

# TEMPORARILY INSANE

*Carl Borgen*

## **Acknowledgements**

### **1st edition**

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*Published on [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) , [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)*

**Die Bock Saga**

*Published on [www.amazon.de](http://www.amazon.de)*



**Sa = “to get”; Ga = “to give”**



## Casper

The sun peered between the mountain peaks, and I saw the wind snapping at the dust as it tried to settle. It was six o'clock in the morning on the 24th of February 1975 in a freezing desert in Baluchistan, Pakistan. I stood by a rock that acted as a signpost, just outside the Quetta bus terminal. On it was written the distance to Amsterdam: 7,000 kilometres.

I had no idea that my life was about to change completely right here in this place and time, and that the man walking toward me would be the catalyst for everything that was to come. Out of seemingly nowhere, Ior walked up to the signpost. We both looked at it in silence and headed for the bus terminal in tandem. We happened to be travelling on the same bus. As there were no other Westerners around, we decided to stick together out of convenience.

We had a lot of time to talk and listen to each other. The bus brought us to Teheran. The signpost had mentioned it was 1,575 kilometres away. We'd both been in Goa, the hippie refuge in India, and he'd seen me there, dancing at the 1974 Christmas party. I hadn't noticed him.

From Goa, I'd hitchhiked several thousand kilometres through the south of India into the north. In the holy city of Benares, on the river Ganges, all my money had been stolen. From there on, I'd made my way without money and had ended up in Quetta. Ior was broke too. He'd been smart enough to leave his train ticket to Helsinki in Teheran in the safe hands of the Swedish/Finnish embassy when passing through seven months earlier. If he reached Teheran, he'd be ok.

The trip from Quetta to Teheran took a few weeks and there was always someone who offered to pay for our tickets and food in exchange for stories from other parts of the world. Most of

the time, we sat with a sheep on our lap or on the roof of a bus with large families and chickens. It was an easy time, and the atmosphere was good. In those days, Pakistan and Iran were friendly places for travellers like us.

Ior had a lot to tell. He was an expert in 18th century European history. I listened carefully for hours to his stories and explanations of what had happened during that century, a time in which so much had changed for mankind. The diminishing power of the church, the flourishing of science, the technological revolution that this brought and all its implications. Ior came from an old and influential family who'd been part of the global action in the last few centuries.

I didn't have a lot to tell in exchange. I told Ior that I came from a suburb next to a run-down steel factory near Amsterdam, Holland. I told him that my parents loved chinchilla dogs and that we had a rabbit in the garden with droopy ears. As a street kid, I loved to kick balls. I was in primary school and then in secondary school and then in a teacher training course. After one year working as a teacher, I realised that I'd spent all my life in school and knew nothing of the real world.

My world was limited to a horizon of smoking chimneys and the perpetual smell of burning coal. I was fed up and wanted more from life, for myself and for the kids I taught. I didn't want to teach kids to become like me and to accept the world as it was. Shouldn't there be something more to life than that?

Of course, I knew more about the world than what I saw around me. The TV and radio saw to this. I knew that we belonged to the Free West and that the Russians were our enemies because they were communists that wanted to steal everything from us. There were wars all around the planet between us and them. The communists were very poor because everything they did was wrong. We were not only free, but rich as well. Although the latter was hard to see from where I lived.

They told us that the Russian women had to work hard in heavy industries, steering enormous machines. This made them ugly and manly. Everyone else in the world didn't matter; they were from different races and hadn't yet reached our level of development. They believed in all kinds of gods and usually died at a young age from terrible diseases.

One day, a letter arrived. It was a letter that all boys in Holland



received sooner or later, and it summoned me to enrol in the army for 18 months. I decided to leave. To run away.

The bus pulled into the chaos of the main transport centre of Teheran. As far as the eye could see were buses, camels and donkeys pulling carts, each loaded with bales of produce on their way to feed the city. The roar of engines, the sound of animals and the crash of shouting mixed with a myriad of smells. It was busier than a distressed ant nest. We bumped our way through the flock of foreign bodies towards one of the exits and found a teashop where we sat down, our senses reeling from overstimulation.

“What are your plans then? Apart from picking up your train ticket to Helsinki, of course,” I asked, eyeing up the golden pile of honey sweets a turbaned kid had just set on our table.

“I want to meet a friend. Or more of a client, I should say.”

“Client?”

“I did a guided tour for him in Helsinki.”

“Ah... so a tourist or something?”

“Not quite. He was on business in Finland and the government asked me to entertain him by giving him a tour. We got on really well, and he asked me to drop by if I ever came to Persia.”

