

UNFICTIONAL: "THE MOST DANGEROUS GUY IN NORWAY?"

*producer: Steve Urquhart
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SCRIPT v2

BOB INTRO

From KCRW, it's UNFICTIONAL... etc...

Today: a piece by the British radio producer Steve Urquhart, who we've featured here on Unfictional in the past.

As well as the BBC, Steve also works with prison radio – where inmates learn new skills to create shows that are played to other inmates across the UK.

Earlier this year, Steve went on a fact-finding tour of Europe – supported by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust – to learn how different countries deal with convicted felons.

One of the places he went to was Norway – a country that's frequently described as “liberal” and “progressive” when it comes to prison and rehabilitation. For example, Halden Prison – in the south of Norway – has a reputation for being “the world's most humane jail”.

Steve met the director of Halden Prison – *Are Hoidal (“ARR-a HYE-duhl”) – who told him about one particular former inmate:

PLAY “INTRO CLIP”

His name is Trond Henriksen. He was a very dangerous person in the 70s, 80s – he was known as “the most dangerous guy in Norway”. (Really?) Really. It was in the paper – the biggest paper in Norway, the whole front side – “the most dangerous guy in Norway”.

(BOB continues...)

Trond Henriksen was a heroin addict. A bank robber. A fugitive. He became a film star. A successful businessman. Then, back to being a heroin addict... and now, he's a much-loved radio host.

Steve was intrigued... and so were we. So we sent him back to meet Trond Henriksen. Is he “the most dangerous guy in Norway”?

From KCRW – it's UNFICTIONAL...

0'00” OPENING – HALDEN PRISON / CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

TROND

We are now in the front of Halden Prison. A lot of walls around us! (laughs) (Tell me about the last time you stood here on October 2010, what happened?)... 20th October '10, I was taking my last heroin shot, on this parking, and then I walk in through the walls, four years ago. So that is my last memory, from this side.

I was really stoned when I get into prison!..... I was really sick for two weeks when I got into the prison, on heroin, I was really shaky.

SCRIPT

Thirty years after he was first sent to prison, Trond Henriksen's drug habit once again took him back behind bars, in *2010 [two thousand and eleven].

Now, he's 48... lives in a beautiful town with his girlfriend... and has a well-respected job, which he loves doing.

So..... what happened?

1'12" CHILDHOOD / YOUNGEST PRISONER

TROND

I grow up in the capital of Norway, Oslo, on the east side, from a poor family, my mother was working hard... (Was your dad around, your father?) Yes, my father was addicted to alcohol, but my mother separate from him when I was 3-4 years. My mother had never used any kind of drugs, not even alcohol, but my stepfathers, all of them have using alcohol.

SCRIPT

At the age of 10, Trond got very ill with tuberculosis, and spent several months in hospital. Although he recovered, he fell behind at school... and started to skip class.

TROND

I go to the centre of Oslo, as I couldn't go home. So then I go to meet other young guys... and there I met Frank, aged 19, and he was really crazy. He introduced me for cannabis for the first time, aged 12. First time I should smoke hashish I thought I should die – because my mother said “if you use drugs you will die!” I was growing up with that. So, I thought ok – Frank will die before me, and I can run – but Frank didn't die, so I took the pipe and I just smoked, you know. So that was my first meeting with cannabis.

Frank was the boss of this gang, and the most important thing in the gang was to do crazy things. We stole money for the drugs, we stole cars... I was very young when I first went to prison, aged 14 years and 21 days... I think I've been the youngest person in the prison ever in Norway.

So, the judge say, Trond, you steal 45 cars, I have to do something, so I send you to prison to see what this is, so I give you six days, so you can see what this is – and I hope you learn.

(OSLO PRISON FX)

When I come into the prison of course I was really scared. I come into the cell, it was a double cell, this guy was sitting there, very big, very fat and sweating. (How old was he?) Maybe in 30s, something? (You shared a cell with a guy in his 30s when you were 14?!) Yes – and this guy was really crazy, so I thought I'd get raped this evening... like you have seen in the movies and all this thing... (you must have been terrified!) Yes I was terrified, absolutely. But, prison was a school for me to do new crime things. So I learned a lot. After only six days I came out, I was still in the same gang, it was difficult to get out of it, so I was back in prison maybe some weeks later.

