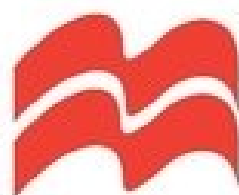


BEYOND REASON

KEN ENGLADE



BEYOND REASON

The True Story of a Shocking
Double Murder, a Brilliant and
Beautiful Virginia Socialite, and a
Deadly Psychotic Obsession

KEN ENGLADE



St. Martin's Paperbacks

For the triplets: Glad, Sal, and Sam

Table of Contents

[Title Page](#)

[1](#)

[2](#)

[3](#)

[4](#)

[5](#)

[6](#)

[7](#)

[8](#)

[9](#)

[10](#)

[11](#)

[12](#)

[13](#)

[14](#)

[15](#)

[16](#)

[17](#)

[18](#)

[19](#)

[20](#)

[21](#)

[22](#)

[23](#)

[24](#)

[25](#)

[26](#)

[27](#)

[28](#)

[29](#)

[30](#)

[31](#)

[32](#)

[33](#)

[34](#)

[35](#)

[36](#)

[37](#)

[38](#)

[39](#)

[40](#)
[41](#)
[42](#)
[43](#)
[44](#)
[45](#)
[46](#)
[47](#)
[48](#)
[49](#)
[50](#)
[51](#)
[52](#)
[53](#)
[54](#)
[55](#)
[*Author's Note*](#)
[*Afterword*](#)
[Copyright Page](#)

1

SWEAT ROLLED DOWN DEREK HAYSOM'S FACE. IT streamed down his forehead, collected in his eyebrows, and dripped from the end of his nose. Every few minutes he stopped digging and wiped his brow with the back of his hand. It did not do much good. Seconds later, the perspiration was flowing as freely as before.

A few miles away, in Lynchburg, the weather bureau's protected thermometer was pushing eighty-four. But it was hotter than that in the shadeless garden where Derek and his wife, Nancy, had been working since early that morning. It was much too hot, Derek thought, for March 30. Without turning his head, he asked his wife, "How are you holding up?"

"As far as I'm concerned, we can call it a day," Nancy replied wearily.

"That's a good idea," Derek agreed, slowly straightening his stiffening back. "I think it's sundowner time."

Normally, it does not get particularly warm in the Blue Ridge Mountain country of central Virginia until much later in the year. But 1985 was an exception; the sun had been beating down relentlessly all week. It was particularly hard on Derek, who was accustomed to cooler climes.

"It's going to be just as miserable tomorrow as it was today," he grumbled as he gathered his tools and began stacking them at the side of the house. Sometimes he was as fussy as an old maid, which is about what one might expect from a man whose favorite hobby, after gardening and card games, was designing circuit boards for ham radios. "But that doesn't matter," he panted. "Palm Sunday or no, we're going to have to be out early again."

Nancy nodded silently in agreement, too exhausted to reply. Turning toward the house, she listlessly peeled off her thick cotton gloves and threw them on the ground.

As he gathered the equipment, Derek tried to make light of his fatigue, joking about his "seventy-two-year-old bones" and how it was getting harder to bounce back than it used to be. Advancing age was not something he accepted readily. To help postpone it, he kept in shape with tennis and sporadic jogs along Holcomb Rock Road, the narrow, twisting thoroughfare that ran in front of their house. But a long day of hard labor in a hot sun was enough to drain even the barrel-chested Derek.

The Haysoms had moved to Boonsboro three years before, in 1982, after Derek retired as director of a venture capital organization in Nova Scotia. An engineer by education and training, Derek had shifted into management at midcareer and worked in executive jobs on three continents. Boonsboro beckoned because it was a suburb of Lynchburg, where Nancy had grown up. They lived in relative tranquility in a modest two-story house that Nancy had named Loose Chippings, after a dwelling in an obscure British novel. In the novel, the house was called that because it served as a sort of way station for eccentrics. Nancy found that particularly applicable to their situation.

Naming houses was one of Nancy's little quirks. Another was collecting small

boulders, which she used for building walls around the gardens they always planted whenever they moved to a new residence. Over the twenty-five years she and Derek had been married, wherever they lived, Nancy always built rock walls around their gardens. Now that she was into middle age, the children nagged her about it. Wrestling with outsized rocks, they argued, was not a hobby particularly conducive to her continued good health. To appease them, she promised that the wall at Loose Chippings would be her last.

"I'm for a shower," she said, running her hand through a mop of auburn hair that was just beginning to show streaks of gray.

"You go ahead," Derek muttered. "I'll finish up here and then I'll be right behind you."

"GOD, IT WAS BEASTLY OUT TODAY," NANCY SAID, LOOKING cool and comfortable in a royal blue dashiki she had chosen for a quiet evening at home. Her speech was clipped and sprinkled with Briticisms, which was not surprising considering she had spent the last thirty-six years, since she was seventeen, living among British expatriates in southern Africa and Canada. Despite her Virginia roots, there was hardly a hint of a southern drawl.

"Summer will be here before we know it," agreed Derek. "At times like this I wish we were back in Nova Scotia."

