

FAQ 39

(April 9, 2007)

39.1

Q: Do you have any photographs taken at the Valentine St. House and when did you move from there to the Franklin House?

I believe dad bought the Franklin House in 1945, before going to China. My grandparents resided there during his absence. I'm not sure what month we moved into that residence?

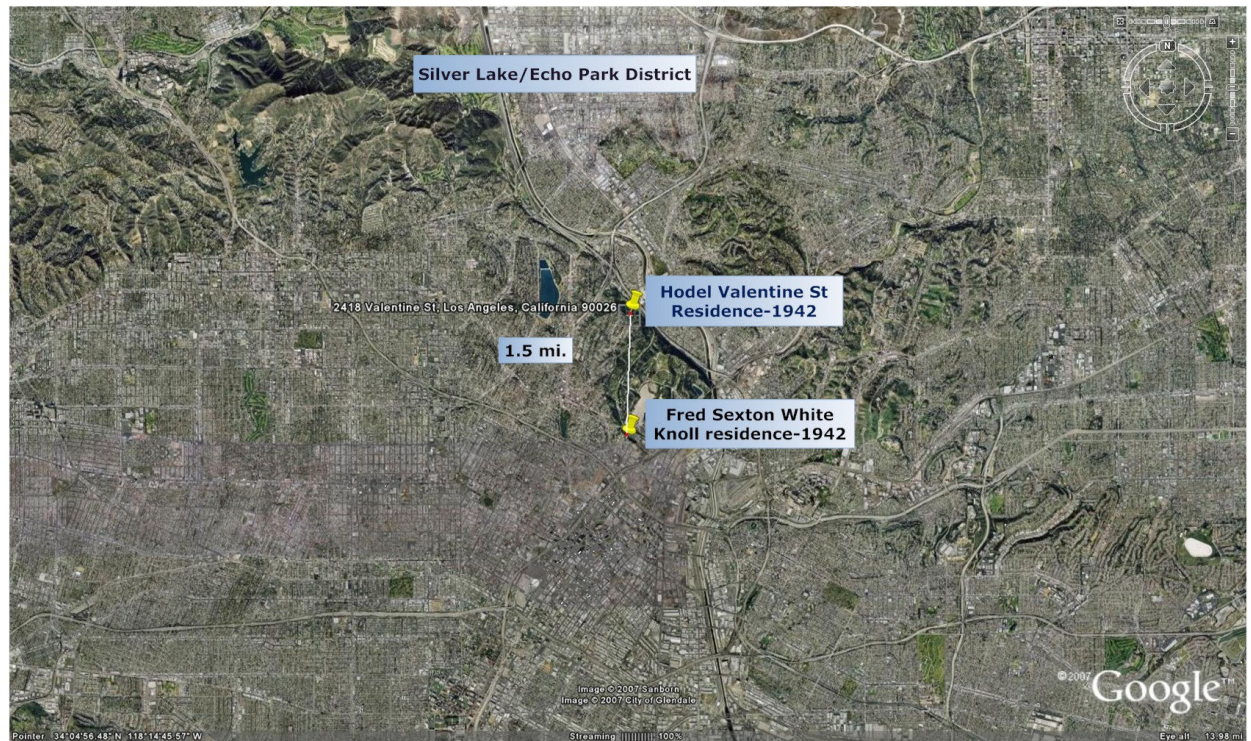
Below is a photo taken in December, 1942. It shows mother, holding my brother Kelvin, who is just a month old. I am standing next to them, on the railing. While, not absolutely positive, I believe this snapshot was taken at the Valentine St. House, with a view looking toward the northeast.



Dorothy Steve and Kelvin Hodel at the Valentine St. House 1942

(A friend of mine upon seeing this photograph, commented, "Dorero looks like a gun mall. Sort of a Bonnie to George Hodel's Clyde." I have to admit, he does have a point there, but her two cherub-like sons do tend to soften the theme.)

Below diagram shows 1942 distance (1.5 miles) between the Hodel Valentine house in the Silverlake District, and Fred Sexton's residence in Echo Park. Our future Franklin House residence (1945-1950) is approximately three miles to the west, in the Los Feliz District.



39.2

Q: What ever happened to the woman that rode with Officer Mary Unkefer, Lillian Lenorak and Joe Barrett to Santa Barbara? Was she a girlfriend of your father's?

