

Sture Bergwall Released From 23 Years Imprisonment After 8 Murder Convictions Overturned

Sture Bergwall was described for almost two decades as Sweden's 'Hannibal Lecter' before reinvestigation of his cases discovered he is innocent of the eight murders he was convicted of committing. He has been released after all his convictions were overturned.

In December 1990 Bergwall held a family hostage while his accomplice forced the father to take out about \$37,000 from his bank.^[fn.1] Although Bergwall brandished a knife no family member was harmed during the incident. Bergwall was arrested and prosecuted for serious robbery. After his conviction the judge took into consideration that Bergwall had been diagnosed with a personality disorder, and in June 1991 he was sentenced to inpatient mental care. Bergwall was incarcerated in the secure psychiatric unit of the Säter mental hospital in Säter, Sweden.

Immediately upon his incarceration the 41-year-old Bergwall was administered large quantities of psychotropic drugs, and he would remain in a constant drugged state for the next ten years — until 2001.

Bergwall began using the name Thomas Quick at Säter and started confessing to heinous crimes that he said he committed between 1976 and 1988. Bergwall chose Thomas Quick because Quick was his mother's maiden name, and he said his first victim's name was Thomas. Bergwall told hospital and police authorities tales of stabbings, stranglings, rape, incest, and cannibalism involving more than thirty victims in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland.

Bergwall was eventually tried and convicted after six separate trials of murdering eight people in Sweden — five men and three women. His first trial was in 1994, and his last was in 2001. During all of Bergwall's trials the same prosecutor presented the State's case, the same police forensic inspector testified, and the only substantive



Sture Bergwall after his release. (Facebook)

evidence of his guilt were his confessions, because no physical, forensic, or eyewitness evidence linked him to any of the crimes.

Bergwall's trials were national news in Sweden. The reporter for Sweden's largest circulation tabloid, *Aftonbladet*, [wrote during his first trial](#) comparing his appearance as "a pale and unremarkable man in jeans with a shiny bald head"—with his accused actions: "The man is a serial killer, pedophile, necrophiliac, cannibal and sadist. He is very, very sick."

None of Bergwall's convictions were appealed, so weaknesses in the prosecution's case, such as inconsistencies between his confessions and the crimes, were not reviewed before his convictions became final.

After his 2001 trial Bergwall refused to talk with anyone about his self-confessed crimes. Bergwall's silence roughly coincided with him no longer being administered psychotropic drugs.

After seven years of silence, in 2008 Bergwall agreed to a visit from a Swedish filmmaker called Hannes Råstam. During their third meeting Råstam pointed out to Bergwall that in police videos of Bergwall talking about his confessed crimes he seemed drugged up and he didn't seem to know any important details himself. The next time they met Bergwall [told Råstam](#), "I haven't committed any of the murders I've been convicted of, and none of the murders I've confessed to, either. That's the way it is."

In Råstam's documentary broadcast on Swedish television in December 2008 Bergwall recanted his confessions. Bergwall claimed they were a combination of being heavily medicated and his desire for attention. He explained that he obtained information about the people in his confessions from newspapers and magazines in the local library. Bergwall's recantation wasn't surprising to many people in Sweden who for years had doubted he committed the crimes he confessed to under his alias of Thomas Quick. Doubters of his guilt included the parents of some of his alleged victims. A book had even been published by one skeptic [that was called](#) *Thomas Quick: Mythomaniac*.

In 2009 Bergwall submitted a petition challenging his 1997 conviction. and he eventually filed petitions challenging all eight of his murder convictions. Reinvestigation of the

cases resulted in disclosure that four of the "murders" may not even have been crimes — and two of the people may not even be dead. Between September 2010 and July 2013 Bergwall was acquitted or the charges were dismissed in all eight murder cases. It was official. Scandinavia's most notorious serial killer was nothing but the figment of "Thomas Quick's" drug fueled imagination.