While Nancy's accent was affected, Derek's was legitimate. Most Americans hearing him talk, in fact, thought he was British. In reality, he was a South African of British descent, a native of Natal Province on the East Coast. During the years he worked and studied in the United Kingdom before returning to southern Africa after World War II, he polished his speech to the point where no one but an Englishman would notice his colonial roots.

Nancy sighed. Finishing her drink, she extended her empty glass. "Would you, please?" she asked Derek.

Derek took it and strode to the liquor cabinet. "The same?" he asked, already pouring a large shot of gin over the melting cubes.

She did not answer. Given a choice, Nancy almost always drank gin: Boodles when it was available, Gordon's when it was not. It was a sign of his exhaustion that Derek did not offer his usual lecture on the evils of her beverage of choice. Almost invariably he chided her about her love for gin. "The juniper extract used to flavor it is a perfect poison," he would say. "It produces the same feelings of aggression as amphetamines." Tonight he said nothing. Silently, he added a splash of soda and a slice of lemon to her glass and put it to the side while he refilled his own. Derek's preference was scotch, which he consumed in the British fashion: straight up—no ice, no water, no soda.

Scooping up the two glasses, he recrossed the room, handing the gin to Nancy and taking a seat across from her. As much out of habit as because of the heat, Derek had closed all the curtains so that they were sitting in the glow of a single lamp. The weak light threw Derek's craggy face into strong shadow, accentuating his nose and jutting chin, making him look positively fierce. The same light made Nancy appear soft and cuddly. At fifty-three she was still a good-looking woman, perky rather than pretty, petite with attractive, even features, a charming upturned nose, flashing brown eyes, and a fine, full figure. Plump some might say. But whenever she and Derek attended

social functions, and that was often, Nancy never failed to draw stares from the men in the group. This raised conflicting emotions in Derek —pride mixed with jealousy— and usually sent him off on a tirade about how she undoubtedly would remarry quickly once he was out of the way. She laughed off those exhibitions, but as a woman with an almost insatiable need for attention and affection, she was secretly pleased with her lingering voluptuousness. Tonight, she had not bothered with makeup after her shower, and the lamplight made her appear unnaturally pale. Around her neck was a doublestranded gold choker, her only concession to formality for the evening. It glowed in the darkness.

“One more, please, dear,” she said. “A little something while I’m fixing dinner.”

While Derek mixed her another drink, Nancy put a pot of rice on to boil and attacked a mound of ground beef, shaping the meat into thick patties, which she slid into the oven.

NANCY RINSED THE PLATES AND STACKED THEM IN THE dishwasher, carefully culling the silverware because she always washed that by hand. In the dining room, Derek slumped peacefully at the table, enjoying the after-dinner quiet. It had been a long day, and he was falling victim to too much sun, too much scotch, and too much dinner. He was just about to nod off when there was a loud rapping at the door. He jerked upright. “Bloody hell,” he cursed, blinking and squinting at his watch. It was just past eight o’clock.

“Are you expecting anyone?” Nancy called from the kitchen.

“No,” Derek grumbled, stretching like an old dog forced to surrender his favorite napping spot.

Nancy poked her head through the serving door cut into the wall between the kitchen and dining room. “I wonder who it might be?”

“I’ll soon find out,” replied Derek. Carefully placing his palms flat on the sturdy table, he used his powerful arms and shoulders to push himself upright. As he moved his chair back, it scraped across the slate floor like a fingernail being dragged down a chalkboard.

“I’m coming,” he yelled, setting off unsteadily across the room. After his shower Derek had changed into a pair of baggy work pants and a short-sleeved shirt, which was marked by dark half-circles under the arms. On his feet was a pair of new Indian-style moccasins, the kind in which the sole wraps around the foot to be joined to the upper by thick laces. As he walked, the leather made soft scuffling sounds on the uneven stone, the kind of soft whisking noise the barber used to make when he stropped his straight razor. The scotch had thrown Derek’s internal compass askew, and he walked lopsidedly to the door.

Nancy left the kitchen and crossed the dining room, silently watching her husband’s erratic progress toward the door. She was more curious than anxious. Not many people arrived unannounced on a Saturday night, and she was eager to see who it was. Unconsciously, she brought her left hand to her breast and gathered the dashiki more tightly about her. Underneath the robe she wore only a beige bra and matching panties, not exactly the attire she would have preferred for welcoming guests.

Derek paused at the door, fumbling with the light switches. The visitor thumped the knocker again. “All *right*,” Derek growled. “Don’t be so bloody impatient.” With his

right hand, he flipped the switch closest to him, turning on a set of floodlights that bathed the top half of the driveway in harsh light. Clearly visible was the Haysoms' creaky ten-year-old tan van, which Nancy had joshingly christened the Bronze Belle. To its right was their 1963 BMW sedan. Immediately in front of the door, side-by-side with the Belle, was a shiny new silver-blue subcompact that Derek had never seen before.

Reaching up, Derek flipped a second switch. It controlled a single bulb over the doorway, and when it was lit, it threw heavy shadows on whomever happened to be standing on the stoop. Sometimes, depending on how close the caller was to the door, visual identification was tricky. But a nearly full moon eliminated that problem. Although he did not know the car, Derek immediately recognized the caller.

"Oh!" he said in surprise. "What are *you* doing here?"

