

PSYCHIATRIC REPORT

on

Jens SOERING

Date of Birth: 1.8.1966

This report is based on my assessments of the above at HM Remand Centre Ashford on 9 July 1986 and at HM Prison Brixton on 17 July and 23 September and 20 November 1986.

I have interviewed Soering's father and mother on separate occasions. Soering is charged with offences of attempt to defraud alleged to have been committed in Richmond, England in April 1986 and I have seen the prosecution exhibits in relation to those charges. He has also been charged by a Grand Jury in Bedford County, Virginia, USA with one count of capital murder and two charges of murder in March 1985, the victims being Derek Haysom and Nancy Haysom, the parents of his co-defendant Elizabeth Haysom. I have seen the affidavits and exhibits which accompanied the request by the US Department of Justice for Soering's extradition. I have also seen statements of a police officer who interviewed Soering together with police officers from the US in Richmond in July 1986. I have also interviewed Elizabeth Haysom.

Family History

Soering's father, who was born in August 1936, is a Vice Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany currently located in Detroit and has been in the U.S.A. for some eight or nine years. Jens Soering believes that his father has not achieved his full potential perhaps because he is "too honest" in his dealings in the Diplomatic Service. His mother was born in January 1935 and came from a wealthy family but at the age of 17 had run away from home to the U.S.A. She had returned to Europe to work in a Dutch consulate where she met her husband, the couple marrying in 1958. Subsequently Mr Soering senior worked in Africa, Thailand, Cyprus and Germany prior to his current appointment in Detroit. Soering described his father as being a rigid and tense individual who was absorbed in his work, who communicated little with his family and one who was intolerant of misdemeanours or mishaps to the

extent that he showed extreme outbursts of temper though not being physically violent. His father he said was "always right". Soering, whilst asserting that he loves his parents, says that he has always hated what he saw as the authoritarian aspects of his character and his father's acceptance of what Soering sees as the violent aspects of American government policies. Soering told me his mother had been drinking heavily for many years and had been unsuccessfully treated for her alcoholism. Her husband had refused joint marital therapy which had been recommended.

There is one younger brother Kai whom Jens believes to have a preoccupation with violence, enjoying wrestling, getting into fights, reading mercenary magazines and being interested in weapons and the martial arts.

Physical Health

After a normal pregnancy and delivery he reached the appropriate developmental milestones of infancy. At the age of 12 or 18 months Soering developed an organic brain condition which was initially considered to be possibly a brain tumour and was accompanied by a degree of hydrocephalus. He was taken from Cyprus to West Germany where he had a drainage tube inserted between the third and fourth ventricles which successfully relieved the increased intracranial pressure. There appeared to be some doubt as to the origins of the condition and he periodically saw specialists until five or six years ago. At some point between the ages of eight and eleven he received a series of hormone injections for undescended testicles which brought about the desired result. Otherwise his physical health has been sound and there has been no history of fits or fainting, or head injury or losses of consciousness.

Personal History

Soering was born in 1966 in Thailand where the family lived for a year before moving to Cyprus for some five years. He and his family moved then to Germany where he remained until the age of eleven when his father was posted to Detroit, U.S.A. Soering remembers his time in Cyprus as an unhappy one being unable to speak Greek, Turkish or English as at that age he was only speaking German. Similarly in Bonn, Germany he felt himself to

be a stranger as his other schoolfriends had established friendships. In early adolescence in America he says he only had three friends and initially found it very difficult to socialise as he was teased by other children who would call him a Nazi because of his Germanic English. He remembers resenting the way he was treated by others and resented the socialite children he met at school. He describes his three friends as being odd-balls and outsiders like himself all of whom rebelled against the expectations their parents had of them. Soering's father does not share his son's view about his difficulties with language or in socialising in Cyprus and Germany but believes in his late teens Jens was a well-integrated young man and although not an "all-American" boy had a broad interest in society's problems.

There is no history of drug abuse or serious abuse of alcohol. Soering told me of "binges" which customarily took place at school and which he detested as the aim seemed to be for all the participants to become extremely intoxicated to the point of vomiting. On one occasion he did drink the equivalent of about one half bottle of vodka and one half bottle of liquor following which he had an amnesia lasting about five hours. He describes himself as having behaved bizarrely during the time he was intoxicated such as attempting to fight a tall school mate. This he says is the only amnesia he has ever experienced.

