

## [Transcript] Casefile True Crime / Case 244: Engla Höglund & Pernilla Hellgren

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These episodes are designed to be slightly shorter, allowing us to cover a broader range of cases. To receive these episodes early and ad-free, you can support Case File on your preferred platform. Today's episode involves crimes against children and won't be suitable for all listeners. On the morning of Saturday, April 5, 2008, good couple Thomas and Katerina Lungton left their home in the Swedish city of Stockholm to begin a long journey north-west through the countryside. 190 kilometres later they reached their destination, the small inland village of Cherensund. The Lungtons were visiting their friends, the Tubis, who lived nearby on the edge of Lake Gricken. Thomas had brought his brand new digital camera with him, and he spent the day testing it out by documenting the group's activities. After a barbecue lunch, they took a stroll into town.

As they wandered down the rural forested roads towards Cherensund, Thomas snapped candid photos of their journey, capturing the trees, birds and people they passed along the way. It was about 2.15pm when the group emerged from the forest and onto a main country road. There, Thomas spotted a young girl riding a white hybrid-style bicycle towards them. She was wearing black sports shoes, black tracksuit pants and an olive green winter coat zipped up to her chin. Her long brown hair was pulled back by a headband, and her brown eyes looked out from behind a pair of burgundy-rimmed glasses, focused on the road ahead.

Eager to test out the sports feature of his new camera, Thomas dashed across to the other side of the road and took a series of photos of the young cyclist as she peddled past. When Thomas rejoined his group, his friend Ula Torbi asked, Wasn't that Karina's daughter Angla? Ula's husband turned around just as the girl was preparing to turn right onto a gravel track that led into the forest. Cherensund had barely 100 residents, making it easy to recognize 10-year-old Angla Hurglund. It was clear she was heading home, as her

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family's cottage was nestled in the forest just over 500 metres away.

Earlier that day, Angla Hurglund had ridden her bike into Cherensund to attend soccer practice. Before she left, she made a promise to her mother Karina. Angla could ride home by herself as long as she called to check in with Karina along the way. Shortly before 2pm, Angla phoned her mother on a mobile phone to let her know that soccer practice had finished and she was heading home. The ride home was roughly four kilometres, which would take Angla about 15 minutes to complete. At 2.09pm, Angla rang her mother again, dutifully reporting that her trip was going well and that she would be home very soon. As the minutes ticked by, Angla hadn't yet returned and Karina's phone remained silent.

Angla's journey would have taken her down the main road and onto a 400 metre long gravel track through the forest. From there, it was just 200 metres to the Hurglund's cottage.

Yet, 2.30pm hit and Angla was nowhere to be seen.

Karina called her daughter's mobile to check what was holding her up. There was no answer. She tried several more times to no result. Worried, Karina left home to walk the route Angla would have ridden from soccer practice. She made it all the way into town, having found no sign of Angla along the way. It wasn't until Karina made her way back home that she made a significant discovery. As she approached the turn in the forest 200 metres from her family's cottage, Karina spotted a white bicycle abandoned a short distance away amongst the trees. It was Angla's.

Karina immediately phoned the country police who wasted no time in organising a search party to scour the forest for Angla, complete with tracking dogs and a helicopter. The small local community also rallied together to help search the expansive countryside.

That evening, when local couple Peter and Ula Torbi heard about Angla's disappearance, they realised they were the last people to have seen the 10-year-old before she rode into the forest and vanished. Their friend who was with them that afternoon, Thulmus Lungton, looked back through the photos he had taken as the group walked into town. He had happened to capture Angla mid-ride right before she entered the forest. Less than a minute later, Thulmus had snapped another photo that captured a compact red vehicle driving along the road a short distance away. It was a late 90s Saab 93.

Thulmus wasn't the only one who had noticed the red Saab. Local woman Aunt Sophie Lexian had been driving about two kilometres outside of town when she passed Angla on her bike.

Shortly after, Aunt Sophie spotted a man standing on the side of the road, leaning against the parked red Saab. He was facing oncoming traffic and smoking a cigarette.

Aunt Sophie recognised the man, but she couldn't recall exactly who he was or why he looked familiar. Driving onwards, Aunt Sophie then passed the longtons and tourbies on their walk into Sharonsoond.

Police showed Aunt Sophie the photographs taken by Thulmus Lungton. She confirmed the red car travelling behind Angla was the same vehicle she'd seen the man leaning against.

Before she couldn't recognise him at the time, Aunt Sophie now realised she knew exactly who it was. He was a truck driver whom she'd met at the service station where she worked. His name was Undesh Ekland.

Police showed that Ekland owned a red Saab 9.3, but that wasn't all.

