

Two detained on charges of aiding Copenhagen terror attack

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Two men were detained on Sunday, charged with aiding Omar Abdel Hamid El-Hussein, the suspect in the Copenhagen terrorist shooting attacks.

El-Hussein, 22, killed two people in separate attacks Saturday and was shot dead by police Sunday. The two men were ordered to remain in custody for 10 days after being arraigned at a four-hour closed hearing Monday. Defence lawyer Michael Juul Eriksen said that both deny the allegations.

The two detained were among four arrests made in the aftermath of the attack during a raid on the PowerPlay Internet café in the Norrebro area.

El-Hussein allegedly murdered film director Finn Norgaard, 55, while firing at a meeting attended by his supposed target Lars Vilks, the Swedish cartoonist who previously depicted the prophet Muhammad as a stray dog. While on the run, El-Hussein later shot volunteer security guard Dan Uzan at a nearby synagogue.

More details have emerged regarding Hussein's biography, confirming how well known the gunman was to police. The head of Denmark's secret service, PET, Jens Madsen, said that El-Hussein may have been "inspired by Islamist propaganda issued by Islamic State and other terror organisations." Madsen did not offer evidence substantiating this allegation, however.

What is known is that Hussein was only recently released from prison after serving a sentence for knife crime.

The *Daily Mail* reported that El-Hussein "descended into a life of crime in his teenage years, joining the notorious gang The Brothas and roaming the streets with a knife or a gun." His criminal record included assault and possession of dangerous weapons.

In November 2013, he was captured on CCTV pulling a knife out in a train in Copenhagen. He knifed a 19-year-old man in the thigh and buttock before

departing. He was jailed for aggravated assault.

In an extended biographical report, the *Guardian* noted that El-Hussein "was a smart student but reportedly had a short fuse and was prone to violence. He was a talented kick-boxer and yet appeared to have suffered from anxiety and used cannabis."

Of Palestinian origin, his parents left a refugee camp in Jordan to come to Denmark, and he "was always quick to debate the Palestinian issue."

El-Hussein was in prison at the time of the *Charlie Hebdo* attack in Paris, with the *Guardian* reporting that Michael Gjorup, head of the country's prison and probation service, "told Danish media that authorities had noticed changes in his behaviour in prison and had alerted the intelligence services."

Engaged in petty crime, El-Hussein lived an impoverished existence—failing to graduate and becoming homeless.

According to the same report, "Emilie Hansson, 26, who is half Swedish, said she knew El-Hussein and had seen him at the estate last week. She said: 'For me he's not a terrorist. He's someone who felt finished with life and decided to go out with a big bang.'"

The *Telegraph* reported that friends of El-Hussein laid floral tributes to him on the corner of the street where he died, which were later removed. It cited someone named "Mohamed," who said, "We've put flowers here because we must remember him... He was a good guy. We don't believe he did anything wrong. It wasn't like the police say."

Another friend, a local thug named "Benny," insisted that El-Hussein could not have carried out the shootings: "I know he didn't have the money to buy an automatic gun. Here it costs 50,000 kroner."

No account has been made of the police statement that the flat to which El-Hussein was returning,

adjacent to the Norrebro metro station, where he was gunned down, was already under surveillance as part of an unspecified “ongoing investigation.” The PET baldly declared that, though El-Hussein was well-known to them, it was not possible to keep a round-the-clock watch on all suspects.

Nor has any explanation been offered for the police raid on the Internet café.

In a reportedly unrelated incident, German police in the northern city of Braunschweig took the extraordinary decision to cancel an annual carnival procession Sunday, citing fears of a terrorist attack.

Police claimed that information from “reliable state security sources” pointed to “a concrete danger” of attack from persons with an “Islamist background.” Police chief Michael Pientka said there had been no arrests and no explosives or weapons had been found.

The carnival in Germany was cancelled just hours before it was due to start, leaving an estimated 250,000 attendees disappointed and 4,500 participants stranded with their floats.

Haaretz reported that Pientka told German public radio NDR there was “no connection to the terror attacks in Copenhagen.” Carnivals elsewhere in Germany went ahead on Sunday and Monday.

The police added to the murky picture by stating afterwards that “we do not have any concrete indications of attack plans in Germany.... The situation is unchanged.”



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