"I—" the visitor started, but he stopped when Nancy's head appeared over Derek's shoulder, a puzzled look on her face.

"Is Elizabeth with you?" Nancy asked, peering into the darkness to see if she could see her daughter walking up the path.

"No," the visitor replied. "I came alone." He was wearing jeans and, despite the warm night, a gray Members Only windbreaker. It effectively hid the layer of baby fat that still clung to his five-foot-eight frame. He wore thick-lensed spectacles and offered a tentative smile.

"What's this all about?" Derek demanded in the gruff manner he used with those he did not particularly like. "What do you want?"

"Is anything the matter?" Nancy interjected. "Is Elizabeth all right?"

"She's fine," the visitor said, shuffling nervously from foot to foot, bouncing in his white running shoes like a marathoner waiting for the starting gun. "I came because I wanted to talk to you and your husband."

Derek frowned. "Talk to us? What about? Why isn't Lizzie with you?" His tone was more than mildly belligerent.

"It's all right, Derek," Nancy said soothingly. Despite her gin-induced fog she felt the visitor's tension. It was palpable, as obvious as the darkness and the heat. "I'm sure there's a good reason," she whispered, laying a calming hand on her husband's forearm.

Turning to the visitor, she flashed an airline hostess smile. "Please come in," she said, trying to project a warmth she did not feel. "We were just finishing dinner. Come in, and I'll fix you a plate."

2

ANNIE MASSIE SCREECHED TO A HALT IN FRONT OF THE modest two-story house that she knew almost as well as her own.

“Thank God you’re here,” Jane Riggs wailed, wringing her blue-veined hands.

“I came as quickly as I could,” Annie said breathlessly, striding briskly across the greening lawn to join Jane and her two companions, Marilyn Baker and Constance Johanson.

“This is so unlike Derek,” Jane sobbed. “So unlike him. I just *know* something dreadful has happened.”

Every week, as regularly as a church service, Derek Haysom played bridge with the three women. Unless he was away on a business trip or he and Nancy were off on a trans-Atlantic jaunt, he never failed to miss a bridge date, certainly not when he was the host.

“We pounded on the door,” Jane said, nodding at the big brass knocker that glistened flatly in the weak, late-afternoon sunlight. “It didn’t do any good.”

“When no one answered, we thought they had lost track of time and might still be working in the garden,” interjected Constance. “But we checked, and they weren’t there either.”

“That’s when we got really worried,” added Jane. “So we went down to Mitchell’s Store and called you.”

“I’m glad you did,” Annie replied apprehensively. “Elizabeth called just before you did,” she added cautiously, anxious not to upset the three elderly women any more than they already were. But she could not smother her own strong premonitions of tragedy. “She said she hasn’t been able to reach them all week, and she wanted me to come out and check on them.”

They all knew it was a rarity for Derek and Nancy not to have some contact every few days with their twenty-year-old daughter, a student at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, a ninety-minute drive away. She was the focus of their lives.

Annie looked around quickly. The bunged-up van was parked in its customary spot under the trees in the center of the circular drive. A few feet farther along was Derek’s BMW. It, too, was in its normal place, backed carefully off the pavement so its nose was pointing down the steep slope. He always backed it into its parking niche: When it was time to go somewhere the impatient Derek didn’t like to waste time maneuvering his vehicle.

“We didn’t know what else to do,” said Jane, her voice cracking. “We didn’t want to have to call you, but we didn’t know whom else to call.”

“Don’t worry,” Annie said soothingly. “You did the right thing.”

Digging into her purse, Annie produced a dull brass key. “Nancy gave this to me a long time ago,” she explained. “When they’re out of town, I come over to check the house, water the plants, and make sure everything’s okay.” Fingering it as reverently as a Catholic would a rosary, Annie paused, considering what to do. Nancy was her

dearest and closest friend. They had been like sisters since they were children. Over the years she had come to be fond of Derek as well. She liked them both too much, was too respectful of their privacy, to go barging into their home unless she was asked to do so. But this had the earmarks of an emergency. She knew no two people more reliable than Derek and Nancy. If they made an appointment and then failed to keep it, there was a reason. In the pit of her stomach, she was sure the reason would not be pleasant.

Slowly, fearfully, she approached the door. Glancing over her shoulder, Annie read the anxiety on the three women's faces and knew that the same emotion must be painted on hers as well. Gritting her teeth, she turned the key in the lock and started when the tumblers clicked noisily into place. Holding her breath, she twisted the handle and swung the door open a crack. "Hello," she yelled more loudly than she intended. Startled by her own voice, she jumped as though a hairy spider had just crawled across her foot. When there was no reply, she tried again. "Nancy?" she called more softly. "Derek?" Again there was no response. She turned and looked at the three women. No help there. Their faces were as blank as the Virginia sky.

"Should I go in?" she asked them.

Constance shrugged. Jane, the more visibly frightened of the three, bobbed her head nervously. "Something's very wrong," she said in a quavering voice. "I feel it in my bones."

Annie threw back her shoulders and took a deep breath. Reaching out, she gave the door a gentle shove. Silently, it swung open another eight inches. Immediately, she wished she had not touched it. In the gloom, she saw a sight she knew would haunt her dreams for years to come. Just inside the door, barely two strides away, Derek was sprawled on the floor surrounded by a huge dark stain which she knew intuitively was dried blood.

