

Chapter 9

The American Psychiatric Association's definition of the folie a deux states that, "if the relationship with the [...] person who already has a disorder with persecutory delusions [...] is interrupted, the delusional beliefs will diminish or disappear" in the secondary partner. For me the return to sanity began about two weeks after the police led Liz and me away to separate patrol cars after our arrest at Kew Garden underground station. Like a heroin or cocaine addict in cold turkey withdrawal I was suddenly and permanently deprived of the only thing that made my life worthwhile or even possible: Elizabeth.

That shock was compounded by the trauma of being ingested by the criminal justice machinery. Suddenly I was no longer a person but a thing, a lump of meat thrown into the maws of the meat grinder called law enforcement. I was not Jens Soering but a wrist, handcuffed to another wrist. I was not the son of Klaus and Anne- Claire but a finger, to be inked and rolled across a fingerprint card. I was not the lover of Liz but a mouth, which was ordered to talk about the frauds by two interrogating police officers. I was not a highly intelligent and accomplished scholarship winner but a stomach, into which the cell block sergeant had to throw some cold food before the shift changed. The machine had consumed me and made me its own.

On May 2, 1986, two days after our arrest, I saw Elizabeth briefly at a court hearing where we were remanded into custody until our trial. We hardly had time to exchange a few words before being torn apart again. Because England's pre-trial prisons, called remand centres, were grossly overcrowded at that time I and many other unconvicted prisoners were housed in underground holding cells at various police stations across London. Two and sometimes three of us spent twenty-four hours a day in cells designed to keep one suspect safe for a few hours. Without TV or books or, for that matter, windows or toilets, we had nothing else to do but talk.

I learned a lot about stealing cars, dealing drugs and breaking into houses during those days. When it was my turn to entertain my cell mates I said nothing about the murders in Virginia, of course, but instead revealed to those youngsters the ineffable glory of loving and being loved by the most wonderful woman in the world. Never before had I told anyone so much about my feelings for Liz. During the previous year and a quarter no opportunity for such self-revealing conversations had arisen because we had almost never been apart. And now, when I missed Elizabeth so much, talking about her was one way to relieve the yearning.

One of my cell mates listened more attentively and with more understanding than the others. As I recall he did not express his opinions on my relationship with Liz but simply asked some pointed questions. If love was the attraction and bond between two people, did this not necessarily imply that there had to be two individuals, separate and more or less equal, in order for love to exist between them? Yet did I myself not say that Elizabeth and I had merged our personalities into a common whole, because we wanted to be inseparable? Without our individuality, could we really call our feelings for each other love? What would be a better term for our relationship? Exactly why did I like disappearing as an individual by melding with Liz?

The more questions this cell mate asked, the longer I took to answer. And his questions did not leave me when he was transferred a few days later for a court appearance. Without him to guide my examination of the relationship with Elizabeth I fell back on the same tools I always used when I wanted to work on a problem: pen and paper. As a gesture of spiritual gratitude I even addressed my diary-letter to my cell mate, although I did not want him or anyone else to read it and had no way of

sending it to him even if I did. Obsessive is how I described my bond with Liz; I had recognized that I needed to find some sense of a separate self again. But re-establishing my and Elizabeth's individuality was only a means to the same old end for me, since the whole crux of the letter was that I wanted our love to be even more glorious than it already was. Still, the insight that our relationship did not amount to perfection was revolutionary 9:1.

Before I could develop these thoughts much further, however, Liz and I were re-arrested at an English magistrate's court hearing on June 5, 1986, for interrogation on the Virginian homicide charges. Elizabeth and I had already believed ourselves safe from the Bedford County authorities because no one had questioned us about the murders during the month since our original arrests for the English frauds. Later we learned that Sheriff Carl Wells and Commonwealth's Attorney James Updike had not issued international arrest warrants for us after our escape from the U.S. to Europe in October, 1985. Thus it took the police in London more than four weeks to trace Liz's and my movements back from England to Thailand to Yugoslavia and finally to Virginia. Had those English detectives not been alerted by the suspicious passages in our Christmas, 1984, diary-letters, they would never have bothered to contact American law enforcement authorities, and the Bedford County investigators would never have heard that Elizabeth and I were in custody overseas.

I have still not heard a convincing explanation for Sheriff Wells' and prosecutor Updike's failure to make any attempt to find us after our flight in the fall of 1985. In addition to the fingerprint and blood type and, possibly, foot print evidence against Liz, our sudden departure was itself an implicit admission of involvement in the killings of Derek and Nancy Haysom. The homicide investigation made no further progress during our seven months on the run, so the decision to send Commonwealth's Attorney James Updike and Bedford County Detective Ricky Gardner to London, England, at the beginning of June, 1986, was based on the same evidence available in October, 1985. Why then had the Virginian law enforcement authorities not contacted Interpol immediately after our escape from the U.S. to Europe? Perhaps Sheriff Wells' and prosecutor Updike's reverence for the Langhorns, Gibbes, Astors, Benedicts and Haysoms was so great that they preferred leaving the crime unsolved to accusing the scion of those illustrious families of murdering her parents.

In any case I had no intimation of trouble as I was brought to a magistrate's court on June 5, 1986, for a brief procedural appearance on the English fraud charges. Suddenly the door burst open and my court-appointed lawyer entered. Without a word he flung down on my bench a copy of London's seamiest tabloid, "The Sun," with the banner, "Voodoo Murders: Two Held." Apparently the journalists had combined the gruesome nature of the killings with the passage about "voodoo" in Elizabeth's Christmas, 1984, diary-letter to arrive at that sales-boosting headline. Since Liz had not told me anything about voodoo when she described the crime scene to me fifteen months earlier, I did not even understand at first why my attorney had shown me the newspaper -- until I began to read the article.

No more than two hours later I found myself back in the holding cells beneath the same police station where Elizabeth and I had been questioned about the frauds more than a month ago. This time, however, I knew that I had to face and fulfil the promise I had made to Liz in the Marriott Hotel on March 30, 1985: I would have to "confess" to her murders to save her life. Oh, how the feelings, the memories from that terrible night came flooding back! During the four days of interrogations the investigators required me to think about the homicides, and during the long nights I stared at the ceiling while I counted the blue tiles on the walls and remembered, remembered.

As Elizabeth had explained to me in the hotel fifteen months earlier, her parents deserved it, since they were child-abusers. The drugs made her do it, so the murders were not really her fault. And if I don't

help Liz she'll fry! If I don't help her she'll fry! If I don't help Liz she'll fry!

Nothing had changed since the night of the killings. Either I could be the executioner's accomplice, by telling the police the truth and sending the woman I loved to the electric chair. Or I could be the hero, by "confessing" to the homicides and spending a few years in a German youth prison under the partial immunity my father's diplomatic status would grant me. So of course I played the role of Macbeth, the murderer. I kept my promise.

Even today I am glad I did not become part of the judicial process that would have sent Elizabeth to her death. I still believe the lesson of the Nazi era with which all German children are inculcated, that the worst form of murder is the killing of a citizen by his own government. But my "confession" cannot be retrospectively redeemed by interpreting it as romantic idealism. Sidney Carton understood the consequences of his sacrifice when he took Charles Darnay's place on the guillotine in Charles Dickens' "A Tale Of Two Cities," while I was just a mentally unbalanced and fatally misinformed nineteen year old.

"It is a far, far better thing I do than I have ever done..." So said Sidney Carton on the scaffold, and so I told myself as I prepared myself for my "confession." For three days, from June 5 to June 7, I told the detectives as little as possible; before I placed my head on that guillotine I wanted to ask my lawyer whether I would in fact be protected by partial diplomatic immunity! But even on June 5, the first day of questioning, I tried to protect Liz from execution by insisting that she had been in Washington when the murders occurred.

On June 7, while I was still trying to persuade the policemen to allow me to see my attorney, I nearly panicked and told the truth. An English Detective Sergeant named Kenneth Beever asked me, "Would you consider, under those circumstances, taking into account your answer, pleading guilty to something you didn't do?"

"Would I consider doing that?"

"Yes."

"I can't say for sure right now, but I can see, I can see it happening, yes. I think it is a possibility. I think it happens in real life."

"I disagree with you, but don't let's get into any legal arguments now. I'm sorry. I think you answered my question."

"I mean, you know. I couldn't answer that question right now. I certainly hope that, I hope very much that it's not going to come to something like that." 9:2

But it did come to something like that. I knew that the English magistrate had ordered the police to stop interrogating me about the homicides by midnight on June 8, 1986. If I was to keep my promise to save Elizabeth's life I could not wait forever for my lawyer, and the investigators never did allow me to speak to him. So on the evening of June 8 I decided to admit to Liz's crime without having checked my legal status with an attorney.

The interrogation was conducted by Bedford County Detective Ricky Gardner, who dictated these notes onto a tape recorder as soon as the interview was completed:

"Told by Beever that Soering wanted to talk with me. Brought to detective's office at 4:45 p.m. Read Miranda warnings to Soering at that time. Said he understood and signed form. Said he would make statement only to me. Said that he did not want me to tape record the statement. I agreed and asked Jens to tell me what really happened. He began to make his statement.

Elizabeth and Jens drove a rental car to Washington D.C. on that Friday night. Discussed killing her parents...They were opposed to her seeing Jens. Thought that she could do better...Elizabeth and Jens did not want to kill them...Subject of killing them came up. He decided to drive to Lynchburg and confront her parents...Drove rental car there on Saturday night...Had knife with him...Had not decided to kill Haysoms, just wanted to talk to them and try to convince them to let Elizabeth continue to see him. Left Washington in afternoon...Drove to Loose Chippings. Knocked on front door. Answered by Mr. Haysom. He invited Jens inside...Elizabeth stayed in Washington to set alibi in case trouble happened.

Jens entered front door. Mr. Haysom served Jens one or two stiff drinks...Mrs. Haysom came down from upstairs...Argued with Mr. Haysom about her painting...Both were drinking heavy...My drink was gin and something...Mrs. Haysom wearing jeans...Big argument between Elizabeth's parents about painting... They invited Jens to have something to eat...Led to dining room table...Sat with back to window looking over the hill through back dining room window...Mr. Haysom was to Jens' left side...Haysoms arguing very loud...They started yelling and arguing with me about Elizabeth...Said they could have me kicked out of U.Va....Said they did not want Elizabeth to see me any more...Argument got more violent...Head was ringing...

Tried to leave...Got up from my chair and tried to walk behind Mr. Haysom...He pushed me back and I was slammed against dining room wall...Hit my head against the wall...Do not remember how many drinks I had before I tried to leave...I did not drink much...Did not hold my liquor well...After hitting wall, I pulled out my knife and cut Mr. Haysom across his throat...Across his jugular vein...He grabbed his throat and yelled, 'God, you must be crazy, man!' Blood rushed out of his throat...I froze...

Just wanted to get out of there...Heard Mrs. Haysom screaming...She was coming at me with a knife...Waving it at me...Got knife away from her...Grabbed her and held her as a shield...Mr. Haysom got up from his chair and came at me...Used Mrs. Haysom as a shield...My glasses were knocked off in this fight...Slashed Mrs. Haysom across throat...She went towards kitchen...Mr. Haysom hit me in the head...Don't remember any more...

Left house...look tableware and clothes to the dumpster at the end of the street...Threw pants, jacket and sneakers into dumpster...Hit small dog on way to dumpster...Drove speed limit all the way back to Washington D.C....Met Elizabeth at the movie theater...She was scared shitless...Told her what happened...She said, 'Oh my God!'

Jens threw two knives into durnpster...Went back to house to wipe up fingerprints and blood...Swirled footprints in blood on floor...Threw away glasses and silverware in dumpster...Turned off lights when he left house...Drove all the way to D.C. in rental car...Wrapped sheet around him...Jens' hand was cut in fight...Didn't notice cut until he got to dumpster...washed hand and wrapped it in a towel...Met Elizabeth outside Rocky Horror Picture Show...Theater in Georgetown near hotel...Movie ended around 2 a m.

Derek Haysom was waving a spoon at Jens during the fight...Most blood was in the dining room...Mr.

Haysom was standing like a bear and waved arms after he was stabbed in the throat...Didn't see either victim fall and hit the ground...Last time he saw Mrs. Haysom, she was walking towards the kitchen and was holding her throat."

The interrogation was interrupted at this point for a break which lasted from 6:45 p.m. to 7:19 p.m. When questioning resumed the English Detectives Kenneth Beever and Terence Wright joined Ricky Gardner, so I had to repeat my description of the murders. Consistency and accuracy were crucial to making my "confession" convincing, and I tried my best to repeat my story without changes. Only two new details were added, which Detective Gardner noted in his transcription of his tape recorded notes:

"Jens showed me scars on his fingers which he said were from the fight with the Haysoms. [...] When he returned to Loose Chippings the second time, both Mr. and Mrs. Haysom were on the floor and not moving...Mr. Haysom was lying in the dining room with his feet out of the living room door, facing the front of the house..."

