

Chapter 116 : Sofia Hellqvist (1984-2011) – The Gold Digger.

Carl Philip was in the habit of each year visiting Båstad for the tennis. The tennis week of 2008 he encountered the glamour model Sofia Kristina Hellqvist on a similar visit. Carl Philip had coffee with a friend at an outdoor terrace when Sofia and a mutual acquaintance approached him. Nothing further seems to have happened except that Sofia was invited to drive a go-kart. In contrast Carl Philip's and Sofia's 2009 tennis week was so passionate that it ended up in a blog with pictures and everything. Sofia gave him her phone number. Then things progressed quickly. Already after six months there were inquiries in the papers if Sofia Hellqvist was suitable princess material. Svensk Damtidning, the tabloids and the public at large joined in a search for all the interesting and revealing details that I here pass on.

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Sofia Kristina Hellqvist was born on December 6, 1984, at Danderyd Hospital in Täby, Sweden, but the family later moved to Älvdalen in Dalarna, where her mother was born. Her father Erik Hellqvist (1949-2011) was born in Denmark, had studied economics and statistics and was an employment officer. Her mother Marie (1957-) worked in marketing at the company Rullpack's local office in Älvdalen and was 2010 elected substitute member of the municipal council for the Liberal Party.

Sophia was the middle child of three sisters. Her mother was interested in hunting and motorcycles, but Sofia was never that sportive. She attended primary school in Montessori, secondary school in Älvdalsskolan and studied for a dance teacher Sabina Bjurström where she learned to sing, dance and play the piano. Primary school grades were decent - 245 points out of 320 possible. The highest grades were in social-oriented subjects and in Swedish. Lowest grades in German, Mathematics and Physics. She used glasses but has since stopped. During high school, she attended the dance line of the aesthetic program at the Vansbro Learning Center - a three-year college preparatory education that included English, mathematics and a variety of aesthetic subjects. The ratings were good: 18 MVG, eight VG and one G (in Math A). There seems to have been a distance between her and her classmates. She hung out with the boys and wanted to leave. At the age of 16, she was an animal rights activist and vegetarian. She had a number of summer jobs, including in a plastic factory, as a waitress and in a sports shop.

Sofia's modelling career began during the Hultsfredsfestival 2001 where she was discovered by the girl photographer Lennart M Sjöberg. He took a number of pictures of her both there and during a later visit to Thailand with Sofia's aunt as an apron. The images were never published but were disseminated from a server. The motives were mixed. Sofia played both the jungle girl Liane and posed nude with hands tied behind her back as in the movie poster for Soldier Blue. She also had a job from Mika's modelling agency where she was converted from "heavily made up hard rock fan" to next door blondie to fit a commercial for Bob's jam. Her later appearance has been dark straight hair, false eyelashes, eyeliner and a lot of eyeshadow, giving her a penetrating look. In the morning before styling, she looks like Tove Jansson's Little My though.

After graduating in 2003, Sofia moved to Stockholm and worked as a waitress. The level of ambition was unclear. She had talked about applying to the ballet academy or stage school but seems not to have done so. She was registered to the model agency of the Stockholm Group, but it has not been possible to locate any missions from there. Sjöberg recommended her to a

colleague Tony Kollberg who took a series of bikini pictures for Expressen's Sunday edition - her first major assignment. Kollberg also persuaded her to participate in the Miss Slitz 2004 contest. Sofia did not have much hope for it - she thought she would end up in the middle - but she won the reader's vote. The prize was a visit Los Angeles, to be photographed there and to participate in the Slitz 2004 summer tour in the countryside - a mix of booze, dance, Slitz-advertising and crowd-pleasing nonsense.

