

Soering Case Investigator Testifies

BEDFORD (AP) — A Bedford County sheriff's investigator testified Thursday that Jens Soering never asked investigators to stop interrogating him so he could get an attorney and was not threatened by British detectives.

Soering's defense attorneys have said their client's statements to police in 1986 were not voluntary and should not be considered during his trial in June.

Authorities have said that Soering, a former student at the University of Virginia, confessed to the 1985 stabbing deaths of Derek and Nancy Haysom during six interviews over a four-day period in June 1986, while he was being held in a prison outside London.

Investigator R.W. Gardner — who together with two London police detectives took Soering's statements four years ago — testified for nearly four hours Thursday during a hearing on a defense motion to throw out the alleged confession.

Defense attorneys Rick Neaton and William Cleaveland have said Soering asked several times during the 1986 questioning to have an American attorney but was not given one — and the questioning was continued.

Gardner, though, testified that Soering did not ask to have an attorney. Rather, Gardner said, Soering said he would answer some questions about the case and that he would not answer other questions without an attorney.

Circuit Judge William Sweeney said he will listen to parts of the five hours of taped interviews with Soering to draw his own conclusions.

Soering's statements have not been formally introduced as evidence.

The defense also says British investigators made threats to Soering of physical harm to his girlfriend, Elizabeth Haysom, if he did not cooperate with their questioning.

Gardner testified that neither he nor the British investigators threatened Soering. In fact, Soering was offered multiple trips to the restroom and offers of food and tea, Gardner said.

The defense motion, though, alleges that the threats were made to Soering by the British investigators at his cell and not during the taped interviews.

London police detectives Kenneth Beever and Terry Wright, who flew to Roanoke earlier this week, were expected to testify Friday.

Beever and Wright got involved with the Boonsboro killing when Soering and Ms. Haysom were arrested in London.

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