

Gert Jonnys



Gang warfare didn't gain a foothold in Sweden until the late 1970s, but once it started, there was no stopping it. From Malmö in the south to Kiruna in the north, the country was terrorized by roving bands of organized hoodlums. In Stockholm, the capital, the crime wave reached unprecedented heights when one especially ruthless gang took control of the streets. The Gert Jonnys – which, loosely translated, meant “the naughty gents” – were at times *worse* than naughty. Even normally brave members of the metropolitan constabulary feared for their safety when suddenly confronted by these ill-mannered ruffians. The Jonnys dressed in camouflaged attire that allowed them to steal unseen through the city as if they were specters. Particularly adept in the theft of haberdashery, the rascally rogues had in their possession more than half of Stockholm's adobe hats by the time law enforcement closed in on the gang's hideout. But by then, the Jonnys had moved on to another criminal endeavor equally nefarious. In the end, the gang's success was its downfall. The four chieftains – Hans, Inqvik, Sergei and Bob – began to squabble over their attire. Sergei and Bob thought their present camouflagery suited them well and saw it as a successful branding tool. But Hans and Inqvik, longing for a more visceral visual, argued for Kevlar bodysuits with bright yellow GJ monograms on the front and red piping down the sides. The disagreement escalated in choler and ultimately turned violet when Hans poured a gallon of purple-blue latex paint over Bob. Unable to rid himself of his purplish hue, the doused desperado immediately quit the Jonnys and hooked up with the Sherwin-Williams mob. Soon thereafter, the rest of the gang broke up. Hans and Inqvik abandoned their hooligan ways for good and kept profiles so low that they only cast shadows on sunny summer days. And Sergei became a barber who specialized in subnasal depilations, a process he called “mustache whacks.” Today, the gang's memory lives on in *The Ballad of the Gert Jonnys*, a song as naughty in musical construct as the gents were in real life, and much too unpleasant to reproduce here.