

INTRODUCTION

THIS IS THE SEQUEL to *Most Evil: Avenger, Zodiac, and the Further Serial Murders of Dr. George Hill Hodel*, published by Dutton Penguin Group in September 2009.

During the past five years, some of the investigative findings included here have been discussed both on my author website¹ and in my sequel *Black Dahlia Avenger II* (Thoughtprint Press, 2012; updated in 2014.)

For those readers who might not be familiar with that work, I have decided to include some of the relevant Zodiac information, in the addendum to this book.

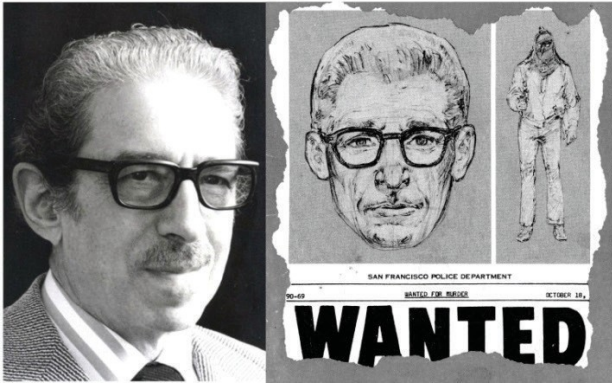
From the back cover of *Most Evil* (Dutton, 2009):

When veteran LAPD homicide detective Steve Hodel discovered that his late father had known the victim in the infamous Black Dahlia murder case in 1947 Los Angeles, the ensuing three-year investigation became the New York Times bestseller Black Dahlia Avenger. Publication led directly to the discovery of a cache of hidden documents, covered up for decades, that confirm George Hodel had long been law enforcement's number one suspect in Elizabeth Short's grisly death. A lurid murder mystery that had endured for more than fifty years was finally solved.

But for Steve Hodel, that revelation was only the beginning. With twenty-five years of experience

investigating homicides as an LAPD detective, Hodel’s instincts told him that a man capable of bisecting Elizabeth Short’s body, arranging it in a gruesome and public tableau, and taunting the police and the public with notes and phone calls, did not begin or end his killing career with the Black Dahlia. A chance encounter in the wake of Black Dahlia Avenger’s publication led Steve to consider a question as preposterous as it is compelling:

Twenty years after shocking the world in Los Angeles, could Dr. George Hill Hodel have returned to terrorize California as the killer known as Zodiac?



In *Most Evil* (2009), I presented my four-year follow-up investigation (2005 to 2009) pointing to the possibility that my father, Dr. George Hill Hodel, might have committed more crimes in Chicago; Illinois; Manila, Philippines; and Riverside, California, as well as the seven crimes in the San Francisco Bay area attributed to “Zodiac” in 1968 through 1969.

Unlike my Black Dahlia investigation, I did not claim that these out-of-state, out-of-country, and Zodiac crimes were “solved.”

In the conclusion (*Most Evil*, 281-2), I wrote:

...As a homicide investigator who has been called upon to collect sufficient evidence to press formal charges and ultimately convince a jury, I realize that the chain of evidence linking my father to Zodiac and the Chicago Lipstick murders is largely circumstantial. But, as was found in the case of the Black Dahlia investigation, I believe that detectives possess and are still holding forensic evidence that links Dr. Hodel to the Zodiac killings and possibly even to one or more of the sixty-year-old Chicago “Lipstick Murders.”

...As with Black Dahlia Avenger, I expect new witnesses will come forward, new evidence will come to light, new links will be established.

Here, I present the anticipated new witnesses, new evidence, and new linkage.

The new findings are dramatic and compelling and, for most readers (my jury), I believe they will likely move them across the evidentiary threshold from *Most Evil*'s strong circumstantial case to “beyond a reasonable doubt,” which is the proof required to arrive at a guilty verdict.

As I write this introduction it is August 2015.

In November of 2014, I mailed letters to the concerned law enforcement agencies (San Francisco Police Department, Solano and Napa Sheriffs, and Vallejo Police Department) requesting a confidential meeting with their cold case detectives.

In that letter, I offered to present, on my time and my dime, a three-hour PowerPoint presentation to provide them with an overview of all of the evidence that I believe links my father, Dr. George Hill Hodel, to their unsolved crimes—collectively known as the Zodiac Murders.

My purpose was to convince law enforcement to proceed with an attempt to obtain confirmed Zodiac DNA.

I originally made this offer (absent the new and increasingly compelling evidence found in this edition) back in 2009. At that time, I informed law enforcement that I was in possession of my father’s full DNA profile and it was available for comparison when and if they obtained a confirmed Zodiac DNA sample.

The general public, along with a few self-appointed Zodiac “experts” and most journalists, remains under the impression that Zodiac DNA exists and that various suspects have been eliminated because their DNA did not match that of the actual suspect.

These “eliminations,” seen in some crime documentaries and news bulletins, are not coming from official police sources. Why? Because the investigating officers know that the partial DNA samples in their possession remain unconfirmed and cannot be represented as actual Zodiac DNA.

My request to brief detectives in the following month or two had but one purpose—to convince them that there exists a strong likelihood that they can solve and clear five cold case murders and two cold case attempted murders by simply obtaining Zodiac DNA.

It was my hope that at least one of the four jurisdictions would take the necessary step to reexamine the two dozen or more as-yet-untested pieces of Zodiac evidence and obtain that confirmed DNA.

If they had succeeded in obtaining actual DNA, then those samples can be compared to the full DNA profile that is in my possession and include or exclude George Hill Hodel as the Zodiac Killer.

In the chapters that follow I continue to build on the existing circumstantial evidence linking Dr. George Hill Hodel to Zodiac.

However, it is not until a closing chapter of this book, with its decryption of the original Zodiac cipher, that we are presented with Zodiac's Rosetta stone.

So confident that he was a master criminal with what he considered an absolutely "crackproof" coded cipher, the megalomaniac Zodiac codified his signature using his real name.

The following investigation picks up where I left off with the publication of *Most Evil* in 2009.

—*Steve Hodel*

August 2015