During the last twenty minutes of the interrogation the policemen asked me a few questions about my motive. Here I tried particularly hard to keep my answers short and simple, since I believed this to be the most unconvincing aspect of my "confession." After all, Liz's mother and father lived in Lynchburg and thus could hardly prevent their daughter dating me while we both lived at U.Va.! But in trying to explain the supposed cause of Elizabeth's and my purported hatred of her parents, I had to be careful not to say anything which might point too strongly in Liz's direction. Detective Gardner recorded in his notes,

"Elizabeth was raped in Switzerland when she was younger...He did not think that Mrs. Haysom was a lesbian...Elizabeth was neglected by her parents...Mrs. Haysom had affairs and enjoyed creating havoc in public...Mr. Haysom switched off to Mrs. Haysom and Elizabeth referred to him as cold...Photos of Elizabeth in the nude were taken by her mother and shown to visitor...Jens saw these pictures...Elizabeth showed them to him...Read excerpts of Jens' January, 1985, letters to Elizabeth...Voodoo is possible if people believe in it...Burglaries were a possible excuse for the murders...Dinner scene a coincidence...Jens concluded, 'I fell in love with a girl. We talked about killing her parents. I didn't want to do it, but I drove to their house and killed them. I got caught.' Interview ended at 9:42 p.m." 9:3

While my statement ended at 9:42 p.m. the three investigators' questions should then have begun in earnest. Detectives Gardner, Beever and Wright were all familiar with the evidence found at Loose Chippings, so they knew that too many details of my story did not correspond to the scene of crime. The location and type of murder weapon, the location of the bodies, the logistics of the fight, the state of the scene of crime, the forensic evidence, even the number of killers -- none of these matched my "confession." Normal police procedure would have been to interrogate me further, since false confessions are common especially in high publicity crimes and I had already alluded to the "possibility [of] pleading guilty to something [I] didn't do." But, as in the spring of 1985 when police failed to confront Elizabeth with the fingerprint and blood type evidence against her, Bedford County law enforcement officials decided to handle the Haysom murder investigation in their own unique non-standard manner.

Most policemen would have had doubts about a confession which did not match the type and location of the murder weapon as discovered at the scene of crime. In my statement I told police I "had [a] knife with [me]" which I "pulled out" to kill the Haysoms, and that I "threw two knives into [a] dumpster" near Loose Chippings afterwards. While Detective Gardner did not note this in the transcription of the

interrogation, I also described the weapon to him as a butterfly knife with a two-edged blade, and Liz later provided the investigators with a sketch of the knife. On our return from Washington to Lynchburg on Sunday morning, March 31, 1985, we had stopped to look at a store window display of knives on Wisconsin Avenue, so that we could describe exactly the same weapon when the time came to lie to the police. Unfortunately Elizabeth and I chose the wrong knife! The medical examiner who performed the autopsies on Derek and Nancy Haysom concluded that all wounds had been made with a single-edged blade. And it was a single-edged kitchen knife which crime scene specialists discovered in the drawer to the dining room table at Loose Chippings. The knife was part of a set, but only this one had blood residue on its blade, as if the killer had cleaned it hastily and returned it to the drawer to hide it in plain sight.

Not only the type and location of the murder weapon, but also the location and description of the victims' bodies in my "confession" failed to correspond to the scene of crime. Liz had told me in the Washington Marriott Hotel that her father's corpse was in the door from the dining room to the living room. So I told Detective Gardner that "Mr. Haysom was lying in the dining room with his feet out of the living room door, facing the front of the house." In fact Derek Haysom lay entirely in the living room, stretched across the door to the dining room at a 90 angle. Nancy Haysom according to my "confession" was "wearing jeans" when she had really worn a flowery robe.

From the evidence at the crime scene it was also clear that the fatal attack in the dining room could not have occurred as I claimed. I told Detective Gardner that I "sat with [my] back to [the] window looking over the hill through [the] back dining room window [while] Mr. Haysom was to [my] left side" at the head of the table. Fingerprint experts indeed confirmed that Derek Haysom had eaten his bowl of ice cream at the head of the table. But the only other place setting was to Mr. Haysom's left, facing the back dining room window, and here the killer had removed the fork and glass from the setting to hide his or her fingerprints. From that side of the table it was unnecessary and indeed impossible for me to "walk behind Mr. Haysom" to try to leave the room, and he could not have "pushed me back and [...] slammed [me] against the dining room wall." Even if I had sat on the other side of the table and Mr. Haysom had pushed me, there was no "dining room wall" against which I could have "hit my head" but only the huge back window. My lengthy narration of how I had supposedly murdered Elizabeth's parents thus made no sense.

Other details of my description also did not match the crime scene. Investigators found clear evidence that the killer or killers had taken a shower in the master bathroom to wash off blood, but nowhere in my "confession" did I refer to showering. The lights on the outside of the house had been left turned on, though I told police that I "turned off [the] lights when [I] left [the] house." At my trial Commonwealth's Attorney James Updike cited the blazing outside house lights as evidence of my guilt; the switch was inconveniently located in the master bedroom, where a non-family member like me was unlikely to find it. But I had visited Loose Chippings twice in the spring of 1985, so I was well aware of the electrical eccentricities of the house.

Finally, there was yet another contradiction between my "confession" of June 8, 1986, and the scene of crime: the fingerprint, blood type and, possibly, foot print evidence which placed Elizabeth in Loose Chippings at the time of the homicides. And only one or two hours after I finished my statement the three investigators received the strongest possible corroboration of the forensic evidence incriminating Liz. Detective Beever asked her, "You knew he was going to do it, didn't you? Did you?"

"I did it myself."

"Don't be silly."

"I got off on it."

"You did what? What does that mean?"

"I was being facetious."

"O.K. then. Now tell me the truth, please, without being facetious. You did hate your parents ?"

"I did not hate my parents." 9:4

Elizabeth's claim that she did not hate her parents was no more true than her assertion that her admission to murder had been a facetious joke, but by then she was safe. The policemen had their confession, mine, and they wanted no further complications.

Why did Detectives Gardner, Beever and Wright allow Liz to explain away her admission of guilt as a joke, even though her confession was corroborated by forensic evidence? Why did these same investigators accept my statement as true in spite of its obvious inaccuracies and the absence, at that time or later, of any fingerprint or blood type evidence linking me to the crime scene? Perhaps because my claim of responsibility for the killings was so very convenient from Sheriff Wells' and prosecutor Updike's point of view. My "confession" reduced Elizabeth's role in the crime to that of an accomplice, so the venerable names of Langhorne, Gibbes, Astor, Benedict and Haysom were saved from complete disgrace. Liz did not even believe that I would actually carry out the murders, according to Judge William Sweeney, a life-long friend of Nancy Haysom's brother, Risque Benedict 9:5. The real culprit was that foreigner, that German - me.

When the interrogations ended on Monday, June 9, 1986, however, the Virginian criminal charges ceased to be my primary concern. Instead I finally began to worry about the suffering I caused my family, and my greatest regret from that time until today is that I failed to think of them before I made my foolish decision to protect Elizabeth's life by taking the blame for the homicides she committed. After I was transferred from the police station to another cramped underground holding cell for unconvicted prisoners I wrote my father and mother a letter in which I advised them to leave me alone and forget about me. Most parents would, I think, have done just that. Mine did not. As soon as they could my father and mother flew to England to visit me in prison, and through all the following years they have done nothing but love me and support me in every way. I wish - oh, how I wish! - that I had shown them the same love and concern in 1985 and 1986.

One of my parents' first actions was to hire private lawyers for me, and they in turn asked two of England's most senior forensic psychiatrists to examine both Liz and me as neutral, unbiased "friends of the court." Since the doctors reached the same medical conclusion I will quote here only the December 15, 1986, report of Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist Henrietta Bullard, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.Psych., D.P.M.

The introductory paragraph listed the material she had read in preparation for her examination of Elizabeth and me: the transcripts of all our police interrogations, as well as the "exhibits and affidavits relating to the United States Department of Justice's request for extradition." In the first formal section Dr. Bullard reviewed my "Personal Background" and summarised the lies and fantasies Liz had told me, which I described in Chapter 2 and subsequently. The report then continued with the "Examination

of [my] Mental State":

"During the first interview [conducted in July, 1986], he was anxious and constantly expressed his concern for Miss Haysom. He felt she was the first person he had ever been able to relate to and that he could not exist without her. He believed that her parents would have been able to separate them and, above everything, he had wanted to protect and love her. During the second interview [conducted several weeks later], he spoke more about Miss Haysom and, while talking, it gradually dawned on him that he had been cheated and conned, and that her stories of gross neglect and physical and sexual abuse were unlikely to be true. He broke down into tears and began to describe their relationship and its unreal quality. I felt that, until this moment, he had no insight into how gullible and suggestible he had been. This emotional reaction was one of anger, bitterness and overwhelming sadness.

He gave a good account of his background, his family relationships and, in particular, his relationship with Miss Haysom. Miss Haysom was the first woman with whom he had had a close relationship and she flattered his vanity and boosted his self-esteem. At the time of their first meeting, he was only eighteen and both immature and inexperienced. There developed between them a symbiotic relationship in which he lost his personal identity and feeling of autonomy. His dependence on Miss Haysom and his need to be with her and share all his experiences strengthened. He described how he accepted her values and relied on her judgement. He was swept along by her enthusiasms and by the belief that he fulfilled her craving for excitement and sexual fulfilment.

During [additional interviews in] the last six months, he has gradually gained some insight into the shallowness of a relationship which was based on one partner's emotional hold over the other. He has recognized how, in order to sustain his beliefs in his own powers and attributes, he lost his critical faculties and subjugated himself to the will of another. There is no doubt that he was living in the fantasy world of Miss Haysom, and that his judgement was seriously at fault.

Opinion: Soering is a young man of just twenty who, at the time of the killings, was aged eighteen. He had the misfortune to meet a very powerful, persuasive and disturbed young woman whom he believed and trusted implicitly. He became tangled in her web of deceit and lies, and began to live with her a life of fantasy and unreality. He seemed devoid of judgement and was not only taken in by her fantastic stories but came to agree with her as to the ultimate solution. He was flattered by Miss Haysom's apparent emotional and sexual needs for him, and her suffering became his suffering. There existed between Miss Haysom and Soering a 'folie a deux,' in which the most disturbed partner was Miss Haysom. It is easy to see how an immature, sensitive and altruistic young man might become the prey of a woman such as Miss Haysom.

At the time of the offence, it is my opinion that Jens Soering was suffering from an abnormality of mind due to inherent causes as substantially impaired his mental responsibility for his acts." 9:6

Dr. Bullard's report concluded by explaining the legal significance of my "abnormality of mind" if the Haysom murder charges were tried in an English, as opposed to a Virginian court. But as I struggled to free myself of the folie a deux during the summer and early autumn of 1986 my lawyers' and psychiatrists' wrangling over my future was the least of my concerns. I remember spending one entire session with Dr. Bullard crying uncontrollably from the moment I walked into the examination room in the prison hospital to the moment I left to return to my cell. As the two doctors tore apart Elizabeth's lies they ripped my universe, my self into shreds, since I had ceased to exist other than as a subordinate part of the Liz-and-Jens union. By the time Dr. Bullard and her colleague were finished I felt I did not know Elizabeth Roxanne Haysom, and I believe I largely still do not.

For the rest of 1986 and much of 1987, however, I coped with the pain of the folie a deux's destruction by convincing myself that I pitied and even loved Liz, that I could perhaps even rescue her from her mental illness. Our fates were still joined, if only through the murderous horrors of our shared past. Life had meant us to be together.

But Elizabeth soon noticed the change in my attitude and, in one of the fits of paranoia to which her borderline schizophrenia made her susceptible, she wrote me a bitter final letter in April of 1987. Then she waived further appeals against her extradition, returned to Virginia and made her bargain with Commonwealth's Attorney James Updike. Pleading guilty as an "accomplice before the fact" Liz was convicted on two counts of first degree murder and sentenced to two consecutive terms of forty-five years imprisonment. She will be eligible for parole in 1997.

It was the press reports of her sentencing hearing in October, 1987, which finally killed my remaining illusions of love for her. Never had I lied about her, never had I tried to save myself by harming her! At that time I had not even told anyone that she, not I had killed her parents, though my motivation to be silent on this subject was not purely altruistic. As I sat on the prison recreation yard reading the newspaper clippings my parents had sent me I was overwhelmed by the same emotions as during the psychiatrists' interviews more than a year earlier: I did not know this person called Elizabeth Roxanne Haysom. How could she tell such horrible lies about me, the man who had saved her life?

To answer that question and to explore all the other mysteries of our relationship I wrote a document entitled "Legal Notes and Arguments" between 1987 and 1989. Over hundreds and hundreds of pages I listed evidence and explanations and arguments in strict outline format, refining and rewriting countless times. It was a sad and futile undertaking, but it kept me sane: all those cold, hard facts left no room for feelings. As long as I kept writing, kept building and re-building that dike of scribbled paper, plugging holes in the sea wall whenever they opened up, the dark oceans of pain could not flood into my cell and drown me. My pen kept me safe.

But I could not avoid my emotions altogether. What saved me from bitterness was, I think, the sad circumstance I discussed in Chapter 3: I still cannot remember a happier time in my life than the months I spent with Liz, even though I now know all of it was false. Every prisoner needs the memory of joy to keep his soul alive, so I could not afford to deny the happiness, however twisted, that Elizabeth had brought me.

So she returned to my English prison cell almost daily as a ghost of the past, to bring me pleasure and pain in equal measure. I can still remember how, in the dawn hours just before waking, I used to dream of her, dream...

