



Bad news brought family and friends to the Newsom home in Greensboro's Hamilton Forest, right. Susie didn't join her family after the murders were discovered because 'my dog has run off. I've got to find him.' Snapshots show Susie with Maizie, Fritz with Showie.



Dave Nicholson/News & Record

'Well, there's nothing left, is there?' Susie said

(From A1)

and friends were coming and going, and the phone was constantly busy.

"Doesn't somebody need to call Tom?" somebody asked, mentioning Susie's former husband in Albuquerque, N.M.

"The son of a bitch can learn it from his lawyers," Susie said.

Somebody already had called Tom Lynch — his lawyer for his child custody case in Reidsville, Bill Horsley. While Susie was at her parents' house, Tom called there seeking more information. He talked to Rob. Susie didn't speak to him.

Tom's mother Delores, who'd helped pay some of his legal expenses, and his sister Janie had been murdered the year before at their home near Louisville, Ky. Tom was getting ready to come to North Carolina for a hearing in which he hoped to get longer visits with his children. Bob Newsom was planning to testify in his behalf.

It was all too much coincidence for Tom.

He called Lt. Dan Davidson of the Kentucky State Police. Davidson was the officer in charge of the still-unsolved Lynch murder case. Tom believed the murders of his mother and sister had to be linked to the murders of the Newsoms.

Davidson, who'd been waiting months for just such a bit of information, now had a promising lead in his case.

Davidson called Forsyth County authorities, got the name of the detective in charge of the Newsom case and called Tom back. Tom called Winston-Salem for Detective Allen Gentry but couldn't reach him. He left his name and number.

It would take a day for Gentry to get the message and return the call.

When the Newsoms' bodies were found, Gentry worked all night at the scene, taking down details. The operator of the SBI's local mobile crime lab was sick, and a crew had to be sent from Raleigh. It didn't arrive until about 4:30 a.m. Later in the morning, Dr. L.W. Stringer, the Forsyth County medical examiner, came to see the bodies. District Attorney Don Tisdale came about 8 a.m.

This was no run-of-the-mill murder. Both Gentry and Tisdale were keenly aware of that. These victims were very prominent people. The news media would be clamoring for information. Pressure would be heavy for a quick solution and conviction.

Early that morning, a detective had gone to the Holiday Inn and talked with Bob Newsom's sister, Frances Miller, and two of her children, Nancy Dunn and David Miller, who had come from Raleigh after being called by Rob. They supplied family background.

Sheriff's deputies set out to canvass the neighborhood to see if anybody had seen or heard anything unusual. Others went to talk to construction people who'd been working at Nana's house.

The Newsoms' bodies were removed from the house shortly before noon, and Gentry returned to his office where he got a call from Rockingham County Sheriff Bobby Vernon. Vernon said he'd had a call about

the Newsom murders from Sandy Sands, the president of the Rockingham County Bar Association.

Early that morning, Sands got a call from Annie Hill Klenner, Florence's sister and Susie's aunt, asking him if he could find out if Susie's parents had been murdered. Susie had called her in the night, Annie Hill said, saying somebody had called and told her about the murders. Susie didn't know if it was true.

Sands checked with Sheriff Vernon, got the details and went to Annie Hill's house to tell her. Sands was Susie's lawyer. Gentry wanted to talk with him.

That afternoon, Gentry and SBI agent Walt House went to Reidsville and spent an hour and a half with Sands. Later, they went by the courthouse in Wentworth and picked up copies of all the court papers filed by Susie and Tom in divorce and custody fights. They found that Bob Newsom had been subpoenaed in the hearing scheduled that week.

On the way back to Winston-Salem, the detectives made a quick stop by Susie's apartment. Only a ferociously barking dog answered their knock, so Gentry left his card in the door.

'You could boil it down to greed'

As Gentry was leaving his card, Susie was having dinner at Annette Hunt's house. Fritz and the boys were there, and so was Fritz's mother, Annie Hill.