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42-year-old Undesh Ekland was born and raised in a small town 20 kilometres from Sharonsoond. For the most part he led an unremarkable life. That was until the age of 30 when Ekland was convicted for the attempted rape of a young woman. He served 22 months in prison and upon his release he assaulted a 16-year-old girl. Ekland was sent back to prison, but he was released again within six months. He then attempted to rape another 16-year-old girl as she slept in her bed. For this, he was convicted of sexual coercion and sentenced to four months prison. As reported by the publication Ufton Blooded,

Ekland was evaluated as being low risk for repeat offences and was released back into the public. In 2000, he was fined for sexual harassment after exposing himself to a woman. Four years later, he was found in a girl's locker room.

Anglo-Hergland had been missing for almost 30 hours by the time police finally caught up with Undesh Ekland. His truck was spotted at a rest stop in southern Sweden, nearly 600 kilometres from Sharonsoond, not far from the border of Denmark.

Police converged on the vehicle and found Ekland, who they promptly placed under arrest for suspicion of kidnapping. Angla was not with him.

At the same time, police searched Ekland's studio apartment in his hometown. Beer bottles and clothing were strewn about the messy and cluttered space. Pornographic magazines were scattered across the floor and piled in a wardrobe. He was in possession of 17 films depicting illegal sex acts with animals, and also had a collection of used women's underwear. But Angla Hergland was nowhere to be seen.

Analysis of Ekland's laptop revealed that he participated in online chat rooms that were accessible to users as young as 15. According to Ufton Blooded, online, Ekland claimed to be a 37-year-old, quote, dark blonde, powerfully built truck driver.

In reality, he was a bespectacled and overweight man with grey balding hair.

56 illicit images of children were also found saved to his hard drive.

Karina Hergland woke on the third day of her daughter's disappearance to snow-covered ground. An arrest had been made, but the cold snap in the weather meant that if Angla was out in the elements, her chances of survival were low. Search efforts were consequently scaled down as police honed in on Undesh Ekland.

Ekland denied having anything to do with Angla Hergland's disappearance and claimed to be shocked by the arrest. Police were able to obtain a sample of Ekland's DNA, and to their surprise, it led to an unexpected discovery.

Eight years earlier in the summer of 2000, florist Panilla Helgren packed her bags and left her home in Stockholm to begin a long journey through the Swedish countryside.

The 31-year-old was headed to the inland town of Forlund to visit her mother for her fiftieth birthday. A party was held on the night of Saturday, June 3, after which Panilla and her sister left their mother's apartment and headed into town together. They visited two popular restaurants before getting swept up in the revelry of an annual street festival. They carried on into the early hours, and by 2am on Sunday June 4, Panilla had had enough. Wanting to go to bed, she parted ways with her sister and walked off alone in the direction of her mother's apartment, which was a few kilometers away.

Shortly after, teenager Linda Sherstrom was cycling home along a bike path about two kilometers south of Forlund's town centre. As she approached a small bridge, she heard grunting and groaning

coming from a nearby cluster of trees. Linda looked in the direction of the sound and saw a heavy-set man sitting cross-legged on top of a slender woman. The woman's short blonde hair appeared to be stained with blood, and it looked like the man had his hands wrapped around her throat. Linda rushed home and immediately phoned one of her friends whose father was a police officer. Authorities rushed to the overpass and discovered the body of Panilla Helgren. She had been sexually assaulted and strangled to death. The man responsible was nowhere to be seen.

While Panilla's killer had worn a condom, his DNA was recovered on the leg of her trousers. The sample was cross-checked against the DNA of 800 men, but there wasn't a match. In time, Panilla's case went cold. That was until eight years later, when Undersh Eklund's DNA was filed following his arrest for the kidnapping of Angela Hergland. While Eklund's DNA didn't reveal anything about Angela's case, it came back as a match to Panilla Helgren's killer. When detectives informed Eklund of this revelation, he requested a private conversation with his lawyer. Afterwards, he told the detectives that what had happened that summer had been gnawing away at him for eight years.

Eklund had attended Forlund Street Festival on Sunday June 4. He was heading back to his car in the early hours when he spotted Panilla Helgren walking down the road. They struck up a conversation, during which Eklund claimed Panilla invited him back to her mother's house for sex. Eklund suggested they sleep into the nearby woods instead, but Panilla was apprehensive. Eklund dismissed her refusal and forced himself onto Panilla as they crossed a bridge spanning a bike path. He struck her so hard in the head that she fell over the railing and rolled down the hill to the ground below. Blood seeped from her head wound. Eklund dragged Panilla into the nearby trees and proceeded to rape her. She tried to escape, but Eklund used his considerable weight to incapacitate her. Eklund claimed he never intended to kill Panilla. He just wanted to strangle her until she fell unconscious so it would give him the chance to flee.

Investigators were unconvinced of Eklund's version of events.

