

# Homicide: The Game

Presents

# Painseeker

## **"The Secret Smile and Everlasting Embrace"** by Lance Wagner

I stated numerous times that I developed this site as a memorial for Raychel. I wanted to give her life and work the honor and attention that she deserved but did not receive. However, I have received an added benefit which I did not originally anticipate. I have learned more about Raychel. Things which I should have known, and maybe I already did but didn't want to admit to myself.

After her murder, my refusal to discuss Raychel also denied me the opportunity to delve deeper into our relationship and reflect upon it. But the input received through this site has given me the opportunity to view our relationship from several perspectives. Not only from the perspective of someone who knew her, but from those of you who have communicated with me through the Questions and Answers form on the site.

Julie from Illinois thought that Kyle provided an escape from my "clinging." Marie from Houston believed that I am blaming Kyle too much for Raychel's death. While I disagree with their conclusions, I cannot deny their opinions. That is where I have learned about Raychel, not from expounding my personal beliefs, but from others reacting to them. The reactions have caused me to reflect further upon my beliefs, question them, and revise them. For that alone, I thank you for visiting.

However, today I will tell you one thing about Raychel that not even her closest friends knew. She kept a secret that only I knew. Every time she smiled, I liked to believe she was thinking about the secret. That secret is already clearly printed here as well as on every page of this site. Because I have not drawn attention to it as such, you may have had a different opinion of the material presented before this knowledge. And if you have visited the site a few times, you have already taken this information for granted. But no one other than Raychel and I knew about it until this site was started.

The secret? That Raychel and I were married.

See, I told you. You already took it for granted. But, please, think deeper about the fact. Neither Raychel or I told anyone about our marriage until the beginning of this memorial. And here is a follow-up on that point: We never divorced, either.

I believe that many of your misconceptions about me (as evidenced in the Questions and Answers section) have been mislaid because of my omission of this facet. The fault is mine. Following Raychel's murder, I made the fact public to my friends, so I did not make a point of stating the secret nature of our marriage here. By throwing open the doors on our relationship without that knowledge, you may not have grasped the big picture accurately. For that, I apologize.

So perhaps it is best that I use the balance of this article as an opportunity to further discuss my relationship with Raychel Wagner. I will use the next article to describe our relationship following Kyle McAllister's insertion into our marriage, and how our marriage changed but did not dissolve.

I have already detailed the beginning of my relationship with Raychel during August of 1997 in "At First Sight." Further details at this point are unnecessary and would only add to the word count of this article. Sufficient to say that if you have not read that article, please do.

If you have already read "At First Sight", please know this: Despite my earlier statement that I would not re-visit the article, I have. I'm glad that I did, because I learned something about Raychel that I hadn't given myself the opportunity to consider. I discovered the reason Raychel loved me.

What I was able to provide her was something she couldn't receive anywhere else: An Everlasting Embrace. Whenever Raychel needed someone to be with her, to love her, I was there. My love re-charged her emotionally and spiritually. Regardless of the interference in our marriage from so many other sources, I was able to provide the stability she needed to have in order for her to fight her demons and express herself in her poetry. Even that first night, she knew that I was capable of it.

I'm ashamed to say that I cried the night I wrote the conclusion to "At First Sight." In retrospect, that was selfish and short-sighted. But when I re-read the article and allowed the possibility of thinking about our relationship from another perspective, I couldn't help but see the truth right in front of me. I cried again that night. But I am relieved to say that they were tears of joy. She trusted me to be her Everlasting Embrace. That was my role in her life. I should have known it then.

Living with Raychel was an experience unto itself. Raychel was like ether, always around but never about. If I sought her out, she was already out. In time, I learned that it was best to just wait for her. In due time, she would appear. Sometimes I would find that she had been living with Laura for a few days, just for a change of scenery. Perhaps it seems as if she was flighty, or I was too needy and prying. Choose your own opinion. What did it matter? We were in love.

Then there was the poetry in the apartment. Pages of it, just laying around everywhere. Actually, the best of the poetry was just laying around (preferably somewhere in her usual flight pattern from bed to bathroom to kitchen to door). Many of her poems died less honorable deaths. Half-doodled on notes could be found serving as coasters for three-day old drinks or folded over and over to provide support for the coffee table. She would say that she was punishing those poems for not being better, "If it wasn't so bad, it wouldn't have to sit around here, would it? It'd go out and earn a living."

Which would have been nice, since the two of us were dirt poor. Raychel would do odd jobs while I could scrounge for temporary work. I can type like fire burns, but I freely admit that I do not play well with others, so it was the best that I could do. But while we were poor, we were not without means. Means meaning Laura, who would help us to keep us out of debt and in town, else The Bleeders would lose two of their three major contributors.

Between August of 1997 and February of 1998 I believed that we learned each other's passions and quirks in enough entirety to propose marriage. Raychel consented, provided that we keep the marriage secret. While I was hesitant, I grew to enjoy the idea that our marriage could become our little secret. So on February 14, 1998 (I know,

how cute), we were married by a Justice of the Peace. We had simple gold rings for the ceremony, but we never wore them outside the apartment. I still have them.

I know what you're thinking. They didn't wear their rings. They kept their marriage secret from everyone. She lived wherever she wanted and whenever she wanted. How is that a marriage? My answer is very simple: It wasn't your marriage. Maybe Raychel did not respect the fidelity aspect of marriage – I accept that and understand – but she did love me exclusively. I knew what I was getting into, whether I admitted it to myself or not. She also knew what she was getting, and took me for better and for worse. That's what we had, which is all anyone ever has at best.

The marriage didn't change the nature of our relationship until March 6, 1999. If you recall from Laura's article, that was the date that Kyle McAllister kidnapped Raychel from a meeting of The Bleeders and kept her with him for three months. If you have not yet read it, please read Laura's article, "Kyle Crystallized" for further details. I will not comment on the events of that evening. Besides, Laura has stated the facts plainly enough.

The Raychel who returned with McAllister three months later was different from the one who was kidnaped. She was changed down to her name. She was no longer answering to Raychel Vanderhoff. Or even Raychel Wagner for that matter. Neither were flashy enough for her new chosen profession. The new name said it all about her new incarnation.

Raychel Taurus was on the rise.