Her name was Karoun Tootikian. I don't know what her relationship to my father was? We do know from Officer Mary Unkefer's letter that Tootikian was called to the Franklin House by George Hodel on the night of Lillian's drugging and staged "attempt suicide." In searching records I discovered an interesting article printed in the *L.A. Times* one-year prior to the Franklin House/Lenorak/Unkefer incident. The article (below) connects both Karoun and Lillian as dancers at the Ruth St. Denis studio, and in January 1949 showed that all three dancers performed together at the Wilshire Ebell theatre in Hollywood. It is interesting to note that after Ruth St. Denis' death in the 1960s, Karoun Tootikian became an administrator of the St. Denis dance Studio and also established her own Armenian Ballet Group.

THE SOUNDING BOARD

ALBERT GOLDBERG

Los Angeles Times (1886-Current File); Jan 13, 1949; ProQuest Historical Newspapers Los Angeles Times (1881 - 198 pg. A6

THE SOUNDING BOARD

Dance Recital Stars St. Denis, Tootikian

BY ALBERT GOLDBERG

The devotees of the exotic dance were not many but they were loyal as they braved the double hazard of the rain and drafty Wilshire Ebell Theater to see Ruth St. Denis, Karoun Tootikian and company in a recital program, mainly Oriental, last night.

Though she was billed as the star of the event, Miss St. Denis' contributions were few and brief and, with the possible exception of the closing "Salome," which came too late for this reporter's observation, they were all from her familiar repertoire.

Fluid Grace

Nevertheless, there is something timeless and ageless about Miss St. Denis. To quote Walter Terry's apt phrase, "She is both historical and contemporary." Her fluid grace is what it has been as long as one can remember, and the seemingly unpremeditated quality of her patterns of movement are illuminated by a personality that is unvaryingly gracious and deceptively stagewise.

All that it was possible to see of her donations to the program were the "White Jade," a study in exquisite balance and proportion, the time-defying "Palac Nautch," and the shop-worn and subtly burlesqued "Cobra," which

formed part of a rather pleasant series of divertissements with Miss Tootikian and her group collectively called "Indian Street Scene."

Novel 'Swan Lake'

Previous to this the program had opened with Tchaikowsky's "Swan Lake," which sounds conventional enough, but turned out to be anything but that. For this to quote the program descriptor was "a translation of the western ballet classic into Hindu dance form."

In place of the familiar arabesques, petits battements and fouettes in white tutus, there were the writhing arms, the clinking anklets, the osteopathic neck jerk, and the flowing garments; what, rightly or wrongly, the American public has been told constitutes the Hindu dance.

Scratchy Records

The plot remained more or less the same as the original, but for the second time within a week at a dance recital the music came from scratchy phonograph records — would

they dare this on a New York, a Chicago, or even a San Francisco audience? — and there was a narrator with a tenor voice on the loud-speaker.

We can think of nothing the world needs less than a Hindu version of "Swan Lake," but for the sake of the record the participants were Miss Tootikian, Sujata-Devi, George Dutro, Marc Malorant in the leading roles, and the four cygnets—ah, THAT you should have seen!—were danced by Lillian Lenorak, Donna Mae Thomas, Lalla Lezli and Clorinda Frisorra.

Below article, written by Karoun Tootikian, appeared in the L.A. Times as a "Legacy" to Karoun's mentor, St. Denis. In 1968, twenty-years after the Lillian Lenorak/George Hodel/Mary Unkefer incident at the Franklin House, Tootikian's own bio by then was: "dancer, choreographer, and former Head of the Ruth St. Denis Oriental Dance Department."

(*Author Note- In my 1999 interview with Fred Sexton's daughter, (who I refer to as "Mary Moe"- pg. 221) she gave the following response to my inquiry asking her if she recalled the name of one of dad's girlfriends who overdosed?

"I think that the person you are talking about was your dad's office manager at the First Street Clinic. I'm not sure of her name, but it might have been Ruth Dennis."

Based on what we now know, I would suggest that Sexton's daughter, a teenager at the time of her visits to the Franklin House, admittedly unsure of the secretary's last name, simply confused and combined the two names; -RUTH SPAULDING and RUTH ST. DENIS.