4'38" HEROIN / JAILBREAK / BANK ROBBERY

TROND

I was in prison, first time I tried heroin. But I thought, I don't understand why people use herion, and smash their head in the table, GNNNNAH, sitting like this, I don't understand that! But then, maybe I should try it, to shake it out – so I try it, and I was **fucked**. I throw up, It was a bad experience – but it was doing something with my feelings. Throw away the bad feelings. It didn't bring good feelings either, but there was not bad feelings there. So I was sold, when I try it first time. After I started heroin, there was only one drug for me.

SCRIPT

But of course, a heroin habit doesn't come cheap. So, during one of his spells in prison, Trond and some others came up with a plan: to escape – and to rob a bank.

TROND

When we escaped from the prison in Oslo... there's only one place you can get REAL money – and that's in a bank.

And in this gang there was a new guy who had robbed banks before. But I know this guy was crazy – because all the bank robs, he don't say “hands up” or anything, he just shoots the gun in the roof – so I say ok, if we rob a bank we have to do it with plastic guns. That

was very important for me... and my other friends. We was three guys who do this robbery.

TROND

When we come to the bank, I was really afraid. I don't really want to do it, and neither my friend. So we were going to drop it, but then the crazy guy just jumped out of the car and into the bank, and we had to follow him, you know?

This robbery was really big – it was one of the biggest in Norway... police in Oslo was heavy, lot of car driving... it was really crazy. But we get away, and escaped to Denmark...

...but three or four days later the police in Denmark take us down. For this I got 7.5 years in prison, for this robbery.

6'51" ON THE RUN – KIDNAP – 4.5 YEARS EXTRA – "MOST DANGEROUS"

SCRIPT

Back inside, Trond stayed out of trouble – and within a couple of years, his good behaviour was rewarded...

TROND

In 1990, I get my first permission from the prison – (permission to leave?) - yes, three days. And every day you have to go to the police station, and say "hello, here I am". But the last day before we should return to prison, I meet a friend of mine, and it was Summer, it was 25 degrees, and we decide to... take a "little holiday".

SCRIPT

This "little holiday" turned into more than three months on the run. Eventually, the police caught up with Trond and his friend... who were armed, and pumped full of amphetamine.

TROND

So we took this policeman, and we drive them up on the mountain. And the problem was that we couldn't just tie them round a tree, because it could have been months before people would have found them, so we just drive them up the mountain, and (laughs) throw them out, and they have to walk back down – it take two hours, I think! And we take this police car, and... we get arrested three days later, and then I get 4.5 years extra. So I get 12 years sentence for these two cases, for the robbery and this kidnapping.

We were all over the national TV, all the newspapers, on the front with a picture... "Norwegian most dangerous", that was really heavy...

8'30" "MOST DANGEROUS" SEQUENCE

DAG

In 1991 I think, he was actually on the cover of all our tabloid newspapers, he was named "the most dangerous prisoner in Norway"...

MINA

Trond was put on the front of the Norwegian newspaper saying he was Norway's most dangerous guy...

USMAN

"that he was dangerous man in Norway".

OLE

"the most dangerous person in Norway"

ARE

“most dangerous guy in Norway”

TROND

I have never killed anybody, but when you kidnap a policeman, it's 100 times worse than kidnapping someone else. They go really hard, they called us REALLY dangerous, and of course I understand that, but – the problem that they called me the most dangerous man in Norway was no problem for me, because I was put back in prison, but for my family, all the aggression against me, from the neighbours, it was getting to my mother. It was a big problem for my mother and my sister, so they had to move from their home place.

9'21" FILM STAR... SUCCESS...

SCRIPT

Locked up for the next few years, Trond began to clean up his act. He participated in a drug rehabilitation programme – which, in the mid-90s, became the subject of a major documentary film, “Big Boys Don't Cry”. Trond was given the starring role.

CLIP: Big Boys Don't Cry

SCRIPT

This made him even more famous... but for the RIGHT reasons. People knew him – they liked him – and that encouraged him to stay out of trouble, and out of prison. He built up a thriving business in the tourism industry, and made a lot of money with his then girlfriend. But eventually... it all came crashing down.

10'10" RELAPSE / OSLO STREETS / CAUGHT / SUICIDE ATTEMPT / HALDEN PRISON

TROND

After seven years there was a break up between Helen and me, it was a shock for me, and I fell back on heroin. I was back on the street, really fast. Much heavier than before. I was older, aged 36, 37, and that was maybe the worst part of my life. I was using 4 or 5 grams of heroin each day.

SCRIPT

Soon, he went back to dealing drugs... and, getting caught.

TROND

I was arrested in Sweden and put in prison, and I was addicted to heroin, I got really sick – so sick that I decided to take my life. I put up something in the light on the roof... I had made a rope from the bed, the clothes, but when I was doing this the people came in and when they saw what I was doing they jumped over me, put me in an isolation bed... the doctor came and saw that I was really ill.