There is also no history of previous violence other than he says three skirmishes as a youngster. On the contrary he describes himself as being a pacifist and would always prefer to walk away from potential violence. His parents confirm his avoidance of rather than any propensity for violent behaviour.

In early adolescence he enjoyed the interests of those of that age such as science fiction and "Dungeons and Dragons". At around the age of fourteen or fifteen he believes he began to mature and decided that he wanted to be more popular with his peers and began to form more normal relationships. His relationship with his father continued to be a distant one with no shared activities. Soering told me he was not subjected to corporal punishment though he frequently felt humiliated by his father's outbursts of anger at him. There is no known history in childhood of neurotic traits such as enuresis or temper tantrums, running away from home or truanting.

At the age of fifteen he began to associate more with what he describes as a sort of "1960's hippies" crowd who revelled in smoking cannabis and playing popular music. As noted earlier Soering has not abused drugs but he did play the guitar and bass in a band. At school he distinguished himself academically and edited the school newspaper and wrote editorials castigating what he saw as reactionary and authoritarian regimes. He went through a phase of intense pre-occupation with philosophical matters, attempting to make an existential film on "the meaning of life". His first relationship with a girl commenced at about the age of 17. She, Claudia, who was a year older, was the daughter of friends of his parents. They had an intense non-sexual relationship conducted mainly through passionate correspondence. Soering describes himself as one who invests a great deal emotionally in individuals to the extent that he becomes jealous when they show any degree of affection to others. He describes them as "mutual parasitic relationships".

He entered the University of Virginia as a Jefferson scholar in Autumn of 1984 where he initially read psychology and later Chinese language and literature. He continued to be a bright student and had no difficult whatsoever with his studies. He says he studied psychology in order to attempt to find out more about himself and also read books on self-hypnosis and Zen Buddhism. He categorically denies at any time reading any works on the occult.

Relationship with Elizabeth Haysom

Soon after entering college he met Elizabeth Haysom and after a few months of close relationship they commenced to have oral intercourse in the form of prolonged cunnilingus. He says at that time he became impotent on attempted intercourse which he attributes to extreme anxiety. The couple first had full sexual intercourse on April 15, 1985, the day Elizabeth Haysom's parents were buried.

Soering's relationship with Elizabeth progressed by his undergoing what he described as "mental torture" when the couple were separated in the winter vacation 1984/85. Thereafter they continued to spend most of their time in the company of each other and some of this was spent discussing her parents. Elizabeth told Soering that she loved her father but did not love her mother, though she could not allow herself to hate her mother. Jens

describes Mrs Haysom as being bizarre and how she had made Elizabeth pose in the nude when she returned to the United States at age 19 and later passed the photographs around her friends. He also knew of Mrs Haysom's complaints about her father poisoning her. Elizabeth told Soering that her parents were trying to ensure that she as the only common child of the marriage would not make an unsuitable marriage as their other children had done. Soering had met the parents on two occasions at restaurants when they visited Elizabeth in Charlottesville. He had formed the opinion that her father was a "cold monster" and that her mother would humiliate the father in public.

Soering described his relationship with Elizabeth as being an obsessive one in which the pair of them became engrossed with each other to the exclusion of his other friends, leaving him no opportunity to test out the reality of their shared interests and beliefs. He describes his sexual relationship with her as being centred around her orgasms and that she always seemed to have a selfish need to obtain pleasure without any regard to his needs. He attributed this to a story she had told him of having been raped in Switzerland at the age of ten by three Frenchmen. He felt aggrieved with her parents for not agreeing to her receiving psychological counselling following that. She had also told him of a subsequent "forced" lesbian affair she had had. Soering says Elizabeth also told him that her parents had beaten her, had allowed her to be savaged by a dog, had sent her to a 'brutal' boarding school, had refused to allow her to take up a scholarship to Trinity College, Cambridge and in general had made her lead a wretched life. Soering's parents told me that they were aware of the hold Elizabeth had over him and tried unsuccessfully to counsel him not to take her too seriously.

Events Leading up to the Homicides

Soering told me of a letter which Elizabeth had sent to him during the aforementioned vacation in which he is alleged to have said that she hated her cold cruel parents, wished them dead and had suggested "Can't we use voodoo on them?". Soering says that at that time she had been overindulging in alcohol and drugs, had taken an overdose and had been admitted to a hospital in Lynchburg. He concedes that he did not dismiss the idea of "voodoo" but by that he meant that the parents might die by suicide through the power of suggestion.

