

Bedford County Sheriff's Office

Michael J. Brown
Sheriff

Committed to Excellence

February 26, 2011

The Honorable Robert F. McDonnell

Richmond

Re: Jens Soering Clemency Petition

Dear Governor McDonnell:

My name is Ricky Gardner and I am currently serving as Major /Chief Deputy with the Bedford County Sheriff's Office in Bedford County, Virginia. I have been employed with the Bedford County Sheriff's Office for 30 years. In April 1985 I was serving as a criminal investigator and was the lead investigator in the murders of Derek and Nancy Haysom.

On April 3, 1985, Derek and Nancy Haysom were found murdered in their Bedford County home. Mr. Haysom, age 72, was stabbed 36 times and Mrs. Haysom, age 53, was stabbed 7 times. Both had their throats cut from ear to ear. This was by far the worst crime scene I have ever witnessed.

I would like to share with you some of the facts in the case that the jury heard during Jens Soering's three week trial in June 1990. Jens Soering confessed on three separate occasions to murdering Derek and Nancy Haysom in their Bedford County home on Saturday night, March 30, 1985. Soering said that after he murdered the Haysoms, he left their home and drove to a nearby dumpster to get rid of some evidence that he had taken from the crime scene. This is when he said he realized that he had cut his hand during the struggle with the Haysoms, and that he had left the exterior front door light on when he left their house. He said that he decided to return to the Haysoms' house to get a bandage for his hand. He also wanted to turn off the light before it raised suspicions.

Soering said that when he re-entered the house, he did so in his socks because he didn't want to leave any shoe impressions. While working the crime scene we found a full-length sock impression on the living room floor near Mr. Haysom's body that appeared to be blood-soaked. At trial, the state's impressions examiner was not allowed to give his opinion on whether the impression was made by Jens Soering, but his work product was admitted into evidence. We also collected numerous blood samples from the scene. When we received the lab report, we learned that the samples taken from the front screen door and a spot in the master bed were type O blood, pre-DNA. Neither of the victims had type O blood. Both of these pieces of evidence found at the

scene were corroborated in Soering's confessions. Jens Soering has type O blood. Also, when deputies responded to the Haysoms' home, the exterior front door light was on. Jens Soering could not locate the light switch to turn off the light. Elizabeth Haysom, who had lived in the house, knew where the switch was located. The only switch to the light was located over the headboard of the bed in the master bedroom.

After the bodies were discovered, I interviewed the victims' youngest daughter, Elizabeth Haysom. She was a first-year student at the University of Virginia. She told me that the weekend her parents were murdered, she and her boyfriend, Jens Soering, rented a car in Charlottesville and drove to Washington D.C. for the weekend. She professed her love for her parents and was cooperative. She was quick to give us her fingerprints, blood samples and foot impressions.

Later, we acquired a copy of the rental car agreement and it was signed by E.R. Haysom (Elizabeth Roxanne Haysom). The car had been driven 669 miles that weekend, which immediately raised suspicions. Round trip from Charlottesville, Virginia to Washington D.C. is approximately 240 miles.

On Sunday, October 6, 1985, Jens Soering, a University of Virginia Jefferson Scholar, drove to Bedford and was interviewed by Investigator Chuck Reid and myself. He was uncooperative and refused to give us his fingerprints, blood sample and foot impressions. As Jens was leaving, he advised me that he would think about it and would give me a call on Wednesday, October 9 with his decision. On Wednesday, he called me and said that he would cooperate and give me what I requested, but he couldn't meet with me until the following Tuesday. On Tuesday, October 15, we learned that Jens and Elizabeth had disappeared. A few days later, Jens' car was found in a parking lot at National Airport in Washington D.C.

In England, Jens confessed three different times that he murdered the Haysoms and Elizabeth stayed in Washington to create an alibi. On his return to Bedford County in January 1990, he changed his story and said that he was the one who stayed in Washington and Elizabeth killed her parents. If that was true, then why did he refuse to give us his physical evidence on October 6, 1985 and leave the country less than a week later? She gave me her physical evidence days after the murders.