Susie didn't mention her parents. She talked about her grandmother, about what a remarkable woman Nana was. A couple of years earlier, when Susie was studying anthropology at Wake Forest, she had a night class that prompted her to spend one night a week at Nana's house. Nana proofread her papers for her.

"Greed," Susie said. "Nana always said that was the ultimate sin. You could boil it all down to one word: greed."

Nana, Susie went on, was a wonderful woman. It was hard to think of her gone.

"She was such a sweet person," Fritz added.

Fritz didn't say much that night. At the table, he was seated so that he could see out the window to the Newsom house across the street.

"It's hard to have to look over there," he said.

After dinner, Fritz went outside and talked with Annette's 17-year-old son, Joey. Fritz saw Rob come out of the Newsom house and went over to offer his condolences.

Fritz had to take his mother back to Reidsville. Joey took Susie and the boys home. Before Joey left, Fritz slipped him a loaded pistol and told him to be very watchful.

On Tuesday morning, Gentry called Rob and made an appointment to interview him at home at 3 p.m. He also called Susie and asked for an appointment, but she said she had prior engagements. Gentry thought it odd that she put other matters above talking to the detectives who were trying to solve her parents' murders. He made the appointment for 10 a.m. Wednesday instead.

At 10:43 Tuesday, Gentry returned Tom Lynch's call. Tom told him about the murders of his mother and sister. Gentry wouldn't forget the date of those murders, July 22. That was his birthday. Tom said he believed the two sets of murders were connected and suggested what the link might be: Fritz Klenner, Susie's cousin.

Fritz was a weird guy, Tom said, and his former wife had a strange relationship with him. That was the first time Gentry heard Fritz's name.

'I don't like hearses'

That morning, Rob and Susie drove separately to Winston-Salem to make funeral arrangements. They met at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, the family church, the church where Susie was married. Susie spent a lot of time with the Rev. Dudley Colhoun, the rector. She was concerned about the order of service and the music to be played.

Later, Rob went to Nana's house to pick up a suit in which to bury his father. Florence was cremated, but Susie went by the house and got some of her mother's clothes as well.

Back at home, Rob met with Gentry and Walt House of the SBI. They spent hours going over family background, details of his father's work, his grandmother's estate (estimated at about \$1 million), his parents' estates (also about \$1 million), and Susie's and Tom's problems.

"Did anybody in the family have an unusual interest in weapons?" Gentry asked.

"Yes, my cousin, Fritz Klenner," Rob said.

That's when Rob knew for certain that Fritz was the murderer.

While Rob was talking with detectives, Susie was shopping with Nancy Holder. Nancy had been Bob Newsom's secretary at R.J. Reynolds for 17 years. Susie and Rob had grown up calling her Aunt Nancy. Susie had called and asked Nancy to help her shop for clothes for the boys to wear to the funerals.

Nancy tried to steer conversation away from the deaths. She talked about past Christmases and good times they'd had together. Susie talked a lot about John

and Jim, about how much she loved them, how proud she was of them. She spoke very bitterly of Tom, said she had a friend very high in the CIA who'd told her bad things that Tom was up to. That was why she didn't want him to have the boys.

Susie was upset about what the police had done to Nana's house.

"Oh, it was just devastating to walk in there," she said. "Everything's sprayed black, and they've cut holes in the carpet. It was awful."

Susie said she would not ride in the family car to the funerals.

"I just can't," she said. "I just don't like hearses and limousines."

After Nancy bought suits for the boys, she and Susie decided to drive over to the K&W Cafeteria at Forum VI for supper.

On the way, Nancy brought up Bob and Florence.

"You know how fine they were and how much I loved them," she said.

"I know," Susie said.

Nancy said that she'd always felt more like family than friend, and she was glad that Rob and Susie had included her at such a time.

"Thank you," Nancy said. "I do love you both."

Susie started crying, reached over and hugged Nancy.

"Hey," Nancy said. "Cut that out. I don't drive too well as it is. I can't drive at all if you get me crying. I've already cried so many tears over this that I don't think I have any more left."

