

FAQ 40

(April 30, 2007)

40.1

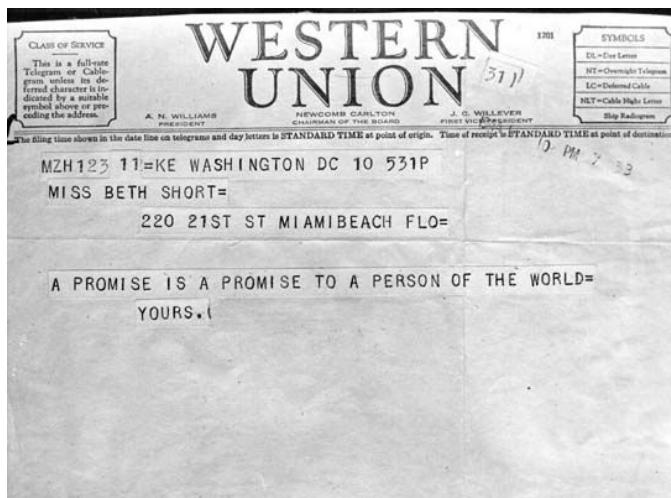
Q: Another website points out that your “main claim” connecting George Hodel to Elizabeth Short was the telegram sent from Washington D.C. In your book you said your father sent it to her in 1945, but it was sent in 1944? Any explanation?

No, actually the main claim connecting George Hodel and Elizabeth Short can be found in multiple references made by DA investigator, Lt. Frank Jemison in the 1949-1950 DA FILES. In his investigative files he indicates multiple witnesses identified Elizabeth Short as being seen in the company of Dr. George Hodel.

As to the “promise is a promise” telegram, I would refer you to my earlier comments on this subject which can be found in **FAQ 26**.

As previously indicated, no date or year could be read on my original 1999 copy of the telegram, however, subsequent samples (copies of copies) seem to indicate the year was 1944. The fact that it may have been sent a few months earlier, (winter of '44 as opposed to spring '45) changes nothing, since my father, as Head V.D. control officer for L.A. County was required to make frequent trips to Washington D.C. during the years-- 1942-1946.

What is also interesting to note is the fact that while LAPD back in 1947, would have conducted an immediate follow-up on this intimate telegram—and most probably IDENTIFIED THE SENDER that information, has apparently “DISAPPEARED.” In 1999, when I speculated that the sender of this telegram might have been George Hodel, I assumed that LAPD had that information in hand, and in our pre-publication meeting/briefing with them, or once my information was published they could either CONFIRM or DENY. (Repeated attempts on my part to meet and discuss the investigation with LAPD pre-publication were repeatedly turned down by LAPD.) Obviously, today’s LAPD no longer knows the D.C. telegram sender’s identity. That information, like all of the LAPD reports and files naming my father as the DA’s “prime suspect”, have been removed from the original investigative files. Why? Did the original files confirm that the boyfriend/sender in D.C. was in fact George Hodel? Today’s LAPD cannot answer the question and can only comment and confirm that, “they are missing.”



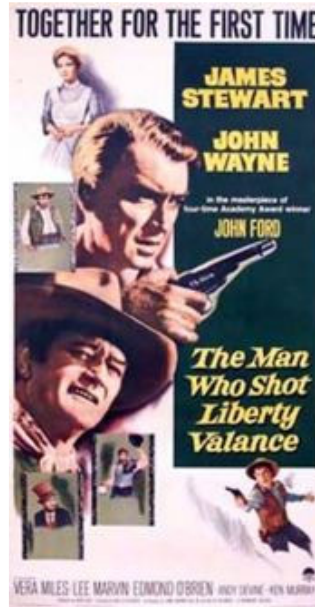
“Promise” telegram purportedly sent in 1944 (original telegram not made public)

40.2

Q: I have read everything written on the Black Dahlia Murder and I find that it is nearly impossible to tell the truth from fiction. How did you sort it out in your investigation?

I would agree with your assessment.

There is a great line in the 1962 John Ford classic Western, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, which I find apropos to what has occurred with the 1947 murder of Elizabeth Short.



At the end of the film, the Shinbone, Arizona newspaper editor, Maxwell Scott, who has listened carefully to Senator Ransom Stoddard's (James Stewart) telling of the true story of "Who Shot Liberty Valance." (Through flashbacks in the narrative) Senator Stoddard then turns to the newspaperman and asks,

You're not going to use the story Mr. Scott?

Scott in his best FRONT PAGE vernacular replies:

"This is the west sir. When the legend becomes fact, print the legend."

And, that is exactly what transpired with the Black Dahlia murder. Since 1947, newspapermen and novelists have chosen to PRINT THE LEGEND. They used the legend and its sensationalism to weave and spin the gold for them.

However, since 2003, with the unlocking of the DA vault and revelations found in the DA BLACK DAHLIA AND HODEL FILES, we have been able to dispel most of the fiction (legends) and have been left with a treasure-trove of FACTS.

40.3

JIM TATREAU, LAPD EX-ROBBERY-HOMICIDE COMMANDER DIES AT 58

LAPD Commander Jim Tatreau passed away on Sunday, April 30, 2007. The below *Times* obituary informs the public of his outstanding career with LAPD and of his dedicated service to our city.