Ruth St. Denis: A Legacy of Dance

KAROUN TOOTIKIAN

Los Angeles Times (1886-Current File); Jul 28, 1968; ProQuest Historical Newspapers Los Angeles Times (1881 - 1985) pg. C32

Ruth St. Denis: A Legacy of Dance

BY KAROUN TOOTIKIAN



RUTH ST. DENIS

● Over the years, the great and near-great have made pilgrimages to the Ruth St. Denis Dance Studio on Cahuenga Blvd. in Hollywood to observe, to learn and renew friendship with the indomitable Miss Ruth. The studio, with its faded front poster of the dancer (in a pose from her interpretations of the poems of Tagore) is now a memorial, for Miss Ruth is gone.

It was befitting, in a way, that the dancer, whose career spanned five generations, should choose July 21, a sabbath, for her goodbye, since it was she who introduced the revolutionary work, "Rhada", in 1906, which brought to America the completely new idea of religious Hindu dancing in its purest and most esthetic form.

She was helped in her goal of popularizing interpretive dancing as a suitable career for young people by three contemporary dancers: Isadora Duncan, Loie Fuller and Maude Allen, who all developed different forms of the dance. While St. Denis delved into the Oriental religions for her main inspiration, Duncan became responsible for eliminating the old confines of classic movement, and danced barefoot in a light tunic. Fuller dressed in billowing silk skirts and lighted by various colored lights, she created spectacular forms with subtle variations and silhouettes, while Allen drew from all three for her sensational dance forms.

Whereas Duncan's talent was best expressed by dancing with symphonies, Fuller's in creating spectacular

serpentine movements, St. Denis' famous solos were, for the most part, confined to extreme discipline of movement and economy of gesture. Draped from head to foot in voluminous silk and jersey, Miss Ruth presented each nuance of movement in

Miss Tootikian is a dancer and choreographer who headed the faculty and Oriental department of the Ruth St. Denis Studios in Hollywood for 16 years.

rippling waterfall effects inspiring great tranquility. She often appeared as a painting come to life.

It was both Duncan's and St. Denis' great purpose to found a school where the essence of the dance could be taught to perpetuate their dream. The Duncan Schools, both in Paris and Moscow, did not outlive the death of the dancer, who was strangled when her long scarf became entangled in the back wheel of an automobile in 1928. But the Denishawn School of the Dance (formed in 1914 in Los Angeles, with her husband, Ted Shawn) became a beacon of learning for some of America's most illustrious proponents of modern, interpretive dancing.

Out of this conservatory came Martha Graham who toured extensively with the Denishawn Dancers and who later developed an individualized choreography in such creations as "Appalachian Spring" and "Night Journey." Doris Humphrey, who joined Denishawn in 1916 and danced with the

company for 12 years, also made her mark with the electric "Lament for Ignacio Sanchez" and "Ruins and Visions." She brought forth her first choreographic work, "Sonata Tragica," under the auspices of the Denishawn company.

Miss Ruth never officially retired and continued to give concerts as late as 1968. Separated from Ted Shawn since 1931, the famous couple nevertheless appeared together occasionally on the stage, most notably in recent years at the observance of their Golden Anniversary in 1964 at Shawn's School, Jacobs Pillow, at Lee, Mass.

Of Miss Ruth's wide repertoire of original dances, four are perhaps indicative of her genius: "Incense," in which the rippling arm and hand movements first drew the attention of Ted Shawn who reportedly fell in love with her as she performed on the stage in Denver; "Dance of the Cobras," wherein the hand movements become the snake charmer's pet in an Indian market place; "White Jade," which was inspired by a visit to the Temple of Heaven in Peking and shows the Goddess of Mercy bestowing compassion upon the world; and "The Minstrel of Kashmiri," a Nautch Dance for which Charles Wakefield Cadman composed a special score.

A legend in her own time, Ruth St. Denis, at 91, whom dancer Charles Weidman once called "the most beautiful woman in the world," the mother of modern interpretive dance, will live on in the students whom she has inspired to carry on her work.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

39.3

Q: Do you think the investigation and your case against your father hinges on the two photographs? Seems to me what you later discovered about your father is much more important?