"Oh my God," Annie gasped, covering her mouth.

"What is it?" Jane asked shrilly. "What is it?"

"It's Derek," Annie croaked, swallowing an urge to retch. "He's right there on the floor. He's covered with blood."

"Let me see," Marilyn said, pushing forward. "Maybe we can help."

"No!" Annie replied, quickly closing the door. "There's nothing we can do now. There's no way he could be alive. Not with that much blood. Take my word for it," she said, blocking the entrance. "You don't want to see."

"What about Nancy?" Constance asked, smothering her rising panic. "Where is she? Did you see her?"

"No," Annie said, struggling to control her own horror. "I didn't see her. I don't want to see her."

"Maybe she got away," Jane suggested.

"Then we would have heard from her," Annie replied. "She would have called the police."

"Maybe she's lying in there hurt," Constance added.

Annie considered that. "No," she said slowly. "I don't think so."

"Oh my God, oh my God," Jane mumbled, breaking into tears.

Annie stared at her. As a physician's wife she knew how contagious hysteria was. If she did nothing, she would very quickly have three blubbing women on her hands.

“We can’t go inside,” Annie said firmly. “I’ve read enough books to know we shouldn’t go into a house in which a crime has been committed. From the quick look I got, I could tell Derek has been dead a long time. Going into the house isn’t going to help him or Nancy. What we need to do is call the police.”

With a decisive twist, she relocked the door, removed the key, and returned it to her purse. Then she bundled the three panic-stricken women into her car. She drove down the drive and turned right in the direction of the main highway and Mitchell’s Store, the same roadside market where Jane had used the telephone to call her. They were there in three minutes.

While the women waited in the car, Annie punched at the telephone’s metal keyboard, willing her hand to stop shaking long enough for her to push the right buttons. When Dr. William McK. Massie came on the line Annie explained to him in a halting voice what she had seen. He told her to stay calm; he would call the police.

ALTHOUGH MASSIE INITIALLY CALLED LYNCHBURG OFFICIALS, he discovered that the Haysoms’ home was not in the city but in Bedford County, a distinction Massie did not appreciate until he was told by the LPD dispatcher that he had to contact the Bedford County Sheriff’s Office. The city of Bedford, where the sheriff’s office is headquartered, is about thirty miles west of Lynchburg, almost exactly halfway between that city and Roanoke. But the Bedford County line runs right up to the city limits of both places. Boonsboro is only a mile and a half outside the Lynchburg city limits and barely over the county line.

As Roanoke and Lynchburg expanded, Bedford County Sheriff C. H. Wells and his troopers were faced with more work. To help facilitate the reporting of crime on the county’s borders, Wells maintained local numbers in Lynchburg, Roanoke, and Big Island, which is on the northern border with Amherst County. Dispatchers in all the counties were scrupulous about determining who had jurisdiction.

When Massie got the Bedford dispatcher on the line, he succinctly explained his reason for calling.

“Tell your wife to go back to the house,” the dispatcher said. “I’ll have someone there as soon as I can.”

Within minutes Deputy Joe Stanley roared up the driveway. It was 4:15.

“Tell me what you saw,” Stanley ordered Annie.

As soon as she finished, Stanley took the key from her trembling hand, unlocked the door, and looked inside.

“Aw, Jesus,” he said. The scene was exactly as Annie had described it: Derek was stretched out grotesquely on the floor, and he had obviously been dead for several days.

As Annie had done, Stanley backed out of the house, closed, and locked the door. Following department procedure, he radioed Bedford and told them to stand by for a telephone call, mindful that ears other than those of Bedford deputies often monitored the law enforcement frequencies. From a pay phone he confirmed what Annie had said, adding that the second person believed to be in the house was not visible from the living room and that he needed another deputy immediately.

By the time Stanley got back to the house, Deputy George Thomas was there and more help was on the way. The dispatcher had put out a call for all available

investigators to report to the house on Holcomb Rock Road. The LPD and sheriff's offices in neighboring counties also were alerted.

Working as a team, Stanley and Thomas went back inside. Barely glancing at Derek, they moved to the right, across the living room and into the master bedroom. Despite bloody tracks across the floor, there was no other body there.

Retracing their path, they crossed the living room again, stepped around Derek's supine form, and went into the dining room. It looked as though someone had poured a bucket of brown paint on the slate floor, then splattered some of it around the room before swishing the remainder about with a mop. But Nancy was nowhere to be seen.

"God, would you look at that," Stanley mumbled. "You ever seen anything like that before?"

"Not in my worst nightmares," Thomas stuttered.

For a considerable time they stood there, horror-stricken, staring at the evidence of more carnage than either of them could have imagined was possible.

After what seemed a long time, Stanley shook his head and found his voice. "Where's the woman?" he said. "We still haven't found the woman."

"Oh, hell, that's right," Thomas said. "Where in hell could she be?"

Without answering, Stanley nodded slowly at the open door across the room, the passage that led to the kitchen.

Slowly, they crossed the blood-splashed dining room.

"You think she's there?" Thomas asked.

"Has to be," Stanley replied.

