

Police mystified by theft of Zidane's biography manuscript

Thieves have made off with the manuscript of an unauthorized biography of retired French football legend Zinedine Zidane that deals with several sensitive issues, including doping, the weekly Le Point reported Thursday on its web site.

The biography was stored on two computers that were taken within three days of each other from the residences of the book's publisher and of a journalist who was helping the author, Besma Lahouri, with its final edit.

The first theft occurred April 1, when the home of the book's publisher, Christophe Deloire, was burgled. In addition to the laptop, some jewellery and a child's piggy bank were taken.

Three days later, the home of a journalist identified as Anne. B was broken into and the laptop containing the entire manuscript except the chapter on doping was stolen, as were some jewels.

According to Deloire, 'The police don't think this is a coincidence.'

In addition to doping, the book also discusses Zidane's advertising contracts and his financial investments.

According to the report, pressure on the publisher and author began to grow in December last year after the sports daily L'Equipe reported that the biography was in the works.

'Almost overnight, my research became much more difficult,' Lahouri said. 'Several people I had interviewed called me and said they did not want their names and their statements used in the book.'

For Deloire, the sudden pressure was also surprising. 'I am used to publishing controversial books, but I've rarely seen anything like this,' he said.

Even before the computer thefts, publication of the book had been pushed back from May 23 to September 24.

In January, L'Equipe asked Zidane about the biography. The former Real Madrid and France star replied, 'I have never wanted one.'

(© IANS / India eNews)