Whatever the truth, Eklund had confessed to raping and killing Panilla Helgren.

While the DNA had convinced investigators of this fact, they were still stunned that he openly admitted to it. Emboldened by Eklund's willingness to talk, interrogators once again brought up 10-year-old

Angela Hergland. Case file will be back shortly. Thank you for supporting us by listening to this episode's sponsors. Thank you for listening to this episode's ads. By supporting our sponsors, you support Case File to continue to deliver quality content.

Eklund maintained he had nothing to do with Angela's disappearance, but ultimately requested to speak to his lawyer in private again.

Afterwards, he began to tell another story. On the afternoon of Saturday, April 5, 2008, Eklund claimed he'd been driving home when he pulled over just outside of Scherenzund to smoke a cigarette. Shortly after, Angela Hergland rode by on her bike. Eklund returned to his car and continued driving up the road. He noticed the right hand turn onto the gravel track that led into the nearby woods. Eklund thought there might be some deforestation happening nearby and wondered if he could secure some work transporting wood chips in his truck.

He turned onto the track and soon passed Angela again, who was cycling along the same route. A little further ahead, Eklund parked his car and got out. He wondered why Angela was cycling alone in such an isolated area. When she approached, Eklund asked if she lived nearby,

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to which Angela supposedly replied that she was taking a shortcut.

Eklund claimed that Angela was acting arrogant and cheeky towards him, and she kicked him in the leg.

This prompted Eklund to grab Angela and drag her towards his car.

Although he denied it at first, Eklund eventually confessed to having sexually assaulted Angela.

During the attack, Angela kicked Eklund again, causing him to stumble backwards.

She tried to run away, but Eklund caught up with her quickly and threw her to the ground.

He was so enraged that he suffered what he described as some kind of tunnel vision.

This led him to put his full weight on Angela's chest while proceeding to strangle her with his bare hands.

He then put Angela's lifeless body in the trunk of his car before throwing

her bike amongst the surrounding trees. Eklund began driving away from the scene,

but before long he heard a noise coming from the trunk. He stopped to investigate,

realizing it was the sound of Angela's mobile phone ringing in her jacket pocket.

It was her mother checking to see why she hadn't come home yet.

Eklund threw the phone off to the side of the road, then continued home.

There, he changed his clothes and made himself a coffee.

He then got back into his car and continued driving, wanting to create as much distance

between Angela and her home as possible. Along the way, he stopped to buy cigarettes

and eat a pizza, until he reached a secluded forest. He removed Angela's body from the trunk

of his car, doused her with petrol, and set her alight. On the drive home, Eklund visited a

service station and washed his car. He found Angela's burgundy-rimmed glasses in the trunk

and promptly threw them in a bin. His attempted cleanup wasn't perfect.

As traces of Angela's blood were found on the tailgate of his car.

Officers searched the forest where Eklund claimed to have left Angela's body

and soon found her charred remains.

Afterwards, a funeral service was held for Angela,

with so many mourners packing out the church that many had to watch the event on large projector

screens outside. The service was also broadcast live around the nation.

This was a first for Sweden, a testament to the impact that Angela's ordeal had made.

It allowed the whole country to remember Angela as the spirited young girl she was,

and not just a murder victim.

Eklund faced trial for the rape and murders of Penilla Helgren and Angela Hergland in July 2008.

With DNA and blood evidence linking him to both crime scenes, it was an open and shut case.

Eklund took the stand, and while he didn't deny the crimes, he blamed a side of himself

that he called Evil Lundesh. He admitted there was no logic in what he had done to Penilla Helgren,

while still maintaining he had never intended to kill her.

Eklund's lawyer attempted to mitigate his client's moral responsibility

by likening Angela Hergland's fate to a tragic accident.

He quoted the famous short story To Kill a Child by Stig Dugerman,

a Swedish journalist who rose to prominence in the aftermath of World War II.

In the piece, the protagonist accidentally kills a child by running over them with his car.

Observers regarded this as an appalling attempt to elicit sympathy for Eklund.

It was particularly upsetting for Carina Hergland, who swore under her breath as the prose was read

aloud. Her profanities got louder and louder until she eventually shouted at Eklund and

his lawyer, resulting in her removal from the courtroom. Before leaving, Carina looked directly at Eklund and snarled. Is that the best you can do? He stared back passively in response.

Under Eklund was found guilty on all counts and sentenced to life in prison.

The district court rejected the stories he concocted about the lead-up to both attacks.

In Penilla's case, it was likely he had stalked her as she walked home alone from the street festival. She had not propositioned him like he had claimed. The court was also dismissive of Eklund's story about driving down the path that led him to Engla in search of work.

