

FAQ 56

56.1

Q: On a 48 HOURS television show I recently watched, they hired a surgeon to examine the photographs and he said because the body was so skillfully cut in half, it was his belief that the killer was a doctor. Is this true?

Yes. It is one of the rare points, that all of the professionals involved in the Dahlia investigation (past and present, law enforcement officers, district attorney investigators, coroner's experts, and FBI) are in full and total agreement. (The only disagreement comes from Dahlia theorists whose particular suspect(s) do not possess medical skill and training)

Since the publication of BDA in 2003, two (3) separate surgeons (all active surgery instructors in medical schools) after examining the photographs, identified the bisection as a "hemicorpectomy", a specific procedure taught in U.S. medical schools in the 1930s. (George Hodel graduated from medical school in 1936, and for the first year of his medical career was the sole "camp surgeon" at an Arizona logging camp for the CCC. (FDR's, Civilian Conservation Corps) For the next several years he served as a Public Health surgeon (rank of Lieutenant) treating patients on the Navaho and Hopi Indian reservations.

As Los Angeles Head Deputy District Attorney, Stephen Kay noted in his 2001 summary of my investigation, "The fact that the killer was a physician, skilled in surgery, very much limited the suspect pool."

From BDA:

Elizabeth Short Autopsy

On the following morning, January 16, 1947, Dr. Frederic Newbarr, then chief autopsy surgeon for the County of Los Angeles performed an autopsy on the victim. His findings determined that the cause of death was, "hemorrhage and shock from a concussion of the brain and lacerations of her face." It was Dr. Newbarr's further opinion that "the trauma to the head and face were the result of multiple blows using a blunt instrument."

Later sources provided the following additional information:

- 1) As earlier described the body had been neatly and cleanly bisected in half.
- 2) A sharp, thin bladed instrument, consistent with a scalpel had been used to perform the bisection.
- 3) The incision was performed through the abdomen, and then through the intervertebral disk between the 2nd and 3rd lumbar vertebra.

In 1947-1948, LAPD criminalist Ray Pinker and criminalist, Lemoyne Snyder M.D. J.D., two of the most respected forensic experts of that day, after thorough study of the autopsy photographs and enlargements of tissue samples, concluded the killer had to have had advanced knowledge of anatomy and a high degree of surgical skill.

As noted in BDA:

(Investigator's Note- Popular crime and mystery writer of the time, Craig Rice would later publish a book, *45 Murderers: a collection of true crime stories*, (New York, 1952, Simon and Schuster,) with one entire chapter devoted to "The *Black Dahlia*." I quote relevant excerpts from that chapter,

Everyone now knows that the body of Elizabeth Short was cut in two, severed at the waist, but what everybody does not know is the fact that the job was done with great precision, and with every evidence of professional skill.

This fact had been noted by police criminologist, Captain Ray Pinker from the start; and his deductions were verified some time later in a joint study he made with Dr. LeMoyne Snyder, of the Michigan State Police Crime Laboratories, and a member of the editorial advisory board of *True Police Cases*.

Going over the detailed photographs of the body, taken at the morgue, the two experts noted the clean knife marks made by the sharp instrument used in bisecting the body. They noted that not a single organ of the body was severed. They studied enlargements of some of the tissues, and came to the conclusion that the job showed extraordinary knowledge of human anatomy.

Dr. Lemoyne Snyder was both a medical doctor and lawyer and literally "wrote the book" on Homicide Investigation. His book was my bible during my early training at the LAPD Police Academy, and an important reference guide during my 18 years working Hollywood Homicide.

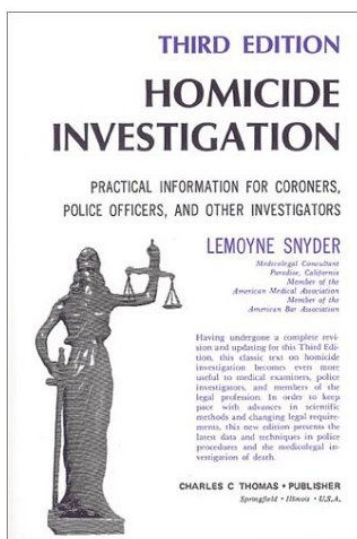
LAPD criminalist Ray Pinker is legendary. A highly skilled scientist, he basically single handedly brought LAPD into the 20th Century as relates to criminal investigation of crime scenes. Ray was considered an expert witness in almost every field of forensics. He did it all: polygraph, chemistry, ballistics, trajectories, etc. You name it, he did it. (In the "it's a small world category" Ray Pinker was good friends with my uncle, Charles Eugene Harvey (my mother's brother) who was a scientist and considered one of the leading world experts in the then brand new field of SPECTROSCOPY. Uncle Gene worked on the MANHATTAN PROJECT at Los Alamos, New Mexico, and after the war became a college professor, wrote three separate text books on the subject and taught spectroscopy.



Dr. Lemoyne Snyder M.D. JD.



LAPD Criminalist Ray Pinker 1942



56.2

Q: You recently showed some photographs of women riding down Hollywood Blvd. in a car on VJ DAY. You speculated one of the girl's might be Elizabeth Short. Could the car be Dr. Hodel's? (FAQ 53)

No. First off it is a convertible, and father owned a 1936 Packard sedan, HARDTOP. Secondly, though due to light and shading, it appears black in some photographs (another example of what we think we see versus WHAT IS) in reality the car in question was-- MAROON OR BURGUNDY IN COLOR. (See below)

