

FAQ 3

3.1

Q: I'm confused on how the LAPD Chief Thad Brown photograph taken with you as a rookie police officer connects to the Black Dahlia murder. Can you explain it?

1966 In front of---Parker Center "The Glass House"



Steve Hodel Chief Thad Brown

Yes. The above photograph was taken in 1966, in front of what was then known as the LAPD's, Police Administration Building. (Shortly after it was renamed **Parker Center** in honor of Chief William H. Parker.) Immediately after Parker's death in 1966, then Chief of Detectives, Thad Brown was named as Los Angeles' interim chief of police. (This is common for a high-ranking officer to be selected and assume command, while other staff officers prepare to compete for the exam, orals and permanent selection.)

In 1966 I was a rookie officer working Hollywood Patrol and was sent, along with a dozen other officers from Hollywood, to attend Thad Brown's swearing in ceremony in the police auditorium.

Immediately after the ceremony, a photographer approached me as I was walking out the front door and asked, "Would you like to have your picture taken with the new chief?" Surprised and honored I readily agreed and Chief Brown smiled as we walked out in front of the building where this photograph was taken. About three weeks later, I received this copy through the Inter-Department mails. I threw it in a box and forgot about it

The photo had no real meaning or significance to me, other than the obvious honor of being with the chief. However, we now know it had tremendous meaning and import to Thad Brown. He knew then, what I would not discover for another 35-years. Thad Brown KNEW I was the son of the Black Dahlia killer, and it is obvious he just could not resist the "photo-op". It would not be until after the completion of my investigation and the publication of my book, that we would learn from an LAPD reserve officer about the conversation between Thad Brown and actor Jack Webb, his close friend who played, LAPD's Sgt. Joe Friday. **In that confidential conversation Thad Brown discloses to Jack Webb, "We know who killed the Black Dahlia. The case was solved. It was a doctor in Hollywood, who lived on Franklin Avenue."** This was Chief Brown's independent and separate confirmation of what we discovered from the D.A. DAHLIA/HODEL Files. Those files opened in 2003 as a result of my investigation, revealed Dr. George Hodel to be the prime Black Dahlia suspect as of late-1949.

3.2

Q: Is your ex-wife KIYO still alive? Do you think she knew about your father and Elizabeth Short? Why was Kiyo's picture still in your father's photo album with Elizabeth Short and other family members?

No, Kiyo died from cancer, about ten-years after our divorce in 1965.

I welcome your question, as it affords me the opportunity to clarify the dynamics of what some readers perceive to have been a Wife-Father-Son "triangle." In fact, it was nothing of the sort. Strange and mysterious—yes. Adulterous- not really. It was more like something out of a Greek Tragedy, where the gods needed to have a good laugh. Here is how it unfolded.

In 1941, shortly after the start of the war, Dr. George Hodel approached a beautiful young Eurasian woman on a street corner in Hollywood. She was waiting for a bus. It was Kiyo, age 20. He informed her he was a physician and a photographer and would love to photograph her and naturally pay her well for her modeling. Kiyo an art student happily agreed. George worked his charm and Kiyo fell in love with him and they had an affair. I was one-year-old at the time. The affair ended, Kiyo married another man (Brook Cuddy, a photographer.) After the war was over, from 1946-1950, both Brook and Kiyo regularly attended parties at the Franklin House. I have no memory or knowledge of ever meeting her at that time.

In the 1950s, Kiyo became an actress doing bit parts in Hollywood films, including Cecil B. De Mille's, *The Ten Commandments* (1956). She divorced Brook Cuddy, and remarried, then divorced her second husband after a few years.

Kiyo clip from Cecil B. DeMille's – *THE TEN COMMANDMENTS* (1956)



Kiyo as Priestess Yul Brynner as Pharaoh Charlton Heston as Moses

In 1961, still in my teens (19) and in the Navy, I met Kiyo at a "Hollywood Party." Always attracted to older, intelligent women, I was totally captivated by her exoticness and sophistication. By then, Kiyo was an "astrologer to the stars", and was teaching both astrology and piano out of

