

Excerpted from *Black Dahlia Avenger III* (Rare Bird Books Nov. 2018)  
Chapter 6- Tamar Nais Hodel (1935-2015) -pages 137-143

...

Here, again in her own words, unabridged, is the overview of her life she sent to me, along with a second follow-up email with the names of the people and acquaintances that played a role, large or small, in her amazing life.

**Steve**

---

**From:** "Tamar" <Tamar@hawaii.rr.com>  
**To:** "Steve Hodel" <steve.hodel@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 12, 2004 10:22 PM  
**Subject:** FEEDBACK PLEASE

*An overview...of my project.*

*I am writing an Autobiography in three parts titled "The Tamar Chronicles"*

*Book One will cover my early and quite interesting childhood growing up in the North Beach Bohemian sector of Beautiful San Francisco in 1935 ...leading into a life changing experience after going to live in Los Angeles with my Father Dr. George Hodel... and my Brothers Michael, Steven and Kelly (and my Beautiful Step-Mother Dorero ) at 5121 Franklin Avenue...Lloyd Wright's Mayan Temple Edifice in Old Hollywood.*

*A most intense and quite unusual two-years followed at the Franklin House prior to my running away from my father ...in 1949 ..and being catapulted into newspaper headlines in an infamous incest trial... appearing in LA Confidential and Keyhole magazines, etc. available throughout the U.S.*

*(This part of the story has been partially covered in My brother Steven's recently published book "Black Dahlia Avenger" by Steven Hodel..exposing my father as a serial killer... misogynist and the person responsible for the murder of "The Black Dahlia")*

*Life as I knew it... totally shattered.*

*My Father was defended shamelessly by Attorney Jerry Giesler and Robert Neeb... "All a Fantasy of a young girl" ! A smear campaign was created and I was labeled inaccurately as a liar and a "bad seed" .*

*At the close of the court trial and my father's acquittal ...I was transferred from The Los Angeles Juvenile Hall to San Francisco Juvenile Hall as a Ward of the Court ...suddenly I had become the criminal...without committing a crime!*

*I was incarcerated for almost one year. The system had no idea where to place me...In the end...I was released to my Mother in San Francisco...the*

*first day home I walked across the street to see my childhood friend David age 15, and as I approached...I was startled to hear his Mother call out to him not to speak to me...telling me "to get away from her son...You Whore...You Whore"!!! He did not even speak...I returned home...shocked and confused...later that day David slipped away from his Mother's watchful eye to tell me that the case had been in all the newspapers and Sex Magazines...that I was a Scandal !! Considered to be A Very BAAAAAD Girl...He asked me to meet him at his friends home nearby that evening so that he might show me the news clippings and magazines...I arrived at his friends house... (a bachelor, about 25 years of age)...who kept me supplied with good tasting drinks ( I learned later that I was being given Sloe Gin in mixed drinks)...I drank and waited...no David...finally I passed out and awakened to being raped by his friend...as soon as I could walk...I went home..and soon discovered that I was pregnant!!!*

*Still a ward of the court...a Baaaaaad Girl*

*and pregnant...I asked my Mother for help...She refused to help saying "she would not help ... not after what I had done to my Father !!"*

*That I should take care of it on my own !*

*Wow!*

*A long series of painful attempts "to handle my pregnancy on my own " followed...all unsuccessful. That is a whole chapter to itself...*

*My Mother turned me into the court as a runaway...I had not ...I was simply trying "to take care of it myself as instructed " At the final point of this effort...too many people were becoming involved that could be hurt for helping me...including Gus Hall the distinguished leader of The Communist Party*

*Rather than endanger any others...I turned myself into The Juvenile Court.*

*A very kind and loving Black man tried to help me...offered to marry me...which he thought would ..give me my freedom as an adult...the court said no...it was actually illegal at that time in California !*

*By the time that I was about two months pregnant..I was placed in an Unwed Mother's Home...and although my pregnancy was truly an unwanted one...my baby became the only family that I had in the world...and I wanted so very much to keep her...I was informed that would not be possible...unless my Mother agreed to be responsible...As they*

*assumed that the father of my child was black (due to my friend who asked permission to marry me)...and...All my heroes were black...( I was not favorably impressed with the white race... I had been very shocked by the way I saw blacks being treated at Juvenile Hall...( I was embarrassed to be white ) and I was also surprised by the fact that most of the beautiful black girls...had no idea that they were beautiful) Sooooooooooooo as they thought that the baby's father was black, I continued to allow them to think so. Understanding that I would not be allowed to keep her...I wanted her to be in a loving environment. At that time (1950) I naively thought just being in a black family would accomplish this..*

*When she was born, I did not get to hold her ...I was only allowed to see her through a glass window in the arms of a nun...and as I looked at her trying to project my absolute helplessness at the whole turn of events...she flashed an accusing look of betrayal.*

*I was not to look into her eyes again until 20 years later, when we were reunited in Honolulu. She (Fauna) has made a film about her long search for her mother... and growing up white in a black family, called "Pretty Hattie's Baby" with Alfre Woodard, Charles Dutton, Jill Clayburgh, Tess Harper, Bobby Hosea and Allison Elliot.*

*After Fauna's birth, I was whisked away to Mexico City "to forget". I was told that I must never attempt to find my daughter, that she had been adopted by two wealthy Interracial Artists...and that I must never interfere.*

*At the time I believed my Mother...however as it turned out my Mother actually had her given to a maid at The Silver Dollar Hotel in Reno Nevada !!*

