

Time to dust off your conspiracy theories

 devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20041209-00

December 9, 2004



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When I started studying Swedish, my web searches happened to alight upon Francis Strand's blog thanks to its wonderful title, "How to learn Swedish in 1000 difficult lessons", and I've been following his musings on life on Stockholm ever since.

Wednesday morning, an apartment just a block away from his own exploded under curious circumstances. According to the initial report,

A man is missing after the powerful explosion which blew out an entire apartment on Surbrunnsgatan in Stockholm early Wednesday morning. ...

The apartment's resident was not found among the evacuees. ... Police bomb-sniffing dogs searched through the apartment without any indication of explosives. The police's main theory, therefore, is that a gas leak caused the explosion.

Later that day, that theory fell under suspicion, at least by the conspiracy-minded press:

"Nothing points to gas explosion."

An expert at the energy company Fortum doubts that the violent explosion was caused by gas.

"There are things which are inconsistent with a gas explosion. First of all, the explosion should have caused a fire if it had to do with a gas flow. If it is still a question of a gas accident, it is unique in its scope. ... A huge amount of gas is required for so powerful a blast. The residence must have been filled to the gills. We have no documented instance of this type of explosion ever being caused by accident."

Even more interesting is that the apartment's resident had been released by the police just last Friday:

The missing man is suspected of book theft.

The owner of the Surbrunnsgatan apartment which exploded is the man who is suspected of theft in the millions [of Swedish Kronor] from the Royal Library. The man was released from custody last Friday.

The 48-year-old had been held in custody for approximately one month. On Thursday, police held a so-called conclusion hearing with the man. Prosecutor Stefan Lind determined later that there was no reason to continue holding the 48-year-old who was released on Friday. “But the investigation into him continues,” says Stefan Lind.

The 48-year-old allegedly stole millions of Kronor worth of rarities [rare books, presumably] from the library where he was employed. The man has to some degree admitted to the crimes.

Francis’s current houseguest thinks the man was killed by the people he sold the books to. I myself don’t know what to think. It’s just plain curious.

The Swedish word for the day is själ. It means *soul*. [Updated 9am: Got the word wrong! I had written skäl instead of själ. That’ll teach me to flatter by imitation. Only Francis Strand can do it right.]



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