

KIM DELANEY GASHES HEAD OPEN IN DRUNKEN PLUNGE



Kim began taping a Philly episode without bangs (left), but suddenly sprouted them to finish her scenes

JUST weeks before Kim Delaney's recent DUI bust, the troubled actress got so plastered that she fell down the stairs in her home, ripping a gaping wound in her forehead that needed 25 stitches to close, sources say.

The nasty gash was so prominent that the actress had to get a new haircut with bangs to hide it in order to complete an episode of her new ABC crime drama Philly, insiders reveal.

"The cut was huge and just below the hairline," says a source close to the former NYPD Blue star. "And bangs were the simplest solution."

Delaney's boozy fall happened on Christmas day, during a party for friends and family in her home.

"She was drinking her usual martinis and was getting drunker and drunker," says the source. "Kim got so drunk that she toppled over and fell down the stairs. She landed on her face. There was blood everywhere. And the gash on her forehead was awful!"

The 40-year-old brunette, who was rushed to the hospital to be stitched up, is the first to admit that she loves to party.

"When I'm drunk, I like to have a good time," she boasts. "I get playful. I don't like people who get emotional when they're drunk - it's sappy."

But slicing open her forehead apparently wasn't enough to convince her to change her ways.

As GLOBE recently reported, Delaney

was busted on a DUI charge Jan. 26 outside her Malibu, Calif., home after another motorist called 911, telling authorities he spotted her in her black Mercedes S430 swerving across lanes and narrowly missing other cars.

The motorist followed her for about three miles to the beachfront pad she shares with her producer-fiance Alan Barnette. Delaney is scheduled to appear in Malibu Municipal Court March 27.

"I felt really sorry for Kim after she fell," says the insider. "It was humiliating and tragic for her as an actress to hurt herself like that. What more does she need to force her to face the fact that she has a serious drinking problem?"

The source says that Kim's ex-husband, actor Joe Cortese, the father of her 12-year-old son Jack, is extremely concerned about her boozing.

Kim and Cortese met on the set of the 1988 mini-series *Something Is Out There*. The 53-year-old actor is best known for his roles in *American History X* and *The Rat Pack*. He also stars in the upcoming flick *You Got Nothin'* and is set to begin filming *Against the Ropes* with Meg Ryan.

"Joe and Kim had a bitter split," says the insider. "They battled over custody of Jack. Both were huge drinkers, but Joe got sober. Kim would never address her drinking and it's gotten worse over the years."

"Now, everyone close to Kim hopes these last few drunken episodes will be her wake-up call." - ROBIN MIZRAHI

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