



Poland | Warsaw

“Black Roman”

Every big city has its own legends. Warsaw has its “Black Roman”, a mysterious and original character. Dressed all in black, as his name suggests, he walks, or rather runs, through our city, especially the center. Black Roman is a strange, hurried flaneur. He keeps his own hometown under surveillance, observes it precisely, and has a wise piece of advice for every passer-by.

If we meet Black Roman on the street, he may tell us the time of our death.

Perhaps he will also make us a compliment – assuming, of course, he is in a good mood. I had myself the luck of meeting him about ten years ago when I was looking for a dress in a certain shop in the Aleje Jerozolimskie (Jerusalem Avenue).

Black Roman came up to me, took a dress from the rack with an imperious gesture (it was an orange one), held it against my body and said I would certainly look lovely in it. Unfortunately, I didn’t take his fashion advice and didn’t buy the dress.

A pity really, because then I could today walk through the city in this dress and tell everybody that it was from Black Roman. There are various theories about who Black Roman really is, why he has for years been walking through our city, why he walks so fast and why he wears black.

According to one of these theories, Black Roman was once a currency profiteer who used to deal in American dollars or in gold in the 1980s and was involved in various shady businesses. Then Black Roman went bankrupt and became a little crazy.

Another theory is that his former wife robbed him and ran off with another man. Black Roman never got over it, and since then has been roaming the streets, hoping perhaps to run into his faithless wife and divest her of their common property. And whether this is all true or not is quite beside the point. Black Roman roves through all the streets of our city. If you ever come to Warsaw, keep your eyes and ears open: maybe you will even learn the hour of your death.

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