



# International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation.

## Assassinations and revenge: A study of David Lindsey's *The Color of Night*

Matondo Kiesline Stevell Dadi <sup>1\*</sup>, N'zambi-Mikoulou Donald <sup>2</sup>, Massala Hubert Franck Lylian <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1-3</sup> Université Marien Ngouabi, Congo

\* Corresponding Author: **Matondo Kiesline Stevell Dadi**

### Article Info

**ISSN (online):** 2582-7138

**Impact Factor:** 5.307 (SJIF)

**Volume:** 04

**Issue:** 05

**September-October 2023**

**Received:** 27-08-2023;

**Accepted:** 16-09-2023

**Page No:** 527-533

### Abstract

The analysis of David Lindsey's *The Color of Night* has enabled us to understand that embezzlement is one of the causes of characters' assassination in the United States. For, one sees how Strand becomes a widower after Romy's killing by Schrade for being suspected to have stolen his money. After her death, Clymer and Ariana are also portrayed as victims of murder by Schrade for the same cause. These murders finally urge Strand to revenge for Romy's death, because he becomes psychologically heart wounded to find out that the woman he used to love and share secrets with is no longer alive. As a result, he looks for some ways out to heal his wounds by killing Schrade. His motivation to act as such is reinforced by the pistol given to him by Hodge, for whenever he holds it, he never ceases to think of killing him. What he really wants is not only to see Schrade dead for his cruel acts, but more to keep his life safe and protect other American citizens who are likely to die because of this male character's cruelty.

**Keywords:** The United States, Characters, Embezzlement, Assassinations, Revenge

### Introduction

This paper is about characters' assassinations and revenge in David Lindsey's *The Color of Night*. Published in 1999, this novel tells the story of three main characters named Schrade, Strand, and Romy. While working together in the same organization called the Foreign Intelligence Service (FIS), Romy is shot dead by Schrade, her own brother after being suspected to have stolen his money. This tragedy finally urges Strand to revenge for Romy, his deceased wife. He finally succeeds in killing him with the help of some American gangsters.

Our choice of David Lindsey's *The Color of Night* for this paper is justified by the author's portrayal of characters' embezzlement that brings about murders and revenge. Linda Johny who first scrutinized it, considers it as a book crammed with tensions and crimes: "*In David Lindsey's the Color of Night, we are brought deeper, and deeper, into the world of espionage, international crime, passion, betrayal, fear, and revenge*".<sup>1</sup> Through this quotation, one understands that Linda Johny focuses his attention on the novel's plot. He means that murder and revenge are some of the themes portrayed in it. This portrayal urges us to concentrate on the answer to the following question: To what extent are inhuman practices parts of characters' experience in David Lindsey's *The Color of Night*? We hypothesize that the author's portrayal of embezzlement, assassination, and revenge attests of characters' experience of deviant behaviors in this narrative.

Being conscious of the fact that the novel studied contains a set of fictional facts linked to the American society, we find it necessary to resort to the sociological and psychological approaches to better clarify the above hypothesis. The sociological approach enables me to examine the relationship among characters in the society created by the novelist. For, *The Color of Night* appears as a reflection of the latter's social experience of wrongful facts observed not only in the United States, but in every part of the world where people reject the laws established in the society in which they live. For, according to Krutch: "*Art is not created in a vacuum; it is the work not simply of a person, but of an author fixed in time and space, answering to a community*" (Krutch, quoted by Wilbur: 1962, 123). Similarly, Toni Morrison argues: "*If anything I do, in the way of writing novels or whatever I write is not about the village or the community or about you (the African Americans), then it is not about anything*" (Morrison: 1984, 339). This is to say that, for Toni Morrison, the writer, whoever he may be, reconstructs the experience of people in a given society. In this connection, Foster says:

In the novel, we can know people perfectly, and, apart from the general pleasure of reading, we can find here a compensation for their dimness in life. In this direction, fiction is truer than history, because it goes beyond evidence, and each of us knows from his own experience that there is something beyond the evidence, and even if the novelist has not got it correctly, well he has tried" (Foster: 1962, 70).