...of the old man as he leaves the garden, closes the rusty gate behind him and walks into the forest of black firs beyond. Only the white flags of his breath remain hanging in the air, blending with the frosty morning fog. The cold pricks my skin with goose bumps. I turn away from the window.

Liz lies naked on the bed with her back to me, graceful even at rest. Beneath the duvet I melt into her smooth white skin: my face in her hair, my chest along her back, my lap around her buttocks, my legs next to hers. She sighs contentedly. Eyes closed I breathe her salty warm night scent and taste her neck with a kiss. Sleep comes slowly and gently until...

...another sound awakens me again: metal striking metal in five second intervals, far off. Between my

arms there is an emptiness where Elizabeth had lain, but I can still smell her. I only have to reach out, and she will be there. I know this is true, I know it! My eyes remain tightly shut.

Every five seconds metal slams on metal. Every five seconds the sound comes closer and closer. Another five seconds and, Crash! The wicket-window on my cell door bangs open, and the screw glances inside to make sure I am awake. His eyes are empty of all emotion.

Notes: Chapter 9

9:1 -- Jens Soering's diary-letter of April, 1986, is available in the public records at Bedford County Courthouse.

9:2 -- The transcripts of Jens Soering's 1986 police interrogations are available in the public records at Bedford County Courthouse.

9:3 -- The transcripts of Jens Soering's 1986 police interrogations are available in the public records at Bedford County Courthouse.

9:4 -- The transcripts of Elizabeth Haysom's 1986 police interrogations are available in the public records at Bedford County Courthouse.

9:5 -- Bedford County Circuit Court Judge William Sweeney presided over Elizabeth Haysom's plea and sentencing of 1987, and Jens Soering's trial of 1990. He made this comment in an interview published in the magazine *Albemarle*, Charlottesville, Virginia, June 1, 1990.

9:6 -- Dr. Henrietta Bullard's psychiatric report is an exhibit attached to the European Court of Human Rights' decision on Jens Soering's appeal against his extradition from Great Britain to the United States on capital murder charges. Judgement of July 7, 1989, No. 1/1989/161/217, European Court of Human Rights, Strasbourg, France.

Chapter 10

Telling the story of my imprisonment is impossible, I believe. But the cause for my failure to communicate this experience does not lie within me as a writer: I have yet to find any book on jail life that has even remotely conveyed the essence of what it means to be incarcerated. As I recall it was E.L. Doctorow who had the courage to admit in one of his novels that a story-teller must capitulate before the gates of a prison. No author can lead his readers into the twilight universe behind bars.

The art of narrating a story lies in engaging the reader's emotions by placing him in a particular time and place, by allowing him to live the life of a specific person or character. But neither I nor any other writer can let a free reader feel like a prisoner, because no free man has experienced anything remotely like the complete loss of freedom which is the essence of incarceration. A female correctional officer in America once told me with total sincerity that she was just as much a prisoner as I was, because she was a single female with a small child and thus was not free to date on Friday and Saturday nights. If years of direct observation while working in jails had not provided this guard with a basis for empathetic understanding, how can even the most sensitive reader imagine his way into the mind of a convict in a locked cell?

The structure of any story or narrative can eventually be reduced to a series of incidents -- yet if

anything defines jail life, it is that nothing happens over and over and over again, for months and years and decades. Of course I can paint word-pictures of events I experienced during the three years and eight months I spent in English prisons. I can recount how I had to piss and shit in a so-called piss bucket because none of the cells had a sink or toilet. I can tell of the pleasure of the once-weekly shower and the once-weekly change of clothing to which virtually all inmates were restricted. I can attempt to describe the indescribable English prison food: the oatmeal, called porridge, that was delivered to the kitchen in sacks labelled "Livestock Feed, Medium Quality"; the greasy stew we were served twice a day, every day, once with and once without curry powder for flavouring; the complete absence of any vegetable other than over-boiled cabbage. All books about life behind bars relate such gruesome yet strangely fascinating episodes, most famously Solzhenitsyn's "A Day In The Life Of Ivan Denisovich." But the description of incidents in my or Ivan Denisovich's prison actually misleads the reader about the true nature of the convict's experience.

What happens in any one day of an inmate's life is irrelevant; what matters is the endless succession of day after day after day, and the days becoming weeks and months and years. Yesterday was exactly the same as today, and today is exactly like tomorrow will be. Time itself becomes a grey and meaningless ooze, which is why English prisoners call doing time "doing porridge." Nothing happens over and over and over again.

In his later books about the gulag Solzhenitsyn managed to capture some of the tedium of jail life by making his novels immensely long and repetitive, but I do not want to inflict such suffering on my readers. Nor do I believe that Solzhenitsyn or I could communicate how the endless sameness of the days affects each inmate over time. The calendar works slowly and patiently like water washing over rocks, and eventually the years wear away even the hardest stone. Without a life of variety and challenge the convict's personality is ground down until nothing remains but despair and hatred. There are a few exceptions to this rule, usually political prisoners like Nelson Mandela. Such men survive by believing in their cause and its eventual success, by monitoring their fellow revolutionaries' actions through rumours or media reports, and if possible by smuggling manifestos to the outside world. Their lives still have meaning and purpose even behind bars. But virtually all other inmates have no cause, no revolutionaries fighting for their freedom, and often no friends or family to whom they could write letters. They -- we, because I am one of them -- are the damned.

While I cannot communicate the essence of jail life through narration, I can tell the story of my extradition from London to Bedford County. When the proceedings began on January 1, 1987, upon completion of Elizabeth's and my prison sentences for the English frauds, no one expected the legal battles to take three years or to reach the highest court in Europe. I remember singing "Lili Marlene" in the cavernous holding cells below Bow Street Magistrate's Court, because the ancient tile echoes so nicely. At that time I was still confident that my father's diplomatic status would protect me; in December, 1986, the German government had even sent a prosecutor all the way to England to obtain another "confession" from me, so I could be put on trial in my own country for the Virginian homicides. That was even better than the partial diplomatic immunity on which I had based my plan and my promise to save Liz's life by taking the blame for her murders! Clearly I had nothing to worry about.

Only a few weeks later, however, my lawyers visited me at Her Majesty's Prison Brixton to personally deliver the worst possible news: Commonwealth's Attorney James Updike wanted to have me extradited for capital, not first degree murder, and he planned to seek the death penalty at my trial. Since he had never lost a capital case my execution was a virtual certainty, my attorneys explained. Of course they would file appeals in all the courts, but those efforts were doomed to fail because the

English government supported prosecutor Updike's extradition request over the German government's. To please the American authorities England was even willing to breach the requirements of its own extradition treaty: before a prisoner was returned from British territory to a country where he faced capital punishment, the English government was supposed to obtain a binding assurance that the death penalty, if imposed, would not actually be carried out. In my case, however, England had declared itself satisfied if the judge at my trial in Virginia merely read a letter to the jury, explaining that the English government objected to execution.

Like doctors informing a patient that he has a terminal disease my lawyers bent over the table in the prison visiting room and looked deeply into my eyes. A moment of silence passed before they told me, I should not get my hopes up.

What happened to my partial diplomatic immunity, I asked them. Through my father I had always had a German diplomatic passport, and while I had lived in the United States that passport had carried a large American diplomatic visa. How could all that suddenly be irrelevant? Surely this must be a mistake.

The mistake was mine, according to the attorneys. Because my father was Vice-Consul at the German Consulate General in Detroit, the American government classified him as a consular staff diplomat, as opposed to a diplomatic staff diplomat at the German Embassy in Washington D.C. This distinction was completely arbitrary, of course, since all country's foreign services transferred their officers back and forth between consular and diplomatic assignments; my father, too, had performed both types of duty during his career. But unlike most countries the United States extended diplomatic immunity only to the family members of diplomatic staff diplomats, leaving the families of consular staff officers uncovered. So I would be executed because of a technicality in diplomatic procedure, the lawyers told me.

Sitting in the cramped, shabby legal visit cubicle I tried hard to contain my extradition request over the German government's. To please rising panic and sense of outrage. Going to the electric chair had not been part of my promise to save Elizabeth! Five years in a German youth prison, that was to have been the extent of my "sacrifice," as she had once called it in a letter to me. Somebody cheated somewhere but now I had to be careful, lest my mouth get me into even more trouble. Hesitantly I asked the attorneys what my legal position would be if I were not guilty?

My lawyers' eyes immediately widened in horror: Heaven forbid the possibility of my innocence! To have any hope at all of gaining a binding assurance that the death penalty would not be imposed, it was essential to maintain my complete guilt throughout the extradition proceedings. If we conceded that I might have a defence against the murder charges, the appellate judges would rule that I needed no binding assurance, because an innocent man would presumably not be convicted and executed anyway. The legal term for this was "the necessity of proving the 'seriousness of risk' of execution," the attorneys explained.

So if I wanted to live no one could know that I had not killed the Haysoms. Even then I could not help but smile at the poetic irony of my position: my innocence, if it became known, would kill me! Playing the role of the accomplice Lady Macbeth, as Liz and I discussed after she killed her parents, had already saved her from the electric chair. And continuing to play the part of the murderer Macbeth was the only hope I now had of saving my own life.

After the homicides in March of 1985 I had been driven beyond the edge of sanity in part by the weight of the secret Elizabeth and I shared, and from now on the same spirit of constant deception and

vigilance was to strap my still-fragile mental balance yet further. I could not tell my family or my lawyers the truth, since the visiting rooms of English Category A-inmates like myself were widely known to be bugged. I could not write a letter, because all Category A correspondence had to be turned in unsealed so the prison administration could photocopy the letters before posting. I could not even smuggle out a note during a visit: if the screws intercepted that one crucial letter during a search, I was dead - - literally! Safety lay only in complete, total, and absolute silence. There was no one, no one at all to whom I could unburden myself.

The truth came gushing out of me at the earliest moment that it was safe: a few days after the final extradition hearing before the European Court of Human Rights, but several weeks before the judgement was even announced. Before the hearing I had broken my right wrist on the prison recreation yard, so my writing hand was still in plaster -- but that did not stop me, not after three years of silence! Over many hours I scribbled a long letter to my lawyers with my left hand, carefully printing each letter of each word.

However, the need for secrecy about the true identity of the Haysons' killer was actually the lesser of my two main worries between 1987 and 1990. Above all I had to contend with my terror of death. I should not get my hopes up, my attorneys advised me, and I followed their advice. Each day I reminded myself, I would be extradited to Virginia. I would receive no binding assurance from the English and American authorities that the death penalty would not be carried out. I would be convicted and sentenced to death. I would be executed in the electric chair. Like everyone, I would die -- except that I would die sooner and far more unpleasantly than most.

When the fear was still new and unfamiliar it had complete power over me. All day the flood would carry me where it wanted. One moment it would lift me to the top of a wave to show me some glittering island of hope in the distance, and then the waters would fling me into a valley of despair so deep that my stomach literally ached. Yet no lawyer had brought me good news to warrant optimism, and no letter had informed me of disastrous developments. The extremes of hope and despondency were simply functions of the fear, the high and low tides of the sea of terror.

Up and down, up and down, all day long the waves tossed me about and toyed with me. Sometimes my head would grow dizzy even though I had not moved from my prison bunk. Neck muscles would bunch and relax, bunch and relax. By night time I was so tired that I fell deeply asleep as soon as I turned out the lights. Some days I thought I would drown.

In the three years of my extradition appeals I found only one defence against the floating fear of my approaching death: a mental exercise, which I performed during our daily hour on the outdoor recreation yard. It was a simple, familiar meditation on a single brick in the prison building's wall. Standing apart from the other inmates I would choose a brick, any brick and focus on...

...a whole universe of varied particles: flat flakes of silver, tiny grains of dull black, medium-sized granules of ochre in several shades, larger interlocked particles of red, smooth round drops of shiny black. The relative distribution of these colours changes along the length of the brick. In some sections the ochre even overwhelms the red! Age and acid rain have left the surface of this brick pitted. The corners are worn smooth and round, and there are no cracks or splits. Human language is hardly rich enough to describe the variety of beauty in the brick's world, but...

...words were to be avoided in this meditation anyway. The trick was just seeing, without allowing thoughts or feelings or memories to come between my mind and the sight of the brick. Any other sense

could serve equally well for this exercise. By just seeing the brick, just tasting a piece of potato at lunch time, just hearing the gurr-gurr of a pigeon, just smelling the boiled cabbage in the kitchen beyond the recreation yard, just touching a patch of concrete, I could anchor myself in worlds of pure sense experience. My mind had something steady to grasp, and the drifting on those waves of terror stopped. For a while there was no light-headedness, no nausea, no numbness in the arms and feet.

But if I permitted the single brick to remind me of all the other bricks around it and the prison which together they made, or if I allowed the brick to remind me of my family's house in Atlanta, then the fear would flood back into my mind along with the memory. And the floating would begin again. How I feared the loss of this world! Never again would I see our house in Atlanta! That boyhood home, that part of me, had already drifted out of existence, even while I awaited execution. This was why I could not let myself think of prison walls or remember our home as I meditated on that brick on the recreation yard. Everything around me reminded me of parts of me that had already been killed. One day soon, the rest of me would die, too.