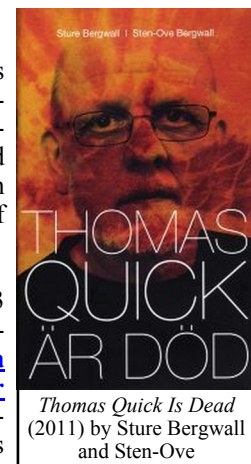
Swedish legal expert Sven-Erik Alhem [called Bergwall's case](#) Sweden's "greatest miscarriage of justice in modern times."

Bergwall's first-person account of how he came to confess to more than two dozen murders he didn't commit is in *Thomas Quick is Dead*, the book he wrote with his brother Sten-Ove that was published in 2011 in Sweden.

Because of his known mental issues he wasn't immediately released after his exoneration pending a review of his condition.

In November 2013 the Swedish government [appointed a special investigator](#) to review Bergwall's case. It was announced the "investigation will not lay blame on individuals involved in the case but rather seek to understand what went wrong," and the investigator is "tasked with going over the actions of legal and health care officials who convicted and cared for Bergwall during his court-ordered stay at a psychiatric hospital." The mother of a man Bergwall confessed to murdering told Swedish Radio [she wanted the investigation](#) to identify the officials responsible for the failure of justice in Bergwall's case, and "I think it is absolutely horrible that the authorities can do so much wrong and yet not have to answer for it. All the time has been devoted to Thomas Quick, instead of following the real killers."

On March 19, 2014 the administrative court in Falun [issued its ruling](#) that although he continues to suffer from a "personality disorder" it didn't require his confinement, and that "the forensic psychiatric care of Sture Bergwall shall continue and change from closed to open care." The 64-year-old Bergwall was released later that day after 23 years at the Säter state hospital.



Säter mental hospital in Säter, Sweden

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Leila M. Dekker Found Guilty Of Improper Medical Conduct After Her Acquittal In Two Criminal Prosecutions

After being acquitted in two separate criminal prosecutions, Dr. Leila Maria Dekker has been found guilty by the Western Australia State Administrative Tribunal of improper conduct for failing to stop and render medical assistance to a woman who died at the scene of a traffic accident in April 2002.

Dr. Leila Dekker graduated with a [medical degree](#) from the Universidade Federal Fluminense in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and became a doctor in 1974. She speaks Portuguese, Spanish, French, and English. She immigrated to Australia and became registered as specialist in diagnostic radiology in 1996. In the spring of 2002 Dr. Dekker was living in the area of Karratha, a city of about 16,000 that is 950 miles north of Perth in Western Australia. She was working for the Kinetic Health Group in Karratha.

Dekker's life changed forever on April 27, 2002 when she went to the garbage dump outside the nearby town of Roebourne. At about 6:30 p.m. she was returning from a trip to the dump that is on Cherratta Road. Dekker was stopped where Cherratta Road makes a 90 degree turn at a T-intersection, when an oncoming vehicle on the wrong side of the road began veering toward her. (Australian's drive on the left side of the road.) To avoid a collision Dekker pulled her Toyota pickup forward into the brush across the road and the oncoming vehicle passed behind her. Although Dekker heard what sounded like a crash, she couldn't see anything because it was dark and there was no street lighting. (Sunset was an hour earlier at about 5:30 p.m.) Dekker had no flashlight, no cell phone, no medical supplies or even a first-aid kit with her, so she immediately drove to the Roebourne police station that was less than a 1/4 mile away and re-

ported the incident. Police officers promptly went to the intersection and found the vehicle had run off the road and rolled over. The driver, Marshall Bobby, wasn't seriously injured, but his passenger Josie Tumbler was thrown from the Land Rover. She died at the scene from severe internal injuries.