Foster argues that a novel, being a literary genre, incorporates all events that occur in the community of its writer. In this sense, Benjamin Evayoulou, for instance, argues that "literature is viewed as the expression of a given ethnic reality" (Evayoulou: 2003, 176).

The psychological approach which deals with the mind of the writer and the motives of characters to the reaction of the reader, helps me analyze the psychological pains that characters undergo when they are hurt by one of them, as clarified by Scott Wilbur in these terms: "The criticism that employs this approach assumes that an important part of the relationship between an artist and art is similar to that between patient and dream. (...) Psychology can be used to explain fictitious characters" (Wilbur, *ibid.*, 71-72). One understands that my main aim in using this approach is to better examine characters' psychological wounds originated from their peers' murders.

Two main points are examined in this paper. The first is characters' assassinations by their fellows because of their embezzlement. The second refers to characters' revenges for their deceased counterparts.

### Characters' assassinations

In *The Color of Night*, David Lindsey presents Schrade as the embodiment of cruel acts. His efforts to present him as such are evident in the passage in which he shows how he murders his own sister Romy, pretending that she has stolen his money. What is worth knowing is that the money he claims to be stolen by Romy is not his, for the latter argues that he robs it from his professional services. His idea to kill this female character occurs when Strand, his brother-in-law meets her for the first time:

I'd actually met Romy while Schrade was spying on the Russians for us. I was his case officer, and schrade was such an arrogant bastard that he often demanded I go to him in secret at his villa on Schwanenwerder, an Island in the Havel River in the Nikolassee district of Berlin. I saw Romy there many times and got to know her (p. 126).

This passage evidences Strand and Romy's encounter in Berlin, especially in Germany. In fact, this encounter takes place because Schrade is used as a spy by Strand's organization known as the Foreign Intelligence Service directed by the United States. This means that Schrade collaborates with the American Foreign Intelligence Service, as evidenced by the sentences "Schrade was spying on the Russians for us" and "I was his case officer". The collaboration between Strand, an American and Schrade a German is what helps Strand meet Romy "in the Havel River in the Nikolassee district of Berlin". However, Strand's love affair with Romy appears as one the main causes not only of the latter's assassination, but also of many other characters in the author's novel:

When FIS took me off the Soviet project, the abrupt interruption of my meetings with Schrade forced Romy and me to acknowledge how strongly we felt about each other. We arranged our first secret meeting in Geneva. [...] Lake Como, London, wherever we felt we could successfully elude Schrade and the FIS for a few days (pp. 126-127).

One understands that the departure of Strand from "the Soviet project" and his sudden "meetings with Schrade" allow him to meet secretly with Romy in different cities of Europe, especially in "Geneva", Lake Como, and London" where they love affair begins. It also reveals that Strand has worked for the Foreign Intelligence Service (FIS) viewed as an American organization which conducts some crucial activities abroad with people like Schrade:

Anyway, Schrade's illicit profits were laundered by several money managers who worked for him. One of these was a woman named Rosemarie Bienert. Her history with Schrade Was ...complicated. She was brilliant, held university degrees in international economics and finance. He called her Marie. I called her Romy (p. 126).

What the author shows through this passage is that Schrade is a businessman who has connections with some people who help him launder the money which makes him rich. One of those people that the author calls "managers" is Romy, an intellectual woman who has graduated in international economics and finance. This means that she is a pillar of Schrade's money laundering. Unfortunately, she becomes Schrade's enemy because of the money she robs from him, as evidenced below:

Eventually Romy designed an astonishingly complex to divert some of the money she was laundering for Schrade, which the FIS was allowing him to launder in exchange for his skills in providing us with information. He was hesitated. Actually, she was able to divert huge amounts of it. Hundreds of millions (p. 128).