*In Mexico City in 1951 ...I met a dazzling array of Artists including Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo... had bit parts in two films with Jorge Mistral "La Bestia Magnifica" and "La Mujer Que Tu Quieres"...met and married*

*( divorcing two years later) a handsome Negro-Art Student when I was 16...During that time I traveled to New York City and met and fell in love with the man I would love a l l l l l l l l l l the days of my life... (to this very day even though sadly he left the body in 1969 ) the beautiful and noble Josh White...Folk Singer and Story Teller and Civil Rights spokesman par Excellence..*

*I returned to Mexico City...divorced my first husband and moved back to San Francisco*

*at age 18.*

*In San Francisco I met and married Stan Wilson, (Folk Singer and part owner of the famed "Hungry i") The Place To Gather if you were young, intelligent and hip.*

*I had my second daughter with Stan named Deborah ( she later changed her named to Fauna also ,...thinking at the time that we had no way to find her sister. When she found us in Honolulu... in 1973 they became Fauna I and Fauna II.)*

*There was in the 1950's a delightful and interesting group in the then Bohemian North Beach, San Francisco...Maya Angelou ..The Smothers Brothers, Lenny Bruce, Mort Sahl, Phyllis Diller, Odetta Felious, Bud and Travis ...and many more who were part of the Music and Art Scene in California...a very deep and interesting time.*

*There were many adventures and challenges traveling "On The Road" with Stan. it was considered quite scandalous and shocking in the 1950's for a Black man and a White woman to marry..*

*Buying the Lime Lighter and Cosmo Alley from Herb Cohen and Theodore Bikel and inheriting Les McCann and Gene McDaniels.*

*And Paul Mazursky.*

*Book Two..will continue with Michelle Phillips ..Uniting with my father again...and many more adventures all the way through the 60's with Dick Gregory and Scott Mackenzie and Lenny Bruce ...The Flower children days ...Michelle and John Phillips ...Timothy Leary ...moving to Honolulu and giving birth to my three sons...Peace on Earth, Joy To The World and Love.*

*Book Three...will cover the 70's, 80's and 90's in Honolulu ...and ...Now.*

Tamar's second email contained the long list of names.

From: "Tamar"

To: Steve Hodel

Sent: January 12, 2004

Subject: PARTIAL LIST OF CHARACTERS SO FAR (AS I THINK OF THEM)

*(Tamar in her email inadvertently repeated several names)*

Robinson Jeffers	Fauna
Eleanor Roosevelt	Mexico City
Paul Robeson	Jose Gutierrez
Marion Anderson	William Byers
The Ballet Theatre	John Wilson
The Ballet Russe	Vernon
Leonide Massine	Michelle and Russell Gilliam (Phillips)
Alexander Danilov	Gil Gilliam
Alexander Oumansky	Frida Kahlo
Dr. George Hill Hodel	Diego Rivera
John Huston	Elizabeth Catlett
Dorero	Apollo Theatre
Man Ray	Josh White
Fred Sexton	Dizzy Gillespie
Kiyo	Duke Ellington
Tim Holt	The Theresa Hotel
Jerry Giesler	John D. Thomas
LA Confidential	Harlem
SF District Attorney	
Hot Lips Page	Cosmo Alley
Mexico City	Paul Mazursky
San Francisco	Leon Bibb
Los Angeles	Michelle Gilliam Phillips (again)
Dr. Charles White	and Kelly
Joe Adams	John Hawker
Billy Ekstine	Gogi Grant
June Ekstine	Ketty Lester
Trini Lopez	Kitty White
Faith Petric Craig	The Renaissance (LA)

Billy Daniels	Dick Gregory
Hungry I	Langston Hughes
Stan Wilson	Scott McKenzie
Deborah Elizabeth Wilson	The Journeymen
Enrico Banducci	John Phillips
Mort Sahl	The Church Catolico
Maya Angelou	(St. Peters and Pauls)
Tommy and Dick Smothers	Father John Hester
Phyllis Diller	The Mamas and the Papas
Harry Belafonte	George Harrison
Earth Kitt	Dr. Paul Fleiss
Professor Irwin Corey	Warren Beatty
Frank Werber	Wendy
Harry Smith	Tex Watson
The Gateway Singers	The Rathskellar
The Limelighters	Harvey Ragsdale
The Purple Onion	The Kingston Trio
Billy Holiday	Theodore Bikel
Honolulu	Skip Weshner
Tempest Storm	Susan Oliver
Lenny Bruce and Honey	Steve McQueen
The Clouds	Sally Kellerman
Doris Duke	The Lamplighter
Liberace	Les McCann
Peggy Lee	Gene McDaniels
Tom Moffatt	

### *So Many Secrets*

Tamar's list of names included her short-lived marriage as a teenager to William Byers, in Mexico, which she had informed me, was "to get away from her mother." A cursory check of Byers' name revealed a *Jet Magazine* article from March 1953, which documents a despondent Tamar had attempted suicide by pills.

True to the times, the married couple are described as "her Negro husband" and Tamar as "a twenty-three-year-old White student."



### Student's White Wife Tries Suicide In Mexico

Desperate after her first quarrel with her Negro husband of less than a year, Tamar Hodel Byers, 23-year-old white student at Mexico City College, took a heavy dose of sleeping pills in an attempt to commit suicide. William Charles Byers found his wife unconscious in their Mexico City home, rushed her to a hospital where emergency treatment saved her life. Byers, a native of Washington, D. C., now studying in Mexico under the GI Bill, said he and his wife had been "perfectly happy," could give no reason for her suicide attempt.

