX-LEGISLATOR TREATED IN HOSPITAL FOR HEAD WOUND AFTER MONDAY'S 16-HOUR DISAPPEARANCE. (APPEARED IN EDITIONS 1, 3 & 4 ONLY)**

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Former state Rep. David Balmer remained hospitalized with a head injury Tuesday, telling relatives and police he had no recollection of what led to his daylong disappearance on Monday.

Police were unable to unravel the mystery of exactly what happened between the time they found his abandoned car in east Charlotte and he collapsed on a doorstep in Grier Heights.

``When they tried to talk to him, they couldn't get anything out of him - nothing that made any sense," said Charlotte-Mecklenburg Capt. Matt Hunter. ``There were some I don't know.' ``

Police are waiting for Balmer to talk. ``He has the information," Hunter said. ``He knows what happened during those 16 to 17 hours he was unaccounted for."

Balmer, 33, was listed in good condition at Carolinas Medical Center with what a hospital spokesman called a concussionlike injury.

``We're thankful to God that David's alive, given the circumstances," said brother John Balmer Jr. ``He has obviously gone through a terrible ordeal."

The ordeal is just the latest for Balmer and his family.

Last year he lost a congressional primary after acknowledging lies on his resume. Two months ago his wife, Mary Kay, who had stood by him through moments of triumphs and pain, filed for divorce. She alleged physical and mental abuse as well as a pattern of erratic behavior.

``I always felt I should forgive, and I forgave much," she said Tuesday.

Monday morning, Balmer's 1991 Chrysler New Yorker was found in a fire lane at East Mecklenburg High School where police believe it had been parked before dawn. The driver's door was open and small bloodstains were found on the interior and exterior.

A massive search ensued with a helicopter, dozens of police officers and dogs combing the woods.

Four miles away, a family in Grier Heights heard their doorbell ring at about 10:30 p.m.

James Carr and his granddaughter, Knieshia Morris, 14, looked out the window of their gray bungalow and saw a disheveled looking man kneeling on their front porch.

``He said, Sir, please help me, I'm hurt,' `` Knieshia recalled Tuesday.

She said he then fell down on the porch. They called 911.

Knieshia said police officers arrived, and tried to talk to Balmer while waiting for an ambulance.

``They asked him what his name was, and he hesitated. Then he said, I don't know,' `` she said. ``They asked how he got here, and he said, I don't know.' ``

Balmer was wearing shorts, a white T-shirt and running shoes, and appeared to have a scrape on one knee. ``He

was soaking wet, like he had been in the creek," Knieshia said.

Family members told Mary Kay Balmer that her husband ``was more coherent today than he was last night. . . . David can't remember what happened."

Mary Kay Balmer, who has been living in Wayne County with their daughter, Laura, said she has ``absolutely no idea" what occurred.

``It's absurd; it's strange that his car would be found at East Meck," she said. ``Our home is in south Charlotte."

In divorce papers filed in Wayne County in mid-August, she described a marriage starkly at odds with the one portrayed by the couple in public.

She alleged Balmer physically abused her, and ``constantly" and ``repeatedly" abused her verbally and mentally. Balmer, her suit alleges, ``has been so unpredictable in his behavior toward (his wife) that she never knows what to expect from him and what will set him off.'``

Asked Tuesday why she continued to stand by him if such allegations were true, she said: ``Well, love is a confusing thing sometimes. But I have a lot of faith in God. Always have. And I always felt I should forgive."

John Balmer Jr. said his brother has denied her allegations.

``He did not admit to any of the charges in that complaint," John Balmer said. ``He settled that custody issue because he wanted Mary Kay to have custody of Laura. David very much wants Mary Kay and Laura to come back home."

The Balmers' entire married life had revolved around politics.

Four months after they wed in 1988, Balmer, then 26, was elected to the first of three terms in the N.C. House. Mary Kay Balmer, who had campaigned side by side with her husband, worked as his secretary. By 1993, Balmer had become House minority leader.

He ran for Congress in 1994 but his campaign stalled when resumes surfaced with suspicious claims: that he played varsity soccer in college, clerked for a state Supreme Court justice and graduated in the top of his law school class.

He first blamed rivals for the embellishments. But at a news conference with Mary Kay at his side, he accepted blame and apologized.

He lost the Republican runoff overwhelmingly to Sue Myrick.

The loss, like his recent separation, hit hard.

``David's one of those guys who's focused," said friend Hal Wilson. ``And when something happens that gets him off-focus he seems like a little lost kid sometimes."

**Caption:** Photo  
Balmer

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