

Homicide: The Game

Presents

Painseeker

“Trust?”

by David Vanderhoff

If you've been reading this site for any length of time, I have one question for you: Who do you trust? If you feel like you don't have enough information to make a real decision, then you understand my dilemma. The difference between you and me, however, is that while you may read this web site for a voyeuristic pleasure, I am reading to learn why my sister was murdered and to find out what type of friends and acquaintances she had. In doing so, I find myself stuck on the front lines of a battle of opinions, half-truths, and facts with little or no supportive evidence to back them up. To this point, I am left with one conclusion.

I don't trust a single one of them. At least not yet. I have good reason to hold fast to this conclusion. If you see it from my perspective, I expect you will understand.

In the middle of June 2000 I received a phone call from Raychel. That sentence understates the impact it had on me. I hadn't spoken to her in years but that was not my choice.

On July 6, 1990, Raychel walked off the family farm and never returned, wrote, or (to my knowledge) spoke with our parents again. Since Raychel was over 18, there was no legal reason for them to pursue her. I doubt they would have searched for her anyway. During this time I was away at law school, so we never had the opportunity to talk about her decision. But I understood what she had been through. I expected that Raychel would turn up on my doorstep and ask to stay with me. I would have done it instantly. A few days went by and I became worried for her safety on her trip. Days went to weeks without so much as a phone call. I called the local police to see if anyone had seen someone matching her description. While I did receive some calls, my sister was not one of the people brought in. After two months went by, I understood what

had transpired between the two of us. Raychel had cut me out of her life in the same manner as our parents. No words. No good-bye. In retrospect, I believe I understood why. I had set the trend. I had left her alone in the house with our parents while I went on to pursue my own goals. She was just following my pattern.

So now maybe you understand how I felt when I heard my baby sister on the other end of the phone.

“Is it true? Are they both dead?,” she asked.

It was. Our mother had died less than a year after Raychel left the farm. Our father, however, had died the previous week. I asked her how she knew, if she had tried to contact them recently, but she wouldn't tell me. That set the pace for the rest of our conversation. It was just a series of painful memories briefly revisited, then dropped for another one, all the while searching for that one memory that would make us both laugh. It wasn't there. At least not that first time. But we were able to catch up on each other's lives, at least in a cursory manner. After a few hours we hung up, agreeing to call each other again to talk more.

In the brief time we had together again, I felt that I was beginning to know my sister as who she had become and not as the person I remembered. That feeling was too short lived. I received the call from Laura Douglass on August 18 that Raychel had been brutally murdered at Kyle McAllister's apartment. There weren't many details and the police were investigating.

I had regained my sister for a little over two months and this was how it ended up. A funeral. Laura asked to help me with Raychel's arrangements. It would have been a much more difficult experience to go through without her assistance. In the future, perhaps I will tell you more about the wake and funeral. Actually, I think it is necessary. However, it is not necessary at this time.

In February of this year I received a call from Lance Wagner, who asked me to contribute articles and photographs of Raychel for his “living memorial” to Raychel. When he gave me the URL, I was shocked. No one had told me that Raychel had been married! Yet there it was on every page: “A Living Memorial to My Wife by Lance Wagner.” Even more shocking was the fact that he did not identify himself as Raychel’s husband when we spoke on the phone. My internal radar went off immediately. Something very wrong was going on with my sister’s memory. I decided to keep Lance just close enough to monitor his work, but far enough to keep from participating in what may have been a fraudulent memorial. Had I contributed early in the development of the site, I would have given Lance’s story credibility. While I have no hard evidence to prove that Lance and Raychel were never married, I have yet to receive any substantial proof from Lance about his claim.

Within a week after my call from Lance Wagner, I received a call from Laura Douglass. She had also been asked to contribute to the site. She stated her doubts about the legitimacy of the site (and Lance’s marriage claim). I told her I agreed with her. I told her of my plan to keep Lance at arm’s length. She told me that she wanted to involve one more person, but needed to gain Lance’s trust to involve her friend, Ken Kincaid. Again, my radar went up. Fighting subterfuge with subterfuge did not appeal to me. Luckily, I was not required to actively participate in this effort. I did, however, learn (from Laura herself) that I was unable to trust Laura Douglass. In addition, the less than subtle allegations about her drug use seem to explain her behavior at times.

I would like to also take this opportunity to thank Ken Kincaid for his efforts in opening the participation of the site to everyone who knew Raychel. I believe that your efforts will lead to this site becoming a true open memorial to Raychel. However, that being said, I have three things to say about you. 1) I do not know you. 2) I do not trust you. 3) I do not like you. If that last line stings, re-read your articles, remember why you are on this site, and apologize for your insensitive (and perhaps inaccurate) comments.

I have had little interaction with Sharon Wolfe, but I believe that Lance Wagner has asked the best question that deserves to be answered: If your protection as a

bodyguard is (as you yourself described) 24x7, then how did Raychel die? Until I receive a satisfactory answer to that question, I can't trust you, either.

To anyone who reads this article: If you don't trust me, I understand. Moreover, I respect you.

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