“Oh, so he’s a businessman?”

“No, not really. He’s a Shah.”

“Shah? As in *the* Shah, ruler of Persia?”

“Yes.”

After checking in at a hotel in the old marketplace, Ior went to the palace to ask for an audience. This was granted for the next day, which gave us twenty-four hours to make Ior presentable. We’d been broke for a long time and it showed. Ior managed to wash his travelling clothes in a well, shave and then smear his hair to one side. The look he was going for was that of a seasoned traveller, and this he truly was.

The next afternoon, I was drinking tea with the hotel receptionist when Ior came bursting in.

“We had a great time. The Shah insisted on being my personal guide, just as I’d been for him in Helsinki. He showed me the oldest parts of the palace; it’s extremely beautiful. He knows a lot about the architecture and what all the mysterious math-

ematical symbols mean. Of course, much knowledge has been lost, but mathematics always stays the same. That's the beauty of it."

I was amazed that my dusty friend was received so well in high places.

"After the tour, we had lunch together in a saloon decorated with the most intricate adornments I've ever seen. The Shah is an interesting man. He both lives within ancient traditions and is fascinated by modern Western living and technology."

"What did you eat?" asked the receptionist.

"The table was full of little snacks. It was actually not hugely different from what you see here in the market."

"Our Shah is from a modest background. That's the food he grew up with."

"Was there no lobster and caviar?" I smirked.

"No, just pastries and fruit. Delicious ones, but nothing fancy."

"The Shah is like us. He loves his people, but not everyone loves him back. It must be sad for him. Thank God he is very strong and wise."

"He donated this book to me."

Ior took an enormous book from his bag. It was leather-bound with golden inscriptions.

"It's about his palace. Look, it's full of colourful handmade drawings."

We all focussed on the book and its content.

"That's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen," the receptionist told us solemnly.

"Out of this world," I mumbled back, without taking my eyes off the intricate illustrations in front of me.

The receptionist looked at us in awe. "This is a very expensive gift."

"Ior, if this book is really that expensive, then you realise what's happened, don't you? You're no longer a poor man!" I joked, eyes glinting in the afternoon sun.

"Right. Well, I should sell it then, so I can pay the hotel bill."

"What's this about the hotel bill?" the receptionist asked sharply.

"Not to worry, my friend," smiled Ior. "Can you tell us where we could get the best price for it?"

“Hmph. I do happen to know a place, but are you sure? This is a gift from the Shah. If you do decide to sell it, don’t go yourself. Teheran is full of spies.”

Ior turned to me, and I remember a slight sense of uneasiness crawl down my back. “Casper, please go and sell this book for me.”

Although the uneasiness still lingered, it didn’t change the fact that my friend had asked me a favour, so I set off with heavy shoes. The receptionist found a boy who guided me through the maze of the market to the prospective buyer. I entered the antique book shop through a side door. It was both light and dark simultaneously. Rays of light squeezed through little windows of different shapes and colours, illuminating the dusty air. It was more of a museum than a shop, filled with gold-leafed, leather-bound tomes looking down from their towering shelves. The book I carried was similar, albeit not yet antique. The shopkeeper looked up as I entered his shop. Like his books, his skin was leathery, and he balanced a pair of gold-rimmed glasses on his nose. I showed him my treasure.

“This is a masterpiece of art and handicraft,” he told me, gently turning over each page. “Why have you brought this to me?”

“I want to sell it.”

“When?”

“Now, of course.”

“Its value is about 750 *abassi*. I’ll give you half, due to the circumstances.”

Haggling for a better price led to nothing. It was take it or leave it, and I decided to take it. Half of a lot of money is still a lot of money, especially when you’re poor. I left with a bounce in my step.

When I arrived back at the hotel, I was welcomed by the receptionist and Ior in great agitation.

“A special envoy was sent by the Shah to tell me that I must go back to the palace with the book. The Shah wants to write a dedication in it for me. Do you still have it?”

“No... I just sold it. That’s what you asked me to do! Here’s the money,” I handed him the notes and coins I’d crumpled into my pocket.

The receptionist shook his head slowly, a horrified look in his

eyes.

“Go back to the bookshop and reverse the deal. Don’t come back without the book,” Ior commanded.

“Is it really that bad?” I asked, feeling slightly betrayed.

“I told you, the Shah is strong and wise. He will cut off your head with that strength and wisdom if you don’t get that book back right now and bring it to the palace,” the receptionist howled. “And he might come for my head too!”