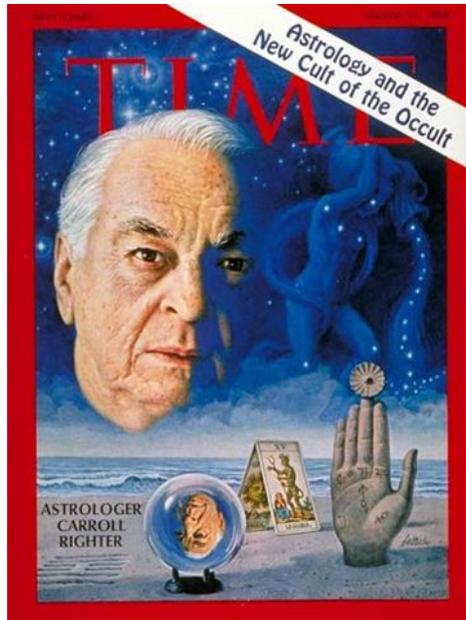
her home in Laurel Canyon, in the Hollywood Hills. (She had been an art/music student at Julliard) When we first met, Kiyo told me she was “28” and looked it. I knew nothing of her “history” other than, “she knew my parents as a young girl.” I had no reason to question her, and very much liked the fact that she was “ten years my senior.” I would not learn her real age (she was actually 20-years older than I) until after our three year marriage ended in 1965. The full story of my life with Kiyo is told in Chapter 10 of BDA.

George Hodel’s private album of loved ones



Photos of Kiyo taken by George Hodel sometime in the 1940s

As to the 1999 discovery of Kiyo’s photo in my father’s private album of loved ones, the “surprise” came not from the fact that they had been lovers, which I learned from my mother, shortly after separating from Kiyo in 1965. That fact while bizarre in itself had been known by me for 35 years and was no “revelation.” The shock came in discovering that her photo was included in my father’s book of “loved ones.” This indicated that what I had always assumed was his “short fling with a beautiful young woman” was in fact-- something much more. To me this indicated- he loved her. Why else would he keep her picture for over fifty years? Like I said, this is the stuff that Greek tragedy is made of.



March 21, 1969

Below is excerpted quote by Kiyoko (seen below) in *TIME MAGAZINE* article of 3/21/69, some four years after our divorce. Described in the article as “a young half-Japanese astrologer” one can see that she certainly looked much younger than her actual age of 48.

...

The young, too, are exploiting the boom, although less cynically. A California rock group called The Fool has recorded several zodiacal songs—not because they believe only in astrology, but because they feel generally tuned in to the entire occult world (the Fool is the card in the fortunetelling Tarot deck that stands for Man). “This is a very brilliant generation,” says Kiyoko, a young half-Japanese astrologer who works mostly among pop groups and folk singers. “They’re interested in astrology because they’ve found the material things failing them, and they’re trying to find their souls.” In Manhattan, one of the brightest young astrologers is 28-year-old Barbara Birdfeather, who is writing a column for *Eye* magazine and draws private clients from the under-30 set.



TIME, MARCH 21, 1969

- **SKH Update-** One of my not so musically challenged readers has informed me that the “client seen in the above photo with Kiyoko in 1969 is NEIL YOUNG. Neil’s planets must have been remarkably aligned as by 2008 he has sold over 79 million albums.

3.3

Q: What do you think of the other theories and suspects and what about the latest book that say's that gangster Bugsy Siegel and his gang killed Elizabeth Short?

I have made it my policy not to comment on other authors "theories." My position is that my investigation is not just another theory. In 2003, Los Angeles County Head Deputy D.A. Stephen Kay, then an active high-level prosecutor, personally briefed the LAPD high-command and Robbery Homicide detectives at Parker Center and informed them it was his studied opinion that the "Black Dahlia case was solved, and Dr. George Hodel was the killer." (Prosecutor Kay remained active for another three-year and retired in 2005, after 38 years of dedicated service. Steve Kay was one of the most respected prosecutors ever to serve Los Angeles County.) In November, 2004, LAPD Robbery-Homicide detectives claimed they could not clear the Black Dahlia case because the evidence "had disappeared, George Hodel's fingerprints were missing, and no DNA exists to make a comparison." Speaking as a homicide supervisor, I can assure you LAPD's past or present policy has never required that DNA evidence be a prerequisite for a murder clearance. (Neither are detectives required to get an official finding from the DA to clear any unsolved murder, which In this case they had.)

As to recent publications, which claim to present official DA FILE documents I will make a generic statement. I would simply caution readers to be very careful in what is presented as "facts". Many of the purported DA documents are not what they appear to be. They have been cut-and-pasted, and edited, with whole paragraphs removed, which totally alter the witness statements and facts as presented in the original 1947-1950 documents. Complete interviews are altered to where the actions and statements of one witness are attributed to another. A "black sedan" belonging to one witness, through alteration and removal of certain statements becomes the property of another, and then claimed to be the Dahlia suspect vehicle.