Every single court had turned down my appeals against extradition on the capital murder indictment: Bow Street Magistrate's Court in June, 1987, the High Court of Appeals in December, 1987, the House of Lords in July, 1988. As 1988 drew to a close my attorneys and I had reached the final stage in our long legal journey, the European Commission and Court in Strasbourg, France. The appellate panel there consisted of one judge from each of the European countries, which all opposed execution on principle and also were unlikely to be as accommodating to American pressure as the English government. But after so many failures in England's courts I dared not hope that the European judges would prevent my return to Virginia on death penalty charges.

I remember the fall and early winter of that year as the worst, most hopeless period in the three years of extradition appeals. Since the June, 1986, homicide interrogations I had been housed in a special Category A unit for political prisoners, terrorists, organized crime bosses and murder extraditees like me: the most dangerous inmates in England, beyond even normal high security. Shortly after my lawyers filed the initial petition for appeal to the European Commission in August, 1988, however, the prison authorities unexpectedly transferred me from that small Category A cell block to F-Wing, the huge psychiatric section of Her Majesty's Prison Brixton. Once there I discovered that, on the same day I was moved, a Sikh terrorist awaiting extradition to Canada for blowing up an aeroplane had also been transferred from the Category A housing unit; he was now living in one of the four Category A hospital cells adjoining F-Wing. Yet neither one of us was physically sick, mentally ill, suicidal or on medication.

Why had the authorities isolated us in the most stressful section of H.M.P. Brixton, among mentally disturbed inmates who screamed and barked and babbled all day and night? The prison doctors refused to give us an explanation, but the Sikh terrorist and I soon figured it out. He had just filed an appeal against his extradition to the House of Lords, with good prospects for success. And my case had just passed to the European Commission, where the English government had much less influence than at all the English courts which had turned down my previous appeals. So the authorities had moved us to the prison's hospital/F-Wing simply to make life a little less comfortable for us, to encourage us to drop our appeals! Throwing sane people into lunatic wards, for political purposes -- I once thought such things happened only in dictatorships.

No, I would not get my hopes up. Death would come soon. The English government and prosecutor Updike would make sure of that.

When I look back to those fearful months in H.M.P. Brixton's F- Wing I recall one particular day in December, 1988, when my attorneys visited me to tell me of the European Commission's decision on my extradition appeal. This panel of international magistrates was to decide whether the European Court of Human Rights would hear my petition in the spring of 1989; if the Commission ruled against me now I would be taken to an airport almost immediately and sent to my rendezvous with Virginia's electric chair. I remember waiting in my cell, waiting until...

...the screws from Movement are here. The first one is already calling Jay-Ex on the walkie-talkie as the other opens my door. They are in a hurry, so my lawyer must be waiting. I grab my manila envelope with legal papers and step outside.

The screw closes the door of my cell behind me, and suddenly, strangely, I feel shut out. My cell was my safe haven! In that cinder block box there is no electric chair. I want to say goodbye.

Standing in front of the screw I spread my arms at shoulder level. He runs his fingers around my collar, pats down my rib cage, down the side of my legs, and back up the inside. I hand him the manila envelope. He is not supposed to read the contents, but he looks inside to check for knives and smuggled letters.

The screw returns the manila envelope, and I drop it. My fingers and arms are numb and oddly light as I pick up my papers. I feel like a ship just before sailing, struggling against the ropes that hold me to the quay. My mind has gone quiet. There is nothing but a silent floating sensation, no conscious thought at all.

The fear has returned. If I cannot anchor myself soon I will drift away on the waves of terror.

The two screws and I walk along the tier and then down the narrow green cast iron staircase from F-2 to F-1, the bottom floor of F- Wing. As always I feel as if I were in a cathedral, awed and humbled by the power of the architecture soaring upward around me. Running the full length of F-Wing, the vast empty interior space is twenty feet wide and sixty feet high, with four floors of twenty green cell doors per side rising one above the other to a peaked roof. There are even stained glass windows at one end of the building, though this glass is coloured only by the grey-green-yellow-white shit of countless generations of prison pigeons.

Halfway along the length of F-Wing the green cast iron stairs wind their way skyward. Where the staircase reaches a floor there is a small platform which joins the two sides of the building together. On this sits a Plexiglas sided hut resembling a fully-enclosed bus stop shelter: the screws' office. Apart from this landing the two sides of twenty cells each open onto a one yard wide tier which circles all the way around the cathedral walls. One six-sink, two-toilet bathroom is next to the stairs and office; another six-sink, four-toilet, eight-shower bathroom is at one end of the floor. Anti-suicide wire netting hangs across the central well on F-2 and F- 4.

F-Wing, the psychiatric housing unit, was constructed in the 1960's to precisely the same architectural design as H.M.P. Brixton's other wings, built during Queen Victoria's reign. One thousand remand prisoners now await their trials here, locked in their cells twenty- three hours a day.

As I move toward the hot plate on the ground floor where meals are served, the air around me is filled with the sounds of wicket- windows banging, screws shouting, doors being kicked, mentally ill inmates howling, barking and preaching at imaginary congregations. The noise never stops, and the smell never

stops, either. Piss and shit have soaked into the floors and walls and now return as olfactory ghosts.

The two guards and I turn right to reach the green wooden door behind the hot plate: the exit of F-Wing. The lead screw unlocks the door and the blue-painted metal barred gate behind it, and all three of us crowd into a small square room with metal gate-wooden door combinations in all four walls. To the right lies the regular F-Wing recreation yard for Category B inmates, while the door on the left leads to the tiny Category A yard. The guard behind me locks the wooden door and metal gate to F-Wing. Then the leading officer opens the white metal gate and orange door to the new prison hospital ahead.

I hold open the gate as I pass. It is heavy and surprisingly rough to touch. There are thousands of tiny valleys and ridges on the iron where the paint has peeled away. I can even feel the fine edge where the paint starts again! And then the surface is smooth as if it were plastic, except for a few craters where bubbles burst while painting. The metal, painted and unpainted, is very cold. My hand closes tight around one of the bars of the gate, and the sensation of drifting lightness diminishes. For a moment I am tied again to this planet.

The three of us enter the food serving area of the hospital and wait for the trailing screw to lock the gate and orange door. To my left are the long tables for serving the hospital inmates' food, a screws' Plexiglas office and beyond that Ward 1 with its ten beds. On the right is the ward's communal bathroom, then the narrow staircase to the four further floors of hospital wards above, and a closet with a half-door which serves as a canteen store.

We walk straight ahead through an unlocked open orange wooden door into the small Victorian hospital annex. The hallway is narrow now, with five secure isolation cells each side. The doors here are wider to allow beds with very sick inmates to be rolled in and out. Contagious, crazy and suicidal prisoners, two of the Category A's, stand at the large barred wicket-windows and stare as our group passes.

The sharp ammoniac smell of urine stings my nose. All the way from the nostrils to the furthest reaches of my nasal cavities I can feel the tingling, as if tiny hairs in the mucous lining were being tugged. For a moment the fumes from the old open piss buckets have brought me back. I am still here, walking, not floating.

After a few steps the three of us pass an unlocked and open metal gate-wooden door combination into the old two story hospital administration building. We are in a sort of lobby. In a corner to my left is a screws' Plexiglas office, to the right lies a similar Plexiglas waiting room. Ahead a broad staircase winds to the doctors' offices above.

Our little procession turns left around the screws' office and passes through another unlocked and open wooden door-metal gate combination, painted blue this time. In this hallway there are blue wooden doors to doctors' examination rooms on both sides.

Through a half-open door I can see the hospital screws' aquarium in the P.O.'s office. The underwater plants wave their bright green leaves in the current, the tropical fish glare orange and red with black stripes. Tiny silver bubbles burst from a hose in the golden sand and explode against yellow rocks. Real colors, vibrating with life, pull at my eyes and suck my field of vision into their fish world, anchoring me there for a moment -- until we pass, and I am adrift again in greyness.

Soon we turn right into a short hallway lined with guards' grey metal lockers. The lead screw unlocks the blue metal gate and the blue wooden door at the hallway's end. As we step outside the Zulu-unit

begins barking, and the trailing officer locks the gate and door behind us.

We cross a thirty foot corner of a service yard. To my right lie low buildings with offices, and directly to my left a ten foot tall green chain link fence circles around the A-Wing recreation yard. Ahead rises the giant truncated cross of H.M.P. Brixton's old Victorian wings, four stories of sooty brick with grey slate roofs and scores of small barred windows. A-Wing on the left meets B-Wing in a straight line, and at their juncture the chapel/kitchen building juts out towards us at a right angle.

The air outside is different, heavy and wet. The morning fog has long gone, replaced now by clouds of greasy cabbage vapour from the kitchen just ahead. Suddenly I taste the harsh acid from my stomach -- a surprise from my body, just when I thought I had myself completely under control! How strange, how strange... I swallow the bile back down. My throat constricts, my tear ducts swell: I am drowning in a wave of almost unbearable yearning, a need to reach out and grasp something, some part of this world, to stop for just one moment this terrible, terrifying floating!

Then I remember the screws. I lower my face. Ahead in the wall is a blue wooden door.

We enter the chapel/kitchen building and walk along a low, semi- circular, strangely winding hallway lined with White tiles. To the right is the kitchen, above us the chapel. Our group turns left into a straight hallway and walks past the officers' pay window toward a white metal barred gate ahead.

The lead screw unlocks the gate, and we step into a large low room. The white metal gate and wooden door to A-Wing are on the left. Ahead of me I can see the perimeter area between the wings and the outside wall through a blue metal gate and an open wooden door.

After the guard behind me locks the gate to the straight tiled hallway we turn right. The leading officer unlocks the white metal gate to B- Wing; the wooden door on the other side is already open. We pass into another enormous open cathedral-like space. But this wing is oddly quiet because the old wooden cell doors here have peepholes for the screws, not wicket-windows.

My hearing is suddenly hyper-acute. I can distinguish each clink as the trailing screw's key enters the gate's lock, slams home the bolt and exits again on its silvery jingling chain. The steel-tipped toes of the officers' boots tap sharply on the linoleum floor, while my Adidas squeak plaintively. Somewhere above me inmates are showering. To my left S.O.'s and P.O.'s argue in an office. Noise reaches for my ears from all directions and pulls my head this way and that, roping me to this planet for a moment by strands of sound.

We walk along B-1's offices and cells and communal bathrooms and hot plates until we reach the other end of the wing. Ahead of us is a white wooden door with a sign reading, "Segregation Unit." This was formerly known as the punishment block, but prisoners are no longer punished for being unruly. Instead, after the guards have finished beating them, the inmates are thrown into completely bare, ice cold strip cells with nothing but their underwear -- segregated.

We turn right at the block and pass through an open warden door and a white metal gate which the lead screw unlocks. The trailing officer locks the gate behind us, and only then the leading guard opens a second gate into a long low hallway.

At the far end is yet another blue wooden door-metal gate combination leading to the reception and processing facilities. Near the end on the right is a wooden door to another part of the service yard.

Next a wooden door leads to the tiny fourteen man D-Wing unit for Category A prisoners. Directly across from this door on the left is the metal gate-wooden door combination to C-Wing, another huge Victorian wing.

Most of the doors are closer on our left. Beside us lies the Movement office for Category A escorts, followed by two Category A social visit rooms with tables for two groups of visitors each. Then there are two bathrooms for the screws and visitors and, finally, three tiny legal visit cubicles.

Yellow light pours from one of the legal visit rooms into the greyness of the hallway. My hands feel cold and sweaty; I wipe them against my jeans. As we pass the Movement office the smell of fresh-brewed tea pulls my head to the left. My mouth is arid, my tongue thick. The staccato tapping of the screws' boot tips fades as the bass thump of my pulse grows louder in my ears. We are almost there.

Suddenly I am certain the judges decided to send me to my execution.

I turn the corner into the legal visit cubicle and see Belinda standing, half-smiling, and instantly I know.

Today, again, as on the last four or five visits, Belinda does not bring me death. It is another reprieve of some sort: an interim decision by the European Commission keeps me alive a while longer.

I shake Belinda's hand, already relaxing. By the time we sit down I am at ease. I am ready to listen.

Belinda Avery is the most junior member of the team of lawyers representing me in Strasbourg: the liaison to my Queen's Counsel, Colin Nichols, and my solicitors, Richard Spencer and Dr. Graupner. Belinda tells me that, surprisingly, the European Commission has decided to pass my case on to the European Court, which will hear oral arguments approximately four months from now. This is the good news.

The bad news is that the European Commission will not lend its formal support to my appeal when it is heard at the European Court. This decision decreases my chances of success there even further. I should definitely not get my hopes up!

Why did the European Commission not support me? Because several supportive Commission magistrates were prevented from attending the Commission's session by a surprise French air traffic controllers' strike!

So I will not get my hopes up. Chances are still very good that I will die soon. If the electric chair does not kill me, the air traffic controllers will.

Chapter 11

On July 7, 1989, the European Court of Human Rights announced its decision that extraditing me to Virginia to face the death penalty would constitute "torture or inhuman or degrading treatment," a violation of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. Since this ruling in effect outlawed capital punishment the press and TV news programs across Europe celebrated the decision as the most important in the court's history. Across the Atlantic Ocean the public reaction was somewhat different. New York Senator Alphonse D'Amato bitterly condemned those interfering liberal Europeans for daring to lecture the U.S. on human rights, and for depriving law-abiding Virginians of the pleasure of watching an animal like me fry.

