

= Ursula and Sabina Eriksson =

Ursula and Sabina Eriksson ( born 1967 ) are Swedish twin sisters who came to national attention in the United Kingdom in May 2008 after an apparent episode of folie à deux ( or " shared psychosis " ) , a rare psychiatric disorder in which delusional beliefs are transmitted from one individual to another , which resulted in a series of bizarre incidents on the M6 motorway and the subsequent killing of Glenn Hollinshead of Fenton , Staffordshire . There was no evidence that drugs or alcohol were involved in the incidents on the M6 or the death of Hollinshead .

The twins had been in Ireland before travelling to England and boarding a coach for London at Liverpool . Their odd behaviour after exiting the coach at a service station on the M6 ? including not allowing the bags they were clutching to be searched ? caused the driver not to allow them back on the coach . The two were later seen on the central reservation of the M6 . When Highways Agency Traffic Officers arrived to assist the women , they ran across the busy motorway . Ursula managed to dodge traffic - Sabina was first struck by a SEAT Leon .

Shortly after police arrived , the women again ran onto the motorway and were struck by oncoming vehicles , a Volkswagen Polo hitting Sabina and a Mercedes @-@ Benz Actros lorry crushing Ursula 's legs . Sabina suffered a serious head injury that left her unconscious for several minutes . When Sabina regained consciousness , she refused medical aid and attacked a police officer , at which point she was arrested . Appearing calm , although a bit " odd " , as she was processed by police in Stoke @-@ on @-@ Trent , she was therefore released from custody . Shortly afterward she was taken in by Hollinshead , whom she later stabbed to death in an unprovoked attack . She was pursued running from the scene and arrested in hospital after jumping from a bridge onto a busy trunk road , later pleading guilty to manslaughter with diminished responsibility . She was sentenced to five years imprisonment and released on parole in 2011 .

= = Background = =

Ursula and Sabina Eriksson , identical twin sisters , grew up in Sunne , Värmland , in western Sweden with their older brother .

= = Incidents in England = =

The sisters left their home in County Cork at 2am on May 16 , 2008 .

= = = Coach journey = = =

In Liverpool , at 8 : 30am on 17 May , Saturday , the twins went into St Anne Street Police Station to report concerns over Sabina 's children . At midday the pair boarded a National Express coach to London . A police report stated that the twins suddenly disembarked from the coach at Keele services , a motorway service station , as they were not feeling well . The driver of the coach , however , said he left them at Keele services after becoming suspicious of their behaviour . He noticed the twins clinging tightly to their bags and did not let them re @-@ board because they refused to let him search their bags for illegal items . The manager of the service station was informed and , also feeling suspicious of the pair , called the police . Officers arrived to talk to them but left after deeming the women harmless .

= = = Running onto the motorway = = =

The pair began to walk down the central reservation of the M6 motorway before attempting to cross the motorway , causing chaos to the traffic and picking up minor injuries in the attempt . Their elder brother claimed in a Swedish newspaper that his sisters were fleeing from maniacs who were chasing them . As seen on closed @-@ circuit television cameras , the police arrived to investigate and paramedics were also at the scene to treat the women . Along with the police came a small

television crew who happened to be filming Motorway Cops with one of the officers . Sabina later told an officer at the police station , " We say in Sweden that an accident rarely comes alone . Usually at least one more follows ? maybe two . "

Standing on the north direction hard shoulder of the motorway , just north of Three Mile Lane ( 52 ° 59 ' 38 @. @ 84 " N , 2 ° 18 ' 15 @. @ 44 " W ) , the police spoke to the twins when , without warning , Ursula ran into the side of an oncoming Mercedes @-@ Benz Actros 2546 articulated lorry travelling at around 56 mph . Sabina then followed her into the road and was hit by a Volkswagen Polo travelling at high speed ; both survived . Ursula was immobilised as the lorry had crushed her legs . Sabina spent fifteen minutes unconscious .

The pair were treated by paramedics ; however both women resisted medical aid , fighting and screaming at the paramedics and police officers . Sabina shouted " They 're going to steal your organs " and Ursula told the policemen restraining her " I recognise you ? I know you 're not real " .

Sabina got to her feet , whereupon a policewoman attempted to persuade her to stay on the ground and receive further medical attention . Sabina instead struck the officer and crossed the central reservation again , running into traffic on the other side of the motorway . Emergency workers and several members of the public caught up with her , restrained her and carried her to a waiting ambulance , at which point she was sedated . Ursula was also taken to hospital where she stayed for weeks . Sabina appeared less deranged and more calm and relaxed in police custody .

= = = The killing of Glenn Hollinshead = = =

On 19 May 2008 , Sabina was released from court without a full psychiatric evaluation having pleaded guilty to trespass on the motorway and hitting a police officer . The court sentenced her to one day in custody which she had been deemed to have served having spent a full night in police custody . Leaving court she began to wander the streets of Stoke @-@ on @-@ Trent , seemingly attempting to reach her sister in hospital , carrying her possessions in a clear plastic bag given to her by police .

At 19 : 00 , two local men spotted Sabina whilst walking a dog on Christchurch Street , Fenton . One of the men was 54 @-@ year @-@ old Glenn Hollinshead ? a self @-@ employed welder , qualified paramedic , and former RAF worker . The other man was his friend Peter Molloy . Sabina appeared friendly and stroked the dog as the three people struck up a conversation . Although friendly , Sabina appeared to be behaving oddly and this odd behaviour worried Molloy . Sabina asked the two men for directions to any nearby bed and breakfasts or hotels . Hollinshead took pity upon her and instead offered to take her back to his house at Duke Street , Fenton . Sabina accepted the offer and the three walked to the house , as Sabina told the men how she was trying to locate her hospitalised sister .