Fritz had taken John and Jim to Annette Hunt's Tuesday morning and left them for the day. Nancy brought Susie back to Rob's house about 8 that night. Shortly afterward, Annette went back to the apartment with Susie and the boys. She and Susie bathed the boys and walked the dogs.

Soon Fritz came in. He was angry and shouting.

"Why didn't you call me?" he demanded over and over, pacing about.

He didn't want Susie out at night. He didn't want her to be any place he didn't know about. Susie tried to calm him, but he kept storming about. Susie shrugged and gave Annette a what-can-you-do? look as Annette tried to fade into the clutter.

Susie was vague about Saturday night

Detective Gentry and SBI agent Tom Sturgill met Susie at her apartment Wednesday morning. The living room was so cluttered that Susie had to clear places for the detectives to sit in two wicker chairs, the only chairs in the room. She sat on an ottoman. Fritz sat beside her on a small stool.

"This is my cousin," Susie said of Fritz. "He helps us out."

Both detectives noticed that Fritz was wearing a folded knife in a leather case on his belt.

Susie was charming. She showed no grief. Indeed, she was almost bouncy and bubbly.

She said her father had called her on the 17th, but she didn't mention that he told her he planned to testify for Tom in the upcoming custody hearing. She talked about her grandmother. She was upset about all the black fingerprint dust in the house. Would it come off?

Nana had helped her with her legal expenses, she said. Nana often gave money to her grandchildren, including sizable checks every Christmas.

The detectives asked her to go over her activities for the preceding weekend.

On Friday night, she had dinner at Annie Hill's house in Reidsville. Fritz had gone camping in the mountains. She spent much of Saturday with Annette Hunt. She was vague about Saturday night. She took the boys out to eat, then came back to the apartment.

On Sunday afternoon, Fritz called and asked her to meet him at Natural Bridge, Va., for dinner. She took the boys and drove there. They all got back to her apartment about 11:30. When they opened the door, Showie ran off chasing a cat. It took Fritz four hours of searching to find him.

At about midnight, John Chandler called and told Susie about an accident at Nana's. She thought it was a minor auto accident and wasn't concerned.

At about 2, she got a call saying her parents were dead. She didn't believe it. She called Annie Hill, who told her it probably wasn't true, not to worry, that she'd try to find out something about it in the morning.

Fritz went to sleep on the floor, but she stayed up all night working on a school paper. Not until Annie Hill called and told her that her parents and Nana were dead did she really believe it.

Gentry took his jacket off during the interview. He was wearing an unusual pistol, an H&K 9-mm German squeeze cock. He wanted to see if it drew Fritz's attention. Fritz never mentioned it.

Gentry asked Susie what she knew about the Lynch murders, and she became very vocal.

"It was professional," she said. "Nothing was taken."

She went on at length about Tom and his supposed dope dealing and underworld connections. As she talked, she occasionally turned around and patted Fritz on the knee. She said that Tom had inherited a large sum because of his mother's death and she was trying to get her lawyer to get some of it for her sons.

She also told about finding the boys' toy animals with their throats slit and about the mysterious "two down and two to go" telephone call she'd received.

She was scared for herself and her boys, she said, but Fritz was there to protect them.

As the officers got ready to leave, Gentry asked Fritz for his name, address and phone number.

"What kind of work do you do?" Gentry asked.

"I'm a physician, but I'm not licensed in this state right now," Fritz said.

That afternoon, Susie had an appointment for a haircut and permanent. Annette went to the apartment to stay with the boys. Fritz was there, fooling with some camping gear. John and Jim were supposed to be cleaning their room. They squabbled, and Fritz broke it up. Annette got a headache and asked Fritz if he had anything for it.

He opened a kitchen cabinet that was chock-full of pills, mostly vitamins, and got her some Tylenol. She went into the boys' room to lie down for awhile, and Maizie jumped onto the bed with her.

"She just wants to cuddle," Jim said.

The boys and dogs played around her as Annette rested. Fritz loaded the camping gear into his Blazer and left.

