

ECONOMICS
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From Hell to Heaven The Case of Florian Homm **HD**

He was a star in the financial sector – until his system broke down. Hunted by the FBI, he faces a 225 year jail sentence in the US. Now Florian Hamm has given up the ruthless pursuit of money and started a new life.

Rarely is Florian Homm seen in public without his cigar. If appearances are anything to go by, then the man is the prototype of an arch capitalist. His most successful years were those just after the turn of the millennium. Back then, he was estimated to be worth about EUR 300 million. Although he's on the FBI's most-wanted list in the US, the man who prosecutors say has conspired to defraud investors and fixed stock prices is free to roam in Germany.

In interviews, the once ruthless stock speculator says he's reformed, and explains that it was greed that made him do it, saying, "Somewhere there's that primeval feeling in a true capitalist. It's a drive that says, 'I want to own everything, it will all be mine!'" Homm, who once led a life that whirled around stocks, cocaine and prostitutes, presents himself today as a devout Catholic and preaches to economics' students, "You do not have to forsake wealth, but you should not lose sight of what is good and important."