I received a call from Detective Constable Terry Wright in Richmond England on Thursday, May 29, 1986. He asked me if Elizabeth Haysom's parents were dead and if so, had they been murdered. When I confirmed both, he advised me that he believed that the murderers were in jail in England.

On Tuesday, June 3, 1986, Bedford County Commonwealth's Attorney Jim Updike and I flew to England. We were met by Detective Constable Wright and Sergeant Ken Beever. They advise us that several weeks prior, they had arrested the couple for check fraud. After the arrests and while searching the couple's apartment, they found a diary and a stack of letters. The officers took items as evidence. Detective Constable Wright started reading the letters and diary. The first entry in the diary was October 6 and was co-authored by Soering and Haysom. It was noted that on Sunday, October 6, "Jens met with Investigators Reid and Gardner in Bedford. They insisted on test...must phone them back on the 9th of October." In the following days it was noted in the

diary that the "apartment was wiped clean of fingerprints and travel plans were being made." It was also noted in the diary on October 12 "That the case is about to be solved.....Perhaps fingerprints on the coffee mug used by Jens in the Bedford interview gave him away."

In the letters, which were written during the Christmas break of 1984 when the two were away with their families, Elizabeth wrote to Jens of her hatred for her parents, how they controlled her life and wishing they were dead. Soering responded to her letters and in one letter wrote that "I have the dinner scene planned out." The attack on the Haysoms started while Mr. and Mrs. Haysom and Jens were sitting at the dining room table. Again, these letters were dated December 1984, which means Jens and Elizabeth were making plans to kill her parents three months prior to the murders.

Thursday afternoon, June 5, 1986, Wright, Beever and I began our interviews with Haysom and Soering. After several days of interviews, on Sunday afternoon Soering asked to speak with me alone. At this time he decided to confess, but would not allow me to record his statement or to take notes. He stated that Mr. and Mrs. Haysom did not approve of him and he drove to their home to try and change their minds. But, if he was unsuccessful, he was prepared to kill them. He and Elizabeth, who wanted her parents dead, had planned this. He stated that she stayed in Washington D.C. to create an alibi.

Later that Sunday evening, Elizabeth confessed to her part of the murders to Wright and Beever. She stated that she did want her parents dead and she put Jens up to murdering them. Elizabeth said she stayed in Washington to create an alibi, while Jens drove to her parents' house to kill them. She said that Jens dropped her off in Georgetown where she purchased two tickets to a movie. She then took a taxi back to the Washington Marriott where they were staying, and ordered room service for two, using a credit card.

Later that evening, Elizabeth went back to Georgetown, as planned, to purchase two more tickets and to meet Jens in the designated location on his return. When Soering picked her up, he told her that her father refused to die and "he fought like a big bear." At the end of the day, Jens and Elizabeth had confessed and their confessions were identical.

During his confessions, Jens stated that Mr. Haysom refused to die and fought like a big bear. At one point in the struggle, Jens said that Mr. Haysom hit him in the face knocking off his glasses. At Jens' trial, a gentleman testified that "while attending the Haysom's memorial service, he noticed that Jens had a bruise under his eye."

In summary, the type O blood and sock impressions found at the scene, the rental car agreement, the letters and diary written by Jens and Elizabeth, Jens absconding and fleeing the country immediately after being asked for his fingerprints, blood samples and foot impressions, the man who testified that he saw Jens at the Haysoms' memorial service with a bruise under his eye, were consistent with and corroborated by Jens Soering in each of his three confessions.

Finally, Jens Soering has never shown any remorse, nor has he ever taken any responsibility for killing Mr. and Mrs. Haysom. He viciously attacked the victims in their home and nearly cut off their heads. He was going to kill me if Elizabeth had not stopped him. I think these facts alone should disqualify him from any special treatment.

Respectfully, I ask on behalf of the Haysom family and the citizens of Bedford County, that you deny clemency to Jens Soering. Also, I want to thank you for standing firm in not allowing Soering to be transferred to Germany last year.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at 540-586-7699.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ricky". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "R" and a cursive "icky".

Major Ricky W. Gardner
Bedford County