

Love and Greed in the Heartland

The Richmond Hill Murders

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Chapter 1: The Explosion

The Richmond Hill subdivision, an enclave of about 125 homes built in the early 2000s, sits isolated on the south side of Indianapolis. This cluster of middle-class homes has only one entrance off of South Sherman Drive. There is no other way to access the neighborhood. Because of the subdivision's isolation and the closeness of its homes, the residents of Richmond Hill have developed a close bond, a strong sense of camaraderie. Everyone knows everyone else, and they all look out for each other. Several years ago, one of the residents even set up a Richmond Hill Facebook page so that everyone living there could keep up-to-date on what was going on in their neighborhood. The night of November 10, 2012, however, would put this bond, this feeling of fellowship, to the test.

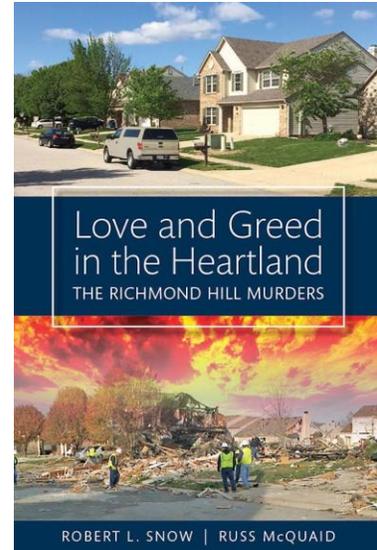
At about 11:10 p.m. on the night of November 10, 2012, an explosion rocked the Richmond Hill subdivision, an explosion so powerful a wildlife video camera 15 miles away captured its sound. Earthquake detection equipment in Martinsville, Indiana, 30 miles away, also registered the shock of the blast. Two weather detection devices meant to measure barometric pressure and infrasound subsonic waves—one in Sheridan, Indiana, 42 miles north, and the other in Milroy, Indiana, 41 miles southeast—both picked up vibrations in the air from the explosion.

Closer to Richmond Hill, people living within a five-mile radius of the neighborhood heard a huge boom and then felt their houses shake. Not knowing what had happened, many of these people raced outside, fearing that their homes had been hit by a car or that an airplane had crashed nearby. Most would not find out what had happened until they watched the morning news.

For the people living inside of Richmond Hill, many of them watching the Notre Dame vs. Boston College football game, the explosion and its effects were much more dramatic. The blast, whose epicenter was a home at 8349 Fieldfare Way, reduced what had once been a two-story, four-bedroom house to just splinters. The rubble that was left then caught fire and burned intensely.

Although the houses directly north and south of 8349 also suffered significant damage from the blast, they still stood, though both quickly caught fire from the explosion and appeared ready to collapse at any second. A report published the next day by the Indianapolis Department of Code Enforcement said that 80 homes in Richmond Hill had been physically affected by the blast, 31 of them suffering significant structural damage.

Because of the force of the explosion, many of the residents of Richmond Hill found themselves knocked off their feet, while others were flung from beds or chairs. At first stunned by the power of the blast, the bewildered residents found their doors blown in and windows blown out. Some houses had collapsed walls and missing roofs, others had cracked plasterboard, and a few had kitchen cabinets and fireplaces torn away from the wall. After checking on the welfare of other family members, many of these people raced outside to see



what had happened and also to see if they could help anyone who might be injured or trapped by the blast. Because much of the power had been knocked out by the explosion, the would-be rescuers found the neighborhood mostly dark, except where several fires raged, and all around them they could hear car alarms blaring. Witnesses inside Richmond Hill that night would later say that it looked like it was snowing because of all the insulation raining down.

The near-deafening explosion caused the ceiling in the home of Richmond Hill resident Ryan Konecky to cave in, and at the same moment a wooden beam crashed through the wall of his house and speared a couch close to where he and his wife were sitting. Covered with blood, Konecky jumped up and fought through the rubble to rescue his children. Sierra, the family dog, died when a wall of the home collapsed. Her body wasn't found for several days.