In one of the writer's most egregious omissions, the name George Hodel is completely removed from the DA FILES where in the original DA document he is listed as one of the top five suspects. By omitting his name, the author is then free to, and does make the claim that none of the D.A.'s top suspects could have committed the crime since none of them possessed the necessary medical expertise.

In December, 1949, D.A. investigator Lt. Frank Jemison on page 3 of his original investigative summary (about to be presented to the 1949 Grand Jury) writes that there are 107 remaining suspects and that of those 107 suspects his investigation now shows that:

"After examination of the files and evidence it appears that the investigative effort should be continued and concentrated on the following suspects:

**Leslie Dillon – Mark Hanson – Carl Balsiger – Glen Wolfe – Henry Hubert Hoffman and
Dr. George Hodel"**

Original DA FILE document listing George Hodel

-3-

had been indexed for filing. It is now estimated that these reports will be indexed and filed by Thursday morning, November 3, 1949. These records and reports deal primarily with the investigation of suspect Dillon. It was further found that there were approximately two thousand two hundred documents being records, reports and statements and correspondence of the Homicide Division which had been filed in order and indexed. However, due to the fact that the Homicide Division and Sgt. F. A. Brown could not secure the assistance of any stenographers and filing clerks, no indexing or filing had been done on these documents since December, 1948. These documents number approximately five hundred and twenty eight and have yet to be indexed and filed. It is estimated by Sally Scott, a file clerk, that it would take approximately six more weeks to complete the work on these five hundred and twenty eight documents.

On October 26, 1949 Chief of Police William A. Worton assigned two stenographers to assist this file clerk in indexing. It seems that hundreds of police officers have worked on this case and as a result some of these officers did not bring to a conclusion some of the loose ends of their investigations. There has been a tremendous amount of investigation work done on this case as reflected by the officers reports, statements and correspondence. Captain Harry Elliott in charge of the Homicide Division stated that there has been more work done on this case than any other murder case in the history of the LAPD. Sgt. F. A. Brown and Sgt. Harry Hanson have done most of the work on this investigation having been assigned ever since the case of the murder and in spite of their being handicapped by the lack of clerical assistance and lack of expense money with which to travel they have kept their records in fair order and have made a comprehensive investigation and as indicated by their reports they brought most of their check-outs on suspects and investigations to a conclusion as nearly as possible. However, due to the lack of coordination of effort and the lack of proper correlation of records, reports, statements and correspondence on the part of the Administrative Division of the LAPD it appears that there is much work yet to be done on this case and at least fifty persons remain that should be interviewed and there are at least twenty-five more persons that should be requestioned. There have been three hundred and sixteen suspects fifty of whom have been arrested, (Not always charged with murder.) and later released. On the date of this report there are one hundred and seven remaining possible suspects after a definite elimination of two hundred and nine suspects. There have been nineteen suspects who have confessed to the murder of Elizabeth Short.

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The below documents are shown in comparison. Document A is from the L.A. D.A. BLACK DAHLIA FILES and was obtained by me in 2003. It is a true copy and is unaltered. Document B is a copy of the same document, recently published and the first paragraph has been removed. (Note that it is not simply omitted, but rather carefully cut out and removed.) Why?

Because it presents LAPD detectives statements that contradict the writer's position along with factual findings that diminish the "Dahlia Myth" which he does not want made public. The missing paragraph as originally written by LAPD in their report-- reads:

"This case is better known as the Black Dahlia Murder which pseudonym was bestowed upon the victim by the newspapers and was not ever an alias of the victim in life."

Unless you were in possession of the original document, you would never know that he has "sanitized" it for his own purposes. Fortunately, I have the original documents from the files.

A-Unaltered DA File doc.

SUMMARY OF THE ELIZABETH (BETH) SHORT MURDER INVESTIGATION

This case is better known as the Black Dahlia Murder which pseudonym was bestowed upon the victim by the newspapers and was not ever an alias of the victim in life.

At 11:05AM, January 15, 1947, a call was received by the Complaint Board from a woman who did not identify herself that there was a man down in a vacant lot on Norton Avenue between 39th Street and Coliseum in the middle of the block, west side.

At 11:07AM, a radio car was dispatched to the scene, officers F. S. Perkins, #4057, and W. E. Fitzgerald, #3940, who found the body and called the University Detective Division. Officers S. J. Lambert, #2359, and J. W. Haskins, #892, responded to the call.

