

FAQ 20

[posted 10/12/2006]

20.1

Q: In mid-September you appeared on CNN news and said you believe that one of the two photographs in your father's album was "NOT ELIZABETH SHORT." I have always believed the two photographs were different women. Is there new evidence to prove this?

CNN-ANDERSON COOPER INTERVIEW SEPTEMBER 18, 2006



Author announces on CNN only George Hodel album photo on left is Elizabeth Short



Photo believed to be Elizabeth Short, compared to known crime scene photo of victim. (Lacerations to face covered over by author) Physical evidence [earring] ties this photo taken by George Hodel-- to crime scene.

Yes!

I have just returned from a follow-up investigation **where I conducted an in-person interview with the woman who posed for the original photograph.** *I can now confirm that the woman seen standing by the horse statue, was taken by my father at the Franklin House in late 1946 or 1947. I now know the subject's true identity and how and why that photograph came into being. Further, I now have absolute proof that the woman standing by the statue-- is not Elizabeth Short. She has also personally confirmed to me that she is not the woman seen in the second photograph. (The reclining nude, whom I still believe to be-- Elizabeth Short.)*

Many of my readers and critics have argued that the woman seen in this photograph was not Elizabeth Short, nor was she the second woman (reclining nude). Still others argued that that second woman appears to be Elizabeth Short, and it is their belief that she was either unconscious or dead, when the photo was taken. As reported in my new chapter on forensics, based on the physical evidence (earring) seen in photograph #2, which was later found to have been placed inside her left ear, the evidence links George Hodel to the crime-scene and increases the probability that photograph #2 is in fact—Elizabeth Short, and the victim was either unconscious or dead at the time she was posed and the “trophy” picture was taken.

Many of my readers voiced their opinion that the two photographs were of different women, as specifically relates to photo #1. These latest findings prove them correct and I would like to personally recognize three individuals who made this observation early on: First was my sister, Tamar, who stated she believed the woman in photo #1 appeared to be Asian, and felt she may have met or seen her as a child at the Franklin House. (In the story about to unfold, we shall soon learn how and why she remembered the face, even with eyes closed.) Also, my ex-stepmother, Hortensia Starke, who also believed photo #1 was an Asian acquaintance of George Hodel's from the Franklin House days. Thirdly, is Elizabeth Short's living sister, who apparently, in looking at photo #1, told a third party, “that the woman was not Elizabeth, as she never wore flowers in her hair in that fashion.” My further investigation, some six-years later, has proven each of these three are-- correct.

How were these proofs uncovered?

In September, 2006, CBS television network replayed their previously aired program, *48 HOURS: BLACK DAHLIA CONFIDENTIAL*. By mere happenstance, a woman was flipping the channels and saw photo #1 displayed on her monitor and immediately recognized it as an old family photograph of her grandmother, taken in the 1940s. After the show the granddaughter contacted both the network and me, (through my website), which lead to my immediate investigative follow-up.

Here is how it unfolded. I call it- Maganda's Story.

Maganda's Story

On Monday, October 2, 2006 the fog had lifted early, leaving the small coastal community bathed in bright sunlight. As I pulled my Ford Crown Vic into the restaurant parking-lot, I felt high excitement, knowing the fog surrounding a sixty-year old *mystery photograph* was also --about to lift.

Maganda (not her real name, but one I have selected to protect her privacy, means "Beautiful One" in Tagalog, her native language of the Philippines) was seated at a large open table covered with white linens and fine china. Her two granddaughters were on either side of her, there to protect and support their 91-year-old, "nanny."

Polite introductions were exchanged and Maganda's older granddaughter explained to her that I was the author of a book written about Dr. George Hodel, and was also --his son. Her eye's brightened as she spoke, "You are the son of Dr. Hodel?" I nodded and smiled. "Oh, give me a hug. It was your father who I have to thank for starting me in my career as an actress."

I would spend the next five-hours with Maganda, and her granddaughters, as she shared her incredible life-story. She talked about her life in the Philippines, in Manila, where she and her family were held captive, by the Japanese in a Prisoner-Of-War camp. How, in the mid-1940s, they were finally freed with the liberation of Manila by U.S. troops, and how they were hastily escorted aboard a Navy transport ship, which would bring them to America. Shortly after her arrival in Los Angeles, she met my father, Dr. George Hodel, and would go on to describe their five year association. How, in the early 1950s, she decided to exchange the bright lights of— H O L L Y W O O D and the brand new medium of television, so she could devote herself full time to raising her children.