Slitz published two photo reports about Sofia. One in March 2004 by Tony Kollberg and one in May 2005 by Niklas Palmklint. Kollberg's pictures were taken on a sandy beach outside Los Angeles with Sofia in bikini - very innocent. Palmklint's images were the later so renown snake-dance images. Sofia was interviewed about her love life: "In general, I like a little tougher guys, who are soft inside." The number of boyfriends up to that point was less than five. (According to other information only two.) - The best thing about men? "That they are men! That they want to take care of me and protect me, even though you may not always need it! I have always felt appreciated and special in the presence of guys." She was tired of romance and judged the guys on their entertainment value. It would be best if they invited her to some activity. There was a lot of football, martial arts and training sessions. - Feminist criticism was dismissed as "I might be a bit of a glamour feminist who likes to affirm their femininity." - Things to do until you're dead? "I want to try living both in the slums and in a luxury environment. I want to have a family and kids. And I want to travel and discover the world."

The Slitz win allowed her to appear on the reality show Paradise Hotel. It was recorded by TV4 from mid-October to mid-December 2004 at the luxury hotel Casa Mi Ojo on the west coast of Mexico. The American version had a reputation as a sex soap, so all the participants were tested for sexually transmitted diseases. The program format was that the initial 11 participants would form pairs and the unlucky leftover had to leave. New contestants were subsequently elected to replace them. TV4 - read Anton Glanzelius (producer) & Josefin Craaford (presenter) - provided all participants with free condoms and day-after pills but none of the participants felt inclined to make out. Probably they were discouraged by all the camera surveillance: Five camera crews by day, infrared cameras in the bedrooms and 32 surveillance cameras in all kinds of places. The participants sunbathed at the pool and talked life experiences and tactics. During the evening there was liquor and gradually increasingly fierce comments. Leisure time consisted of shopping in the nearby town.

Since every 24 hours was cut to 30 minutes, it is difficult to form an idea of what happened at the hotel. Sofia made her entrance on day six with the presentation "I am here to win. But I want to have a good time too." She then kept a low profile and agreed with the previous speaker. All conflicts ended with Sofia crying and receiving sympathies. That's a fair strategy to get along. But not a winning strategy. There were two camps led by hairdresser Marre Hitti and model Olanda Borggren. Olanda was very outspoken and one evening dressed Sofia down with "How does it feel to be so wimpy and fucking fake? You agree with everyone and you don't have a single opinion that you can stand up for!" Sofia looked ill at ease. It was probably the first scolding she had ever experienced. To cut a long story short, she finished third and the show aired for 60 episodes between January 14 and April 8, 2005. The viewers peaked at 515 thousand. The papers wrote column kilometres of the program and there was also two research reports regretting that all the participants had been cut down to caricatures.

Sofia was now very sought after in all sorts of contexts - she was known as a modelling industry equivalent of casual labour - and worked as a bartender, compère, eye-candy, "guy

expert” etc. She also played the female lead in a short film by the first time director Emil Mkrttchian “Hej Torsten”, about a CP-injured boy who fantasizes about a relationship with a female lifeguard (Sofia).¹ It later won several awards. The magazine Stureplan described her as follows:

Sofia Hellqvist has three qualities that make her special. She's a brunette, she usually smiles on pictures and she doesn't like small talk. Not very special, I'm sure you're thinking. But if you force these qualities into the extreme, then you have Sofia Hellqvist in a nutshell. That is to say, Sofia is not brunette, as in dark blond or hazelnut. Sofia has brown hair, as in the colour of exclusive chocolate with 90 percent cocoa. Sofia doesn't smile in the normal way, but stretches her jaws to reveal the maximum number of teeth. Sofia has made Stureplan habitués talk about her “ingratiating smirk”. That is, to smile as wide and as hard as you can, without looking silly.