Capt. Jack Donahoe, Homicide Division, was notified. The call car was out on a natural dead body on Westmoreland Avenue so officer Marty J. Fynn, Homicide Division, was dispatched to the scene. Capt. Donahoe then telephoned the address where the call car, operated by Sgt. F. A. Brown, #218, and Harry L. Hansen, #859, of Homicide Division, was located. They responded to the call, arriving at the scene at 11:30AM. Upon the arrival of Sgts. Brown and Hansen who were assigned to the case, they found present officers Perkins and Fitzgerald, Lt. Paul Preston, Det. Lt. Jack Haskins, Sgt. Fynn and Vaughn, Forensic Chemist Ray Pinker, photographer Laurson from Sci. Investigation Division, and representatives and photographers from the newspapers. Pictures had been taken by the newspapers of the body. They were later joined by Lt. Ieland V. Jones of the Scientific Investigation Division.

The body was that of a white, female, American, approximately 20 years of age, 5'6" tall, weighing 115, brown-reddish hair recently hennaed, green eyes, fingernails bitten down to the quick. The body was nude; there was no jewelry on the body. There were no women's clothes found in the vicinity. The post mortem condition of the body revealed no indication of rigor mortis. The body was lying on its back, head to the north and feet to the south, on the west side of Norton Avenue, approximately 2' west of the sidewalk. The body was just south of a paved driveway approach to this lot which is the first driveway north of the center block fire plug. The body had been cleanly severed at the middle line and the lower half was lying about 1' to the south of the upper half, the upper half being slightly off line to the west of the lower half. Both parts of the body were lying absolutely flat with protruded entrails of the lower half lying under the buttock. There was a marked post mortem lividity on the top side of both parts indicating that the deceased had lain on her front side or face for some period of time immediately following death. The body was comparatively free of blood stains or smears which indicated it had been washed off some time after death. There were several fibres which were recovered and turned over to Mr. Pinker, which appeared to be bristles from a stiff brush. (Later identified as cocoa fibres by Scientific Investigation Division.) These were adhered to the body, particularly in the pubic region and points of mutilation which included several lacerations on the forehead which appeared to have been inflicted by a blunt instrument; laceration left breast; laceration right breast, top of which appeared to have been removed.

B-"Edited" DA File doc.

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3.4

Q: In your book you tell us that as a young officer two of your heroes on LAPD were Chief William Parker and Chief of Detectives Thad Brown. Were there any others?

I knew and worked with many highly dedicated and decorated cops over the decades. Dozens of names come to mind. Men and women who served in silence. Unsung heroes. Most are long retired, and many have passed on. There is one, in my eyes, who stands a little taller and straighter than the rest—Detective III Russell Lee Kuster. At Hollywood Homicide, during the 1970s and 1980s, Russ was my friend and partner, and later promoted to Detective III and became my supervisor.

LAPD HOLLYWOOD DETECTIVES circa 1972



Old Hollywood Police Station and Hollywood Receiving Hospital circa 1969. *Ironically*, this station, my and Russ Kuster's duty assignment for 17 years, was the same police station where in 1950, a total of 18 LAPD and DA investigators were "staked out" -- 24-7, listening to, and recording, Dr. George Hodel's conversations. Telephone lines were leased and ran from our Franklin House to the basement of this police station, a distance of-- 2 ½ miles. The six-week surveillance (Feb 18-March 27, 1950) ended abruptly, only because George Hodel fled the country, leaving the detectives with their bugs and microphones still concealed inside the residence walls. The DA/Hodel File consists of 146 typed pages of summarized conversations from over one-thousand man hours of police surveillance.

Four years after my 1986 retirement, Russ was off-duty, about to have dinner at a Hollywood Hills restaurant, when Bela Marko, a parolee with a history of violence, armed with a laser-sighted 9mm automatic, became enraged after an argument with the restaurant owner. After being informed that Russ was a police detective, Marko without warning, turned and fired six shots, striking Russ in the upper chest and heart. Though mortally wounded, Russ managed to pull out his service revolver, and return fire, also striking the suspect in the chest. Within minutes, both men lay dead on the floor.. On October 10, 1990, (my father's birthday) I got the early morning phone call that no cop ever wants to receive. It was from Hollywood Detectives, informing me of my ex-partner's murder.

Here is the story as told in the *Los Angeles Times*:



Final Goodby for a 'Cop's Cop'

Police: More than 1,500 attend services for Detective Russell Kuster. He is remembered as a man with 'a real sense of strength.'

By BETTINA BOXALL, TIMES STAFF WRITER

More than 1,500 strong, Los Angeles police gathered on a cemetery hill Monday to pay final tribute to Russell Kuster, a much-loved veteran Hollywood detective killed just months before his retirement in an off-duty shoot-out with a career criminal who was waving a gun inside one of Kuster's favorite hangouts.