Now, in her Nineties, Maganda remains alert and happy. She has been kept strong and nourished with the familial love from both her granddaughters,, who held "Nanny's" arms as we conversed. Nearing the end of our talk, Maganda reached into a cardboard box resting by her on the table, and removed two large pictures from a group of sixty-year-old photographs. One was framed, the other was not. She smiled, as she handed them to me. "Here are the two pictures your father took of me at his beautiful home in Hollywood. These pictures were on your father's desk, and they are what got me started in motion pictures."

(copyright 2006)



“Maganda” circa 1947 (copyright 2006)

Both photos taken at the “Franklin House” by Dr. George Hill Hodel

What follows are selected, relevant excerpts of Maganda's incredible story, told in her own words.

Early life:

I was born in the Philippines. My mother was Filipina and taught Spanish. My father was an English professor. When he first saw my mother he said, "I'm going to marry that woman." My parent's romance was love at first sight.

During World War II, my husband and I and our children were kept in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp in Manila. We were there almost six years. Then American soldiers came and freed us. I had my young daughter and my toddler son. They took us straight to the Navy ship and we boarded and came to America. The ship was originally going to go to dock at San Francisco, but there was a world conference, so they came to Los Angeles, to San Pedro harbor instead.¹

Meeting Dr. George Hill Hodel

I met your father through a woman that was raising money for the War Chest to send donations to the Philippines after the war had ended. She was connected somehow with the mayor's office, and also owned a modeling agency. The woman knew George Hodel and suggested that he might want to meet and photograph me. She sent Dr. Hodel a note, and later we met and he photographed me and took these two photographs along with some others. On the one he had me close my eyes and tilt my head downward. I don't know why?

Your father's home was filled with many of these art objects (Maganda pointed to the Chinese horse statue in background of photo) and he wanted to photograph me with each separate art piece. There were many such objects, but it never happened and we just photographed this one.

I don't recall how many times your father took photographs of me. It was a number of times, but my husband was always there. He waited in the interior courtyard, or in his car. Your father and my husband liked each other. My husband was chief engineer for a large aircraft company and your father and he enjoyed talking to each other.

I never attended any parties at your father's house. I was only there during the photographic sessions. Your father was always professional and never said or did anything that would be considered out of line. My husband was always present.

It was because of these two pictures that your father took, that I became an actress and got into motion pictures. The pictures were in a frame on a desk at your father's house. Your father had two important men, patients of his, who he was seeing at his house. He was treating them for some illness or something. The men were high-up in the government of a foreign country. They saw the pictures of me and said, "Who is this? She is perfect for a part in the film we are making." George told them that he had taken the pictures and who I was, and the next thing I know, I had a small part in their film. From there I went on to make many more films and was one of the first actresses to be involved in a television series.

¹ The San Francisco Conference was held on 25 April 1945. Delegates of 50 nations met in San Francisco for the United Nations Conference on International Organization. The delegates drew up the 111-article Charter, which was adopted unanimously on 25 June 1945 in the San Francisco Opera House.

On meeting Tamar Hodel

I never met your mother, or you boys. But, I did meet his daughter, Tamar. She actually stayed with me overnight. It was quite strange. Here is how I recall what happened. Your father called me one night and his voice was quivering. He sounded very upset. He said to me, "Are you alone?" I told him I was. He went on to say, "there has been some trouble and would you mind if my daughter, Tamar stayed with you for some time?" I told him she could, and he sent her over in a taxi cab. Tamar was a young girl, maybe 12 or 13? She arrived in the cab, and was crying. She said, "My daddy was bad to me", but wouldn't tell me what had happened, so I didn't ask anything further. I asked her if she was hungry and she said, "Do you have any milk?" I gave her the milk and put her to bed. I was rubbing her arm, comforting her on the bed, and she said, "It's nice to have a mommy" and I told her, "Well, I can be your mommy." I told her that anytime she had trouble she could talk to me."

George called me early the next morning and told me that "Tamar has to go to school" and for me to, "send her to school in a cab." Tamar refused to go to school, so I told George that I was sending her back to him instead. I then sent her home.