Cautiously, afraid of what they were going to find, they peeked into the room. Curled on the linoleum floor, in the center of a large brown stain, was Nancy Haysom. Except for the dried blood, she looked as though she may have just stretched out for a nap. She was resting on her left side, her hands tucked under her body and her legs bent slightly at the knee. Her hair fanned out gently from her face. On her feet was a pair of tan walking shoes so new that the manufacturer's logo was still clearly visible on the soles. Bending over the body, Stanley could see part of a gold necklace. Most of it, however, disappeared into a horrendous slash across her throat, a wound so deep and so large she was all but decapitated. The deputy didn't have to feel for a pulse; he knew that Nancy was far beyond help.

Retreating through the dining and living rooms, Stanley and Thomas went out the front door and carefully closed it behind them. Annie Massie and the three bridge players were waiting for them, tense and white-faced.

"Did you find Nancy?" Annie asked anxiously.

"Yeah," Stanley said, breathing deeply. "I'm afraid she's dead, too."

SERGEANT GEOFFREY BROWN, LPD'S YOUTHFUL LAB technician, had gone home that afternoon with grand plans to celebrate the early spring. He was in the backyard, grilling steaks on the barbecue, when the telephone rang. A few minutes later he came back and told his wife he was going to have to leave.

"Not again!"

"A double murder," he explained quickly, "over in Boonsboro."

"But that's Bedford County," she pointed out.

"I know," he said, "but they're activating the Regional Homicide Squad. That means

me.”

“What time will you be back?” she asked in resignation.

“I don’t know,” he said, snatching his car keys off the kitchen table, “but don’t wait up.”

WHEN HE GOT TO THE HOUSE, BROWN’S FIRST IMPRESSION was that he was wading into a sea of gore. Looking around quickly, he estimated that 90 percent of the floor surface in the living room, dining room, and kitchen was smeared with blood. His second impression, once he began examining the bodies, was how terribly they had been butchered.

Moving first to Derek because his body was the closest, Brown squatted and examined the scene. Derek, he noted, was lying on his back, turned slightly to his left, with his head resting against the wooden fireplace jamb. His right hand was palm down with the right index finger extended, as though he were pointing to an object on the bloodstained floor. His left hand was palm up, exposing a deep gash that ran horizontally, a cruelly ironic, cavernous lifeline.

There was no question he had died brutally. Someone with a large, very sharp knife had slashed and stabbed Derek Haysom unmercifully. There were two large, roughly parallel horizontal gashes on the left side of Derek’s face. One began near his cheekbone below the corner of his eye and angled upward and across, cutting through his ear. The other ran from the corner of his prominent chin straight across to the back of his neck. There was another slash on his right cheek that began on his chin and went upward to just below the ear. Brown figured these cuts were made by the killer in efforts to slice Derek’s throat. Obviously they were preliminary attempts because the killer soon found his mark. A huge, gaping wound ran right around Derek’s neck.

A glance at Derek’s hands demonstrated how desperately he had fought for his life, actually grabbing the blade in attempts to wrest the knife away from the assailant. He had six cuts on his hands, including the one that traversed his entire left palm. One of his knuckles was abraded, Brown noticed, indicating that Derek may have slugged the killer at least once.

An autopsy report would later confirm that the killer’s slash had severed every major blood-carrying organ in Derek’s neck. If he were alive when the wound was administered, he would have bled to death in a matter of seconds. Whether he was indeed alive at that time no one knew, because that was not the only potentially fatal injury inflicted upon the retired executive. He also was stabbed through the heart.

Besides the cuts on his cheeks, jaw, and hands, there were eleven slash wounds on Derek’s chest and fourteen on his back. All told, Derek was cut, sliced, or stabbed some three dozen times.

Nancy was not sliced as terribly as her husband, but there was no question that the attacker meant to kill her. In addition to the grotesque slash across her throat, there were two stab wounds to her torso which could have killed her, one to her heart and one to her side, which penetrated the peritoneal cavity. She would not have died as quickly from those wounds as she would from the slit throat, which virtually guaranteed that she had dropped where she was cut. Besides those wounds, Nancy had a cut on her jaw, a superficial wound on her left breast, and an incised wound on her left elbow, apparently inflicted when she raised her arm to try to ward off a knife

thrust.

By the time Brown had finished his cursory examinations, the first wave of what soon seemed like an army of police had begun to arrive. A deputy was posted at the door to keep out everyone who did not absolutely need to be inside until the lab technicians had a chance to collect their evidence.

Since the murder occurred in Bedford County, Sheriff C. H. Wells would be the man responsible for the investigation. Standing in the blood-soaked dining room he quickly surveyed the scene. Three chairs were pushed back from the table, which still held a dirty plate, a bowl, a wine glass, and a neatly folded paper napkin soaked in blood. On one end of the table was a stack of books, as though someone had been using it as a desk. On the tasteful gray upholstery covering the seat of one of the chairs was a large bloody palm print looking for all the world like the cover illustration on a recent mystery novel entitled *Thinner*.

Almost immediately, Wells came to two conclusions. The first was that three people had been seated at the table. Since two of them were dead, that meant that either the third party, the guest, probably was the killer or there was another body somewhere that had not been found. His second conclusion was that the attack took place in the dining room. Nancy apparently was gravely injured early on and staggered into the kitchen to die. But the killer and Derek fought around the dining room and living room until Derek was overcome by his injuries. Both bodies apparently were left where they fell.