As noted in the court's written opinion, the European Court judges expected me to be deported to Germany after their ruling, so I could be tried in my own country on the American murder charges. The English government began to make preparations for my transfer, but at the same time it was negotiating furiously with the United States. For more than half a decade England had sought the extradition of an Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.) terrorist named James Doherty, for the shooting of an English Army Captain in Northern Ireland. Because Irish-American pressure groups claimed he was a political prisoner, however, this accused murderer remained in a federal facility while his supporters had a street in New York City re-named in his honor. The English government had hoped to trade my extradition for his -- until the European Court spoiled this plan.

Eventually it was Commonwealth's Attorney James Updike who had to give in to accommodate the wishes of the English and U.S. governments. By dropping the capital murder indictment he cleared the way for me to be extradited to Bedford County without violating the European Court's decision forbidding the death penalty. But he managed to express his frustration at being denied the opportunity to have me executed by choosing a special day on which to announce that I would after all be sent to Virginia, not Germany: August 1, both his and my birthday! After a fruitless petition to the High Court of Appeals in London I was returned to America on January 12, 1990.

Television cameras met me at every airport through which I passed on my journey back: Gatwick in London, Charlotte in North Carolina and finally Roanoke on the border of Bedford County. The media of central Virginia had covered every twist in the story since the discovery of Derek and Nancy Haysoms' bodies in 1985, and now local journalists were driven to a frenzy as they awaited the main event. Because Elizabeth had pleaded guilty as an "accessory before the fact" in 1987 some pre-trial news reports even described me as a murderer without using the usual qualifying adjectives, like "alleged" or "accused." To most residents of the Roanoke-Bedford- Lynchburg area there seemed to be no doubt about my guilt.

Naturally my legal team -- Richard Neaton of Detroit and William Cleaveland of Roanoke -- requested that the trial be transferred away from the intense local publicity. But Bedford County Circuit Court Judge William Sweeney refused to hear arguments from either prosecution or defence on this subject. Instead he brought in a jury from another county bordering Lynchburg, although residents of that area were exposed to the same potentially prejudicial publicity as the citizens of Bedford County.

The judge also overruled the defence's objection to TV cameras in the courtroom. At that time Bedford was one of only two counties in the state whose courts permitted live cameras as an experiment, and the novelty of this technology attracted viewers across Virginia. The entire trial was shown on cable TV, with highlights re-broadcast every evening. Public fascination with the case soon reached new heights, and local entrepreneurs profited handsomely from pirated video cassette recordings of the legal drama.

In another pre-trial motion the defence asked Judge Sweeney to excuse himself from presiding over the case because of his links to the Haysoms' relatives. The judge admitted that he and Mrs. Haysom's brother, Risque Benedict, had remained in contact ever since attending the Virginia Military Academy (V.M.I.) together for two years during the late 1940's. In fact Judge Sweeney referred to the victim's brother by only his first name several times during the hearing and acknowledged thinking well of him. He also admitted attending a party in the Haysoms' honor in 1983. Nevertheless the judge decided there was no actual bias or even the appearance of impropriety, so he denied my lawyers' motion.

From March 1-5, 1990, Judge Sweeney heard the defence's motion to suppress my "confession" of 1986. This was the most important of the many pre-trial hearings: if the police were found to have denied me access to an attorney during questioning, my statements would not be admitted as evidence at trial. Credibility was the central issue, as in most such motions. Should Judge Sweeney believe my claim that an English policeman had threatened to hurt Liz if I did not agree to speak to the detectives without my lawyer's presence? Or should the judge believe that one American and two English investigators, who all insisted that my right to an attorney had not been violated?

The prosecution argued that I had knowingly and willingly consented to questioning without counsel. Except for the first two sessions at 3:35 and 6:00 p.m. on June 5, 1986, I had signed Miranda waiver forms before each interrogation. Someone as intelligent and educated as I could hardly claim that I had not understood my rights, and there was no evidence of physical coercion. Those portions of the interrogations which had been tape recorded contained fairly polite interviews without direct verbal threats.

But I testified that I had only signed the waiver forms and talked to police because I had feared for Elizabeth's safety. The English Detective Sergeant Kenneth Beever had come to my holding cell alone and told me that Liz might fall down and hurt herself if I did not drop my demands for a lawyer.

In court my American attorneys argued that the chronology of events on June 5 supported my claims. At the 3:35 and 6:00 p.m. sessions I refused to sign the Miranda waiver forms, insisted on my innocence and requested a lawyer. The police's records confirmed that I was returned to my holding cell at 6:45 p.m. specifically because of my demand to see an attorney.

What I could not prove through documentation or witnesses was that Detective Beever issued his threat at some time between 7:00 p.m. and 7:40 p.m. But this allegation was hardly implausible, given the English police scandals of the late 1980's and early 1990's. First to be released by London's High Court of Appeals were the Guildford 4, a group of Irish youngsters who spent fourteen years in prison for an I.R.A. terrorist bombing they did not commit; Americans learned about this miscarriage of justice through the movie "In the Name of the Father." In the following years the convictions of the Birmingham 6, the Maguire 7 and scores of non-political prisoners were also overturned, because the English police had used violence or the threat of force to obtain false confessions in all these cases. Judge Sweeney, however, ruled that this pattern of abuse was irrelevant and cut off my lawyers before they could introduce a photocopy of an English police handbook on interrogation, which advised officers to take all steps necessary so suspects would not take advantage of their right to an attorney.

At 7:45 p.m., shortly after Detective Sergeant Kenneth Beever threatened to harm Elizabeth, I asked the station's desk sergeant for permission to telephone the German Embassy. But instead of reaching a consular officer who could contact my lawyer, I was only able to speak with the embassy's night watch man. As soon as he learned of this attempted telephone call Detective Beever fetched me from my cell, and at 8:05 p.m. I signed the first of many Miranda waiver forms.

Since I had been returned to my holding cell at 6:45 p.m. expecting to see my attorney soon, I had no reason to waive my right and speak to the police only 75 minutes later -- unless I had been forced to do so. I was certainly in no rush to unburden a guilty conscience! Although I admitted during the 8:05 p.m. interrogation that I had been at the scene of crime, I retracted that partial confession the next day and did not admit to killing Derek and Nancy Haysom until the evening of June 8.

The defence was also able to produce some undisputed evidence which threw doubt on the police's

credibility on the specific issue of granting me access to a lawyer. Bedford County Detective Ricky Gardner testified at the suppression hearing that I had made only an equivocal request for an attorney during the 6:00 p.m. interview on June 5, and his typed summary of this session, written on June 9, 1986, also implied that I had not directly asked for counsel. But the contemporaneous hand-written notes of the 6:00 p.m. interrogation, made by English Detective Constable Terence Wright, showed that my request for a lawyer had been very explicit indeed. Why would the Virginian investigator take the risk of lying in court about this issue, unless he realised that his actions had not conformed to Miranda requirements?

Unfortunately my attorneys were unable to learn everything that happened at this interrogation session because Detective Wright's hand-written notes had been altered. One of the four pages had been removed and replaced by a page in a different color ink from an interview with Liz. In reversing the convictions of the Guildford 4 and all the other innocent prisoners, the High Court of Appeals in London had ruled that such tampering with interrogation transcripts was indirect but conclusive evidence of the police's violation of suspects' rights.

Like Detective Gardner, Detective Beever also failed to tell the truth on at least indisputable occasions. At 4:00 p.m. on June 5, 1986, he told my English lawyer over the telephone that I did not wish to see him, although at that time I was demanding counsel. The next day Beever promised on tape to fetch my attorney, but when the lawyer arrived at the station two hours later he was only allowed to speak with Elizabeth.

In spite of my attorneys' arguments Judge Sweeney found the police's denials more believable than my claim that I had been denied a lawyer. The "confession" was admitted into evidence and is reproduced here in Chapter 9.

Just a few days before opening statements began the most bizarre of all the pre-trial hearings took place. Steve Rosenfield, an attorney representing Liz, had approached my lawyers to offer them an opportunity to speak with his client -- for a sum of money. Since such arrangements were ethically dubious and embarrassing if made public, my attorneys contacted prosecutor Updike, and together they decided to inform Judge Sweeney of this development. In court the Commonwealth's Attorney revealed that Liz's lawyer had also made the prosecution an offer for her to testify in exchange for early release. When the unfortunate Mr. Rosenfield was cross-examined on the witness stand by my lawyers, Commonwealth's Attorney Updike and Judge Sweeney himself, he turned out to be a paralegal who had only recently passed his bar exam and now did much pro bono work for liberal causes. To me, Steve Rosenfield appeared well-meaning but naive -- rather like myself, when Elizabeth brought even more trouble into my life than she was now bringing into his -- and I was glad when, many months later, the Virginia State Bar merely slapped his wrist for this incident.

The trial itself began on June 1, 1990, with yet another hearing, this one on the admissibility of certain forensic evidence. After opening statements by both sides' lawyers the prosecution then presented its first evidence: Liz's and my diary-letters from the Christmas, 1984, holidays, which I discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

After the police witnesses had finished reading out those letters Mrs. Waitie testified how she had discovered the bodies of Derek and Nancy Haysom on April 3, 1985. During cross-examination my lawyers asked this lady whether she thought Elizabeth had been present at Loose Chippings when the homicides occurred. She managed to say yes before Commonwealth's Attorney Updike jumped up to object. Judge Sweeney then ordered the jury to disregard Mrs. Waitie's opinion and had it stricken from

the record. This exchange was in fact a replay of Liz's sentencing hearing of October, 1987. Mrs. Waitie and one of Elizabeth's half-brothers had testified then that they thought Liz had been in her parents' home during the attack. But even in 1987 prosecutor Updike and Judge Sweeney had not allowed them to explain their reasons for this belief.

Before Mrs. Waitie left the witness stand at my trial my lawyers questioned her about one other subject: the cleanup of Loose Chippings at the end of May, 1985. In Chapter 6 I described how Mrs. Waitie and one other member of the group had observed Elizabeth removing her shoes and comparing her feet to the bloody sock prints on the floor. Since the jury eventually based its verdict on the sock print evidence I cannot help but wonder now whether the jurors overlooked this testimony, given so early in the trial.

The connection between Liz and physical evidence at the scene of crime grew stronger when forensic experts took the stand next. The prosecution's scientists could not of course deny the incriminatory findings I discussed in Chapter 5: Elizabeth's fingerprints on the vodka bottle and her relatively rare blood type on the damp rag. But Commonwealth's Attorney Updike did his very best to prevent any suspicions falling on the star witness who would testify against me later in the trial. He questioned his own forensic experts as if he were a defence lawyer, forcing them to explain how a suspect's fingerprints could appear at a crime scene even if she was not present during the murders, and now the prosecution's own blood typing tests could have malfunctioned and falsely implicated Liz. All in all, it was a very curious performance indeed.

The prosecution's scientists also had to admit that no fingerprints of mine had been found anywhere at Loose Chippings. This too was rather curious because, according to my "confession," I had spent the better part of an hour in the Haysoms' cottage drinking alcohol, eating a snack, committing a particularly violent double murder, leaving and returning by the front door, cleaning myself up at both the kitchen and the bathroom sinks, wiping the dining and living room floors on my hands and knees -- all without wearing gloves! Since crime scene specialists had used all available technology, including lasers and luminol, it was nearly miraculous that they had not found my fingerprints somewhere, if indeed I were the killer.

Even more curious was the discovery of a human hair in the blood-stained bathroom sink, where I had supposedly washed myself after killing Elizabeth's parents. This hair did not belong to Derek or Nancy Haysom -- or me. Yet it was highly unlikely, if not impossible that the hair could have fallen into the sink much before the homicides because the water would have washed it down the drain when the murderer turned on the tap to rinse the blood of his or her hands. Perhaps most curious of all, the scientific experts claimed they had somehow forgotten to compare Liz's hair to the hair in the blood-stained sink.

There was, however, at least one tenuous forensic link between myself and the scene of crime. A few spots of type O blood, my type, were found on the way from the living room to the bathroom at Loose Chippings, as well as on the inside of the front door. But once again, the sample was too small to be subtyped, so those drops could have been left by any of the 45% of the population which have this, the most common of all the blood types.

While it could be argued that those droplets might have been mine, they were found in proximity to other physical evidence which was definitely not left by me. The attacker had lost his or her type O en route to the bathroom, yet the hair which the killer then dropped into the bloodstained sink was not mine. Also, unsmear prints of a bloody socked heel on the bathroom floor were much narrower than

the heel on sample footprints I provided to police. And halfway between the location of the type O blood and Mr. Haysom's body detectives found a shot glass carrying, on one side, Mr. Haysom's fingerprints and, on the other, fingerprints whose owner was never identified. The shot glass was discovered on top of the liquor cabinet containing the vodka bottle with Elizabeth's fingerprints -- a highly significant location, since both Derek and Nancy Haysom's blood had high levels of alcohol. No other glasses were found at the crime scene.

At trial my attorneys argued that the blood, the hair in the sink and those fingerprints indicated the presence of a second murderer, apart from Liz, but to this day I do not know the identity of her accomplice. Elizabeth of course will never name this person; if arrested, he or she would confirm that Liz herself had killed her parents, and then she would never be paroled. Had Sheriff Wells' and prosecutor Updike's investigators done their jobs professionally, had they not let themselves be bullied by the Haysom brothers' lawyer into dropping Elizabeth as their prime suspect in April, 1985, then perhaps their highly-publicised manhunt, properly focused, could have caught her accomplice.