Exactly so. Below is a response and clarification to a similar question I provided readers/researchers at Pamela Hazelton's website- <http://www.bethshort.com> where I discussed how the early investigation, related to my sister, Tamar.

Bethshort.com website/January, 2007:

Just to further clarify how things originally unfolded for me in the early months of the investigation in 1999. The photographs did not stand alone and were really only a very small part of my initial investigation. My talks with my half-sister, Tamar, immediately after our father's death were a huge factor. Prior to our father's death my sister and I had maybe talked a total of one-hour in the previous fifty-years. (Ten minutes, here and there, over the decades.) After his death, I called and wanted to know everything she knew about him (not because of the Dahlia connection, but because I wanted to know him as a father, and she, being much older, remembered the Franklin Years, much better than I.) Her disclosure that "you know dad was a suspect in the Black Dahlia murder" was a huge shock to me. I would spend the next several months in hundreds of hours of telephone calls with Tamar and discover a lot of unknown family history. The real start to my investigation was when I saw my father's UNDISGUISED handprinting on the front page of the 1947 newspaper. That, with the fact that somebody skilled in surgery was the suspect got my attention and I would spend the next three-years (now six-years) putting the pieces together. As I have said on numerous occasions, we can throw the photographs out if we want to; they really make no difference at this stage. Critics that try and focus all of my investigation on the photos are simply trying to obscure and fog the facts. Fact is that NO ONE (except Tamar) KNEW (including me) that George Hodel was a prime suspect UNTIL post-publication of my book (2003). Only after the DA safe was opened, could we confirm what Tamar said was true. (Even today's LAPD didn't know he was a suspect.) Nowhere in the Dahlia literature (including all the myths) does the name George Hodel appear prior to Tamar's disclosure to Janice Knowlton in 1998. Not even rumors. (The one exception was the 1947 article in the newspaper, where my father's defense attorney raised it to discredit Tamar during the incest trial) His tactic worked as it was ignored by everyone including the judge and jury.)

Re. Janice Knowlton: Tamar was surfing the web sometime in 1998 and met Janice in a chat room. Tamar told Janice that she too had been a victim of sexual abuse by her father, and that he was a suspect in the Black Dahlia murder in 1947. Tamar was Janice's "source" in her later 1998 or 99 posting about George Hodel. Janice like the rest of us knew nothing about Hodel until talking with Tamar. She quickly assured Tamar that it wasn't Tamar's father, George Hodel, but rather, Janice's father, "George."

In the last stages of my 2001 investigation, up popped DA investigator Walter Morgan, who accidentally met Tamar's daughter, Fauna Hodel, and asked her, "You are not related to Dr. George Hodel are you?" She informed him she was, and that is how I discovered about the bugging of the Franklin House from the only living

investigator from the 1950 surveillance. I held out little hope for any DA reports still existing, and was sure that they too had been "sanitized" and we would discover they had "disappeared." Fortunately, Lt. Frank Jemison locked a "second set of books" in the DA's vault, and we have the transcripts preserved for history.

Wishing you all a very HAPPY NEW YEAR. May 2007 bring each of you increased Health and Happiness.

Steve Hodel
Los Angeles

***** UPDATE TO ABOVE INFORMATION- June 4, 2007*****

On today's date I received an email correction from my sister, Tamar. In it, Tamar informed me that:

She was not surfing the web, but rather Googled "Dr. George Hodel" which took her to Janice's web entry, which in turn referenced "Janice stating that Dr. George Hodel had been an associate of Elizabeth Short." Tamar then emailed Janice requesting her telephone number. Janice forwarded her number and Tamar made contact with her which began their communication.

Tamar informed me that she was not Janice's original source on our father's name and that Janice knew the name prior to Tamar contacting her in 1998 or 1999. This begs the question— who or what was Janice's source?

As follow-up to Tamar's information I have just this morning searched and located an Internet message board entry dated 4/17/03 (a week after BDA was published) which confirms Tamar's recollection that Janice had heard and mentioned the name George Hodel prior to 1998.

The below writer indicates she had a telephone conversation with Janice circa 1996, and recalls her mentioning the name George Hodel as coming up during her (Janice's) research.

