

Bushido and the IV pensioner – Bankruptcies and parrots

Translation of an article by Timo Nowack and Christian Bütikofer published on 17th May 2013 in the Swiss financial magazine “Bilanz”.

(Translator note: “IV pensioner“ in the article’s headline apparently refers to the Hartz system used in German-speaking countries for calculating entitlement to state benefits. I have been informed that Hartz IV means that the person’s pension income is not sufficient to live on and has to be supplemented by state benefits. The pensioner here is only referred to by the initials of his name, but will be recognized by anyone involved with the conservation of the Spix’s macaw.)

A Swiss bought two companies in Berlin in which the controversial rapper Bushido had a share. The background of the businessman is distinctly odd.



The Swiss R.M – seen here in 2001 - was owner of a few of the rarest parrots in the world. Some ten years later he bought in Berlin two companies partly owned by the German rapper Bushido. The hip-hop star is not just successful with his music. The 34 year old, whose real name is Anis Mohammed Ferchichi, is a millionaire and despite his controversial lyrics has been accepted into German high circles of prominent and political people. Bushido was given the Bambi media award for integration, was an intern with a CDU member of the federal parliament and was photographed with the German minister of the interior. However, Bushido has been criticized time and again - mainly because of his

loose ties to the Abou-Chaker family



The Swiss businessman R.M (his name is known to the editor) took over two companies from the German rapper Bushido, his partner Arafat Abou-Chaker and some other partners. The musician is being criticised at the moment for his contact to the Abou-Chaker family. “ The male members of this large family operate in organised crime circles“,Stern quoted the Berlin senior state prosecutor Jörg Raupach, “Mafioso-style structures clearly exist here and have been established judicially.”



In an interview with the Swiss journals Handelszeitung and Bilanz M maintains that he is not directly involved with the companies taken over, but has been given the task by the Berliners to re-organise and wind up the companies. Bushido and Arafat Abou-Chakar have refuted the allegations in Stern through their lawyer.

Yet just who is this Swiss who does business with Bushido? The IV pensioner is friendly and freely provides information about his business activities, which gives rise to many questions.

Many companies in liquidation

In the years before the Bushido deal M had already taken over companies in Berlin – also for re-organisation as he says. In Malaga in Spain the late-fifties man was active in real estate. However to a question about an action being brought against his company there he does not remember exactly the details..

His business activities in Switzerland are more sensational. Since 1990 he is or has been very active in some 20 companies mostly involved with housing associations and real estate/building companies in Murten, Greng and Ulmiz in the canton of Freiburg. Most of these are now being liquidated.

“ I cannot recall Mr M actually building anything in Murten,“ says town clerk Urs Höchner. “ He produced sketches, but I have never seen a building from him.” M contradicts this. He says he has built some 300 houses in Switzerland. “ Banks handed projects over to me where they had to take land away from partners.“, he says with regard to the many companies, “ I had to set up a separate company for each project.” He alleges he then built on the sites or sold them on.

Debts for more than 1.7 million Swiss francs.

Then he had suffered brain damage from a fall, which he says had prevented him working for a long time. During this period his wife divorced him and a business partner deceived him. “ All that set me back and I had to close down my companies”, he says, “I lost everything and in the meantime have begun re-organising.”

In 2004 and 2005 he piled up debts of more than 1.7 million Swiss francs through mortgages and business activities in Murten. An office block in Villenstil (estimated value 1.6 million francs), which belonged to one of his companies was auctioned off. He still has debts, but not more to this extent.

In the communal administration of Ulmiz the name M is well-known. They still have regular enquiries about his whereabouts. He moved address frequently.

The rarest parrot of the world

The perhaps most scintillating chapter in the life of the Bushido business partner carries the title Spix's macaw. This has to do with the rarest parrot in the world, which has become extinct in the wild. At the beginning of the 2000s M bought at least 15 of these birds and thus an estimated fifth of the world's known population. He set up a company with the stated objectives “ real estate“ and “bird breeding“ One of the assets was “ 15 birds - Spix” with a total value of CHF 100,000.

Yet M is a controversial figure on the parrot scene. At the time critics questioned his qualifications in the breeding of birds. Finally he disposed of them. An expert, who does not wish to be named, says today that it's good for the birds that M gave up keeping and breeding.

M. defends himself against this criticism. “ I have kept parrots since I was young and loved these birds”, he says, “ I sold them for the same price as I bought them to conserve this species for the world.” The buyer of the largest number does not have to worry about prices. It is Sheikh Saoud Bin Mohammed Ali Al-Thani from the Qatar royal family. His private breeding centre AWWP for endangered species took the birds over. The exact price paid is not known.

Arrested in Brazil

The Brazilian media reported in 2009 meanwhile an especially delicate matter on M. He was arrested for a day at the end of 2008 in Rio because he was carrying 10 parrot eggs in a special waistcoat – obviously intended for smuggling purposes abroad.

M does not dispute this, but says he had received the eggs for breeding, but had not known he could not take them out of the country. When back in Europe he had not known where to transfer payment of a fine levied on him and for a short while there was an international arrest warrant issued against him. “ It was stupid of me” M says about the egg business.

Just how he will describe the deal with Bushido remains to be seen. .