I was privileged to have worked briefly with Jim in 1983, when, as a newly appointed Detective Supervisor iii, I was loaned to Internal Affairs Division, to provide some training in detective procedures to a unit that was then almost entirely comprised of patrol sergeants. Jim was my partner for several weeks. I retired in 1986 and he went on to promote to Captain and command Robbery-Homicide Division. Our paths would merge again, in 2003, when Jim, then recently promoted to Commander, attended my and Head DA Stephen Kay's, BLACK DAHLIA BRIEFING of "the brass" at Parker Center in August, 2003. Upon completion of the two-hour briefing, Commander Tatreau (recently transferred from Robbery-Homicide to command South Bureau) expressed his support of my investigation and was looking forward to the anticipated DNA results and follow-up by LAPD detectives. (As we know, that never happened. LAPD ignored the facts presented and a year later in Aug. 2004 reluctantly told the press that "all the evidence had disappeared and no DNA would be forthcoming.")

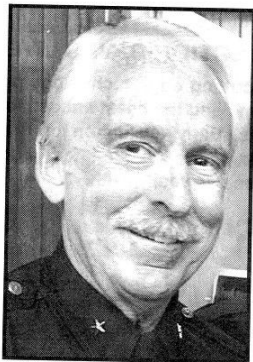
Commander Jim Tatreau was an outstanding example of a dedicated and effective leader. His was truly A FORCE FOR GOOD and served the citizens of Los Angeles in the finest tradition as an LAPD police officer. My personal condolences go out to all of Jim's family members at the unexpected loss of such a good man at such a young age.

Rest in Peace Jim Tatreau, and thank you from all your fellow ANGELENOS for a job WELL DONE.

Steve Hodel
Los Angeles, California

Los Angeles Times, May 1, 2007

By Andrew Blankstein



JIM TATREAU

The LAPD commander urged the department to use DNA and fingerprint technology databases to help solve cases.

Jim Tatreau, 58; pushed to create LAPD cold case unit

By **ANDREW BLANKSTEIN**
Times Staff Writer

Cmdr. Jim Tatreau, a driving force behind the creation of the LAPD cold case homicide unit, has died. He was 58.

Tatreau died Sunday afternoon surrounded by his family at his Los Angeles County home two years after being diagnosed with brain cancer, his son Jim Jr. said.

Los Angeles Police Department detectives said they had tried to create a centralized unit in 2001 that would use DNA and fingerprint database technology to reexamine thousands of forgotten murder cases.

It was Tatreau, as captain of the department's Robbery-Homicide Division, who cut through bureaucratic obstacles and made the case to department brass.

"He thought it was negligent to not make use of technological advances to solve cases, many of which had been gathering dust for decades," said Det. Rick Jackson, a member of the original cold case homicide unit. "That's why he fought so hard for our unit's creation, when it looked like it might not get off the ground."

Since its inception, the unit has solved nearly 50 homicide cases dating back half a century.

Los Angeles County Dist. Atty. Steve Cooley on Monday called Tatreau a "true believer who was ahead of the curve" to the possibilities of DNA technology.

Easygoing with a quick wit, Tatreau was known as a fierce advocate for his officers and detectives.

Robbery-Homicide Det. Ronald Y. Ito, lead investigator on the Robert Blake murder case, recalled how despite pressures of a high-profile, high-stakes celebrity investigation, Tatreau allowed him to conduct a broad-ranging inquiry with minimal political interference.

Blake eventually was acquitted in criminal court of his wife's slaying but found liable in a civil trial.

Tatreau "instinctively understood what detectives needed and wanted," Ito said. "He supported our theories of a case, but he also wanted us to check out every aspect of it."

Tatreau, who sat on hundreds of LAPD boards of rights, which deal with disciplinary issues, did not shy away from controversy.

A believer in second chances, he often sided with those officers who had fallen out of favor.

"Jim had a soft spot for the underdog, for the 'strays' as he called them," said his sister, Terri Tatreau, a retired LAPD sergeant. "If you were being run out of town, Jim would step out in front and turn it into your parade."

Born in Long Beach in 1948, James Tatreau was the sixth of eight children.

As a youngster, he played basketball and performed odd jobs — delivering newspapers and shining shoes. He also worked at his family's neighborhood restaurant washing dishes, peeling potatoes and preparing hamburger patties.

On his way to Catholic school at 11, Tatreau would stop off at the courthouse in Long Beach to watch cases, sometimes missing class. But it wasn't until high school that he began to consider a career in law enforcement.

While attending Long Beach City College, Tatreau became a student worker with the Los Angeles Police Department, joined the academy and graduated in 1970.

He rotated through assignments in patrol, traffic, vice, gang enforcement and Internal Affairs before being named captain of the Newton Division in 1990.

Between 1998 and 2003, he served as head of the Robbery-Homicide Division before being promoted to commander.

He is survived by his wife, Tammy; sons Los Angeles County Sheriff's Lt. Jim Tatreau Jr. and Officer Scott Tatreau of the Mesa, Ariz., Police Department; and daughters Tiffany and Tatum.

Funeral services will be at 9:30 a.m. next Tuesday at St. Pius V Catholic Church in Buena Park. The LAPD will hold a memorial service May 9 at the Police Academy.

The family asks that any donations be made to City of Hope for brain cancer research.

andrew.blankstein@latimes.com