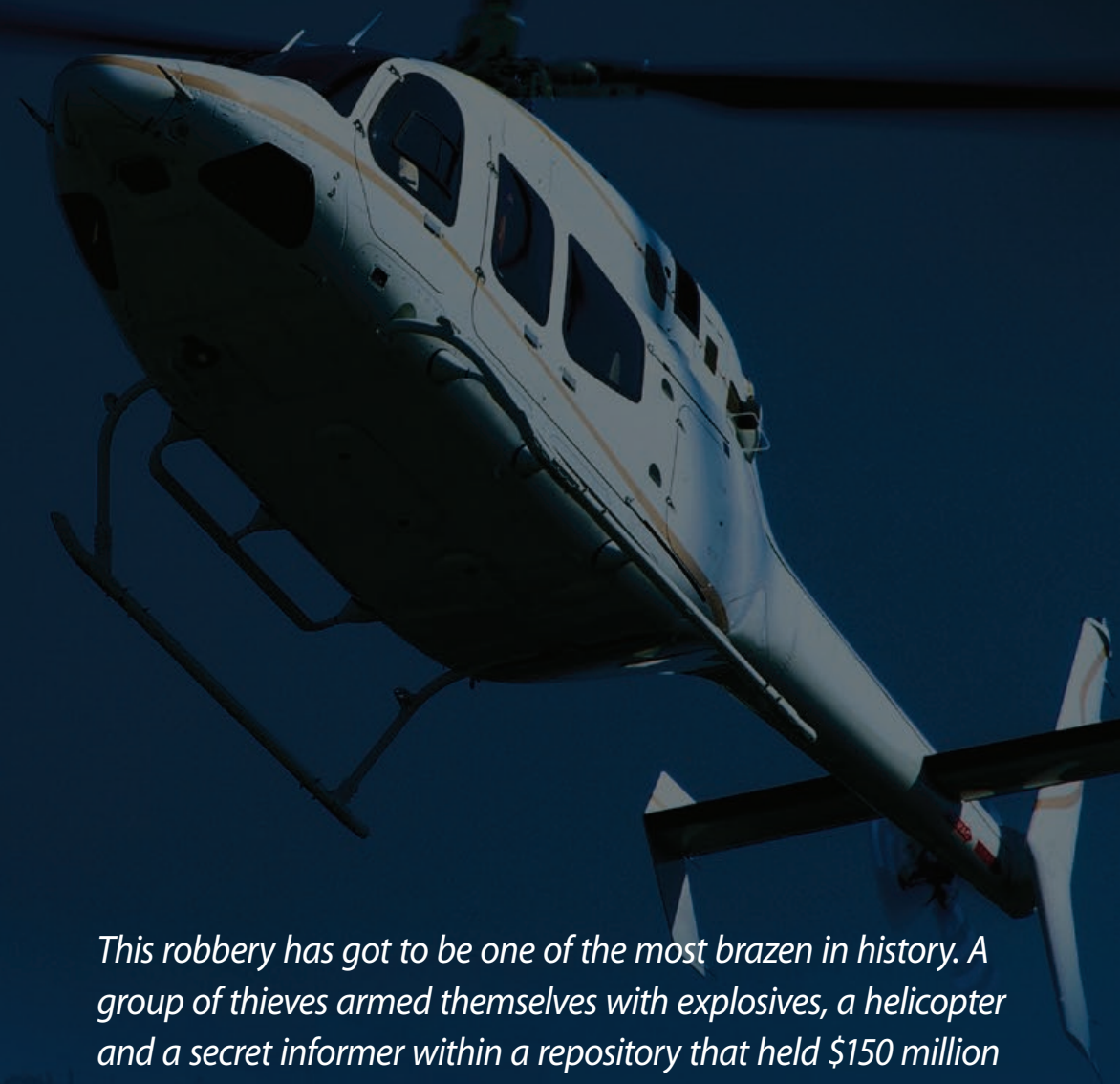


The Stockholm Helicopter Bank Robbery

• Yakov M. Wagschal



This robbery has got to be one of the most brazen in history. A group of thieves armed themselves with explosives, a helicopter and a secret informer within a repository that held \$150 million in cash. They planned the job in exquisite detail, even planting false information to confuse the police. The robbers' audacity stunned the public and led to an investigation of unprecedented scope to bring the perpetrators to justice.

On an otherwise humdrum Wednesday morning, September 2, 2009, two men sat down on a bench in Skeppsholmen, one of the many islands that are attached to Stockholm, Sweden's capital city. One of the two men was of average height with a reddish beard and wearing sunglasses. The other was a bit stooped with dark hair, donning a brown hat and a khaki, military-style jacket.

A nearby art museum, one of Stockholm's popular tourist attractions, was bustling with visitors coming and going. None of the many people who passed by stopped to notice the two men on the bench—which was precisely why they had chosen that spot for their secretive meeting.

A few minutes passed, and a third man joined the first two. He had parked at the museum and was now walking over to the others on foot. Over six feet tall, this man exuded the confidence and air of an established businessman. As he approached the bench, the tall man stopped for a moment

and took in his surroundings. Only when he was comfortable that the coast was clear did he sit himself down between the other two.

But there was one individual whose attention was called to the small group congregating on the park bench. This man was a secret detective who worked for the Stockholm police. He had followed the tall man on his drive to the island. The detective was careful to hide his intentions by appearing to be just another Swede who was interested in enjoying the outdoors. He even brought his dog along for a walk.

Now the detective followed the tall man from a safe distance and noted how he sat down on the bench between the other two. The three men were soon deeply engrossed in their conversation. They failed to notice the undercover detective, or at least to guess his true purpose. The detective was familiar with only one of the three men there, the tall man he had been following.