Soering described the conversations concerning the killing of her parents as a "game" which progressed to discussions on how to kill them e.g. by

setting fire to their house, constructing a radio-controlled car bomb, sabotaging the brakes of their cars, etc. Soering says there may have been six conversations of this nature in the three months leading up to the homicides. There was no discussion on who should carry out the killings. Soering describes these discussions as being pure fantasy on his part but having a purging effect on the feelings of anger towards the Haysoms engendered by Elizabeth's "horror stories" of their treatment of her. He now believes that Elizabeth may have been "psyching him up" to eventually carry out the killings. Soering says that if he had planned seriously to kill the Haysoms he would have done so by shooting as he knew how to get hold of a gun and how to construct a silencer.

The killings took place when they had suddenly gone to Washington DC mainly to get away from others but when they arrived he says things started getting out of control. They discussed the killing of her parents and bought a knife with a three to four inch long blade. Soering believes that Elizabeth talked him into doing the killing and that she equipped him with the knife used in the killings. He explained his feelings that she had weaknesses in her character which made her want to kill her parents and the strengths in her character overcame his weaknesses. He believes he let Elizabeth manipulate him to the end of killing her parents for her.

Soering says he felt completely emotionally dependent on her and that he could not live without her. He thought she might give in to the pressure being exerted on her by her parents and she would leave him. She had said "something has got to be done now" and to him that was an ultimatum of "us or them". He believed he had to prove his love for her or she would stop loving him. Soering insists that when he drove to Lynchburg he was not sure whether or not he would carry out the killings. He did however feel that he wanted to have Elizabeth for himself one way or the other and he approached the meeting with the Haysoms in a mood of recognising the need for confrontation rather than any clearly formed plan to kill them.

On the journey to the Haysom residence he says he consumed two cans of beer to give him Dutch courage and when received into the house was given three drinks consisting of gin and mixers. He is unsure of the quantity of alcohol there would have been in these preparations or the period of time over which he consumed them. He believes it may have been 20 to 30 minutes. Early in the day he had an hotel cooked breakfast at 8.00 am but no lunch and had arrived at the Haysom residence at about 8.00 pm. He thus had

nothing to eat for 12 hours.

He says he was greeted by the Haysoms in a "neutral" way and soon the topic came up of him and Elizabeth. He says Mr and Mrs Haysom took alternative stances on how the couple should be separated. She favoured a soft approach saying he could still be friends with her but Mr Haysom took a harder approach saying he would never be able to see her again. The couple however told him that he was "not their kind of people" and threatened that if the relationship carried on they would take Elizabeth out of university and take steps to ensure that he was dismissed too.

This conversation took place at a dinner table and when Soering got up from his chair Mr Haysom pushed him saying "Sit down young man". Soering said he was not stable on his feet and his shoulders and then the back of his head hit the wall. The next thing he knows is that he attacked Mr Haysom from the rear stabbing and cutting the left side of his neck. He says he froze at the sight of blood but the victim said nothing and slumped on the chair. He apparently was not dead at this point as he was later shouting and screaming. Soering says he next remembers Mrs Haysom coming at him with her arm outstretched holding a knife and he wrestled to take the knife off her. At this point Mr Haysom was hitting him over the head with his hand and knocked his glasses off (Soering is very shortsighted in both eyes). He was shouting "Are you crazy" and the three were slipping about in the blood from Mr Haysom's wounds. At some point in the proceedings Soering cut his hand.

He remembers next getting behind Mrs Haysom and cutting her neck in a similar way to her husband. She then walked off towards the kitchen where he says she was lying on the floor. Soering says he does not have a clear memory for all these proceedings partly because he had lost his glasses, partly because of the alcohol he had been drinking and partly because he was extremely scared.

Subsequently he went outside, took his bloodstained clothes off and put them in a "dumpster". He realised he would have to return to the house and says that when he went in he was still afraid but does recall seeing Mr Haysom lying on the floor and his wife at right angles to him. He did not look to see whether either was dead. He was wearing white socks having removed his shoes. He bandaged his hand and wiped up some shoe footprints. He denies seeing anything unusual such as voodoo symbols.

