

# Investigators search for motive in killings

By MICHAEL FUCHS  
Staff Writer

**BEDFORD** — Before Wednesday, Sheriff Carl Wells never had much reason to talk with law enforcement officers in Canada.

That began changing three days ago, when a former Nova Scotia businessman and his wife were found brutally stabbed to death at their Boonsboro home.

Wells said a special investigative team still has no motive in the slayings of Derek Haysom, the former head of Nova Scotia's largest steel mill, and his wife, Nancy, a Lynchburg native born into an aristocratic family that traveled through the world.

With no suspects in the double murder, investigators hope finding a motive will lead to an arrest. The Haysoms lived in Nova Scotia for about 15 years before moving to Lynchburg about two years ago; that has turned Wells and investigators toward Canada for some information. That, in turn, has become one of the unusual difficulties in probing a puzzling double killing.

"Until Thursday morning, I knew no law officers in Canada," Wells said Friday while discussing the investigation.

"We have not been able to develop suspects, nor have we been able to develop a motive. We're still running leads, talking to people in the area who knew the family.

"We've been looking at everything we can," the sheriff said. "They've spent more years there (Nova Scotia) than here. If it's something that's a revenge killing, it's there. We're not leaning either way."

The FBI was called in to gather leads in Canada, Wells said. "I had been using their sources. I'm developing my own sources now."

The sheriff said the distance between Bedford County and Canada has proved a key initial problem in the investigation, prolonging the usual information gathering process.

If investigators discover evidence leading to a motive in Canada, some could be dispatched north.

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## Mrs. Haysom felt city was home

By PAT RICE  
Staff Writer

When Nancy Astor Benedict Haysom returned to Lynchburg two years ago, it was as though she had never left.

She quickly resumed old friendships and even joined a Wednesday painting class at the Lynchburg Art Club. In June, her still life "Peter's Carrots," won an honorable mention in the Perspective One show, sponsored by Friends of Jones Memorial Library.

Although she and her husband, Derek, had lived on three continents and were described by a relative as "truly sophisticated," they enjoyed the simple pleasures of life, sharing an avid interest in horticulture.

Mrs. Haysom had a thing for rock walls around her garden and had completed one at their rural Lynchburg home, promising her six children that this would be the last wall she would build.

It was. The Haysoms were found stabbed to death in their Holcomb Rock Road home Wednesday. The Bedford County sheriff's department says it has no suspects and no motive for the slayings.

A memorial service for the couple will be held at 4 p.m. Sunday at St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

Mrs. Haysom felt she had come home, friends said, when she and her husband settled in Lynchburg where she had lived as a child, taking lessons at Floyd Ward Dancing School, winning the lead in every school play at Garland-Rodes and playing bass with the E.C. Glass High School Orchestra.

She was an accomplished pianist and violinist and was selected for the all-state orchestra in 1943 and 1945.

Mrs. Haysom's Central Virginia heritage stretched back five generations to James Steptoe of "Federal Hill," who was Bedford County

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Court clerk for more than 50 years.

Her great-grandfather, Edward Hutter, was connected with the first Rivermont bridge, considered a major engineering feat, and her grandmother, Hallie Hutter Gibbes, was a first cousin of Lady Astor, who was the former Nancy Witcher Langhorne of Danville and became the first woman to sit as a member of the British House of Commons, where she often was involved in controversy because of her outspoken views.

One relative termed Mrs. Haysom as someone "who said what she thought, but put it so nicely you didn't mind if she was telling you off — she was a charismatic person whom you enjoyed being around. She knew how to make people feel important."

She also was a determined person, who tackled laying stone walls with the same enthusiasm she put into painting.

"If she had been a man, I'm confident she would have been president of General Motors," the relative added.

Nancy Astor Benedict Haysom was a petite, feminine woman, with green eyes, a thatch of red-brown hair, high cheek bones and a soft, genteel voice, which accentuated her Southern heritage.

She and her brothers, Risque and

Louis, were born in Jerome, Ariz., where their father, Platt Carico Benedict, started his career as a geologist and mining engineer.

In Arizona she picked up her uplifelong nickname, Cita, a short for Nancita as she was called by the family's Mexican maid.

When she was 5, her father took a job with an international mining company and began an adventurous career that would take him to every continent except South America. Benedict's wife, the former Nancy Langhorne Gibbes, settled the children in Lynchburg to give them a sense of roots.

Later the family, except for Risque, then studying at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, joined Benedict in Johannesburg, South Africa, where the Benedict's only daughter, then 20, met an Englishman. They were married in England in 1932 at his family estate near Stratford-on-Avon, and Lady Astor attended the wedding. The couple had two children and later divorced.

In 1960 she married W.R. Derek Haysom, a native of Natal, South Africa, and manager of an iron and steel company in Rhodesia, now known as Zimbabwe.

Though Haysom was 19 years older than his wife, friends say they were a perfect match — both articulate, keen-minded, outgoing people who shared an interest in gardening, sailing and game playing.



Nancy Haysom  
Returned two years ago

"He was the epitome of the English gentleman and she was a Southern belle. He adored her — they were both gentle, kind, warm people," said the relative.

The relative added that Haysom moved his family to Luxembourg in 1965, soon after Ian Smith took control of the country, because he anticipated the racial trouble that was to come.

The family later settled in Nova Scotia, where Haysom still had extensive business connections.

One relative said that was what is so ironic about their deaths.

"They have lived in places where there was real danger. If something had happened to them in Rhodesia, we could understand it, but this is senseless."

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Wells said. But the sheriff stressed Friday that he doesn't know whether the killers knew the Haysoms, or whether they were from Canada or Lynchburg or anywhere else. He also said the investigation hasn't determined whether there's more than one assailant.

Investigators have discounted robbery as a possible motive because some valuable property was left behind.

The couple lived in South Africa and Zimbabwe, formerly known as Rhodesia, before moving to Canada, but investigators won't concentrate on retrieving much background from Africa. "They were there so long ago," Wells said.

Wells revealed Friday that FBI agents have also been summoned to piece together a personality profile of the killers. The portrait, based on the type of people usually found responsible for brutal stabbings, could help investigators find a suspect.

Wells also identified the murder weapon as a knife, which still has not been recovered. Wells said he wouldn't disclose the estimated length of the blade, which was determined from the stab wounds.

The sheriff also said investigators have turned up "quite a bit" of physical evidence from the Haysoms' residence. He declined to reveal any specific finds, which have been sent to state labs for analysis.