When the forensic experts finished their testimony Commonwealth's Attorney Updike introduced the damning "confession" which I had made to detectives in London in 1986. Before the jury and the courtroom TV cameras, secretaries and sheriff's deputies re-enacted how I allegedly stabbed and slashed Derek and Nancy Haysom on March 30, 1985. The "confession" was lengthy, and many details were accurate. Also, my story seemed to be corroborated, however weakly, by scientific evidence: in 1986 I claimed I had been cut during the fight and showed investigators two tiny scars on the fingers of my left hand. These injuries seemed to account for the O type blood found at the scene of crime. In cross-examination my lawyers of course pointed out the many discrepancies between my "confession" and the physical evidence at Loose Chippings, which I discussed in Chapter 9. Next the prosecution called a witness named Fishton who testified that he had seen bandages on my fingers and a large bruise under my eye while I stood next to Liz's roommate, Karen Wong, at the Haysoms' funeral service in Mrs. Waitie's house five years earlier. No one else could corroborate this man's testimony: not college students with whom I had attended classes after the murders, not the many other acquaintances of the Haysoms who had attended the funeral service, not even members of the Haysom family. Prosecutor Updike even stipulated that Karen Wong could not remember whether I had any injuries at the service. Strangely enough, Mr. Fishton only went to the police with his tale of seeing wounds on me after I mentioned the scars on my fingers during my London "confession", more than a year after the funerals. My attorneys were unable to discover whether this witness Fishton was related to Colonel Fishton of U.S. Army Intelligence, the friend of Derek and Nancy Haysom who captured Elizabeth in Berlin after she ran away from England.

Showing Detective Gardner those scars during questioning in 1986 was stupid even by my standards, but I was worried that he would not believe my "confession" if I did not offer at least some corroboration. It was only in the second half of the interrogation session, after Detectives Beever and Wright entered the room, that I decided to add this detail out of desperation. If the policemen had examined the shape of the scarred tissue on my fingers they would have become suspicious: the marks were thick triangular ridges like those commonly left by broken glass, not the thin white lines usually made by knife cuts. In fact I had received those scars as a child in Cyprus when I broke a marmalade jar while trying to capture a butterfly. Later in the trial, when it was my turn to testify, I showed the jurors my fingers so they could judge for themselves.

After Mr. Fishton left the stand Commonwealth's Attorney Updike re-called police witnesses so they could read out the incriminating passage Liz had planted into the diary we kept during our travels on the run: supposedly I had worried about leaving my fingerprints on a coffee mug I used during an

informal interview with Bedford County detectives in October, 1985. In Chapter 6 I explained how Elizabeth had tried to provide seemingly objective evidence pointing at me, as insurance in case I did not live up to my promise to accept the blame for her killings when we were arrested. This plan was a bad one, however, since my fingerprints could not have been found at Loose Chippings, and the other fantastical passages about "white slave transfer points," etc., cast even more doubt on Liz's story of fingerprints on mugs.

At last prosecutor Updike was ready to introduce his star witness, Elizabeth Haysom. My lawyers and I knew of course that she would claim I had killed her parents while she had remained in Washington D.C. During cross-examination my attorneys planned to question Liz closely on the many changes in her story of how she allegedly arranged an alibi for me. Neither she nor prosecutor Updike knew that I had saved the actual movie ticket stubs from the weekend of my killings; my father later found them in my college dorm room. Through this documentation the defence hoped to prove that Elizabeth was not the one who had remained behind in Washington, and that she had in fact driven to Lynchburg to commit murder.

But then occurred yet another one of those bizarre turns of events which so frequently altered the course of this case. Not long after my arrest in 1986 my father had contacted John Lowe, a well-known Virginian criminal defence lawyer, to discuss his representation of me at a possible trial. Realising the importance of the cinema tickets, my father had faxed this attorney copies of these and other documents he had found in my room. Mr. Lowe eventually did not join my defence team, but like any good lawyer he kept his records intact -- including the faxes my father had sent him.

On the eve of Liz's grand appearance on the witness stand John Lowe decided to turn over the faxed copies of the movie tickets to prosecutor Updike. So flustered did he become that he asked for a short recess in court, to allow him to digest the startling news. He realised immediately that a busy night lay ahead of Elizabeth and him, since they would have to correct large portions of her upcoming testimony. For my attorneys and me Mr. Lowe's decision to help the Commonwealth's Attorney was a major disaster, of course, though we were lucky in one respect: those old faxes of the tickets were so unclear that the starting times of the films were illegible. At least the defence would still be able to prove Liz a liar on that subject.

The following day, after prosecutor Updike completed the direct examination of his star witness, my lawyers took Elizabeth through the many mutations of her account of her supposed activities in Washington D.C. on March 30, 1985. During the London interrogations of June, 1986, she claimed she had purchased two tickets for the movie "Witness" around 2:00 p.m. and two more tickets for the film "Stranger Than Paradise" at 4:00 p.m. Next, according to this version, she had returned to the Marriott Hotel and ordered two meals on room service before going to the midnight showing of the "Rocky Horror Picture Show," where she had bought only one ticket.

At her sentencing hearing in 1987, however, Liz revised her story completely. Here she testified under oath that she had really only purchased the single ticket to the "Rocky Horror Picture Show," and that she had bought drugs and alcohol that Saturday night. If Commonwealth's Attorney Updike had not obtained those faxed copies of the movie tickets, Elizabeth would presumably have repeated her sworn testimony from 1987 at my trial in 1990.

But through lawyer Lowe's help she knew she now had to revert to a variation of the tale she told Detective Gardner in London in 1986. Liz again claimed she had purchased sets of two tickets at 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., though she added detail from her 1987 story about ordering a bottle of alcohol on

room service.

Thank goodness the small print on those faxes was illegible! During cross-examination my attorneys produced the original ticket stubs for Elizabeth and the jury to study up close: the two "Witness" tickets could not have been bought for a 2:00 p.m. showing, as she alleged, since newspapers for that day listed on 2:50 p.m. and 5:05 p.m. starting times, and the stubs for "Stranger Than Paradise" read 10:15 p.m., not 4:00 p.m. Her story of purchasing a bottle of alcohol on room service was also untrue, since the hotel testified that the bill was too small to account for both alcohol and two meals. Finally, Liz had no explanation for the check I had cashed while she was in Lynchburg: the reverse of the original cancelled check bore my signature, details from my driver's license, the imprint of my father's VISA card, the stamped date of March 30, 1985, and the hotel receptionist's initials. I had been forced to write this check because Elizabeth had taken most of our cash with her in the rush to depart earlier that Saturday afternoon.

Could it be that Liz was not able to describe accurately her movements in Washington D.C because she had really been in Bedford County committing murder? Would that explain why, on June 8, 1986, she confessed, "I did it myself. [...] I got off on it"?

So devastating were the discrepancies between Elizabeth's testimony and the original documentation that prosecutor Updike did not even attempt a re-direct examination, and according to post-trial newspaper articles the jury did not believe her tales. What mystifies me even today, however, is that the Virginia State Bar took no steps to censure John Lowe for giving the prosecution material which he had received in confidence when my father discussed the possibility of hiring him. To a layman, lawyer Lowe's interpretation of the rules of attorney-client confidentiality would seem to represent a far worse breach of professional ethics than Steve Rosenfield's attempt to gain some advantage for his client, Liz, by offering her testimony as part of a plea-bargain. Perhaps John Lowe did not suffer the wrath of the Virginia State Bar because he moved in the same elevated social circles as Derek and Nancy Haysom once had; in fact my lawyers later learned that he and the Haysoms had been acquaintances and possibly friends.

But the questionable manner in which Mr. Lowe helped Commonwealth's Attorney Updike and Elizabeth get her story a little straighter was not what was foremost in my mind while she was on the stand. This was the first time I saw Liz in person since our brief joint appearances at the London extradition court in early 1987, a three year interval had transformed both of us completely. Looking across the courtroom at the woman I had once loved beyond reason I was shocked most of all by her appearance: I remembered her as attractive, with an athletic physique and, at the end, beautiful long hair. Now her body was emaciated like a heroin addict's, her face aged far beyond its years, and her hair chopped short in a butch style. Where had Elizabeth's physical magnetism gone, that strange allure which a reporter at her 1987 sentencing hearing had described as "unconventional beauty?"

More than anything I wanted an opportunity to talk with Liz, so I could discover how I had fallen under her spell in 1984 through 1986. To what extent had she bewitched me, and in what measure had my own weakness made me susceptible to her magic? But of course such a conversation was impossible now, as I well knew. In any case it was doubtful that she could give me the answers to my questions, since my attorneys had learned from Elizabeth's prison medical files that she had been prescribed psychotropic drugs. Having observed the terrible effects of these so-called medicines on other inmates in England, I was almost glad that one part of Liz's personality had remained undamaged: she still had that icy calm which allowed her to weather my lawyers' cross-examination when less practised and accomplished liars would have broken down. In that respect at least she was still my girl, the same old

Elizabeth who could not resist a little "p.o.t.," or "perversion of truth."

The prosecution's last major witness was a certain Mr. Robert Hallett, a retired F.B.I. lab technician who had specialised in tire, belt and shoe impressions. Strangely enough, Commonwealth's Attorney James Updike chose this man to testify about a subject that lay outside his area of professional expertise: the analysis of the bloody sock prints found at Loose Chippings. Mr. Hallett's only qualifications in the field of forensic footprint morphology were that he had attended some of the sessions of a shot F.B.I. course on the subject, and that he had collected some sample footprints of F.B.I. agents for comparison. No scientific publication bore his name, no university had awarded him a relevant degree -- examining footprints was merely his hobby.

When Mr. Hallett took the stand he showed the jury a so-called overlay: a translucent photograph of a sample ink footprint I had provided, laid over a life-sized photo of the bloody sock print LR3 from the crime scene. The resemblance between the two was remarkable. The toes of my sample looked like the toes of the sock print from Loose Chippings, the ball of the foot in my ink print was similar to the ball of the foot of LR3 -- only the heel of my sample footprint was half an inch longer than the heel of the bloody sock print, a difference of at least two whole shoe sizes. Not just the length, but the width of my heels also differed from heel prints found at the crime scene. While LR3's heel was too smeared for comparison, police also found clear, unsmeared heel prints in the blood on the floor of the master bathroom at Loose Chippings. The bloody heels measured 4 1/2 inches in width, and my ink sample heels were all at least 5 inches wide.

At my trial, however, prosecutor Updike's belt and tire witness, Robert Hallett, argued that the difference between the heels of the bloody sock print LR3 and my sample footprint could be explained away. My ink samples supposedly contained a "double hit" in the heel which made my foot appear longer than it really was. Just why he was allowed to give the jury this opinion is something of a mystery, since Judge Sweeney had explicitly ruled at the beginning of the trial that Mr. Hallett would not be accorded the status of an expert witness qualified to interpret evidence, as opposed to merely stating facts. Without any professional training or background Robert Hallett's opinion testimony could only be irrelevant and misleading, so the judge at one point stopped him from explaining how a socked foot could have made the LR3 impression -- clearly a matter for expert interpretation. But when it came time for Mr. Hallett to testify how my foot allegedly left a "double hit" on the ink samples, Judge Sweeney made an exception to his own ruling on expert opinion testimony and permitted this non-expert to persuade the jurors that a difference of half an inch, or two shoe sizes, did not matter.

What really convinced the jury panel was Robert Hallett's photographic overlay comparing one of Liz's sample footprints to the bloody sock print at Loose Chippings. He chose an ink sample of hers which bore little resemblance to LR3: neither the toes nor the balls of the feet nor the heels appeared similar. Since the jurors only saw the one footprint of mine which looked like the sock print and the one ink sample of Elizabeth's which differed, they concluded that I, not she, had made the LR3 impression at the scene of crime. Thus Mr. Hallett seemed to have proved true the prosecution's theory of the case, that I had killed the Haysoms by myself just as I had "confessed" in 1986.

And with that Commonwealth's Attorney Updike closed the prosecution's case. My attorneys and I had expected him to call Rick Johnson, the forensic scientist whose work I discussed in Chapter 6. He had prepared the original reports on sock print LR3 in 1985, his professional background was better than Robert Hallett's, and he was available to testify at my trial in 1990 -- yet prosecutor Updike chose the non-expert Mr. Hallett to introduce his footprint evidence. As a result the jury never learned that, according to Mr. Johnson's report of June 7, 1985, LR3 was left by a man's size 5 to 6 foot; he clearly

did not believe in "double hits" that magically eliminated the half inch difference between my size 8 1/2 feet and the bloody print at the Haysoms' cottage. Nor were the jurors informed of Rick Johnson's August 29, 1985, report, which found that one of Liz's half-brothers could not be eliminated as a suspect on the basis of his footprints because his ink samples contained too many similarities to LR3. Finally, and most importantly, my lawyers had wanted Mr. Johnson to tell the jury whether he had compared the bloody sock impression at the crime scene to the sample prints that Elizabeth had provided to police before our escape to Europe in October, 1985 -- as I explained in Chapter 6, the strangely ambiguous forensic report of November 8, 1985, did not come to light until five years after my 1990 trial.