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Sophia never opposes anybody and never gets angry. When others get angry, Sofia cries and feels bad. Sofia is like a brittle porcelain roe. The guys go crazy in her vicinity. The testosterone pines for that next door girl with the innocent eyes, slender shoulders and smirk.²

Between jobs, there were trips and relaxation: February 2004 14 days in Africa with drums and dancing - probably one of Urkraft's trips to West Africa. January 2005 the pornography fair in Los Angeles. She kissed Jenna Jameson, known for her memoirs “How to Make Love Like a Porn Star”, one of the globe's more off-putting books. She worked part time in a coffee shop and considered a future as a weather girl on TV4. Sofia has later said that she always had high goals but in 2005 she apparently floundered. Despite or perhaps because her gigs, her income was very modest: 2001 - 11 800 kr, 2002 - 0 kr, 2003 - 38 800 kr, 2004 - 73 300 kr and 2005 - 38 447 kr. That is not possible to live on. There has been speculation about tax evasion or some sugar daddy but no proof. What has been verified is that she shared a floor with others, that food and accommodation were included in her gigs and that she often visited Älvdalen.

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In 2006 it was time to travel and discover the world. Sofia and her friend Camilla Sundman moved to New York. They seem to have been there on tourist visas so every 3 months they were in Sweden to renew it. Sofia worked as a model and as a bartender & waitress at the pizza restaurant Serafina near Central Park.³ In the summer of 2006 they supplemented their travel funds by blogging about their experiences. (The blog was in the 3rd person. Possibly, it was ghost-written by web entrepreneur Andreas Vural.) In the blog, our ditzy party blondes Sofia & Camilla frequented Manhattan's bars and inaugural parties, met celebrities, visited Los Angeles, Denver and other cities, defended their virtue against young and old lechers and also read business economics: “We took courses at 'New York Institute of English and Business'. Had stomach cramps after each lesson because of the entertainment value. Our teacher has something as fun as “Crazy foot” i.e. spasms in one of the legs. We're talking violent twitches, almost giving us a 6-pack because of the laughing bouts.”⁴ The courses

¹ Mkrttchian, 2005.

² Här är ditt liv, Sofia Hellqvist! Stureplan, 2006-05-03.

³ Anne-Sofie Näslund. Sofia Hellqvists liv i USA – som bartender. Expressen, 2015-08-10. [New York Post.]

⁴ Sofia Hellqvist & Camilla Sundman. Sött, salt, surt. Nattstad. Sommaren 2006. [Redigerad version.]

included business development and “Accounting with Computer Applications” = 1152 hours at half speed 2006-2007. However, it is not clear if they finished with a diploma.⁵

Since all the money went to rent, food, travel, alcohol and furniture, they were for a while without electricity. One of Sofia's modelling jobs appears to have been for the photographer Antoine Verglas. Verglas had developed a style in which the models were presented as predatory cumbuckets. Some of the pictures ended up on a Spanish server. Sofia poses - more or less undressed - in a mirror-clad bathroom. The images were blurred and not in Verglas's usual style - more draft images than anything publishable. She looked ill at ease.

Sofia then disappeared under the radar until the summer of 2009. The following is known:

She trained as a yoga teacher at the organization “Yoga to the people (YTTP)”. YTTP-Manhattan was situated the corner of 23rd Street and 3rd Avenue. The requirement for the lowest teacher degree was 200 hours of teaching during 10 weekends and cost the student about 20 thousand SEK. As a teacher, there were classes of up to 40 people. Each class lasted 60 minutes. Students paid any amount of 50-100 SEK per session. Teachers shared what was left over after expenses. Two classes a day were possible to live on - provided you did not pay taxes. The teachers also led “retreats” with nature walks and meditation. There is a record that she opened or was involved in opening a yoga centre but that has not been confirmed.

At some point during her stay - according to one statement already in autumn 2006 - she got in touch with the women's network “Barbro's Best and Brightest (BBB)”. The network included a number of Swedish and American industrialists “Barbro's Friends”. The founder Barbro Ehnbohm was a Swedish businesswoman who became Sofia's personal mentor. Most BBB:s were from the Swedish business school, but lately Barbro had broadened recruitment. According to Barbro, Sofia fitted the bill because “she has talent, drive, is smart and has heart”. Many wondered how Barbro and Sofia ever connected - they hardly moved in the same circles - but according to Barbro, it was through her son the musician Marcus Forss who had met Sofia during a gig at a nightclub.