It is perfectly clear that Schrade works for the "Foreign Intelligence Service's organization of the United States that makes it possible for him to launder money. He is in charge of providing this organization with information. Romy being working with him, finds the opportunity to embezzle the organization with the help of her Strand, her husband. For, the sentences "The plan involved half a dozen people, all of them the very best at what they did" and "We all considered the risks" (p. 129) show that Romy is not alone in this matter of embezzlement. She even has some friends involved in this illegal traffic:

The money we stole from Schrade was money that was in the process of being laundered, money that was being 'streamed' through a byzantine scheme of 'filters', fake companies, banks, investment programs, markets, commodities, everything. Romy's job, as it had been for nearly four years, was to determine at what point Schrade's dirty money had passed through enough filter entities to keep it from getting traced back to Schrade's enterprises (p. 160).

What is true is that Schrade who persecutes Romy and Strand for the money stolen is also viewed as a thief, for he becomes rich thanks to the money he robs not only from companies, and banks, but also from different people in America and Europe. In the passage below, one sees how the author describes Romy and her friends as embezzlers:

The dirty money was passing through the 'stream' at an erratic rate, but it was averaging about forty-four million a month. Romy's plan was to divert a portion of this money in midstream and move it into another set of filters that ultimately spat out the clean money into our own legitimate entities. Romy and Clymer got together and created... I don't know, a financial labyrinth, a highly complex web of legal mechanisms (pp. 160-161).

This passage shows that Romy's main idea is "to divert a portion of this money" and filter it for their own interests. To do so, she and her friend Clymer create a complicated network which helps them embezzle Schrade's money. The protagonist confesses that their business of money laundering lasts some months, as he voices it out in these terms: "*We ran this thing for six months before I stopped it*" (p. 129). What Strand does not understand is how Schrade is informed about their embezzlements: "*How in God's name had Schrade discovered the embezzlement, anyway?*" (p. 108). This quotation attests of Strand's astonishment about Schrade's discovery, for he does not believe that the latter can find out the truth about their secret affair that makes them rich. But the author through the following quotation lets the reader know about how Schrade has come to discover the truth: "*In the meantime, he put his best computer and accounting brains to work trying to find out where it all went. They discovered who before they discovered how. The first thing he did was find Romy and me. He killed her*" (p. 158). As it can be seen, Schrade's "best computer" is viewed as a powerful tool which helps him discover his enemies. Romy's assassination by Schrade is reinforced by the latter's awareness of the fact that she is the one who knows his secrets:

Moreover, Meret had only narrowly missed being in the car with Romy. They had invited Meret to spend the weekend with them at their beach house near Galveston Island, and the two women had planned to drive out Thursday night and set the place before Strand arrival late Friday. At the last minute Meret had decided to take her own car and run some errands first. They had decided that Romy should go on and Meret would follow shortly. Meret had found Romy's Land Rover in the tidewater stream. Death, such an alien idea to her in her youth, had stepped right in front of her face, so close that she could almost smell its breath (pp. 97-98).

One understands that Meret, the woman who works for Strand, is the first witness of Romy's death. The novel reads that the two women and Strand plan to go to the beach near a place they usually call "Galveston Island". Surprisingly, they do not take the same way. For, Strand is supposed to join them on Friday. Unfortunately, before they live home, Meret first decides to go shopping and then follows Romy a few minutes later. Suddenly, she finds Romy dead in her "Land Rover" car under water. The novel also reveals that there is a chase car which pursuits Romy:

Romy's car careened wildly in the turns of the narrow-paved lane, the chase car's headlights losing her just as she was sliding on the edges of the road. Marshland brush and sand dunes jumped in and out of the headlights, and then suddenly the chase car's lights were squarely on the Land Rover. Once, twice, three times the chase car accelerated and rammed into the rear of the Land Rover, the camera shuddering violently with the impact. In the illumination of the handheld spotlight, Strand could actually see Romy's head snap from the impact of each fierce jolt, and he could see her arms wildly fighting the steering wheel (p. 79).