SCRIPT

Trond was sent back to Norway. Incredibly, he had to WAIT six months for a prison place to become available – so he carried on using, on the streets, which explains why he was able to take a shot of heroin before walking into Halden Prison. Once inside, he was given some intensive treatment for his addiction. But this time, he was also given something else: a chance to get involved with “prison radio”.

11'55" PRISON RADIO / RADIO PRIME

CLIP: Radio Inside, Halden

SCRIPT

Radio Inside is a show produced by inmates, for listeners on both sides of Halden's prison walls. It's aired to the public on the local radio station, Radio Prime – so when Trond was released in *2011 [two thousand and eleven], his voice was already well known to the station's boss, Ole (“OO-lay”) Evenrud.

OLE

Trond asked me if I thought he could work on the radio station. And I'm quite a daredevil myself, so I said “well, let's try”. And if it doesn't work then we have a problem! 'Cos of course, if you take an ex-con and put him on the airwaves, a lot of people will have views.

CLIP: Radio Prime JINGLE

OLE

We did it very quietly, because I didn't want to put a lot of pressure on his shoulders – he was fragile and nervous. So in the beginning he wasn't even on air, he was behind the scenes... but today, Trond is on air every weekday between 2 o'clock and 5 o'clock – three hours live.

CLIP: Radio Prime – TROND

DAG

My name is Dag Brandth – I'm a morning host here at Radio Prime, I work with Trond. Trond is amazing, and my bosses have been really cool to give him that chance. They took that gamble and I don't know anyone else who would do that.

OLE

In the beginning, I told Trond at the start, first week – tell everybody, all the listeners who you are, what you done, then people can't make up stories, and it takes the edge off everything – and he did, he was very open.

CLIP: Radio Prime JINGLE – MOST DANGEROUS

TROND

He say, listen to Radio Prime – and Trond Henriksen, the most dangerous man in Norway!
BOOM!

DAG

(How do you think the listeners take to him? What do they think of someone like him getting a job like he has done?) I don't know if this is a Norwegian thing, but people have really taken to him. They are intrigued, interested, and they choose to not be sceptical, but to find out more about it.

14'20" VICTIMS / COST TO SOCIETY / REPARATIONS

SCRIPT

But let's not forget – this is a man who committed a lot of crime. There are victims out there. Are any of them listening to Trond on the radio?

TROND

I remember a year or two ago, I get an email, from a girl, she wrote and said, “in 1989 you steal my father's Ford Granada!” - and with a smiley! Nothing more. (Did you reply?) Yes I think so... I wrote, sorry, that's a long time ago... but I heard nothing more.

SCRIPT

What about Trond's other victims? He recalls one particular experience from the early 90s, after the bank robbery...

TROND

One of the women who work in this bank – after two years, she called this police officer, to ask if she could talk to me. So I said yes ok, no problem. One week later she came to the prison.

When she saw me, she shouted “It's your eyes I see, it's your eyes I see, every night”. And she threw the arms around me... and just cry, it was very heavy, I wasn't prepared for this.

(What were you expecting?) I didn't know. I thought she might shout “Asshole”, “idiot”, but she just cried. And when she held me she said, “why? Why do you do this Trond, why?” And then she just walked away.

(What did you say in response?) I say only one word, sorry. Really sorry. We don't talk much, she only wanted to see my eyes. She cry, and she walk away, and I was sitting there with a lot of questions to myself. Afterwards I can say, it was a very good experience. A lot of prisoners should meet the people they have hurt, really.

I have – all the crime I have done, all the years in prisons – I have cost the Norwegian society about 80 to 100 million krone... that's about 14 to 15 million dollars. And I'm not very proud of that. But the only way to pay back a little bit of this for me, is to use my experience to inform young people, schoolchildren dropping out, similar age to what I was.. To say, the way I have done is not a good way to do, in your life. That's the only way I can pay a little bit back to my society.

17'22" PRISON RADIO ADVISOR

SCRIPT

Another thing that Trond does now, is to advise young inmates who are just starting in prison radio – including Usman, and Ali.

ALI

He said, what you do inside here and what you learn, you have a chance outside and you can get job. The more you learn here, the more tools and opportunities you have.

USMAN

He said, just try and – if you can't, then try again... one time, you will make it.

CLIP OF ROVERRADION

MINA

My name is Mina Hadjian, and I'm the editor of Roverradion – “House of Bandits” – Norwegian Prison Radio.