They had no doubts that his sole motivation to turn down the forested track was to assault the 10-year-old. Penilla's father spoke of how Eklund's guilty verdict brought to an end eight years of uncertainty. He described those times as a rollercoaster between hope and despair.

Quote,

Every time I woke up I knew there was someone on the loose that had murdered my daughter.

Neither I nor my family have lived properly. Now it feels better, but far from good.

You live with this every single day.

Under Eklund was housed in a sex offender's ward, where in 2014 he was attacked by his fellow inmates. As a result, the process began to have him moved to a new facility for his own safety. In 2018 after 10 years in prison, Eklund applied to have his life sentence commuted to a fixed term. This opened up the possibility of parole. His request was denied, as the court found him to be a, quote, concrete and significant risk of relapsing into a serious crime.

Eklund's request to move prisons was granted in 2020. Upon his arrival, Eklund was beaten by a fellow prisoner. Swedish authorities continue to investigate Under Eklund as a

possible suspect in other violent unsolved sex crimes across Sweden. In any case, he will die in prison.

In the aftermath of Under Eklund's trial for the murders of Penilla Helgren and Engler-Hergland, information came to light that stunned the community. When police were first attempting to identify Penilla's killer in the year 2000, they drew up a list of Sweden's known violent sex offenders. It featured 1,213 names. Under Eklund was number 21.

Linda Scherstrom, the teenager who had witnessed Penilla being throttled, provided what was described as first-class recollections of the man responsible. He was an overweight, thin-haired white

man. This matched exactly with Under Eklund's appearance. While the suspect list was gradually whittled down, Eklund's name remained. Despite having solidified his spot on the suspect list, Under Eklund wasn't one of the 800 men whose DNA was cross-checked against the DNA recovered from

Penilla's trousers. In fact, the overwhelming majority of those men were just ordinary citizens with no history of sexual violence. Police then seemingly disregarded their suspect list altogether and instead relied heavily on tips from the public, none of which led anywhere.

In November 2006, an investigative crime program detailing Penilla's murder was broadcast.

An astute viewer phoned police and named Under Eklund as someone worth looking into.

Despite Eklund's name having remained on their suspect list from its inception, investigators did nothing about this tip at all. Their reason was that nothing about it, quote, stuck out.

Eklund's family sued the Swedish government for the failures of police.

Had they done a thorough investigation, Eklund wouldn't have been free to kill Eklund after Penilla's murder. The Stockholm District Court decided that the link between the crimes was

too distant and unpredictable and therefore the lawsuit was unsuccessful.

This was despite an independent inquiry into the police's conduct, which found that had a competent and resourceful investigation into Penilla's murder taken place. Under Eklund would have been apprehended within months.

In a 2018 interview with Publication Expresson, Angler's mother Karina described her grief at losing Angler as pain so unbearable, it hurt too much to cry. Angler had an older sister named Seul, who was 11 years old when Angler was murdered. They were born just 20 months apart, affording them a relationship that was more akin to best friends than sisters.

Seul told Expresson that part of her disappeared forever when Angler was killed.

Despite their grief, Karina and Seul advocate for other victims of crimes.

Karina has always sought to speak personally with Eklund.

She wants the exact truth of what happened to her daughter, but he continues to deny her request for a meeting. In her interview with Expresson, Karina contemplated what Angler's life would have been like if she was still alive. Since she was a little girl, Angler loved being in the spotlight. She entered as many talent contests as she could, singing and dancing to the delight of her audience.

A recording of Angler performing had been played during her funeral service,

sharing her joy to the nation. Karina imagined Angler would have grown

up to live in Stockholm and attended Kultorama, the largest performing arts college in the Nordic region. A statue of an angel now marks the spot in the forest where Karina found Angler's bike.

The name Angler in Sweden means angel.

Angler in Sweden

On the 15th of December 2014, a lone wolf terrorist inspired by Islamic State walked into the Link Cafe in Sydney's Martin Place, armed with a pump-action shotgun and the thread of a backpack bomb. Over 16 hours, he held 18 hostages captive in a siege that was live-streamed around

the world. Tiger, Tiger, Tiger tells the untold story of the courageous actions of the New South Wales Tactical Operations Unit. This book will challenge what you thought you knew about the lineal, with details that show how willing the Tactical Operations Unit operators were to sacrifice their lives. But Tiger, Tiger, Tiger is more than an edge of your seat inside his perspective on Australia's first terrorist hostage rescue mission. Written by the officer who shot and killed the terrorist, this extraordinary frontline account provides an insight into the psychological damage done in the line of duty. It offers a message of resilience and hope for everyone. Tiger, Tiger, Tiger had me gripped from start to end. I finished it in two days because I simply couldn't put it down. Visit Tiger, Tiger, TigerBook.com to grab your copy. That's Tiger, Tiger, TigerBook.com