As it can be seen, Romy does not die of a given disease, but of an assassination planned by Schrade. The sentence "then suddenly the chase car's lights were squarely on the Land Rover" demonstrates how decisive Schrade is to pursuit and kill this female character known as his own sister. The latter tries to fight with her "Land Rover" in order to save her life but, succumbs because she is alone in the car. For, the sentence "Strand could actually see Romy's head snap from the impact of each fierce jolt" evidences that Strand arrives after his wife's assassination:

In a sickening instant Strand recognized his old Land Rover. Before he had time to make his mind work around that realization, a spotlight came on in the camera car lighting the back of the driver's head in the lead car just as she looked around. It was Romy (p. 79).

This passage brings evidence that when Strand hears about the accident, he does not believe that the victim may be Romy. But it is due to "his old Land Rover" and to the "camera" which lights Romy's face that Strand recognizes his wife. Unfortunately, he has no idea about the person who is responsible for his wife's murder:

Strand tried in vain to identify the local: highway markers and exit signs had been manipulated and deliberately blurred. The cars were American; that was all he could tell. The camera car stayed so far back behind its target that Strand couldn't tell anything about the driver or even how many people were in the car, and when the driver braked or switched lanes the tail and signal light caused a halo effect that obscured its identifying marks even more (p. 78).

One understands that Strand who is eager to find out the killer of his dead wife does not know the culprit yet. The only thing he knows is that the car in which Romy is found dead is of American type. This makes him believe that his dead wife's murderers are Americans. The author's account for this mourning event is so excessive that he continues to inform the reader about it in these terms:

So, after the funeral, after the horrible, soul-consuming afterbirth of death had passed and he was left with the silence and the solitude, he had returned to the rhythms of the water and the light to try to steady himself all over again. Even in Romy's absence, he found himself turning to her for help, to her idea of a proper ceremony for rebirth and a new beginning (p. 11).

This passage attests not only of the end of Romy's life on

earth, but also of Strand's loneliness. For, his wife's assassination shocks him a lot and it becomes difficult for him to restart life without his sweetheart. These shocks, the novel relates, urge him to persecute and kill any individual that he suspects to have participated in Romy's death:

After killing Romy in an initial burst of anger, Strand went on "Schrade realized it was a terrible mistake. He may never get the money if he kills all of us. In fact, he probably killed his best prospect for ever getting it all back. He spent the next year trying to track it all down (p. 158).

Schrade's decision is to kill not only Romy and Strand, but more all individuals who, he thinks, has participated in the stealing of his money. In fact, when he realizes that he cannot have his money back, he decides first to kill Romy and then turns back to Strand and others: "No one else died. Why did he wait another year before coming after the rest of us?" He stopped. "I didn't even suspect Schrade in Romy's death. That's incredible, I knew. I just didn't" (p. 158). One may argue that if he waits for a year before killing Strand and Romy's friends, it is because he avoids to be suspected or recognized as responsible for Romy's death. He thinks that killing Strand rapidly after his wife's murder may lead people to investigate and discover the truth. It is certainly for this particular reason that Clymer's assassination by him occurs a year later after Romy's burial:

Now, as for myself, she (Ariana) went on. "I have no reason to believe that Schrade would not kill me if he knew where I was. He didn't let Clymer live. No, I believe Claude. I have no reason to think he would have different plans for me. So, if I'm alive now, perhaps it's because he doesn't know where I am. That, I would think, would speak well enough for my evasive skills" (p. 164).

Through this passage, one understands that after Romy's death, the next victim that Schrade kills is Clymer, for the sentence "he didn't let Clymer live" testifies that the latter is no longer alive. After this character's assassination, Ariana is described as another victim who decides to run away from Schrade, but is caught and killed mercilessly by the latter:

After I found Ariana's body this morning, I knew he (Schrade) was all over me (Strand). If he didn't know I was in Geneva... I don't know ... maybe she'd been careless living Vienna. But she was in an FIS safe house there. She should have been clean. I think if he'd known I was there, he would've let me know about it (p. 179).