When no third body was found, Wells' first observation was substantiated: Nancy and Derek knew their killer at least well enough to invite him into the house and serve him a meal. From the first, Wells was thinking "him." A "her," he reasoned, would not be strong enough to fight with

Derek as viciously as the killer had done, and a "her" was not as likely to slice up the bodies as badly as they had been. Nor would a "her" be likely to perform what looked to be a grisly *coup de grâce*. The chances were good that the Haysoms' throats were slit either after they were dead or when they were very close to dying. It would take an unusual woman to be able to do that.

THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS toiled at the crime scene. While Brown and other technicians worked on the bodies, Wells' investigators spread out in the neighborhood to try to find some clue that might lead them to the killer or killers. Who had been friendly with the Haysoms? Who had seen them and when? Had anyone seen a stranger or strangers lurking around the neighborhood? There were hundreds of questions and very few answers. But there was one thing no one connected with the investigation ever forgot: the viciousness of the crimes. Whoever murdered Derek and Nancy Haysom must have deeply hated them.

The crime was the worst anyone could remember in normally sleepy central Virginia. One LPD officer, a veteran of twenty-five years on the force, was so disturbed by the ferocity of the crime that he did something he had never done before. As soon as he got off duty he went home and put a pistol under his pillow. It stayed there for many months.

3

SHERIFF WELLS WAS NO NEOPHYTE. HALF HARD-NOSED country cop and half accomplished politician—a delicate, sometimes volatile mix required to be a successful rural sheriff—Wells knew a problem when he saw one. He had no sooner screeched to a halt in front of the Haysoms' door and dashed inside the house than he knew he had trouble. It was bad enough that two apparently well-to-do members of the community had been attacked in their home and sliced almost beyond recognition. Even worse, though, was the immediate knowledge that the crimes were not going to be easily solved. As he poked gently around here and there, careful not to touch anything the lab technicians had not already examined, Wells grew increasingly dispirited about the prospect of a quick resolution. The killer—Wells had seen nothing to change his opinion that the murders were committed by one person—had covered his tracks well, leaving little if anything behind to put police on his trail. Evidence would have to be developed the hard way: by talking to people in ever widening circles until sooner or later investigators got enough clues to put together a concept of why and how the crime occurred and, most importantly, who might have done it. But that took manpower, and manpower was the rarest of commodities in the Bedford County sheriff's department, an agency that was geared more to the mundane details of rural law enforcement than to spectacular murders.

Although Bedford County, like every other county in the United States, has its share of killings, these usually involve no great mystery. A husband kills his wife because he thinks she is playing around. A wife gets tired of her husband beating her up and puts a bullet in his head. Two drunks get in a fight and try to carve each other up. In most cases the Bedford sheriff's office has the murderer in jail in remarkably quick time. But the Haysom case was different. While suspects may be predictable in more run-of-the-mill homicides, investigators in this case had not the slightest clue about who the murderer was or why the Haysoms were killed.

There was another issue to consider as well: public opinion. Wells's political antennae vibrated like a tuning fork when he thought of the effect the murders were going to have on the residents of Bedford and Campbell counties. The Lynchburg policeman who rushed home to put a pistol under his pillow was not the only one feeling jittery. The fact that the arrest of a suspect or suspects did not appear imminent, not to mention that no one was even sure about motive, caused considerable unease in Lynchburg and Bedford. Within hours of news reports about the discovery of the bodies, rumors began building that the killings were the work of an East Coast Manson, that the Haysoms perhaps had been only the first victims of a roving band of mad thrill-seekers who could strike again at any time. Almost immediately, gun and ammunition sales skyrocketed. Strangers were examined with blatant suspicion.

Sheriff Wells had anticipated this. Moments after he arrived at the Haysom residence, he decided to activate the Regional Homicide Squad.

Several years previously, law enforcement officials from six central Virginia

jurisdictions, including Bedford and Campbell counties, had agreed to form a special team that could be activated in those rare instances when the investigatory job was too big for any one of the departments to handle on its own. The Haysoms had been killed in Bedford County, but that was not to say that another murder was not already being committed somewhere else in the region. By immediately summoning the team into action, Wells was not only hoping to increase the chances for a quick arrest, but covering political bases with his constituents as well. Central Virginians would sleep better if they thought a small army of investigators was combing the countryside.

Actually, early on the public believed that the investigation was being performed more efficiently than it really was. Although cops had gone banging on doors virtually as soon as the bodies were discovered, the immediate results were depressing: Nancy and Derek were not high-profile people in the neighborhood. Derek had a reputation along Holcomb Rock Road as a gruff, sometimes tactless man who was unnecessarily abrupt much of the time. Nancy was regarded by her neighbors as snooty and pretentious and a tad quirky. But neither of them was well known along Holcomb Rock Road; most of their friends lived in Lynchburg, a twenty-minute drive away.

As the investigation broadened, police learned that among those who knew the Haysoms few of them, with the exception of Annie Massie and her husband, knew them well. Much of the investigators' early information about Derek and Nancy came from Annie Massie. But once Nancy's and Derek's offspring began arriving, profiles of the victims began to be fleshed out.

