

Scott Duncan

# Journey of Kijana

At a time when I was busy worrying about ENTER scores, parties and flipping burgers, a guy my age was sailing his way solo around the world. In October 1999, Jesse Martin had just completed his eleven month expedition, making him the youngest person ever to do so. Reading his journal each week in the Herald-Sun, I was reminded that outside education, there was another world that I could be a part of.

During the 328 days aboard "Lionheart," Jesse worked on developing a proposal for his next journey; "Kijana," meaning young people in Swahili. Jesse and a group of other young people would travel the world over a period of three to four years, visiting places like the Amazon, Galapagos, the Spice Islands and Papua New Guinea. Each of the crew members would each bring skills that would be used to develop a documentary series, focusing on the topics of "youth, environment, culture and adventure." (Lionheart, Pg 240)

The journey departed in March 2002, the crew of six comprising of Jesse, his brother, Beau; cameraman and friend, Josh Schmidt; Reach Youth Leader, actor and writer, Mika Tran and American student, Nicolette Fendon. But as the journey progressed, the thread in the sails of Kijana began to come apart at the seams. Martin, Tran and Fendon were not getting along and it was in Darwin that Tran and Fendon chose to leave the journey. Not long after, Beau decided to leave the journey to focus on following other dreams, and more recently Martin himself announced that he had decided to abandon the journey.

**"Young people make mistakes. I am allowed to get things wrong and as long as I'm being honest, I can live with myself, no matter the results."** (Dream On, p. 3)

To me, Jesse will continue to be someone who I respect and admire. Each and every one of us somewhere deep inside has a dream they want to achieve or a vision of for the future, evident through the number of posts on the Kijana website Wonderwall. The problem is that for far too many of us, they simply remain dreams, rather than being something we work toward making a reality. Whilst his second attempt may not have turned out as originally planned, Martin can at least know that he tried, while the rest of us wonder what could have been.

As for the Journey of Kijana, the rest of the team in Melbourne is in crisis mode. With sponsors pulling out and Josh as the only remaining crew member, one wonders what will become of this ocean adventure. Whilst it may have been Jesse's dream, many see no reason why Josh and other new team members couldn't continue the journey. As one sponsor in a recent interview with the Herald-Sun pondered "why should Martin's departure bring an end to what was an otherwise brilliant idea?"

Even Josh wonders, noting on the Kijana website that "Jesse is a pretty good draw card, but at the end of the day, I think the sponsors linked into the dream of young people, inspiring, and being inspired by other young people." It would appear however, that others don't share the same vision. The deadline in obtaining further funding for the venture as since past and it appears without Martin's name behind the project, interest levels have dropped considerably.

The Journey of Kijana was about young people learning through experiences. Although the journey may have been vastly different to what was expected, valuable lessons can be still taken from the experiences of the group. And the rest of us can take heart in thinking that a journey as well-planned as this still encounters the same sorts of problems and obstacles as we do, working on our dreams.

Meanwhile, Kijana sits in waters off Thailand, waiting for its next ocean adventure. The question on everyone's lips is whether or not this will be its final destination.

**Be inspired by Jesse's feats, see what others are dreaming, and let us know;**  
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## Kijana Wonderwall

<http://www.kijana.net/wonderwall/index.asp>

## Jesse Martin's books;

Dream On : The journey of Kijana - making it happen (2002)

Lionheart - A Journey of the Human Spirit (2000)

## Herald-Sun (Melb) feature

Jamieson, Tim "Mutiny at sea" in 'Weekend', 19/04/03, p.7

**Dreams are not all glory and success, but without them, what is life?**

([www.kijana.net](http://www.kijana.net))