

WELT am SONNTAG

Agent Mauss Considers Jewel Robbery Case Solved

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Hanover JK – Is Germany's most puzzling jewellery robbery about to be solved...after 19 years? Super agent Werner Mauss who investigated the case at the time feels that he has been vindicated: The 1981 robbery was a put-up job.

“The jeweller brought pieces of jewellery to me at a Bremen hotel, after he had reported them stolen”; Mauss told the WELT am SONNTAG.

3,400 pieces of jewellery, weighing 40 kilos, and with a value of around 13.7 million Deutschmarks disappeared in broad daylight on the 31st of October 1981 from a jewellery business at Kroepke in Hanover owned by René Düe. Düe lay bleeding on the floor, his mother bound and gagged upstairs – both apparently victims of assault.

Jeweller Düe was later accused of having set up the robbery himself in order to collect the 13 million marks insurance money. Witnesses spotted the alleged robbers carrying an attaché case. But this was certainly not big enough to hold forty kilos of jewellery.

Düe was sentenced to seven years imprisonment for embezzlement in 1984.

The German Federal Supreme Court and two committees of enquiry of the Federal State Parliament of Lower Saxony investigated the case. The judgement was quashed because, among other things, certain evidence was not allowed. Düe was acquitted in 1989. In compensation for 870 days of wrongful detention he was awarded millions of Deutschmarks in compensation. Nowadays, Düe (52) runs a jewellery gallery in Westerland on the island of Sylt.

Suddenly, this week, a lawyer delivered 10.8 kilos of the missing jewellery to the police in Hanover. He was doing this, he said, on behalf of his client, whom he could not name. The horde was allegedly discovered during the renovation of a house in the city of Hildesheim.

What was agent Mauss's role back then in this mysterious tale?

He was employed in a civilian capacity by the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) and, with the agreement of the Hanover police force, was assigned to the case undercover. His job was to win the confidence of Düe and those close to him.

In this Mauss was successful. He managed to convince the family that he was representing a syndicate with an interest in buying the jewellery. A brother-in-law of Düe's was taken to Sydney, Rome and the Canary Islands. Through him Mauss came into personal contact with the jeweller. Düe later brought a suitcase full of jewellery which he had reported as stolen to the “Columbus Hotel” in Bremen. The suspicion: Düe wanted to incriminate someone else.

In the end, Düe was acquitted – however the court denied him the insurance money due to his wilful deceit.

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