



**International Association  
of Marine Investigators**  
Committed to Training Investigators Worldwide



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a 501(c)(3) nonprofit

## IAMI 2013 Investigators of the Year

They really thought they could get away with it. They thought it would be easy.

We may not know whose idea it was, but we can guess at the sequence of events. The 2011 Glastron 209 GS powerboat with a Volvo Penta 250hp engine had been imported into Sweden by its original owner, and then sold to a new Swedish owner (Owner 2) in Vasteras about 50 miles west of Stockholm. At some point, Owner 2 decided he wanted to get rid of the boat. Perhaps it didn't sell, or perhaps he never gave it a chance. What we do know is that Owner 2 made a deal with the owner of his marina -you make the boat disappear, and we'll split the insurance payout.

Owner 2 had picked the perfect accomplice. The marina owner was a member of a subgroup of the Hells Angels (yes, they have motorcycle gangs in Sweden, too) who knew a thing or two about operating on the wrong side of the law. He removed the HIN/CIN and other identifiers from the hull before selling it to an unwitting buyer (Owner 3). When Owner 3 tried to insure the boat, he discovered that the HIN/CIN had been removed, and the insurance company refused to cover it. He called the marina owner to complain and got only threats in return - Hells Angels kind of threats.

Undaunted, Owner 3 turned to the police, who seized the boat. The case went to Peter Nordstrom, CSL. He searched the boat, but the only number he could find was the serial number on the engine, which did not produce any hits when he ran it through the police databases. The suspicion grew that the boat had been stolen.

Nordstrom contacted Larmtjanst Investigation unit, which works to identify and recover stolen goods with a particular emphasis on organized crime. That's when this year's Investigator of the Year came into the case. She ran the number through the Larmtjanst boat theft register, and there was a hit:

"A Glastron 209 GS, 2011, (US-GLA26008L001) with a VolvoPenta 250 HP engine (4012037741) was reported as stolen in April 2011, from the city of Vasteras. Police report number 1900-K111932-11."

The engine was a match, but what about the boat? On further inspection, Nordstrom found traces of something that looked like an old registration number: MSS259TC. Our Investigator of the Year sent an email via JAMI Fraudfighters on January 11, 2012. That same day, she received a number of responses with suggested contacts to get additional information. She reached out to the Massachusetts Environmental Police, and by the end of the day the boat had been positively identified, the Massachusetts registration linked to the hull number on the stolen Glastron. The

Swedish police and prosecutors were very impressed with the speed of the response.

So, what happened to the perpetrators? With the boat identified, the police had due cause to search the marina and the marina owner's home. The original boat documents and HIN/CIN plate turned up in the bedside table. Which just goes to prove that knowing something about operating on the wrong side of the law has nothing to do with being smart.

The prosecutor decided to return the boat to Owner 3, but the case will never go to trial - the marina owner was killed in a traffic accident with a motorcycle a few months ago.

They really thought they could get away with it. And they may well have, except for IAMI and the cross-border, cross-agency information sharing that it makes possible.

This year's Investigators of the Year are:

Special Agent Carina Birking - Larmtjanst AB

Captain Merri Walker - Massachusetts Environmental Police

Detective William Bilotta - Massachusetts Environmental Police