Other information is difficult to assess. According to Barbro, Sofia spent two years studying English and business and lived as a waitress. She hobby-painted and acquired a number of tattoos. She auditioned for a singing part in something. According to an unknown acquaintance, she had quit modelling, but worked as a mannequin and as a bartender – the nightclub Marquee has been mentioned. Through her mannequin work, she met professional colleague Vicky Andrén - now married to Carl Philip's cousin Gustaf Magnusson - and was through her and her then husband - nightclub owner and party fixer Mark Baker - invited to various parties. She was also seen with public relations man Ricardo Garcia.

Towards the end of her American stay - after Camilla returned to Sweden - Sofia lived with an unknown older man and his four-year-old son. According to a later deleted tweet, she and the man used to flip a coin about whose turn it was to take care of the boy.

Something happened in New York, but what?

⁵ Sofia Hellqvist. CV. <kungahuset.se> (2014-07-02). [“CV+SH+sv.pdf”.]

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February 2009 Carl Philip & Emma Pernald were no longer an item. On July 16, Carl Philip and Sofia bumped into each other in the “Crystal Room” in Pepe's Bodega in Båstad where they danced. Sofia was in Sweden to renew her visa, work a little and meet friends. She and Carl Philip exchanged phone numbers. They then began, under a great deal of secrecy, a relationship which, to the surprise of their surroundings, continued. Most of it took place under the radar. There is a record that they first met in New York, or maybe Carl Philip followed her there. After that, Sofia returned to Sweden and in practice started a new life as a prince mistress and aid worker.

We begin by describing this new life of Sofia's. The sources are decent. She had a private blog and also posted on Synk's member forum. On August 11, she described how she intended to work as a volunteer in Ghana through the “Student & Youth Travel Organization (SYTO)”. She was asked why. The answer was that she wanted to do something and that an acquaintance had recommended SYTO. On September 5, she flew to Accra. There were about 60 volunteers. The first week was an introductory course. She then worked in an orphanage in Mampong, Ghana. They had 20 infants and a further 20 children up to five years of age. The children enjoyed pulling Sofia's hair. For a while, she thought she was going bald, but then put her hair in a knot. At the end she collected donations from friends and acquaintances through her website to decorate a preschool in the village of Yandi in northern Ghana. On October 30, it was over. Sofia felt relieved: “I have gotten used to the food. The dirt. The people. The culture. The insects. I could pretty much live here. Almost. But I would trade a lot for A Tall Starbucks Americano with a couple of Ice cubes and a sprinkle of Cinnamon on Top.”⁶ Since the collection was done via Sofia's private accounts in the United States and Sweden and not via any 90 account there were suspicions of fraud but they seem to be baseless.

The Ghana adventure obviously impressed Carl Philip. A not too wild guess is that they exchanged emails. After Sofia's return, the relationship developed. They were seen at the movies and at Stockholm nightclubs, mainly the member clubs V and Rose. New Year she celebrated with friends in Sälen. New Year's Day, she and Carl Philip were seen walking hand in hand. When that became known, Sofia chose to go underground = study 7.5 points of Child and youth science at the university and plan her next aid project. Carl Philip's surroundings feared that she would reduce the snob value of knowing him so there was much backstabbing. Sofia was named both white trash, bar whore and a jerk off routine. Carl Philip culled his entourage, the remaining being less finicky. In July 2010, the relationship was officially confirmed by the court's press department.

The next aid project - Project Playground - focused on recreational centres in slums. The co-founder was the former model Frida Vesterberg. Frida lived in Cape Town South Africa with her partner, had written a master's thesis in political science about the children in the shanty towns and was now performing volunteer work. Hard to make a difference, though. She and Sofia were introduced by a mutual acquaintance Freja Kjellberg. PP's first sign of life was that Frida January 2010 advertised for a web designer. Then they went looking for a suitable place. The organization was officially registered 2010-03-04. Sofia became president, Frida vice president, Carl Philip board member. Frida's father helped set up the organization, but then withdrew. There was a lot of improvisation. The first centre opened 2010-09-01 in Langa,

⁶ Sofia Hellqvist. I'm going to Africa. <sofiahellqvist.org> (2009-10-24).