Commonwealth's Attorney Updike's choice of footprint witnesses thus was wise from a strategic point of view, given all the facts that only Rick Johnson, but not Robert Hallett, could give the jurors. However, I think it is fair to ask whether this clever prosecution strategy really served the trial process's ultimate purpose: finding the truth, the whole truth.

After Mr. Hallett left the stand the defence opened its case, which was based almost entirely on my own testimony. As if that were not enough pressure, I also had to contend with a whole series of curious distractions while I told my story. First, the courtroom's air conditioner broke down, and the temperature inside soon rose even beyond the extremes of the Virginia June heat outside. Then the lights began failing intermittently, plunging the whole court into darkness on several occasions. Strangely enough, the air conditioning and lighting systems experienced such problems only when I was testifying. Nevertheless, I managed to maintain my composure and give the jurors version of the events of March 30, 1985, as I have done here in Chapters 4 and 9.

During closing arguments my attorneys drew the jury's attention to one seemingly insignificant piece of evidence, which under the defence's theory of the case, explained Elizabeth's motive for killing her parents. Crime scene specialists had found a necklace lying on the floor in front of an open dresser-drawer in Liz's upstairs bedroom at Loose Chippings, and they had carefully photographed and logged it because it was so obviously out of place. Now my lawyers pointed out that Elizabeth herself could hardly have left her room in that condition when she visited her parents' cottage on the weekend of March 23-24 to celebrate her father's birthday: her mother would certainly have straightened up before March 30, the night of the homicides. So that necklace most likely had been dropped on the floor at the time of the killings, as the investigators who took note of it had also surmised.

There was additional evidence that the necklace had been part of Liz's motive. In the letter she wrote me during her Spring, 1985, skiing vacation with her half-brothers -- discussed here in Chapters 3 and 4 -- Elizabeth had threatened to steal her mother's jewellery, and at my trial she admitted taking an expensive watch and ring on the weekend of March 23-24. Her parents would undoubtedly have discovered this theft and then threatened to withdraw the gift of a small account at the Bank of Bermuda, which she had recently been promised for her upcoming birthday.

To Liz, this money represented freedom from the suffocating control of her mother and father -- parents whom, because of her borderline personality disorder, she feared and hated with literally insane intensity. So she probably drove to Lynchburg on March 30 to plead for forgiveness or, if that failed, to win her liberty by any other means. My attorneys and I knew Elizabeth took along an ally, quite possibly the drug dealer to whom she owed the money that she hoped her parents would give her, but only she knew who left the O- type blood, the hair in the blood-stained bathroom sink and the fingerprints on the shot glass.

When these four people met in Loose Chippings that night violence was almost pre-ordained. Derek and Nancy Haysom were highly inebriated, Liz admittedly used drugs, and the highly charged subject of the argument was money and missing jewellery. Perhaps she went upstairs to her room before the murders to fetch the necklace which police later found on the floor, or perhaps her accomplice decided to arrange his or her own financial restitution after the killings. Unless Elizabeth decided to tell the truth, the actual sequence of events inside the Haysoms' cottage would remain a mystery, my lawyers told the jury.

After Judge Sweeney gave his instructions on the law the jurors retired to consider their verdict, and I began my anxious vigil in the defendant's holding room at Bedford County Circuit Courthouse. According to newspaper reports,

"[...] there was six-six split over Soering's guilt when [jury] deliberations began. But juror Jake Bibb said the physical evidence in the Haysom home ultimately convinced him and his colleagues of Soering's guilt.

'What he wrote didn't convict him [and] what people said didn't convict him,' Bibb told the [Charlottesville, Virginia] Daily Progress. 'It was what he left behind. If it had not been for that [sock] print, I would have found him innocent,' Bibb said." 11:1

On June 21, 1990, the jury returned guilty verdicts on both counts of first degree murder and recommended two life sentences as punishment 11:2.

Notes: Chapter 11

11:1 -- "The University Journal," University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Vol. XII, No. 91, June, 1990.

11:2 -- The transcript of Jens Soering's 1990 trial, including all pre-trial hearings, is available in the public records at Bedford County Courthouse.

Chapter 12

In the months and years following my conviction my case took turns which, if this can be imagined, were even more bizarre than the events I have related so far. Of course public interest in the Haysom-Soering trial continued to grow after the verdict, but who would have expected Commonwealth's Attorney James Updike's wife to capitalise on the publicity? She printed T-Shirts with the logo, "Local Yokel -- I Survived The Soering Trial," because I had used that term to describe Bedford law enforcement officials in a private 1986 letter to Liz. At that time I had been proud that we had fooled them with my false "confession," though I was long past such sarcasm now.

Not just Bedford, but all of central Virginia seemed infected with the prurient fever of scandal. Radio stations from Roanoke and Lynchburg telephoned me in my cell block at all hours to request interviews, and a regional TV station produced a two hour documentary which it broadcast in prime time and then sold on video cassette. As theme music the program's producers chose the pop-song "Psycho Killer," based on an embellishment in my "confession" that I made during an interview with one of the English forensic psychiatrists.

While the trial was still in progress "Larry King Live" interviewed journalists covering the story, and in October, 1990, prosecutor Updike, one of my attorneys and, via telephone, I myself appeared together

on the "Geraldo Rivera Show." "Inside Edition" visited me in prison to film the door to my cell being slammed shut, but "Hard Copy's" segment was simply spliced together from the courtroom camera footage. Even the illustrious "20/20" condescended to interview me about my opinion on another death penalty extradition case from Canada.

But not all the attention I received was negative or salacious. On the day of the verdict jail guards brought me the first of a flood of supportive letters, cards and gifts from Virginians who had watched the entire trial on TV. Only two of the four to five hundred letters I eventually received were hateful, and I have reason to suspect that one of these was written by Elizabeth. What impressed and pleased me most about my supporters was the wide variety of their backgrounds: a teenaged girl from a social housing project, a great-grandmother whose family tree was at least as distinguished as the Haysoms', a mathematician at a mid-western university, an African-American manual labourer, even a relative of a Bedford County deputy -- all genders, races and classes were represented. Corresponding with these kind people kept up my spirits in those difficult months after my conviction, and I only stopped writing most of them when anxiety and despair flowered into deep depression in the summer of 1991, upon being transferred to my final prison.

Even before my formal sentencing hearing in September, 1990, however, one of my correspondents drew my attention to the student records of Lynchburg's E. C. Glass High School. Yearbooks from the mid-1940's showed that Judge William Sweeney and Nancy Haysom's brother, Risque Benedict, had grown up, attended high school and participated in at least four extracurricular activities together. There was even a photo which appeared to show the two friends arm-in-arm. When the defence had asked Judge Sweeney at the pre-trial hearing to reveal the extent of his relationship with the victim's brother, he had failed to disclose this information. The judge had mentioned only the two years he and Mr. Benedict had spent together at college, thus creating the impression that their friendship was not as close or as long as it really had been.

My lawyers also learned that Judge Sweeney had made potentially prejudicial remarks to the media years before my trial. In Chapter 9 I discussed how, on the day the trial started, the local magazine "Albemarle" published a cover story feature about the case in which the judge was quoted directly on his opinion as to my guilt. He said that Liz had not even believed I would actually carry out the murders, thereby implicitly endorsing the prosecution's theory that I was the killer.

During August of 1990 my attorneys discovered that either the Commonwealth's Attorney or his foot print witness had failed to disclose crucial evidence, as required by law. At trial Mr. Hallett had shown the jury an overlay comparing one of my sample foot prints to the bloody sock impression at Loose Chippings, as well as another overlay of one of Elizabeth's ink samples over LR3. While my sample resembled the bloody print at the crime scene, Liz's differed from it, so the jury believed I, not she, had made LR3. "It was what he left behind. If it had not been for that [sock] print, I would have found him innocent,' [juror] Bibb said."

When my lawyers reviewed the original sample ink foot prints in the prosecution's files, however, they discovered that the very first of Elizabeth's ink samples resembled the sock impression at the crime scene as strongly as my sample print did. Clearly either one of us could have left LR3! But for his trial overlay Robert Hallett had chosen another ink sample of Liz's which differed from the bloody sock print, to mislead the jury into believing that she could not have made LR3 at all.

The implication of the sock print evidence in its entirety thus was exactly opposite to the false impression created by Commonwealth's Attorney Updike's non-expert witness. There was no unique

identification of myself as the owner of the foot that left the bloody print at Loose Chippings. Not only I, but also Elizabeth, and even one of her half-brothers -- according to Rick Johnson's August 29, 1985, report -- could have made the LR3 sock impression. The jury had based its verdict on Mr. Hallett's misinformation.

Finally, my attorneys obtained the records of the cinema which had shorten the film "Stranger Than Paradise" on March 30, 1985; the original owners had meanwhile sold the theater. Box office records showed that ticket numbers 27014 to 27263 were sold for the 6:00, 8:00 and 10:15 p.m. shows. My stubs bore the numbers 27140 and 27141, and according to the cinema's owners those tickets were almost certainly among the last sold for the 8:00 p.m. show or among the very first for the 10:15 p.m. showing. Printed on the tickets was the time of 10:15 p.m. -- the time I said I had seen the films. Liz had sometimes claimed not to have seen the movie at all, and at other times to have watched it at 4:00 p.m.

The cinema's records thus proved that the purchaser of the tickets to "Stranger Than Paradise" could not have been a murderer. Driving just below the 1985 speed limit of 55 m.p.h. it would have taken four hours to cover the two hundred miles from the movie theater to Loose Chippings. Even if the purchaser of the tickets had left Washington at 7:45 p.m. he or she would not have arrived at the Haysoms' cottage until 11:45 p.m.

Yet there was absolutely no indication at the scene of crime that Derek and Nancy Haysom had been preparing to go to bed. And it was highly unlikely that Mrs. Haysom would have warmed up a slice of left-over meat loaf at such a late hour, or that Mr. Haysom would have joined in with a bowl of ice cream. The Haysoms and their murderer had eaten that snack together much earlier in the evening, when the purchaser of the movie tickets could not have been anywhere near Lynchburg.

Of course prosecutor Updike did not dispute that whoever attended "Stranger Than Paradise" had an iron-clad alibi; he simply contended that it had been Elizabeth, not I, who had bought the tickets. The real significance of the box office records was that they eliminated the theory espoused by Nancy Haysom's best friend, Mrs. Waitie, and one of Liz's half-brothers at her sentencing hearing in 1987: that she and I were both at the scene of crime. One of us must have been in Washington D.C. to buy the tickets.

That conclusion necessarily led to another one: If the forensic evidence proved that Elizabeth was at Loose Chippings during the murders, then only I remained as a possible purchaser of the tickets to "Stranger Than Paradise." And as such, I could not have been a killer.

In September, 1990, my lawyers submitted a motion for a new trial to Judge Sweeney and requested a hearing to present this new evidence. The judge denied the motion because my attorneys had used the terminology "set aside the verdict" instead of "vacate the judgement" in their written brief, and because they had filed the motion only a few days before Judge Sweeney would lose jurisdiction over the case.

1991 saw the publication of a book on foot prints and footwear which contained a 1985 study on all sneakers manufactured in the U.S. or foreign countries at the time of the murders. This monograph finally made possible a conclusive analysis of a bloody athletic shoe print which police had discovered at the scene of crime and designated LR2 12:1.

According to this study the LR2 sneaker print corresponded to a man's size 5-1/2 to 8 shoe. I, however, wore a size 8-1/2 shoe in 1985. Not surprisingly, it was Liz whose shoe size was equivalent to a man's

size 5-1/2 to 8.

Unlike the still-developing field of forensic foot print morphology, shoe print analysis was an exact and proven science. The athletic shoe print thus proved beyond a reasonable doubt that someone other than I was at the crime scene at the time the murders occurred. That of course was not the same as proving my innocence. But it was now true to say that my long London "confession" and the prosecution's entire theory of the case were, beyond a reasonable doubt, false.

On October 9, 1991, the Court of Appeals of Virginia decided that I would not even receive a full hearing of my appeal. In their written ruling the appellate judges made no reference to the fact that their colleague, Judge Sweeney, had prevaricated about his relationship to the victim's family. The Court also found that I had lost the right to present evidence discovered after the trial because of my lawyers' use of the wrong terminology in the motion Judge Sweeney denied in September, 1990. On the issue of my disputed "confession" the panel of judges ruled that a German citizen being interrogated on American murder charges while in an English police station had no right to a lawyer. Ironically even the police had conceded that I had such a right, though they claimed they had not violated it.

On March 13, 1992, the Virginia Supreme Court also denied me a full hearing of my appeal. The justices' ruling consisted of only one single sentence.

By then I was so disgusted and depressed by the American judicial system that I gave up: My father, who had meanwhile been posted to the German Embassy in Mauretania, contacted the German Foreign Ministry in Bonn and the German Embassy in Washington D.C. to inquire whether my government could help me, since the Virginian courts obviously would not. Just a few months later I had my answer, and of course it was negative. Because memories of my high-publicity extradition and trial were still too fresh, any discrete efforts on my behalf would soon become a matter of public controversy and thus were doomed to fail, the German government informed me.

