



PRIX EUROPA 2020 Best European Radio Investigation of the Year

The True Cost of the Goods We Buy: The Dark Secret of the Automotive Industry Prylarnas pris: Bilbranchens mörka hemlighet

Comments from the Jury Group:

“Very important subject and relevant to absolutely everybody. Very impressive! “

“Best I’ve heard. First hand investigative journalism, well scripted, great begin, working with cliffhangers, using archive material, field recordings, nonchalant chatter. This documentary uses the full width of the medium. Great and very exceptional.“

“Takes you along on a very clear research path concerning a topic that affects almost all of us. Excellent!“

“Good the headphones device, and the persistence to get to the truth. Very relevant topic! Very well told, the authors were transparent.“

To save the world from global warming, we have to leave fossil fuels behind. Electrification is by many viewed as the most promising solution. The automotive industry is leading the way. In Sweden market leader Volvo Cars has promised to only make electrified cars in a near future. Volvo claim their reason for this shift is concern for the climate and the environment. However, as this investigation shows, electrification comes in this case with a hefty price. Electric cars need much more of rare earth elements compared to ordinary cars.

It is possible to mine these metals in a responsible way and to recycle them. However, Volvo and other car companies have done very little to control the mining and the processing of the metals. Most of the rare earth elements are mined in China. Earlier reports have shown severe environmental damage from the mining and processing of rare earth elements. But China claims to have cleaned up its act.

In this investigative documentary Swedish Radio reveals severe pollution is still going on, it has just been hidden from plain sight. Meanwhile, Volvo Cars and the car industry are not living up to the promises of environmental responsibility made to the public. Most of the investigative documentary focuses on locations in China, in Beijing and Inner Mongolia.

In the past reporters have been stopped. In this case someone had alerted the police and the investigation had to be carried out in haste before the police arrives.

The investigation received much attention. It lead to promises from Volvo Cars to improve their control of sourcing. The government has proposed stricter laws on recycling of the rare earth elements in use in Sweden.

Congratulations to:

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Commissioning editors:	Lisa Helgesson
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Production companies:	SR
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