As soon as he began reading the reports, Wells knew why his men had so much trouble filling in the background: The Haysoms' lives had been far from conventional.

NANCY WAS BORN IN 1932 IN A LIZARD DUNG-SIZED SPOT on the map of Arizona called Jerome. Her father was Platt Carico Benedict, an itchy-footed geologist who was just embarking on his life's career of following the gold trail around the world. Her mother was Nancy Langhorne Gibbes, scion of a distinguished Virginia family.

Nancy's mother was not particularly happy to be in Jerome. For one thing, she had been reared along the verdant Blue Ridge, where her daughter would settle almost exactly a half century later. More than a couple of thousand miles separated the tree-covered Appalachians and the barren Gila Mountains, where Jerome, a rough and raw mining town, lay scratched into a rocky landscape seventy-five miles north of Phoenix. More people lived on her street in Lynchburg than in the entire community of Jerome. But Jerome had gold, at least for a while. It also had copper, silver, lead, zinc, and gypsum, all of which were becoming more vital to a booming prewar society. It was her husband's job to help find them.

Life in Jerome did not offer many comforts, especially not to a woman whose illustrious family tree went back five generations in Virginia. Nancy Haysom's maternal grandmother, Hallie Hutter Gibbes, was a first cousin to Nancy Witcher Langhorne. Students of history and politics, notably the English variety, know that Nancy Langhorne gave up Danville, Virginia, for England and the bed of Waldorf Astor, great-great-grandson of John Jacob Astor. When her husband ascended to the viscounty after his father's death in 1919, Nancy Astor, then Lady Astor, successfully ran for his seat in the House of Commons. She was the first woman elected to such a

post, which she held until she retired in 1945. During her twenty-six years in public office she became famous throughout the Empire for her intellect and her wit as well as for her efforts for women's rights and, ironically, considering Nancy Haysom's predilection for gin, temperance. Hallie Gibbes gave her daughter the middle name of Langhorne in honor of her cousin. It seemed natural, then, for Nancy Langhorne Gibbes Benedict to name *her* daughter after their famous relative as well. So Nancy Haysom started out in life as Nancy Astor Benedict, goddaughter and blood relative of the renowned Lady Astor.

Much to Nancy Benedict's relief, the family stay in Jerome was relatively brief. When the minerals started to play out five years later, her gold-fevered husband followed the scent to the Yukon. Cultural and physical isolation were marginally acceptable, she reckoned, but winter-long darkness and bitter cold were not. When Platt Benedict headed off for Alaska, Nancy Benedict packed up her children and went back to Lynchburg. In addition to her daughter, who by then had been dubbed Nancita (Little Nancy in Spanish; 'Cita for short), there were two other Benedict offspring, both boys. Risque was two years older, and there was another son two years younger, Louis. Curiously, the Benedict marriage remained intact; it was just that Platt didn't come home every night like most husbands and fathers.

Once back in Virginia, there was little remarkable about Nancy's childhood except that her father was seldom home. She did what all upper-middle-class southern girls of the time did, except more so since her family tree included contemporary British royalty. She took ballet lessons from Floyd Ward. She shone at Garland-Rodes Elementary School, where she exhibited an early flair for the dramatic by winning the lead in every school play that was produced. Later, she went to E. C. Glass High School, where she played bass in the orchestra. She was also an accomplished pianist and violinist. For two years running, 1945 and 1946, she was named to the all-state orchestra.

In 1949, when she was seventeen and barely out of Glass High, her father summoned the family, saying it was time they all lived together again. She, her mother, and Louis dutifully sped off to Johannesburg where Platt was working for another mining company, still searching for gold. Her older brother, Risque, was entrenched at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology so he did not make the move.

By all accounts, Nancy adapted superbly from the first. Never lacking for spunk, the five-foot-three teenager confronted an intruder in their home one night and routed him by swinging at him with a silver candlestick. A strikingly pretty young woman with flashing green eyes, high cheek bones, a graceful nose, and a warm, welcoming smile, it was natural that she attracted a crowd of suitors. It was a rare treat for the dour Afrikaners and reserved British bachelors to come across such a spirited young woman.

But she was not impervious to the charms of her exotic beaux. When she was still in her teens, she fell in love with a charming young Englishman named *Ian Hall*. Unhappily for her, her parents disapproved of him. Indeed, they felt so strongly that when Nancy, barely twenty, told them of her plans to marry Ian at his family's estate near Stratford-on-Avon, they vowed they would not attend. It was some consolation to Nancy that her godmother, Lady Astor, was there.

A year after the ceremony, Nancy and Ian had a son they named Howard Henry. It

was about this time, too, that Nancy began to regret that she had ignored her parents' warnings about her husband. Soon after a second son, Richard Platt (named for her father), was born, she divorced Ian and announced her determination to rear the two boys on her own, which she did for the next half dozen years, making a handsome living by investing shrewdly in South African gold stocks. She was following her own gold trail.

Then she met Derek Haysom.