Cape Town. They started with 20 children and four adults. After one year they were 300 children and 14 adults but then they shrunk slightly. The activities were football, debates and teaching drums, singing, dancing, theatre etc. In the beginning there was a lot of fighting between the girls' gangs but it calmed down.⁷

Sofia handled the administration and was Swedish spokeswoman for the project. Frida was the location manager. Sofia's eldest sister Lina was also somehow involved. Both companies and individuals contributed. Most of the money came from the Postcode lottery. The quid pro quo was to advertise their beauty products, fashion lines and more. In 2010, PP hired an accountant, who seems to have forced Sofia to compromise with her easygoing attitude towards financial matters. She also established her own company, the SKH Agency. There were suspicions that Project Playground was a way to make themselves respectable and that Barbro was pulling the strings. However, it has not been possible to verify that. In 2013 TV3 made a documentary about the activities. Come the 2015 wedding, Sofia retired from practical work and became honorary president. PP by then had 800 children and 50 adults.

Sofia also worked on her public image. A number of people spoke positively about her at the time and regretted that they had made her participate in Slitz, Paradise Hotel and other suspicious activities. "Sofia is straight, modest, easy to like and deserves her success. A wise, humble, down to earth girl." And that's how it is! Don't dare say otherwise! Wherever possible the web images of her former self were deleted. Critiques were nipped in the bud by Sofia feeling nauseous from their malicious attacks. Even the Flashback-crowd felt a measure of admiration for "the pinup's" gung-ho and survival capacity.

Meanwhile, the relationship continued. In June, she was seen sneaking out of Carl Philip's apartment in the old town wearing a monk jacket, sweatpants and a cap pulled down over the eyes. About five light years from her official image. Apparently, all the fancy clothes were borrowed from acquaintances. In July the court confirmed that they were a couple and they had dinner with Carl Gustaf & Silvia at Solliden. They spent a few weeks in Thailand and South Africa and seem to have moved in together, although Sofia was still resident at her parents. Sofia was so allergic to Emma that Carl Philip even had to buy a new bed. During the public storm against Carl Gustaf in connection with The Reluctant Monarch, they disappeared from the grid, but on June 10, 2011, the court confirmed that they now resided at the same address. Since then, Sofia has attended several official events. The impression is that she is ambulating between Sweden and South Africa and that the two will soon move into Prince Bertil's villa Solbacken on Djurgården. According to a Sifo survey in 2011, 51 percent of the population thought that Carl Philip would marry her.⁸

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In 2014, the two became engaged. The gift from Svensk Damtidning was to censor Sofia's comments field from negative posts. October 17 Carl Philip participated on TV4's "Hellenius Hörna" where he spoke at length about Sofia's merits. Hellenius had played Carl Philip in the parody Hej Baberiba and there portrayed him as an immature jerk. The court had long been offered to participate in his program but not been interested. In the spring, however, Carl Philip and Hellenius met over lunch. Carl Philip arrived hesitant - he seems to have been persuaded by the newly appointed CIO Margareta Thorgren (according to other information PR-strategist Christina Saliba) - but after some negotiations, agreed. The court received the

⁷ Project Playground Annual Report September 2010 to December 2011.

⁸ Beatrice Birkeldh. S unika Sifoundersökning. Tidskriften S, 2011:7.

replay-rights. The program was pre-recorded and lasted half an hour. Carl Philip repeated old information and Hellenius apologized for his Baberiba interpretation.

The following year it was wedding time. The TV4 interview was two hours. The SVT interview was 30 minutes. There is also a German television report. They were asked what they saw in each other. Carl Philip answered that Sofia was beautiful, confident, enterprising, always did her best, looked positive at life and was loyal. Sofia countered with her standard reply that Carl Philip was humble, kind & down to earth. She wanted to talk about Project Playground and her future as a princess. Neither he nor she seemed interested in a family life, but now they have one.