

## **FAQ 68**

(March 3, 2008)

### **68.1**

**Q: In BDA you mention you were involved in the 1981 high-profile LAPD murder investigation of Kazuyoshi Miura, who has recently been arrested by LAPD on a warrant and is awaiting trial in Los Angeles. When will that trial begin?**

You are referring to what the Japanese Media has dubbed “The Los Angeles Suspicions Case.” I was not involved in the original 1981 investigation, but after retirement, I was called to assist in the defense investigation of a man on trial in Japan, (Mr. Yoshikuni Okubo) who Tokyo prosecutors suspected might be a possible accomplice in the shooting of Mr. Miura’s wife, Kazumi. (The original 1981 shooting occurred in downtown Los Angeles.)

Over a period of three-years (1991-1994) through witness interviews and forensics I was able to establish his innocence, and after five long years of imprisonment in a Tokyo detention facility, Mr. Okubo was found “not guilty” and released from custody, to be reunited with his wife and children.

What made this investigation historically unique was the fact that it was the first time that a murder trial had been conducted in Japan for a crime that occurred in the U.S.

See Los Angeles criminal defense attorney, Gerson S. Horn’s, press release (below) dated- April 1, 1994 for details.

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LAW OFFICE OF GERSON HORN ESQ.)**

**CONTACT: ATTORNEY GERSON HORN      APRIL 1, 1994  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FIVE YEAR PRISON NIGHTMARE ENDS: JAPANESE BUSINESSMAN  
CREDITS L.A. ATTORNEY AND RETIRED L.A.P.D INVESTIGATOR FOR  
HIS RELEASE**

March 31, 1994 will forever be etched as a landmark day for Yoshikuni Okubo. Five years after being imprisoned in Japan and charged as an accomplice in a highly publicized Los Angeles murder, Okubo was set free by a Tokyo tribunal after being found "not guilty".

The unprecedented trial, labeled the "L.A. Suspicious Case" by the Japanese press, gained headlines in 1981 when Japanese businessman Kazuyoshi Miura and his wife, Kazumi, were boldly shot in broad daylight in downtown Los Angeles, CA. Kazuyoshi received a gunshot wound to the leg. His wife, shot in the head, remained in a coma for a year before her death in December 1982. The case quickly turned into a media event with international proportions. Miura publicly condemned Los Angeles as being a dangerous and violent place, and returned to Japan where he received celebrity status for his courage in speaking out and warning the Japanese public of the dangers of travelling to L.A.

The seemingly random act of violence theory was suddenly called into question in March of 1984 when the Japanese press unveiled a criminal history in Miura's past, and possible motivation for his wife's murder.

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**JAPANESE BUSINESSMAN RELEASED**

Okubo was linked as an accomplice in the murder in October of 1988. At the time of the 1981 murder, Okubo, a graduate of the University of Southern California, was living with his wife and small child in Los Angeles. His connection to Miura was that of a sometimes buyer of goods and products to be exported to Miura's company, Fulham Road Ltd. in Japan.

After 3 years in Japanese detention, Okubo realized that, to prevent his almost certain conviction, he would have to initiate his own defense investigation in Los Angeles. To assist in the U.S. defense, his family hired prominent Los Angeles criminal attorney Gerson Horn. Horn, in turn, engaged the services private- investigator Steven Hodel, a 24-year veteran of the Los Angeles Police Department and retired homicide investigator. Hodel and Horn conducted an exhaustive 2-1/2 year investigation, that refuted most of the circumstantial evidence alleged against Okubo.

Never before in the history of the United States had a murder trial been conducted in Japan for a crime that occurred in the U.S. Convinced of their client's innocence, Horn and Hodel were nonetheless apprehensive about the possible outcome of the trial in Japan, a country with very different laws and procedures, where the conviction rate registers a staggering 99.7%!

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The U.S. investigation was reviewed and analyzed by Okubo's Chief Counsel, Mr. Takuzo Ito, a leading Tokyo based criminal attorney, who had worked on Okubo's defense beginning with his arrest in October, 1988. Mr. Ito, in a brilliant summation made his final defense arguments and presented the defense investigation findings before the tribunal in January, 1994.

Just hours after his release, Okubo called the Bellingham investigator to personally express his gratitude for the superb investigative work Hodel and Horn had done on his behalf.

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