On Thu, 17 Apr 2003 16:38:23 -0500, Bàidh Stidean
i.am.me.as.you.are...@the-walrus.com> wrote:

Well, I'm not a 'bot and that's about the only other thing that posts to Usenet on a regular basis besides a human. I have no agenda here, I'm just a Black **Dahlia** buff and occasional researcher/writer who stopped back in to see what the take was on the new "Black **Dahlia** Avenger" book.

Do you remember that strange lady who used to post here who claimed that her father was the Black **Dahlia** killer? She also claimed she was raped by Walt Disney and Gene Autry. Her name began with a J... Janice, that's it. Janice Knowlton. She and another poster here wrote a book about it.

Michael Newton. He also wrote the book "Hunting Humans", a compendium on serial killers, amongst others. I mentioned in another thread earlier this week that I have more than a passing familiarity with her and her theory on the **Dahlia** case. I wasn't posting here when she was - if memory serves, she did not have a computer when I was corresponding with her in the mid-1990's as part of my own

research. Oddly enough, it was Janice Knowlton that began bring the name of George **Hodel** - the "suspect" of "Black **Dahlia** Avenger" back into the limelight with her posts in a.t.c in 1999. I'm pretty sure she had mentioned him to me in a phone conversation back in '96, saying she found the name while looking for references to "George" in her own investigation. I'd have to dig out all my notes and review them, but when I heard the name of George **Hodel** WRT this new book, I knew I had heard it before.

Janice Knowlton's book was published in August 1995. In it, there is no mention of a "Dr. George Hill Hodel." However, she does reference her research in discovering the newspaper articles where five separate witnesses, all acquaintances of Elizabeth Short, were interviewed in 1947.

These five friends all informed LAPD that Elizabeth, "had a boyfriend named 'GEORGE.'" (Obviously, the public documenting of this name was key to help reinforce Janice's belief that her father, "George" was the killer.)

Since we now know that Tamar Hodel was not Janice's original source on the name George Hodel, in my opinion, it would seem highly likely that her original source was the same as mine-- THE FRONT PAGES OF THE LOS ANGELES NEWSPAPERS.

This information, the public accusation of Dr. George Hodel being the Black Dahlia suspect was documented by me in BDA. (Pages 95-96.)

The morning headline of the *LOS ANGELES DAILY NEWS* on 12/17/49 read:

"GIRL ACCUSED OF TRYING TO PIN DAHLIA MURDER ON DAD"

The morning headline of the *LOS ANGELES MIRROR* on the same date, read:

"GIRL'S STORY IS FANTASY COURT HEARS"

Both articles go on to describe court testimony between George Hodel's defense attorney, Robert Neeb Jr., in his cross examination of Tamar during the incest trial. Here is Neeb's verbatim quote as it appeared in the DAILY NEWS article of 1949:

...
Tamar, do you recall a conversation you had with a roommate at the Franklin House by the name of Joe Barrett? And do you recall, in that conversation, making the following statement to him: "This house has secret passages. My father is the murderer of the Black Dahlia. My father is going to kill me and all the rest of the members of this household because he has a lust for blood. He is insane"?

And in the *Los Angeles Mirror*:

...
The 14-year-old daughter of a prominent Hollywood physician "plotted his downfall" with fantastic stories, including one that he killed Elizabeth (Black Dahlia) Short, his attorney, Robert A. Neeb Jr., sought to prove today.

By Neeb getting these seemingly "outrageous and absurd accusations" before the jury he was effectively able to falsely label Tamar a "pathological liar" and discredit her allegations of incest, against her father.

SKH NOTE: **We now know from the 2003 revealed secret DA FILES that Tamar had been informed by both the then DA Investigators who were transporting her to court, and also by my mother, Dorothy Hodel, (prior to Tamar being taken into protective custody) that her father, George Hodel, was suspected, and had admitted killing, Elizabeth Short.**

BOTTOM LINE- IT IS HIGHLY PROBABLE THAT JANICE KNOWLTON'S "ORIGINAL SOURCE" NAMING GEORGE HODEL AS THE BLACK DAHLIA SUSPECT WAS THE SAME RESEARCH INFORMATION FOUND IN THESE TWO NEWSPAPER ARTICLES. THE SAME SOURCE THAT LED HER TO DISCOVER THE DAHLIA SUSPECT'S FIRST NAME WAS- "GEORGE."