AT FIVE-FEET-EIGHT AND SOME ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY pounds, Derek William Reginald Haysom was not physically imposing. But he exhibited a commanding, dynamic presence that gave him an air of authority. Nancy found him handsome, too, in a rugged sort of way. He had a hooked nose, steely gray eyes, a trim waist, and a powerful upper torso, which he maintained through tennis and squash. He had about him an aura of vitality and vision that was absent in many younger men. But what really appealed to Nancy about Derek Haysom was his stability.

Derek's grandfather, William Pearce, had been virtually penniless when he emigrated to South Africa from Britain in the nineteenth century. Saving his money, he invested in land on which he planted sugarcane. Over the years his holdings grew, and his plantation, Ilove Estates, prospered. He became very wealthy.

Derek, who was brought up in his grandfather's house, very early showed aptitude both as a student and an athlete. In 1917, when he was only four, his parents enrolled him in a local school. His bent was science. When he finished secondary school, he attended Howard College in Durban to study mechanical engineering. After he earned his degree, he left almost immediately for England, as was customary with young South Africans of privilege. He went to work for a large firm in Manchester and attended classes in the evenings studying electrical engineering. Soon he had earned a second degree. Before he could put his training into practice, World War II broke out, and Derek joined the British Army. His specialty was intelligence work. He was shipped off to the Middle East, where he worked with a group called the Gas Gang, which managed to take over a gasoline refinery in a major coup that deprived the Axis Powers of the refinery's assets. At some point Derek saw combat. He came back home both with scars and medals.

When Nancy met him, she was twenty-seven and still bitter about her failed marriage to Hall. He was forty-six. Nancy's first husband had been charming and handsome, but he had also been immature, cruel, and irresponsible. Derek, in contrast, was everything that Ian had not been: He was kind and conscientious, solid and dependable. It didn't matter to Nancy that he was almost old enough to be her father. That merely added to his allure. After Ian, she appreciated maturity in a mate.

The details of Derek's first marriage are a closely held family secret. All that is known to outsiders is that his first wife was a New Zealander and that she returned to her native country soon after they were divorced, leaving the children in Derek's custody. Whether Derek was still married when he met Nancy is unclear. In any case, soon after he was divorced, he married her, and she followed him to Salisbury, Rhodesia, where he was managing a steel mill. That was 1960. At the time, they had between them five children ranging in age from six to twelve. The oldest was Veryan Neil Graham Haysom, Derek's older son. He was an intense, solemn child, who grew

up to be a lawyer. His brother, Julian Christopher Robert Haysom, who was eight, would be an engineer like his father. Derek's daughter, Fiona Ann Valerie Haysom, was six, the same age as Nancy's younger son, Richard. Richard became an architect and his brother, Howard, who was a year older, became a surgeon. Of the five, only Howard would come to the United States to live.

Derek and Nancy had only one child together, a girl named Elizabeth Roxanne, who was born in 1964. A bubbly, blue-eyed, brown-haired girl, Elizabeth was a delightful child with a quiet, even disposition and a winning smile. More so than most children, Elizabeth seemed from an early age to crave affection. When she was old enough to write, she frequently penned sentimental notes to her parents and shyly slipped them under their bedroom door, reaffirming with regularity her need to be noticed. For the most part, Nancy and Derek were elated to comply. Since she was a decade younger than her half-siblings, Elizabeth was reared virtually as an only child, from the beginning receiving almost the full force of her parents' attention.

For several years the Haysoms led a placid, mainly uneventful life in Rhodesia, which was still a British colony, albeit a restless one. A wave of nationalism was sweeping Africa at that time, and Rhodesia's blacks, who outnumbered whites by some twenty to one, were demanding independence. The British government seemed inclined to go along.

Determined to halt the stampede to black freedom, an obstinate farmer-turned-politician named Ian Smith convinced like-minded whites to revolt from England and beat the blacks to the punch. In 1965 the Smith-led party, the Rhodesian Front, declared its independence, an action that was widely reviled as a blatant attempt to continue suppressing blacks.

Although Derek was working for a government-owned industry, he had little sympathy with Smith's views about white dominance. In direct opposition to government policy, Derek continued to follow his practice of promoting blacks in his mill, occasionally advancing them ahead of whites. It didn't take long for this to come to the attention of Smith, who had since been named prime minister in the new government. Despite several warnings, Derek continued to follow his managerial instincts more than his government's directives. As a result of this stubborn defiance he was placed under house arrest.

Clearly, Derek no longer had a future in Rhodesia. It would be another decade and then some before the country's black nationalists would militarily defeat Smith's government and form a new government under Robert Mugabe. By the time blacks came into power and renamed the country Zimbabwe, Derek and Nancy would be solidly entrenched in eastern Canada, many thousands of miles away.

But in 1965, with a wife and six children to worry about, Derek's main interest became escaping from Smith and his cohorts. He solved the problem very expeditiously: He simply left. One day he was in Rhodesia, the next he was in Switzerland. Very quickly he landed a job as a director with a major chocolate manufacturing firm and moved to Luxembourg, then sent for Nancy and the children.

Derek may never have looked at the Luxembourg job as a career. In any case, he was there only briefly. In less than four years, he took a job with a New York steel manufacturer. Before Nancy and the children could move, he changed jobs again. En route to Calgary on business for the U.S. manufacturer, Derek stopped in Halifax to