My only hope seemed to lie with the very court system which had disappointed me so deeply until now. In February, 1993, I reluctantly asked my attorneys to file a petition for writ of habeas corpus, the only form of appeal left open to me. Reversing a conviction through a habeas writ depended on proving that the U.S. Constitution had been violated during the trial, a process so complex and time-consuming that few lawyers attempted it and even fewer succeeded. But my family believed in my innocence and hoped for my freedom just as I did, and we decided to pursue even this relatively remote possibility for finding sole late justice for me.

Since my father's financial resources had been exhausted by years of my courtroom battles and his recent divorce from my mother, my fraternal grandmother wired several thousand dollars to my lead attorney, Richard Neaton of Detroit, Michigan, on April 4, 1993. And then nothing happened --absolutely nothing at all. I wrote Mr. Neaton repeatedly to inquire about the progress of the petition for writ of habeas corpus, and in his responding letters he gave me a panoply of excuses for his delays: "failure of the post office," "relocation efforts" to Florida in the summer of 1993, "awaiting an updated affidavit from" an expert witness, "still awaiting [another lawyer's] return of the petition," "the funeral of my uncle," and finally his "computer's hard drive [which had] crashed." 12:2

By December, 1993, I was so worried that I told my troubles to old friends of my parents from our time in Atlanta, who had meanwhile moved their law practice to Virginia and occasionally visited me in prison. They contacted the State of Michigan Attorney Discipline Board, and the news they then brought me for Christmas was dire indeed.

On April 1, 1993 -- before he accepted those thousands of dollars from my grandmother -- my lawyer Richard Neaton had become the subject of a "Formal Complaint" by the Michigan Attorney Discipline Board. The charges included neglecting a client's law suit to the extent that he missed crucial deadlines, misleading a client about the progress of her case, preparing a fake deposition for a law suit, misappropriating \$11,000 of a client's funds, and failing to co-operate with the Discipline Board's investigation. Shortly after the filing of this complaint Mr. Neaton moved to Florida, a state famous for its lax bankruptcy laws. On November 2, 1993, while he was still blaming "the funeral of my uncle" and his "computer's hard drive" for the delays in my habeas petition, Richard Neaton filed an "Answer to Formal Complaint" in which he "admitted" or pleaded "no contest" to virtually all counts 12:3. He also informed the Discipline Board that he had "eliminated his law practice," but as late as February, 1994, Mr. Neaton wrote me about "conduct[ing] business for you and other clients." Without the intervention of my parents' friends he undoubtedly would never have remembered to mention to me that his career as an attorney was over.

When I attempted to end my relationship with Richard Neaton amicably in January, 1994, he rebuffed me -- and went on the offensive. First he claimed that he "never received" the money my grandmother had sent him in April of the previous year, though I later had the German and American banks trace the wire transfer to his account. Even if the funds had reached him, Mr. Neaton told me, he felt he had "earned every penny" to compensate him for other work he had done for me. Lastly, he refused to return half of the transcripts of my trial because he "own[ed] half of them"; if I wanted those transcripts, which I needed in order to continue my habeas corpus appeals with another lawyer, I should send him the "remaining \$5,000" of the total \$9,000 bill for the transcripts. Yet three years earlier my father and Richard Neaton had exchanged letters in which both agreed that he had received the entire \$9,000 12:4.

I sent the Michigan Attorney Grievance Commission a "Request for Investigation" of Mr. Neaton on February 22, 1994, and we will probably be suing each other for many years to come. During the spring of 1993, however, I was less concerned with these disciplinary proceedings than with the re-evaluation of my attorney's past performance -- and of course the future of my appeals. In his "Answer to Formal Complaint" in the case brought by the Michigan Attorney Discipline Board on behalf of his other clients, Richard Neaton tried to excuse his behavior by claiming he had suffered from a "mental or emotional disability [which] materially impaired his ability to practice law" since "January, 1989." January, 1989 -- I had still been in England then, fighting extradition! So, throughout all my pre-trial hearings, my trial and all my appeals, Mr. Neaton had been so mentally disturbed that, by his own admission, he could not properly perform his job as my lawyer.

Now I knew why, for instance, he had never bothered to compare Liz's sample ink foot prints to the sock impression LR3 before my trial, so he could have found the resemblance between the two before Robert Hallett misled the jury. The importance of the foot print evidence was obvious to everyone during pre-trial preparations, but Richard Neaton had neglected this basic, simple research until it was too late. Since the jurors had based their verdict on the LR3 overlays, my own attorney's deficient performance had cost me the rest of my life!

Mr. Neaton's psychological disability probably also explained why he had not bothered to investigate the athletic shoe print LR2 until 1991. Long before my trial he had known of Rick Johnson's report of June 7, 1985, which gave the dimensions of that bloody sneaker impression -- potentially very important evidence! Yet Richard Neaton had somehow failed to look up the subject of shoe print analysis in the index of the "Journal of Forensic Sciences," the profession's standard text. Had he done

so, he would have found the definitive 1985 study I discussed earlier, and Mr. Neaton would then have been able to prove to the jurors that someone other than I was at the crime scene when the murders occurred. This would have destroyed the prosecution's theory of the case and almost certainly saved me.

Finally, Richard Neaton's mental problems could well have been the cause of his negligent drafting of the September, 1990, motion for a new trial based on the evidence discovered after the trial. Lawyers are supposed to know the difference between "set aside the verdict" and "vacate the judgement"! Because mine had not, Judge Sweeney had denied the motion, and I had lost the right to present new evidence during my appeals. Not only had Mr. Neaton found Elizabeth's foot print and the shoe print study too late, but his incompetence had then prevented me from using this evidence to correct his earlier failures!

In my anger and desperation I wrote Richard Neaton's Virginian co- counsel, William Cleaveland of Roanoke, to inform him of these developments and to ask him for help. This gentleman, however, failed to answer my respectful letters and did not return the telephone calls of a social worker who contacted him on my behalf. Perhaps Mr. Cleaveland was afraid of being sued -- or perhaps he feared he might catch Mr. Neaton's psychological illness through indirect contact.

My family was nearly as distraught as I by these revelations about Richard Neaton, and some of them now felt that my situation was hopeless. I, too, sank ever deeper into depression and self-pity. Everyone, it seemed, had betrayed me: first and foremost I had betrayed myself, of course, when I sought to escape my own weaknesses by melding my personality with that of my much stronger, older and disturbed girlfriend. Next to betray me had been Elizabeth, who had entangled me in double murder; then Sheriff Carl Wells, who had let himself be bullied by the Haysom brothers' attorney into diverting the homicide investigation to save the family name; Detectives Ricky Gardner, Kenneth Beaver and Terence Wright, who had denied me access to legal advice which would have saved me from making my false "confession"; Commonwealth's Attorney James Updike, who had accepted my very convenient "confession" as his theory of the case despite the stronger evidence implicating Liz; the English government, which had sent me to the U.S. though the European Court wanted me extradited to Germany; Judge William Sweeney, who had wanted to preside over my trial so badly that he failed to tell the truth about his relationship with the victim's family; Robert Hallett, who had misled the jury about the crucial sock impression evidence; the appellate courts, which had failed to correct this miscarriage of justice; my own lawyer, who had neglected to represent me properly and overlooked evidence which would have won the case; and now even some members of my family were giving up on me! At no time during my eight years of incarceration had I felt as close to despair.

In the late summer of 1994, however, my father once again came to my rescue by retaining Ms. Gail Starling Marshall, a former Deputy Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Virginia who had recently gone into private practice. At the time of this writing she is preparing a petition for writ of habeas corpus; but the wheels of justice grind particularly slowly when it comes to habeas petitions, so I do not expect a final resolution of my legal problems for years.

And there my case rests at present. Life drags on, one slow day at a time, as I fight to keep myself alive spiritually and physically. The battle is hard and continuous, since I have so few allies and hardly any weapons, but for a prison inmate the only alternative is suicide.

In the years since my trial my father has been stationed in Nouakchott, Mauritania, and Port Moresby, Papua New-Guinea, both of which lie just about as far from Virginia as is possible. My mother has

been so ill for so long that her doctors have forbidden her the long trip from Germany; letters and monthly telephone calls barely suffice to keep contact alive. Luckily, however, a human rights activist from the Roanoke-Bedford-Lynchburg area visits me regularly. Through many long, very personal conversations we have developed a genuine friendship -- not one of those sad prison romances based on manipulation and exploitation. Without her I think I would lose all hope of retaining some of my humanity.

Apart from these contacts with the world beyond the walls I pass my time with an extremely rigorous routine of physical exercise. Since I never miss a work-out I have slimmed down to 155 lbs. body-weight, bench-press 220 lbs. on a good day, and run five miles four times a week. My fanatical devotion to athletics surprises me when I think of my bookish adolescence. Still, every day my fervour grows in the battle against barbells and running track. Of course I always lose the fight in the end -- I must set down the weights eventually, or slow to a walk -- but I never stop struggling.

Whenever I am not exercising I could, theoretically, further my education. But the Virginia Department of Corrections offers its inmates no more than a two-year Associate Degree program, at a level I passed seven years ago at U.Va. And books have lost their fascination for me anyway. Only commercial fiction can sometimes still hold my attention.

I still write, as I have always done, but I fear that soon this outlet, too, will be denied to me. "Write about what you know," is the most important rule for any author, because all good prose flows from empathetic understanding fed by direct experience. In the last eight and a half years, however, all my experience has been confined to jails and prisons, a sterile, worthless raw material for the writer's craft. How can I create a convincing female character on paper, when I have spoken with so few women since 1986? How can I describe with words the touch of a blade of grass, when I have jogged on concrete for too many years? Shakespeare no doubt visited those foggy Scottish moors to find inspiration for "Macbeth," but I will never have that opportunity again.

During a recent shake-down lock-down at my prison I pulled out my "Complete Works" of the Bard and re-read that play about the Thane of Cawdor and his Lady. I thought about personalities, what shapes them, how every act is the product of all that went before. It took billions of years to get from inanimate matter to life, hundreds of millions for microbes to develop into vertebrates, yet more millions for lizards to become humans, thousands for the first Macbeth to arrive, hundreds more to produce Macbeth himself, and several decades of Macbeth's own life -- to bring him to that one moment, fresh from a bloody battle, full of ambition, happy to see the wife he loved, and thus open to Lady Macbeth's pressure to kill. Could Macbeth have acted differently? I think not. Macbeth acted as Macbeth had to act, being Macbeth.

Of course I was not a successful battle-hardened warrior on Saturday, March 30, 1985. I was not Macbeth but Jens Soering, the A-student and diplomat's son who had only one brief school yard fight in his entire life. But, like Macbeth, I loved my woman and thus was open to Elizabeth's pressure. I had to help her, or she would die in the electric chair! So I promised to confess to a crime I did not commit, expecting limited diplomatic immunity and five years in a German youth prison.

Could I have acted differently? I think not. I acted as Jens Soering had to act, being Jens Soering. But Shakespeare's Macbeth is a tragic hero, while I am only a fool.

Because I wanted to believe in a perfect Liz who could never exist in reality, I did not recognize that she was in desperate need of psychiatric treatment. I should have helped her! But because of my

foolishness, her borderline personality disorder continued to grow until it became murderous. I could have saved her from becoming a monster, but I failed.

Because I trusted Elizabeth in spite of her "perversions of truth," I arranged an alibi and became an accomplice in murder without even knowing it. I should have stopped her! But because of my foolishness, Derek and Nancy Haysom died at the hand of their own daughter. I could have saved their lives, but I failed.

Because I thought my diplomatic passport made me invulnerable, I played the role of Macbeth the murderer to save my girlfriend's life. I should have told the truth! But because of my foolishness, I will almost certainly die as an old man in prison. I could have saved my own life, but I failed.

Because I was a fool, four lives were either ended or ruined. This is my fault, my burden, and I am deeply sorry. Foolishness is no excuse for aiding a double murder and spawning endless misery.

And what would I say to Liz if I were to meet her today? I think I would return to her the poem she sent me in her final letter, before breaking contact with me in April, 1987. For if this poem can be addressed to either one of us, it is to Elizabeth Roxanne Haysom:

- * When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
- * And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
- * And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
- * Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

- * How many loved your moments of glad grace,
- * And loved your beauty with love false or true,
- * But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
- * And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

- * And bending dozen beside the glowing bars,
- * Murmur, a little sadly, how love fled
- * And paced the mountains overhead
- * And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

W.B. Yeats, "When You Are Old," 1892.

THE END

Notes: Chapter 12

12:1 -- Harvey VanHoven, "A Correlation Between Shoeprint Measurements And Actual Sneaker Size," originally published in Journal of Forensic Sciences, JFSCA, Vol. 30, No. 4, October, 1988; reprinted in William Bodziak, Footwear Impression Evidence, Elsevier Science Publishing Company, 1991. The dimensions of the bloody shoe print LR2 are recorded in forensic examiner Rick Johnson's report of June 7, 1985, which is available in the public records at Bedford County Courthouse.

12:2 -- All quoted passages in this paragraph are from letters from Richard A. Neaton to Jens Soering, which are attached as appendices to Jens Soering's "Request for Investigation" of February 22, 1994, Case No. , filed with the State of Michigan Attorney Grievance Commission. "

November 2, 1993, Case No. 93-49-GA, State of Michigan Attorney Discipline Board.

12:4 -- All quoted passages in this paragraph are from letters from Richard A. Neaton to Jens Soering. They, the bank records and the letters between Richard A. Neaton and Klaus Soering are attached as appendices to Jens Soering's "Request for Investigation."