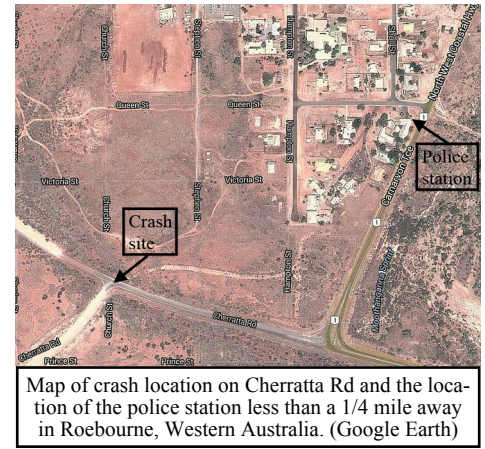
When interviewed Dekker [told the police](#), "as a medical doctor I know there would be a bad injury and I know it was a waste of time, so I go to police so they can get help." (JD Note: As a non-native English speaker Dekker apparently mixed her diction.) She later [made a statement](#) that immediately "After the near miss incident on 27 April 2002 in Roebourne, I was in a state of shock. I was terrified as I thought I had almost been killed."

Dekker was charged in the Karratha District Court with dangerous driving causing death.

During her trial in December 2005 the prosecution's opening statement and closing argument were based on the testimony of the wrecked vehicle's driver that Dekker pulled out in front of him and the evasive action he took resulted in him running off the road and rolling over. Police officers at the scene and officers who later investigated the incident, testified that tire marks left by the crashed vehicle began some distance before where it left the road. There was also police testimony about the deficient condition of the crashed vehicle's tires, steering, and brakes, that it lack of seat belts, and that its front seat could tip because it wasn't securely fastened.



Dekker testified in her defense she was stopped at the intersection when the oncoming vehicle was on the wrong side of the road and headed to broadside her car on the



driver's side, so she pulled out to avoid a collision. Dekker's passenger, a neighbor who accompanied her to the dump, also testified that Dekker was stopped at the intersection when the oncoming vehicle going upwards of 45 m.p.h. was on the wrong side of the road and on a collision course with Dekker's Toyota.

After Dekker was convicted by a jury she was sentenced to pay a fine of AUSS\$10,000 and her driver's license was suspended for two years.

Although she immediately instructed her lawyer to file an appeal, it wasn't done. She changed lawyers several times who she also talked with about filing an appeal.

In the Roebourne Magistrates Court Dekker was separately charged with dangerous driving causing bodily harm.

During her trial in February 2008 Dekker presented the defense that she pulled into the road to avoid a collision with the oncoming vehicle. However unlike her 2005 trial in the District Court, Dekker's defense was bolstered by Robert Davey, who is considered Western Australia's foremost expert in traffic crash examination and reconstruction. Davey testified that photos taken of tire marks on the road showed that the oncoming vehicle had reached 'critical

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Bergwall's blog translated into English is, www.sturebergwallsblogg.wordpress.com.

Bergwall's Facebook page is, www.facebook.com/stureragnarbergwall.

Bergwall's Twitter page is, www.twitter.com/StureBergwall.

Endnote:

1. The amount was SEK245,000. The value of the Swedish Kroner was .15121 to the U.S. Dollar on Nov. 16, 1995, and .15422 to the U.S. Dollar on April 9, 2014. So the Kroner's longterm value appears to be fairly stable related to the U.S. Dollar. Nov. 16, 1995 is the oldest historical currency date available on the webpage www.xe.com/currencytables.

Sources:

[Sture Bergwall](http://StureBergwall), Wikipedia.org (Swedish webpage translated into English by Google Translate)

[Swedish man once considered serial killer is FREED](#) after it's revealed his eight murder convictions are based on false confessions, *Daily Mail* (London),

March 20, 2014

Wrongly Convicted Swedish 'Hannibal Lecter' To Sue For Damages, *BusinessInsider.com*, March 21, 2014

[The Serial Killer Has Second Thoughts](#): The Confessions of Thomas Quick, *GQ magazine*, August 2013

[Swedish 'Serial killer' Released](#) After Convictions Overturned, AFP Story, March 19, 2014, NTD.TV

[Special investigator named for 'Quick' case](#), Radio Sweden, Nov. 26, 2013

"Thomas Quick is Dead," by Sture Bergwall and Sten-Ove (2011)