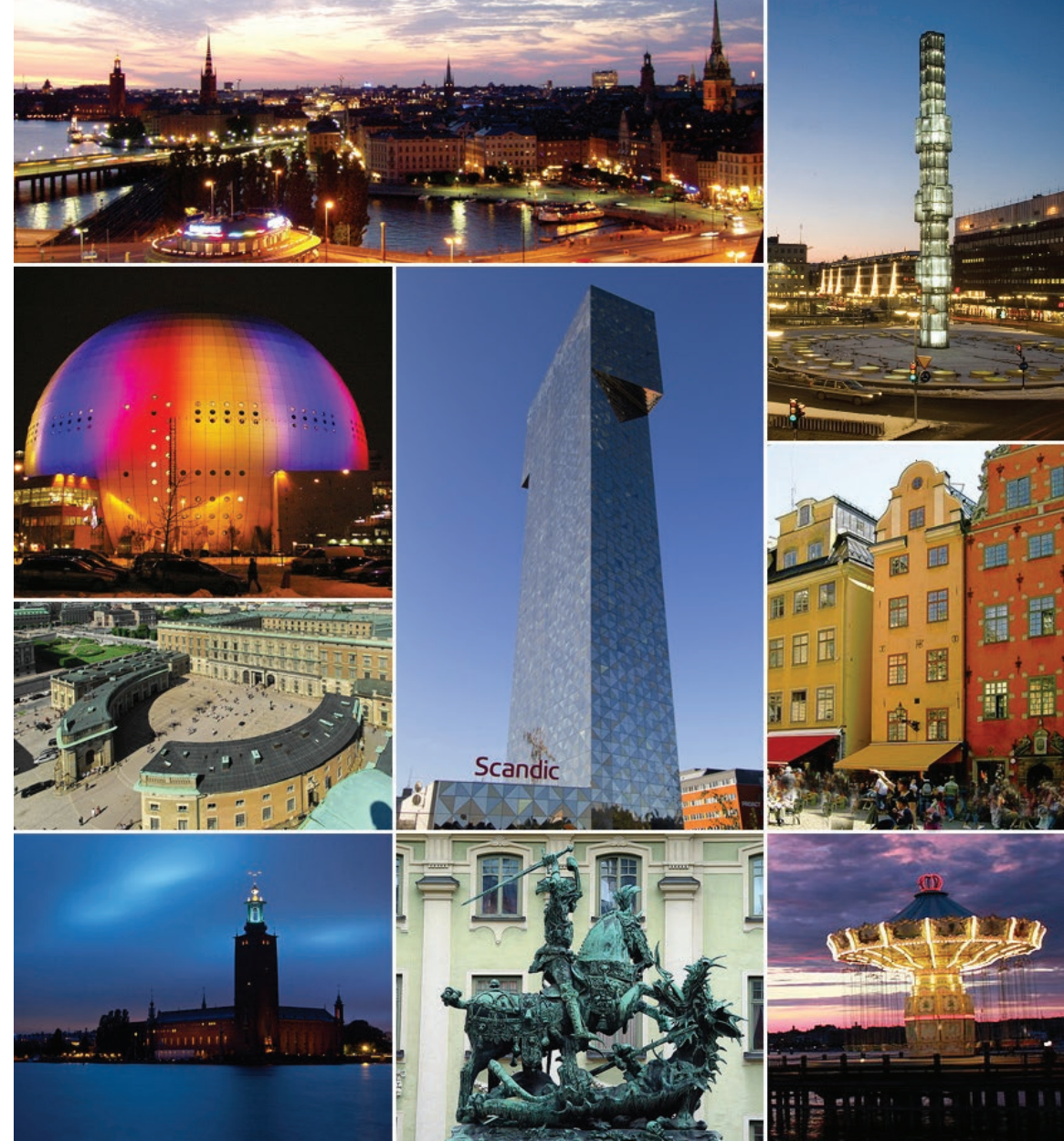
The man was 38-year-old Goran Bojovic, who was born in Sweden to Serbian immigrants. Bojovic owned a construction firm in his parents' homeland, though he lived above a restaurant in a quiet section of Stockholm. Other than a few traffic tickets, Bojovic had no criminal record. Nevertheless, he was being quietly followed by the Stockholm police because they had connected him with the underworld.

It had all begun several months before, with a warning from the Serbian government. Serbian officials informed the Swedish authorities that Bojovic was known to be in contact with an infamous Mafioso named Milan Sevo. Sevo was a former resident of Stockholm who had relocated to Belgrade, Serbia's capital. The Serbian police had wiretapped Sevo's phone and listened to his conversations with Bojovic. They overheard Bojovic requesting Sevo's assistance in carrying out a massive robbery in Stockholm.

The RKP—Sweden's special organized-crime police division – was called in and began following Bojovic in secret. His phone and car were bugged and the police recorded



Goran Bojovic, the Serbian-Swede who masterminded the robbery, at his construction company.



Scenes of Stockholm.

all of his conversations. The Swedish police had every intention of preventing the planned heist, but they had no information yet to act on.

The Swedish authorities had requested that Serbian police transfer all the information they had obtained regarding Bojovic's intentions. But the Serbs did not know the time or place that the robbery was supposed to occur. All they knew was that the men were planning to rob a cash repository (akin

to a Brinks center)—and that the crime would involve the use of a helicopter!

This was highly unusual information, but it still did not give the Stockholm police a solid lead.

The Bearded Man

Working surreptitiously, the undercover detective nudged his dog in the direction of Bojovic and his comrades. This provided