One discovers that Ariana's assassination by Schrade takes place in Vienna in the house of the "FIS", the American organization which is supposed to protect citizens against criminals, but ends up oppressing them in different ways. This means that people who partake in the killing of Ariana are workers of this organization which is viewed as a pit fall of Schrade's enemies, for it helps him capture and kill all of them: "The common bond between people like Schrade and the intelligence agencies that use them is secrecy. They use each other, knowing that if there's ever a falling-out between them, neither side will expose the other, because the relationship itself is illicit" (p. 180). It is clear that Schrade works with some "intelligence agencies" like the Foreign

Intelligence Service which enables him to kill American and Russian citizens, as well as his own German brothers and sisters in exchange of information.

After Romy and her friends' assassinations, Strand decides then to take the money stolen and give it to the American Government. He thinks that there is no reason for him to give it back to Schrade, because he is also recognized as a thief: "I (Strand) wanted the money to be integrated into a legitimate legal framework subject to U.S. laws. I didn't trust an EU country to resist the kind of pressure that Schrade was capable of putting on them if it eventually came to that" (p. 161). One of Strand's objectives in giving money to the American Government is to help American authorities reopen some institutions destroyed by Schrade because of his embezzlement: "When we shut down the operation, we had taken a total of six hundred and two million from Schrade. I set up a series of charitable trusts that established and administered schools and hospitals in the very countries where Schrade's drug and arms business have caused so much miserable hell" (p. 162). One keeps in mind that with some of the money stolen from Schrade, Strand decides to build schools and hospitals in different areas of the United States. But what is worth mentioning is that he does not yet overcome the psychological pain he has from his wife's assassination. This pain that inhabits his spirit finally urges him to revenge his wife by killing Schrade, as demonstrated in the point below.

## 2. Strand's revenge for Romy's death

In *The Color of Night*, the author's efforts to account for characters' social facts are evident not only through his portrayal of characters' assassinations because of their embezzlement, but also through their revenge for their counterparts' murders. One, for example, sees how Strand is determined to seek revenge for the murder of Romy, his first wife. The novel reads that after his wife's assassination by Schrade, he becomes psychologically heart wounded, because the woman he used to call wife and share secrets with her is no longer alive. As a result, he looks for some ways out to heal his wounds so as to restart enjoying the full fruition of life freely: "But also he was wrestling with the discovery that at the back of his heart there was a wound that had begun to fester. It ached for a healing remedy that was as disturbing to him as the discovery of the wound itself: it ached for the balm of revenge" (p. 343). This quotation shows how Strand regrets about his wife's death which is viewed as the result of Schrade's crime.

The sentence "it ached for the balm of revenge" attests of Strand's eagerness to revenge for Romy's murder. This means that he does not feel better as long as his deceased wife's killer is alive. That is why he is determined to kill Schrade by any means necessary. His determination to do so derives from his friend Hodge who extolls him to kill Schrade because of his pitiless heart towards his peers: "He (Strand) went down to the entry hall closet and retrieved the paper sack with the pistol he had gotten from Hodge" (p. 392). One understands that Strand's motivation to shorten Schrade's life is reinforced by the pistol given to him by Hodge, for whenever he holds it, he never ceases to think of killing him. What he really wants is not only to see Schrade dead, but more to keep his life safe and protect other citizens who are likely to die because of this male character's deviant behaviors: "He (Strand) had thought of Schrade until he was sick of him. Killing him would be a sweet liberation" (p. 425).

The novel relates that after getting the pistol from Hodge, Strand walks after Schrade out of a restaurant in order to shoot him dead: *“He approached Schrade coming out of the restaurant, jammed the pistol into his side, and fired. He approached Schrade in the lobby of Claridge’s, jammed the pistol into his side, and fired. He approached Schrade on the street, jammed the pistol into his side, and fired”*. (p. 410). This first killing attempt, as it can be seen, starts in “the restaurant” before extending in “the lobby” and on “the street”. Unfortunately, Strand fails to shoot Schrade dead because of the latter’s carefulness. It is indeed in regard to this failed killing attempt that Strand decides to associate another male character named Obando in his cruel mission:

Strand had heard recordings of Mario Obando that had been made in Tel Aviv while he was doing business with an Israeli drug dealer. The dealer was the one who sounded like the foreigner. Obando sounded as though he’d been born and raised in the San Fernando Valley. You could have spent an evening with him and never known he was Colombian. Obando’s files recorded how he had hated to be pegged by his accent. He hated the stereotype. So, he had worked on it. It had disappeared (pp. 255-256).

