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Wanted: Adler

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Aidar's Adler sits in a field. The car is black with large circular front lights and those protruding shoulders — excuse the lack of motor vernacular — that old cars from the 1930s and 1940s have.

In the photos it looks as if it has just arrived for a mafia meet. There is nothing behind but scrappy land and a miserable industrial building that would be a perfect place for the police to hide in.

The advert says it is an Adler Typ 10 Stromform from 1938 and that it is now in Naberezhniye Chelny.

Aidar is advertising frantically in a number of places but does not seem to have had much success. Not that that has stopped him from raising the price recently from 1.1 million rubles to 1.4 million rubles ($38,000 to $49,000).

Aidar explains that the car is only part Stromform: The body, yes, is pure Stromform, but the engine is from a GAZ-24, the wheel from a Mercedes. If you look at the photos you can see the

Mercedes sign on the steering wheel and an engine that hails from way after the end of World War II. Not that its link to that war is extinct.

It's a car that has been kept alive with body transplants over the last 60 years. Unfortunately, Aidar does not explain how it got to Tatarstan.

Not that it is that hard to guess. The Stromform was made in a few thousands in Nazi Germany. It's not hard to find photos of the car used by Nazis in the war on vintage car web sites, photos taken in France, Poland or Ukraine.

Many German cars were brought back as spoils of war to the Soviet Union — or just seized when on Soviet territory. Aidar's Adler almost certainly has a similar history.

Every few years, a discovery seems to be made in the former Soviet Union. A vintage car expert stumbles across a rare pre-war German car that is hidden away in a barn or perhaps still being used to transport farm stuff in a village. The less scrupulous then convince the farmer to sell it for a new donkey before making millions.

One vintage car expert once told me of how often the car hunter would find a rare Mercedes, one of only two in the world, say, the Holy Grate of car lovers, with its engine still intact, working, with the original diamond windscreen in place.

The only problem was that the farmer had cut it in half and attached it to his tractor as it's hard to transport hay in a Mercedes. Transplanting electric saws onto a pre-war car has also happened.

Aidar obviously knows that the market for a half-1930s Stromform/half-tractor is limited. His car looks in good condition, but still prospective buyers were picking at the purity of the car that mixes so many bits from other cars. It is still for sale.

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