Trond Henriksen was the first to take the radio experience that he had, and to transform it into a job. A full-time job. And I know all the inmates respect him.

He's like the light of hope for other prison radio guys and girls. And hopefully, very very very soon, one of the guys in prison radio is going to come and be Trond's sidekick.

CLIP OF RAI0 ON RADIO INSIDE

MINA

He's a guy called Raio, he's in Halden Prison for murder, he was put in prison aged 16... and the only time he comes out of his cell and talks to people is when he does radio. So I hope Raio and Trond will make a great team. I see them being the wonder radio duo of the future.

RAIO

It's cool to see someone that's been rated as Norwegian most dangerous man to come

outside and get a normal job and a normal life.

(Your story is similar to Trond's...) Yeah – we've both been addicts of drugs, both in prison for a long time, and both are starting to work in radio – so hopefully I'll get to the same place he is now when I come out.

MINA

They've got a lot in common! Trond was put on the front of the Norwegian newspaper saying he was Norway's most dangerous guy – and the same thing happened to Raio. He was on the front page of Halden newspaper, saying this is Norway's most dangerous guy – and a picture of this kid, looking out of his cell door, I mean that's ridiculous – that shows how bad the media is in this country, and why we need something like prison radio, and Trond Henriksen to lead the way.

20'03" SHYNESS / BOUDIL / SHOWING EMOTION

SCRIPT

Trond is unlike anyone I've ever met. He's charming. Popular. Successful. Determined. And...

TROND

I'm a little bit shy, you know... I can speak to a million people on TV, but when I meet people out, I'm really shy. When I finish on the job I get in the car and come straight home to Boudil!

BOUDIL

I'm Boudil, and I live with Trond. He's been my boyfriend for two years now. The real Trond is like every man I think – he likes when he come home, he eat dinner with me, and we lay down on the sofa, he's just like all other guys...

TROND

When you are in prison for many years, you are in the cell, alone. You have a lot of feelings swishing around in your head, and you have to close this down, or you get crazy. And I have this problem when I am out. To just pull down the curtains, and throw it away.

(Do big boys cry?) Yes, but not in front of other people – I can do it alone, but not in front of people.

(So, not even with Boudil?) No...

BOUDIL

...it's very difficult for Trond – he give me a hug and a kiss, but he understand, but he's hard.

TROND

When I was in prison though, I was going to a psycholog(ist). And when he was touching my childhood, I said "I will never tell you about my childhood, because if I do that I will get REALLY emotional". I don't want to talk to him about it. I will try to write it down in a kind of book, sometimes, but I know I will have to be ready for it.

22'18" NOSTALGIC – FUTURE – TRUST – SORRY TO MOTHER – PROUD?

SCRIPT

As I take a photo of him outside Halden Prison, Trond seems... nostalgic.

TROND

It's my home! It's my home! (It's not your home any more – it used to be your home! Do you still think of it in some way as home?) No.

I don't like prison, no. (You miss it?) No, absolutely not! But Halden is still one of the best

prisons in the world.

OLE

(Do you think he'll ever go back to jail?) I don't know. I don't think even Trond knows. All we know is, he leads a stable life with girlfriend, job etc – you can never foresee what happens in future. But I think the longer things work out for Trond, the safer it is that he won't relapse back to his old life.

MINA

Trond is now working in a regional radio station, which is a great radio station – but he has such a good voice and such huge talent that I really wanna hear him on national radio. Trond should be on national radio. And that's where I think he becomes insecure and shy, and doesn't really know if he's good enough. He's more than good enough.

TROND

Lot of people, over the years, have said “Trond, it's possible”. And you know, when people give you trust, then you will give trust back, and that's the first step to get out of it. If everyone around you see you as garbage or something like that, you will BE garbage. If people give you trust, then you will give it back.

(And what about your past, would you change your past? Or is it...)

I have only one person I should say sorry to, and that's my mother. Really. Because she has never, never thrown me out. She was always there, said “come home, take a shower Trond”... she always visited me in prison, for six years, she take the train every week to visit me for one hour. My mother is really fantastic. She has paid a lot for this stupid life I have lived, police coming with machine guns, kicking in the doors... she has been there...! So it's my mother.

(Where is your mother now?) In Oslo – she is 74. She visits us in Halden every month – she is really happy with the life I have now, but she went through hell, I would say.

I'm not proud of my history, but I'm proud that it's history. I'm not proud of all this thing I have done, but I'm really proud I have survived this thing and that's the most important thing for me. Nothing else. I don't need anything else.

25:45” ENDS