

Ex-UVa Student Soering Returned For Murder Trial

ROANOKE (AP) — A West German diplomat's son was flown from London to Virginia on Friday to go on trial for the 1985 stabbing deaths of his girlfriend's parents, a prominent Bedford County couple.

Jens Soering, who bragged shortly after he was caught in London that the "yokels" back in Bedford County would never bring him to trial, arrived at Roanoke Regional Airport on a commercial airliner near dusk Friday.

Soering was handcuffed and escorted into a U.S. marshal's vehicle waiting on the tarmac, where access was denied to the score of photographers and reporters awaiting the suspect.

The return of the 23-year-old former University of Virginia student ended an extradition fight that lasted three years and went as high as the European Court of Human Rights.

In a landmark ruling July 7, the court ruled that extraditing Soering would violate his human rights because he faced the death penalty.

Bedford County's prosecutor eventually agreed to seek first-degree murder charges against Soering and in August, Great Britain agreed to send him back to the United States. Last month, Soering decided not to ask the British House of Lords to block his extradition.

Elizabeth Haysom, now 24, did not resist extradition from Britain and was sentenced in October 1987 to 90 years in prison after admitting being an accessory to the murders while she and Soering were second-year honor students at the University of Virginia.

Miss Haysom told authorities she and Soering had plotted the murders to end her parents' meddling in her life.

Soering, who is about 30 pounds heavier than when he lived in Charlottesville, was "a model prisoner for transport," said Wayne Beamon, the U.S. marshal for

western Virginia. "He was very cooperative. He appeared to be at ease."

Carl Wells, the sheriff of Bedford County, Beamon and other security personnel arrived in London on Tuesday to complete the extradition paperwork and bring back Soering.

Soering was driven 30 miles to the Bedford County jail, where he arrived at approximately 6:30 p.m., and a preliminary hearing was set for Tuesday. Commonwealth's Attorney James Updike said, "It's another step in this long process; we'll now prepare for trial."

Defense lawyer Ray Ferris of Roanoke declined to say Friday whether Soering would plead guilty or innocent. But he said a previous statement by the lead attorney, Richard Neaton of Detroit, that they planned to vigorously defend Soering still held.

Soering's father, Klaus Soering, had been stationed in Detroit before he was recently transferred to Mauritania, West Africa.

Soering has spent three years in south London's Brixton Prison. He was arrested in April 1986 on a check fraud charge after fleeing to Europe with Elizabeth Haysom.

Prosecutors allege that Soering killed Derek Haysom, 72, and Nancy Haysom, 55, in March 1985. The couple were found stabbed and hacked to death in their mansion near Lynchburg. Haysom, a South African native, had been a successful steel executive in Rhodesia, Luxembourg and Nova Scotia before retiring in his wife's hometown.

Soon after he was imprisoned, Soering predicted in a letter to Miss Haysom that diplomatic steps would block his extradition and that he would be sent to his native country to serve a short sentence.

"Those yokels don't know what's coming down," said Soering.

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