I raced back through the market and found the shopkeeper still amongst the leather and dust of his shop. It took some persuasion, but in the end, I managed to convince him to relinquish the book. (Surely, he couldn’t risk owning the very book the Shah had requested?) However, it cost me all of the notes and coins, as well as my last pair of shoes.

Ior returned to the palace, this time with a large book under his arm. The Shah scribbled some nice words inside its front cover and Ior walked back to the hotel relieved. We realised now that we couldn’t sell it. There was no privacy in Teheran, and it would be too dangerous to risk displeasing and misusing the trust of the Shah. It was too traceable, especially for a second attempt. I was nineteen years old, and I learned a lesson in life.

We stayed another month in this city of fairy tales, villains and heroes; a city whose magic is ingrained in its architecture. I started to feel at home there, as if somehow, I belonged in one of those fairy tales.

The moment came to part ways. Before he boarded his train to Helsinki, Ior gave me a business card. It was the first such card I’d ever received. I glanced at it and tossed it in my bag. His name written on it in black ink: Ior Svedlin. It was his step-father’s family name. I didn’t know then that written on that card was one of the richest and most dominant family names in Finland. Ior, the moneyless hippie I met at a dusty bus terminal in Baluchistan, surely didn’t have this sort of gold shining on him. It was only later in life that he changed his name to what he considered to be his real one: Ior Bock.

Somewhere outside of Teheran, I stumbled across a group of hippie travellers heading to Istanbul in a couple of Mercedes 508 vans, the hippie workhorse of that time. Some months lat-

er, I ended up in London. There, I befriended a Dutch guy called Seppo. This is the same name that belongs to a mythological character in the Bock Saga, the king of the world to be more specific. This irony only dawned on me much later as I had not yet heard of the Bock Saga.

Seppo worked as a carpenter in a fairground. He was so inspired by my stories of travels through Asia that he decided he would follow me to India. However, the start of this new journey required some funding, and neither of us had much in that department. Seppo had a plan though; he had some connections at a fairground in Amsterdam where we could both work for a while. There was just one problem. I'd left Holland in a hurry after ditching the army and it wouldn't end well if the Dutch authorities found me.

"No problem at all," Seppo laughed. "I can smuggle you in the trunk of my car onto the ferry from England to Holland. Once we're on the boat, you'll be free to come out and walk around. Then, when we arrive in Holland, you can just hide again. Easy."

And so it was. I lived secretly in Seppo's flat, owned by a guy called Ilmarinen. Which, by the way, is yet another name that crops up in the Bock Saga! I tell you, I'd never before, and have never again, met anyone called Seppo and Ilmarinen. Maybe they were omens of things to come; if they were, I was oblivious to this at the time.

We worked for cash at the fairground. It turned out that Seppo had a real talent for carpentry and painting, and he taught me everything he knew. We worked day and night, with the help of coffee and cigarettes, and we made good money. Come the middle of the summer, we decided we had enough to go hitchhiking to India. I dropped in to say goodbye to my parents. They tried their best to convince me to join the army and defend our country against the Russians and Chinese, or at least to return to my studies; all the usual wishes parents have for their children.

"No, I want to travel and see the world."

We soon found ourselves on the entry to highway A1 in Amsterdam, thumbs pointing towards the sky, ready to hitchhike our way to India. The air was filled with the promise of adventure. One day later, we were at the Kamener Kreuz interchange near Dortmund, Germany. We planned to go from there to Mu-

nich, Istanbul and further south and east in the direction of South-East Asia. Our thumbs were lifted high.

“Hey guys, jump in the back!” shouted a hairy head out of the driver’s window. The side door of the van squeaked open, and we jumped inside. Deep in a cloud of hashish smoke, I could make out the outline of heads. Happy hippie heads.

“Hi, my name’s Flower. Want a puff?”

“A puff from Flower, that’s a dream come true,” replied Seppo. “Compliments to your mother for giving you such a beautiful name.”

“It was mother nature.”

“Well, we’re heading to visit Mother India, and thanks to you, it doesn’t seem so far anymore. Where are you lot heading?”

“We just came from Amsterdam where we bought some mother nature to spread lovingly through Christiania in Copenhagen, where we’re from. You’re smoking some of it now.”

“Oh. So, you’re not actually driving in the direction of India, but to the north?” I asked, exhaling, adding to the cloud.

“Hey, groovy guy, you’re pretty sharp, aren’t you?” Flower laughed.