As it can be seen, “Israeli drug dealer” is portrayed by the author as another male character who, like Obando, seems to be accomplice in Strand’s mission. His collaboration with the latter whose objective is to revenge for his deceased wife’s murder leaves the reader with the impression that he is the one who extolls Strand to act in such a way. But what is true is that he only sees Strand as a friend to share relationships with. He believes that he cannot partake in such a cruel mission, for he knows that shortening someone’s life is attracting trouble to oneself. In the passage below, the author depicts his encounter with Strand, the revenger as follows:

As he had done with Lu, Strand told Obando who he was and gave him some background on his career in the intelligence profession. By the time he had finished, Obando understood that Strand knew things about his organization that Obando had through were secure. As with Lu, when Strand finally stopped, he had not yet given Obando the name of the traitor who had been responsible for creating so much havoc for Obando’s enterprises (pp. 256-257).

The sentence “Strand told Obando who he was and gave him some background on his career in the intelligence profession” expresses Strand’s policy towards Obando. He needs to be close to the latter so that he accepts to cooperate with him. He fails in convincing him to accept his cruel proposal. This failure finally urges him to consider him as a “traitor”. Obando’s objection to Strand’s proposal is justified by the latter’s lack of confidence. He means that he cannot trust him, because he has trouble to understand that the only reason for which he wants to kill Schrade is to revenge for his wife’s murder. By so acting, Obando avoids not only having conflicts with Schrade, but more committing a crime that may put his life into trouble:

So, you see, Harry, after this long collaboration-even though we’d never met- I was already curious about you. And then you contact my people. You come here, give me

this documentation on Wolf, and you want me to kill your brother in-law. Obando raised his eyebrows. See what I mean? You say, it’s personal, I won’t talk about it. I’m wondering, what the fuck’s going on here? (p. 263).

It is clear that despite Schrade’s committed crime, Obando is not interested in Strand’s mission of killing him. When he argues that he will not talk about it, he means that he no longer wants Strand to raise the question of assassination whenever he has a talk with him. For, he is cock-sure that the one who is about to be killed is his friend as he voices it out: “you want me to kill your brother in-law”. Another reason which justifies Obando’s opposition is linked to the fact that he is a Christian. He knows that as a son of God, it is an abomination for him to kill a human being for whatever reason: *“He (Obando) stopped and regarded Strand. Listen, he said, I was raised in a religious family. Went to catholic schools in Bogotá. Elementary and then high school. Two years in a catholic college before I went to UCLA. I’ve read lots of Bible. Lots of it. You’ve heard the story of King David”* (pp. 261-262). It is exactly because of this truth that Strand is no longer ready to keep on persuading Obando to take part in his sadistic mission. He instead associates American sharpshooters in the fight against Schrade who kills his wife:

He (Strand) had known two professional hit men during his years in the intelligence business. They were, seemingly, unremarkable men, a little remote, perhaps, but one of them in particular he quite liked. The man was forty-three years old. Strand remembered, and he had grown up in the mid-western United States. He had been trained to kill when he had served in Vietnam, and when he’d finished his second tour in Southeast Asia, his superior officer had recommended his services to the Metsada. (p. 423).