Events Following the Homicides

Soering says he remembers driving back to Washington and was upset when he ran over and hit a dog on the road which he believes may have died and being upset at this. He also recalls listening to a popular song on the car radio by a group called Talking Heads entitled "Psycho Killer".

He met Elizabeth in a downtown car park in Washington DC at 1.00 am and she helped by getting him a coat into the hotel. He does not recall her asking what had happened but he assumed that she knew her parents were now dead. He then told her something of what had happened but not the whole "messiness" of it. The following day the couple returned to university and three days later Elizabeth was told her parents were dead.

Soering said he was not questioned by the police until the end of September after which he took off with Elizabeth to Europe and Asia. They decided to make their money by frauds in England with the aim of saving up enough money to set up a business in Europe as Elizabeth was interested in textiles and he in a mail order business for electronic gadgets. He told me at no time did they form any definite marriage plans. They referred to the killing as "our little nasty" but very rarely mentioned the subject at all. Soering says he frequently however did become depressed at the thought of having left his family and career and in that context he may also have felt bad and suicidal at the thought of the killing. He said that at the funeral he felt some remorse at the thought of the suffering of the relatives and continues to feel the same together with thoughts about how his own family have suffered. This has led to him contemplating suicide.

There has been a profound change in Soering's mental state and attitude towards the offences during the time he has been in custody following his realisation that he could not now believe much of what Elizabeth had told him about herself, her life experiences and about her parents. He now thinks that Elizabeth may have led him to believe that her parents had made her live a wretched life in order that he would feel sorry for her. He is now unsure as to the facts behind what she told him about her parents' treatment of her. He believes there may have been a "kernel of truth" in some of these but others he now recognises, particularly the more dramatic ones, as being at best exaggerated and much quite untrue.

The realisation of how he had been "conned" by Elizabeth into developing feelings of intense anger towards her parents and his consequent actions in killing them has led to his developing remorse for all that has happened, a knowledge that he has in addition ruined his own life and to suicidal ideation.

Opinion

Jens Soering is clearly of above average intelligence. His cognitive abilities are intact and there are no indications of organic brain disease. It has not been possible to date to conduct refined investigations to exclude brain pathology. He does not appear to have had in the past or to have at present any hallucinations, ideas of reference, thought disorder or other symptoms of a process psychotic illness such as schizophrenia. Whilst he is currently consumed by remorse for his actions there is no history before the homicides of mood swings or altered affect suggestive of depressive illness or manic-depressive illness.

There do however appear to be certain deficiencies in his character which could broadly be described as immaturity and gullibility which became evident during his intense relationship with Elizabeth Haysom. He appears to have become emotionally dependent on her to pathological degree and to such an extent that his normal relationships with others seriously deteriorated. This in turn deprived him of the opportunity to test out in reality the various emotions and beliefs he had acquired as a result of their relationship. I believe that at the time of the killings he may well have experienced these emotions and harboured these beliefs to an abnormal if not pathological degree.

It is also important to consider the effect Elizabeth Haysom's mental abnormality may have had on him. It is by no means rare for the close associate of a psychotic person to share his or her delusions - the condition is known as a folie a deux. Equally cases have been reported of infectious hysteria where there is a contagious spread of false beliefs in a group of people. It is possible that Jens Soering, by reason of the dependent and immature traits in his personality believed to be true pathological lies told to him by Elizabeth Haysom and felt compelled to and justified in acting upon them. It is certainly significant that he now believes he has "come to his senses" and recognises the falsity of their relationship and that much of what she told him was unlikely to be true.

I therefore believe that at the time of the homicides Jens Soering was suffering from an abnormality of mind in which the predominant feature was an impaired appreciation of reality in this circumscribed but crucial area. It is my opinion that at that time he was suffering from such an abnormality of mind (arising from disease of the mind) as to substantially impair his mental responsibility for his acts. Were he to be tried for the homicides in England I would be prepared to give evidence that he suffered from diminished responsibility in terms of section 2 of the Homicide Act 1957 and that he should therefore be liable to conviction for manslaughter rather than murder.

On all occasions when I interviewed him I found Jens Soering to be fit to plead and not under disability in relation to trial.



John R Hamilton MD FRCPsych DPM
Medical Director and
Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist,
Broadmoor Hospital
Honorary Senior Lecturer in
Forensic Psychiatry,
Institute of Psychiatry,
University of London

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