“What a coincidence!” exclaimed Seppo. “My landlord Ilmarinen is from Scandinavia. He’s always busy with mother nature. He’s got an organic farm up in the north of Finland. Maybe we should trust in coincidence and just head there. I’ve always wanted to visit that mysterious country.”

“Wait... what’s coincidental with what exactly?” I asked, but my question was lost in smoke and laughter.

“The only mystery I see is why anyone would visit that mosquito-infested country in the first place.” But these words too went unnoticed.

And that’s how we ended up going to Finland instead of India.

*Excerpt from the Bock Saga:*

*At the beginning of our story, Hel was the spot of the exact North Pole and was located on the top of the planet on a small island in front of what is now called Helsinki. The name of the island is Odens-Ö – the Island of Oden – which is the centre of the land called Odenma.*

*“Oden is a ring.”*

*“Oden is everything.”*

*“Oden has always been.”*

*“And Oden will always be.”*

*“Oden is the sun.”*

*The Earth’s axis was perpendicular to the sun, which made all globes stand straight up. When you turn this globe around its axis, thereby simulating the action of day and night, you will realise that it is always light on top of the planet. Thus, in the land surrounding the ancient North Pole the sun never sets. It is called Odenma. Odenma is the land of the sun.*

*The time when the Bock Saga begins is the time of paradise. ‘Paradise time’ is everything you would expect from such an idyllic concept. It suggests a perfect world with a balmy subtropical climate all-year round and food in abundance. Odenma, where the sun never rises nor sets, is therefore one big paradise – the garden of Oden. The perfect place for the story of mankind to start unravelling.*

*Somewhere in our story, the Earth’s axis shifted from being perpendicular to the sun to where it is now, and the location of the North Pole changed from Hel in Odenma to where it is now.*

It was an enormous deviation from our original plan, but what the hell. We were free, and I liked to say yes to everything. After various meanderings through Sweden, we arrived in Turku, Finland, via ferry. We slept outside and were welcomed by the multitude of mosquitoes that plague Finland in the summer-time. The next day, we went on to Houho, near Hämeenlinna, our provisional end destination. There we found an ‘Opisto’, a community of free-minded people that put all kinds of hippie idealisms into practice. They owned some forest and farming land, where they produced organic food. There was a lake full of fish. About forty local individuals ran the place and it attracted lots of people from all over the world, who came to share their visions for a better lifestyle.

“Who would have thought to see you guys here at the end of the world!” Ilmarinen uttered in disbelief when we appeared through the door of an old wooden farmhouse. “Is this a coincidence?”

“Yeah, it’s all a coincidence,” Seppo grinned.

“No, it’s only a coincidence for me. We were on our way to In-

dia and then Seppo took a left turn unexpectedly,” I explained.

“Coincidence or not, you’re here now. Are you thinking of staying?” asked Ilmarinen, motioning us to follow him.

“If you’ll have us...” Seppo replied.

“Oh, yes! The potatoes have been waiting, snug in the ground, for the likes of you to dig them up. And you wouldn’t want their cousins the onions and carrots to feel left out now, would you?” Ilmarinen joked as he led us out to a field of crops.

“Great, we’re in!” Seppo answered, looking around us enthusiastically.

They chatted on about the climate and other farming things like that.

“Sorry guys, I’m a city dweller, I’ll leave you to it.” I excused myself and went for a wander.

“Well, Casper,” I thought to myself, “You were a hippie on your way to India, and now suddenly you’re a farmer in Finland doing hard labour. We’ll see what’ll come of this.”

After the harvest was finished, Seppo and I received more and more little jobs around the place. Sometimes we worked in the kitchen, catering for more than a hundred guests. Sometimes we used our carpenting skills and worked on the wooden houses and their interiors, painting them and so on.

One night, as we sat exhausted in front of the unintelligible television, an energetic washing powder advert suddenly appeared on the screen. It showed a man and a woman happily dancing with magically changing outfits.<sup>1</sup> For a second, I couldn’t believe it. What in the world was my friend Ior doing in a washing powder commercial?! My excitement must have been visible as Seppo looked up at me in surprise.

“Do you know that guy?”

“Yeah, I travelled with him from Quetta in Baluchistan to Teheran last year.”

“Was it some kind of washing powder road trip?” Seppo laughed.

I remembered that Ior had given me his business card and I dug it up from the bottom of my bag. I called him immediately.

“Hi Ior, it’s me, Casper, the guy from Teheran. Do you remember me? I’m in Finland at the moment and just saw you on TV.”

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<sup>1</sup> If you fancy having a look, here’s the YouTube link for the Coral Steppi advert: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-qoKf87UHQ>