It is quite clear that some of the United States’ soldiers are trained not only for the defense of their country, but also for their personal interests. This is the case of Strand who associates one of those “two professional hit men” in order to avenge for his wife’s death. In fact, the sentence “he had been trained to kill when he had served in Vietnam” brings evidence that these sharpshooters are Americans who accept to help Strand kill Schrade. Mara, his wife is also accomplice in this matter of revenge, as shown in this quotation: *“Strand gave the pistol to Mara and nodded at knight. I’ve got to get this shit off my face, he said”* (p. 447). The participation of Strand, Mara, and professional hit men in the fight against Schrade who is German, shows the solidarity of Americans to revenge for the murder of their sister. This solidarity is certainly what pushed Marie Robin to write:

It is the Western world as a whole that is in mourning and our hearts are weeping in unison with our American brothers. We are one family and together, we will face up to this attack that has killed our people. We weep but we are erect and dignified, and we will stand up to the enemy. We extend our condolences to the American people and share, in its pain, it desires for revenge (Robin: 2020, 1061).

This passage attests of Americans’ solidarity and collaboration, for one sees how they consider themselves as “one family” and believe that things can only be possible if

they are united. Robin shows this unity through his sentence “we will face up to this attack that has killed our people”. According to him, revenge is a collective thing in American society, as demonstrated by Strand who associates sharpshooters and his wife in the fight against Schrade. Such a lifestyle shared by Americans in the United States is what Martin Luther King qualifies as “*a system of a far deeper malady within the American spirit*” (King: 1967, 41). Schrade’s killing finally occurs in Carrington’s house, as the narrator explains:

He (Strand) waved at Night, who covered over to him like a threatened lapdog. Strand grabbed him, speaking hoarsely. “Just answer the door and get him inside. If you do anything, if you try to run, I’ll step outside and blow off the back of your head. “Just get him inside,” Strand repeated, stepping back behind the door. When it clacked, he opened the door. Wolf! Wolf! Good of you... Good of you... come in, come in... Wolfram Schrade was inside. Strand closed the door and in the same movement put the pistol to the back of Schrade’s neck before he had a chance to react. “I’ll explain the gun,” Strand said. It contains a neurotoxin. If it breaks the skin, you’re dead. In less than a minute, there’s no ‘wounding’ with this (pp. 446-447).

The killing of Schrade by Americans although viewed as the result of his own committed crime is to some extent regretful. For, he is attacked and killed mercilessly on behalf of revenge. Such a merciless attitude of Americans pushes a black soldier in John Oliver Killens’s *And Then We Heard the Thunder* to call the American nation “*the United Snakes of America* (Killens: 1963, 87). Schrade’s killing viewed as an act of revenge for Romy’s murder ends up threatening not only Germans but more all Americans. For, they are now conscious of the fate reserved to any human being who may dare to shorten the life of his counterpart in the American society. Strand’s decision to kill Schrade in Carrington’s house is linked to the fact that he does not want to be suspected as his killer, for Schrade and Carrington are friends who have the same line of business:

I’ll (Strand) appear to come to his assistance, call for help, bring people to us. Since I’ll be catching him away from his bodyguard, no one will suspect me a menacing situation. I think most people will immediately conclude that I just happened to be standing next to the guy when he had a stroke or heart attack (pp. 376-377).

After killing Schrade, Strand is no longer ready to bear the burden of his crime. As a result, he does not want to be recognized as responsible for this German’s murder. He claims that he is simply a friend who wants to save his life. Such a cruel act endured by this German character because of his inhuman actions and his position as a foreigner on the American soil intertwines with the assassinations of black Americans in the United States after the Civil War with the birth of the Ku Klux Klan, as contextualized by Ernest James Gaines in *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* through Jane who argues:

I saw people laying everywhere. All of them was dead or dying, or so broken up they wouldn’t ever move on their own... Then I saw Big Laura. She was lying on the

ground with her baby still clutched in her arms. I made Ned stay back while I went closer. Even before I knelt down, I saw that her and the baby was both dead (Gaines: 1971, 23).

