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Soering letters: a telling chapter in a chilling tale

By Carlos Santos
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BEDFORD — Theirs was an irrational love, adolescent and obsessive, but it was Jens Soering, a brilliant University of Virginia student who wanted to write the great American novel, who police say took his love for Elizabeth Haysom to a murderous climax.

The story of the murders has already come out through police statements and court hearings.

Ms. Haysom has said she encouraged Soering to kill her parents, who disapproved of their relationship and planned to stop it.

But court documents, including love letters, diary entries and transcripts of police interrogations, detail the sometimes chilling thoughts of Soering before and after the killings he is charged with committing and the eventual souring of the love Ms. Haysom once said was "beyond reason."

The court documents also show an ordinary, thoughtful side to the American-educated West German who met and courted Ms. Haysom, whom he called Liz, while they were students at U.Va. in 1984.

The documents show a brooding boy who was full of self-doubt, who struggled against parental and school pressure and who searched painfully through art and literature for the

meaning of life.

The documents show Ms. Haysom as a woman with a lively imagination, who lied often to police and others and who said she led her own bizarre life, which included lesbian encounters, dressing as a man and visiting homosexual bars and using drugs, including heroin.

Ms. Haysom, who was educated in boarding schools across Europe, pleaded guilty on Monday in Bedford County Circuit Court to being an accessory before the fact of the murder of her parents, Derek and Nancy Haysom. They were stabbed to death in March 1985 in the Bedford County home they called Loose Chippings.

Soering, who is now 21 and being held in a London prison, is fighting extradition to the United States. He faces a capital murder charge in the death of the Haysoms.

Soering and Ms. Haysom, 23, were Echols Scholars, a distinction reserved for the brightest students at U.Va. In addition, Soering was a Jefferson Scholar, a higher honor that carried with it a full four-year scholarship.

But it's apparent from his love letters to Ms. Haysom that Soering thought himself mediocre despite his high academic standing at Lovett, a private high school in Georgia.

"I was ranked fifth in a mediocre
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