Franklin House connections

I met a few people and recognize some names that you mention, but I never really met any other girls at your father's house. Fred Sexton and Joe Barrett sound familiar. There was an artist friend of your father's that gave me a large wooden sculpture of a pelican. He had made it for some important person in Brentwood, but they decided they didn't want it, so he gave it to me. I still have it at home. It is very large, all carved from one piece of wood. Quite modern. (NB. The artist was most likely Fred Sexton, who as we know, sculpted in wood and carved "The Black Bird" for his friend John Huston, which John used in *The Maltese Falcon*. (1941)

I remember that your father had told me that "he had gotten into some trouble and was going on a long trip." I asked him, "Are you going to get out of it?" He told me, "Oh yes, one of these days I will." Shortly after that he left for the Philippines.

The last contact I had with your father was very strange. He called me from Manila. I was still living in Los Angeles. He asked me, "Do you know of any young women here in the Philippines that I could take pictures of?" I told him, "No, I don't." It was a very strange call, and I felt a bit uncomfortable about it. That was the last I ever heard from your father.

No, I never was invited to any of the parties. No I never met Hortensia. [I show her photo#2, the reclining nude in George Hodel's album, believed to be Elizabeth Short.] No, I do not know who that woman is? No, it is not a picture of me.

Maganda- Robert Cummings connection

During her acting career, Maganda came in contact with many well known actors. I am deliberately excluding mention of her own film/television involvement in order to protect her privacy. However, there was one interesting connection that is relevant to my murder investigation of the actress Jean Spangler, which in my book I classify as a Category I , with what I believe is strong evidence connecting my father to her murder. For that reason, I will include an interesting one-degree-of-separation that came up in my interview with Maganda.

From the late 1940s and into the early 1950s, Maganda knew and occasionally worked with the handsome lead actor, Robert Cummings. Cummings gave her the below autographed photograph circa 1948. (I have deleted her real name on the photo to protect her privacy.)



Inscription reads:

“To my dear friend _____, beautiful, exotic, charming, and I mean very, your friend,
Robert Cummings”

As summarized in my book, Robert Cummings was also friends with actress, Jean Spangler, and was one of the last persons known to have seen her alive. Cummings had a conversation with Spangler at the studio, on October 5, 1949, just two days before her date with an unidentified new boyfriend. Spangler at that time told Cummings, “I have a happy new romance and am having the time of my life.” (Refer to BDA, chapter 24, for the complete linkage to George Hodel, as being this probable “new boyfriend.”) Friends of Jean Spangler’s had seen her the night of her disappearance, standing in front of the Hollywood Ranch Market (across the street from artist Man Ray’s then known residence) with a person they described as, “a clean-cut man in his thirties in a black sedan” Later that same night, Jean was seen arguing with two men inside a popular Hollywood restaurant. George Hodel also was arrested by LAPD for the felony incest charges, involving his teenage daughter, Tamar, just two days before Spangler’s disappearance. He then bailed out of custody on October 6th, just twenty-four hours before actress Jean Spangler was seen dating, and then arguing with the dapper, handsome man from Hollywood. Spangler was last known to be in the company of these two men, when she left the restaurant. The following morning, her purse and identification were found in a Fern Dell Park, just one-half mile from George Hodel’s Franklin House residence. Her body was never located, and her murder was never solved.

I showed a photograph of Jean Spangler to Maganda, who indicated "she looked familiar", and "may have seen her on the studio lot", but that she did not personally know, nor could she specifically identify Jean Spangler from that time period.

While the fact that Robert Cummings was personal friends with both Maganda and Jean Spangler, is interesting, it really provides no direct proof or useable evidence, other than the fact that Maganda is directly and personally connected to both George Hodel and Robert Cummings, with only one degree of separation from victim Jean Spangler.

Despite what some critics claim, I did not pull the Elizabeth Short-Jean Spangler crime linkage "out of a magician's hat like a rabbit." The connection between the two murders was officially made by LAPD and the press some fifty-years before I began my investigation!

This 1949 front page headline is from the *Los Angeles Daily News* and documents the fact that the press and LAPD had immediately identified and were investigating possible connections between the JEAN SPANGLER & ELIZABETH SHORT, "DAHLIA" crimes, despite the fact that the two murders were separated in time-- by nearly three years.

DAILY NEWS, October 11, 1949