Shortly, Annette got up and finished Susie's ironing. She gathered up the clothes and took them to Susie's bedroom. There was no place to put them. The room was a tremendous clutter, the closet so jammed there was no room for another T-shirt. All that she could see was Fritz's stuff.

"I shouldn't be in here," she told herself, retreating with the clothes.

Had the murderer been known?

Thursday was the day of the Newsom funerals. That morning, Gentry and Sturgill reviewed what they'd discovered. They knew that the murders had taken place Saturday night, May 18, probably between 9:30 and midnight. The Newsoms had guests, Ed and Juanita Clark, until 9:30. Ed was Bob's roommate at N.C. State. The Newsoms normally went to bed before midnight, and they were still dressed when their bodies were found. They'd been watching television when the killer surprised them.

Gentry and Sturgill still didn't understand the broken door, or the key that had been found in the lock of the inside door. They didn't understand why Nana's car keys were lying beside her car. Had the murderer been known and let in by the Newsoms? Or had he slipped in and surprised them? The whole back of the house stood open. Sliding floor-to-ceiling windows had been installed, but as yet they had no locks.

Robbery clearly wasn't the purpose of the murders. Family problems seemed to lie behind it. Their suspicions were focusing on Susie and Fritz.

A double funeral for Bob and Florence was held at 10 a.m. at St. Paul's Church. Susie and the boys came with Fritz in the Blazer and parked behind the church. Susie spotted Martha Chandler, John's wife, and asked to leave her purse inside her car. Fritz, Susie and the boys slipped into the church through a back door.

Susie said she wanted to keep the boys away from photographers because she feared that kidnappers were out to get them.

The entire congregation left St. Paul's downtown and went in a procession to Bethabara Moravian Church near Old Town for an 11 a.m. service for Nana.

A graveside service for all three was held at Forsyth Memorial Gardens at noon. Susie, Fritz and the boys did not sit with the family. They stood behind the crowd at the back of the funeral tent.

Several people noted that Susie shed no tears at the services.

Fritz was a good boy

Following the graveside service, a lunch for family and friends was held at Bethabara Church. Susie was first to arrive. The Rev. John Giesler greeted her. Susie said that Fritz had taken the boys and his mother to get fried chicken and wouldn't be attending. As Giesler chatted with Susie, he was surprised that she showed no grief.

Instead she was seething with anger at Forsyth County Sheriff Preston Oldham.

That morning's newspapers carried stories quoting Oldham as saying that high priority would be given to finding if any connection existed between the Lynch and Newsom murder cases.

Similarities were noted. Both were "suspected robberies." Both involved prominent families. Both were in large, secluded houses. All the victims were shot at least twice, each in body and head.

"The gall of him," Susie said. She couldn't stop talking about it. She was burning with resentment.

When others arrived, Susie didn't mingle. She went off into a corner with Jim Taylor, a cousin from Washington whom she hadn't seen in a long time, and stayed with him throughout the lunch.

That night, Gentry and Sturgill met with Nancy Dunn, first cousin to Susie and Rob, daughter of Frances Newsom Miller, Bob's sister. Nancy gave them

(Continued on A9)

BITTER BLOOD

A Genealogy of Murder

Sunday: The Dying Begins — Both murder scenes suggested robbery. Police suspected professionals. Family members suspected one of their own.

Monday: His Father's Son — Fritz Klenner's proud Prussian papa taught him to love guns, hate commies, charm women and expect Armageddon.

Tuesday: Susie Q — Susie Lynch lived a fairy-tale youth: May Queen at 5, high school princess, fraternity sweetheart.

Wednesday: The Gathering Storm — Fritz was ready for the world to fall apart, but not for his father to die.

Today: Victims and Survivors — As the family arranged funerals, the detectives analyzed alibis.

Friday: A Spy Gets Spooked — Ian Perkins dreamed of joining the CIA. He thought he had passed the first test until the police came calling.

Saturday: The Bloody End — A shootout, a chase, an explosion — now nine people were dead.

Sunday: The Unraveling — The family was devastated, the community captivated. One by one, the bizarre details surfaced.