Back at the house her odd behaviour continued ; most notably she offered the men cigarettes , only to quickly snatch them out of their mouths as the men smoked them , claiming the cigarettes to be poisoned . She was also carrying multiple mobile phones , as well as a laptop . She appeared to be paranoid and constantly looked out of the windows ; this behaviour caused Molloy to assume that she had run away from an abusive partner . Shortly before midnight Molloy left the two , and Sabina stayed the night in Hollinshead 's home .

The next day , 20 May , Hollinshead called the local hospitals in order to locate Sabina 's sister Ursula . At 19 : 40 , Hollinshead came outside of the house to ask a neighbour , Frank Booth , for tea bags . Frank said he would get the tea bags once he had finished washing his vehicle , and Hollinshead went back to his home . One minute after returning inside he staggered back outside to the neighbour and told him " she stabbed me " , before collapsing to the ground . Sabina had stabbed him five times with a kitchen knife and Hollinshead died from his injuries . Sabina fled the premises and the neighbour dialled 999 .

= = = Sabina 's flight from capture = = =

Sabina ran out of the house with a hammer , periodically hitting herself over the head with it . A

passing motorist , Joshua Grattage , saw this extraordinary behaviour and decided to tackle her in an attempt to take control of the hammer . While wrestling with Grattage , Sabina took a roof tile out of her pocket and struck him on the back of the head with it , stunning him temporarily .

By this time paramedics had found her and gave chase . The pursuit was ended at Heron Cross when Sabina jumped from a 12 metre ( 40 ft ) high bridge onto the A50 . Having broken bones in the fall , she was taken to hospital . On 6 June 2008 she was arrested while recovering at University Hospital of North Staffordshire , and was later discharged from hospital on 11 September , at which point she was charged with murder .

Garry Hollinshead , brother of the man killed by Sabina , was critical of the justice system which he viewed as enabling Sabina to kill his brother .

" We don 't hold her responsible , the same as we wouldn 't blame a rabid dog for biting someone . She is ill and to a large degree , not responsible for her actions . But her mental disorder should have been recognized much earlier . "

" I do question the criminal justice system for allowing somebody like this to be let out when she is capable of committing such a crime . Her mental condition should have been properly assessed after what she did on the motorway and the experiences the police had . Her mental disorder should have been picked up prior to her being let out in to the community ... [ Glenn ] saw Eriksson in distress and was just trying to help . He wasn 't slow in coming forward to help somebody in distress . It was in his nature . He was trying to help . He would help anybody . If he saw a fight in the street and a guy was losing he would help . "

= = The trial = =

Sabina Eriksson was charged with murder on 11 September 2008 , the same day she was discharged from hospital in a wheelchair . The trial was scheduled for February 2009 , but was adjourned after the court encountered difficulties in obtaining her medical records from Sweden . The trial was then scheduled to start on 1 September 2009 .

Sabina Eriksson pleaded guilty to manslaughter with diminished responsibility on 2 September 2009 . At no point during her interrogation or during the trial did she explain her actions , only replying " no comment " to extensive police questioning . Both the prosecution and defence claimed that Sabina was insane at the time of the killing , although she was sane at the time of her trial . The defence counsel in the trial claimed that Eriksson was a " secondary " sufferer of folie à deux , influenced by the presence or perceived presence of her twin sister ? the " primary " sufferer . The court also heard that she had suffered from a rare psychiatric disorder which made her hear voices , but could not interpret what they said , as well as an alternative theory that she had suffered from acute polymorphic delusional disorder .

The plea of manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility was accepted at Nottingham Crown Court on 2 September 2010 . Sabina was sentenced to five years in prison . Having already spent 439 days in custody before sentencing , this left her first eligible for release in 2011 . In prison she turned to Christianity .

Justice Saunders concluded that Sabina had a " low " level of culpability for her actions .

I understand that this sentence will seem entirely inadequate to the relatives of the deceased . However , I have sentenced on the basis that the reason for the killing was the mental illness and therefore the culpability of the defendant is low and therefore the sentence I have passed is designed to protect the public . It is not designed to reflect the grief the relatives have suffered or to measure the value of Mr Hollinshead 's life . No sentence that I could pass could do that . It is a sentence which I hope fairly measures a truly tragic event .

Justice Saunders also said that :

[ Sabina was ] suffering from delusions which she believed to be true and they dictated her behaviour . It is not one of those cases where the defendant could have done something to avoid the onset .

= = Aftermath = =

Many questions were left unanswered , and Detective Superintendent Dave Garrett stated that " the reasons for the two events may never be truly known or understood but the taking of Glenn 's life was a violent and senseless act " .

Some called for an investigation into the way the criminal justice system handled the matter , including Peter Molloy and MP for Stoke South Robert Ffello .

= = Media = =

Madness in the Fast Lane is the BBC documentary , first broadcast on BBC One on 10 August 2010 , which brought the story of Sabina and Ursula Eriksson and the killing of Glen Hollinshead into the public consciousness . The footage on the M6 motorway of the two women jumping into the passing traffic had previously been broadcast on Motorway Cops , but this was the first time the rest of the story had been told .

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