While black characters are persecuted and victimized by Whites after the wartime period for unfair reasons, some of their fellows in *The Color of Night* are killed because of their embezzlements and murders. Such is the case of Schrade who is killed by his brother-in-law as a way to revenge for his wife’s death. What is worth knowing is that Strand’s reaction against Schrade attests of all Americans’ readiness to kill their peers mercilessly in the United States. This readiness is also evident through the brutality of a white policeman on a young black American named Michael Brown. This brutality is unfortunately not considered as a crime, because, for Whites, the policeman did not shoot him on purpose. He simply wanted to defend himself: “*Without doing anything special, a black American man known by the name of Michael Brown has lost his life because of Whites’ brutality on Blacks. This does reflect the past of this nation because the white policeman is protected*”.<sup>2</sup> Michael Brown’s murder occurred on August 9, 2014, in Ferguson, Missouri. This 18-year-old black man was fatally shot dead by Darren Wilson, a white Ferguson police officer. This tragic event received considerable attention all over the world and sparked a vigorous debate about law enforcement’s relationship with foreigners in the United States.<sup>3</sup>

One keeps in mind that in *The Color of Night*, David Lindsey accounts for the themes of assassination and revenge through Strand, Romy, Schrade, and Lu Kee. These themes are conceptual tools that show the novel’s link with the American society, for one knows that the United States is viewed as one of the countries where terrorism is evident. The author’s portrayal of Romy and Schrade’s assassinations has been a way for him to advice the reader not to engage in embezzlement and murder, for these are crimes which often lead to death.

## Conclusion

At the term of this exploration, we have discovered that in *The Color of Night*, David Lindsey really considers embezzlement, assassination, and revenge as integral parts of his literary discourse. His account for the Foreign Intelligence Service’s failure with regard to its role of identifying criminals and assuring people’s security, evidences the author’s reconstruction of the historical facts of the United States in his work of fiction. For, this organization is grounded in the history of this great nation. The themes of characters’ embezzlement, assassination, and revenge are unquestionably drawn from Americans’ lifestyle in the United States. They are far from being the author’s invention. He has contextualized them in his narrative to draw the reader back to what often happens to this nation’s citizens. Recurrent assassinations, as depicted in the author’s novel, are the results of characters’ embezzlement and readiness to revenge for the murder of one of them. Strand who has become a widower after Romy’s killing by Schrade for being suspected to have stolen his money, teaches the reader that the salary of sin is nothing but death.

## References

1. Evayoulou Benjamin. Racines Ethniques et Dualité Raciale chez Alex Haley: Genèse d’une Trajectoire.

- Paris: Université François Rabelais, 2003.
2. Foster EM. Aspects of the Novel. (US). Harmon worth Penguin, 1962.
  3. Gaines Ernest J. The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman. New-York: The Dial Press, 1971.
  4. Killens J Oliver. And Then We Heard the Thunder. New-York: Howard University Press, 1993.
  5. King, Martin Luther. The Trumpet of Conscience. New-York: Harper, 1967.
  6. Lindsey, David. The Color of Night. USA: New York, Warner Books, Inc., 1999.
  7. Morrison Toni. Black Woman Writers. A Critical Evaluation, New York: Doubleday, 1984, 1950-1980.
  8. Robin Marie. Prevention of Revenge Acts and Vigilantism in Response to Acts and Campaigns of Terrorism. USA: New York, Handbook of Terrorism Prevention, 2020.
  9. Wilbur Scott. Five Approaches of Literary Criticism. New-York: The Macmillan Company, 1962.
  10. [http://www.en.Wikipedia.org// Linda Johnny/ A critical analysis of David Lindsey's The Color of Night](http://www.en.Wikipedia.org//Linda%20Johnny/A%20critical%20analysis%20of%20David%20Lindsey%27s%20The%20Color%20of%20Night), consulted on September 12<sup>th</sup> 2023, 3 p.m.
  11. [http://www.en.Wikipedia.org/Steven/ The killing of Michael Brown in the United States](http://www.en.Wikipedia.org/Steven/The%20killing%20of%20Michael%20Brown%20in%20the%20United%20States), consulted on March 17<sup>th</sup> 2023, 4 p.m.
  12. [http://www.en.Wikipedia.org//Amason/ Michael Brown's murder](http://www.en.Wikipedia.org/Amason/Michael%20Brown%27s%20murder), August 9, 2014, Ferguson, Missouri, consulted on May 12<sup>th</sup> 2023, 5 p.m.