In plainclothes and blue patrol uniforms, in helicopters and on horseback and motorcycle, Kuster's fellow officers came to honor him for two hours of ritual and teary-eyed remembrance.

Whether they knew him or had only heard of him, they extolled him as a simple farm boy from Indiana who, in the midst of the sleaze and glitz of Hollywood, remained ever a "man's man, a cop's cop and a Marine's Marine."

"His strong, silent nature gave a real sense of strength, a real sense of character," police Chaplain Jerry Powell said as he delivered the eulogy to the large, somber crowd, which included Mayor Tom Bradley, Police Chief Daryl P. Gates, County Sheriff Sherman Block and City Councilman John Ferraro.

"I guess you could say he was a stand-up sort of guy, someone who could take a hit and keep on coming. Someone who could take criticism and not let that criticism go to someone else around him," Powell said under a cover of gray haze that gradually yielded to the sun.

After nearly 25 years on the force, Kuster, 50, was one of the city's most experienced homicide detectives, a veteran of celebrated and sensational cases and head of his division's homicide squad.

Like so many of Los Angeles' murders, Kuster's was a sense-

Please see KUSTER, B7



Los Angeles Times

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1990

A Somber Service

Gorbachev W Nobel Peace F

Award: Soviet leader cited for helping e and forging change in Europe. Bush lauds

By MICHAEL PARKS, TIMES STAFF WRITER

MOSCOW—Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev Nobel Peace Prize on Monday for his role in ending the historic changes in Europe and promoting international peace.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee, announcing the 1990 Peace Prize to Gorbachev, praised Gorbachev for his leading role in the peace process which made characteristic important parts of the international movement.

Gorbachev's contributions to world peace in the five years that he has led the Soviet Union have been "many and diverse," the committee said. It cited the dramatic, unprecedented independence and free the democratization of Eastern Europe, the resolution of a number of regional conflicts and major moves toward disarmament.

Although Gorbachev has already received many peace prizes and been credited widely with the growing international desire, the Nobel award recognizes the historic nature of the changes now under way and the unique role that Gorbachev has played in this reshaping of world politics.

Soviet Gets 'H Award'

By ELIZABETH GARDNER, TIMES STAFF WRITER

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Detective Russell Kuster



Memorial buttons worn by mourners at Russ Kuster's funeral.

Five days later, I was in Los Angeles, attending Russ' funeral. My below eulogy, faxed to Hollywood Detectives on the morning after his murder, was read at Russ' memorial. Russell Lee Kuster, "a cop's cop", was one of LAPD's greatest detectives, a proud professional, he inspired all who were privileged to know him. May he R.I.P.

Los Angeles Police Department
Hollywood Detectives
October 10, 1990

Dear Friends:

It was with great shock and sadness that I received the news of Russ's death this morning. As most of you know Russell Lee was a very large part of my life (both professional and personal) during my 14 years at Hollywood Homicide. As my partner and then my supervisor he, more than any other individual, influenced my career. And what a privilege influenced that was for me! Russ possessed a rare and wonderful blend of skill, professionalism and dedication. He was always there when the need arose. For friend and victim alike he was there to help. His strong firm Midwest beliefs fortified his faith in Justice and impassioned his drive and insistence that all Hollywood murders be solved

How many times do we all remember his year end admonition that, "85 % clearance rate is not good enough." How many times do we all remember during "slow" months, Russ's insistence on pulling out the unsolved books and finding the answers he knew were there and had been overlooked by us due to busier times?

Russell Lee Kuster was one of a kind. Like his heroes, John Wayne and General George Patton. Russ was an individual who never wavered in his personal beliefs. You always knew where he stood. This was true if you were a probationer at your first crime scene, or if you were a deputy chief at your 500th.

My heart goes out to all of you at Hollywood Detectives in these hours of grief. Cherish, as I do the fun and tragic times you had with this man. Cherish and remember the spirit of dedication he proudly exemplified. And finally, smile in remembrance that Russ in his final moments made sure that Los Angeles would not be burdened with another "whodunit" as he sent the "Son-Of-A-Bitch" to hell.

Love in Brotherhood
Steve Hodel LAPD Retired

Take care "Roy"

Link to the **Officer Down Memorial**

page <http://www.odmp.org/reflections.php?oid=127>

2006 LAPD Hollywood Division Memorial Hollywood Blvd & La Brea

