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DATE: May 31, 2003

SUBJECT: DA BLACK DAHLIA TRANSCRIPTS & HODEL FILE

Dear Sandi:

I want to thank your office and specifically, District Attorney Steve Cooley for allowing me permission and access to review the Dahlia/Hodel files. As relates to the Dahlia investigation, DA Cooley has taken the "high-road" and his open and honest cooperation are truly a credit to him and to his high-office.

My eight-hour review of those documents has provided a wealth of additional information, as it relates to the investigation.

The attached pages contain my partial "notes" in researching those DA files and transcripts. In return for your and DA Cooley's assistance, I thought I would share some of those findings, which I have highlighted and summarized into notes.

Again, my sincerest appreciation, for your assistance and cooperation.

Most Respectfully,

Steve Hodel

## NOTES

### **Los Angeles County District Attorney Black Dahlia File & Transcripts**

#### **BLACK DAHLIA AVENGER: INVESTIGATIVE FOLLOW-UP**

Los Angeles, California

By Steve Hodel

Four-years ago, I became privy to personal information that would initiate me on a murder investigation I neither sought nor wanted. As most Angelenos now know, the victim was Elizabeth Short, "The Black Dahlia." The suspect was my father, Dr. George Hill Hodel.

That 500-page murder investigation, along with my documentation, witness statements, photograph exhibits and forensics were submitted by me, in secret, to one of Los Angeles' most respected Head Deputy District attorney's, Stephen Kay. After a month-long review of the investigation, Kay prepared a 5000 word written opinion, which included the following:

I have personally read all of Steve's written account of his father's life and crimes and I have no doubt that his father not only murdered Elizabeth Short (the Black Dahlia) but also murdered Jeanne French less than one month after the Black Dahlia murder. Based on the results of Steve's investigation, I would have no reservations about filing two counts of murder against Dr. George Hodel.

In April, 2003, just two days prior to the public announcement of my findings, *Times* reporter Steve Lopez published two separate articles in his *Points West* column, announcing that DA Steve Cooley had permitted him access to Black Dahlia files that had been locked in a vault and had remained unexamined since 1950. A four-hour examination of these records by Lopez revealed that my father was listed as a Dahlia suspect and had made incriminating statements implicating himself in her murder.

On May 9, 2003, I was granted permission by the DA's Office to personally review the *Dahlia Transcripts*. A total summary of the more than 800 pages of documents is not here possible, but here are some highlights:

- In February and March of 1950, Dr. George Hodel was not a suspect, but rather *the prime-suspect* in the murders of Elizabeth Short and Jeanne French.
- Police lab-technicians secretly installed microphones inside the Hodel residence (hidden in the rooms, not phone taps) and then using Pacific Bell hard lines, ran them from the house to the basement of Hollywood station, a distance of approximately four miles, where detectives monitored and recorded 24-hours a day.
- A total of 18 detectives (10 DA investigators and 8 LAPD detectives) were assigned to the Hodel investigation, and covert electronic surveillance was conducted for forty-days, until my father fled the country on or about March 28, 1950.
- Over *one-thousand* hours of electronic wire-recordings were obtained from the Hodel residence. These tapes were listened to by detectives, but not transcribed. The present existence and whereabouts of these "49 spools" documenting forty-days of conversation are unknown.
- Transcripts contain damning verbatim statements and admissions by Dr. Hodel connecting him to payoffs with law enforcement officials, the murder of Elizabeth Short, statements acknowledging "he's in trouble" along with his immediate intention to flee the U.S. and go to Mexico, where "he would be safe."
- Transcripts revealed that DA investigators in addition to the Black Dahlia and Red Lipstick murders were also investigating the Gladys Kern, and Jeanne Spangler homicides as possibly being connected to the suspect. (All four murders are linked in my investigation, and detailed in my book, *Black Dahlia Avenger*.)

- Documents in the DA file and a witness interview connect Dr. Hodel to a secret thousand-dollar cash payoff to abortionist Charles Smith, who assisted in the abortion of Dr. Hodel's 14-year-old daughter, Tamar. (Payoff occurred at the Hodel residence on December 29, 1949, just five days after Dr. Hodel was acquitted of the incest charges. In this interview of 3/20/50, the witness, Mildred Colby, ex-girlfriend of Charles Smith, provides DA investigators with a detailed accounting of Smith's actions, including the following documented exchange between the witness and DA investigator, Lt. Jemison:

Jemison (to Colby): Did you know that Charlie Smith was a friend of Dr. Hodel's?

Colby: Yes. Smith made frequent trips to San Francisco for tea.

Jemison: Did you know that he has been operating girls from San Francisco for abortions?

Colby: No. But I wouldn't put it past him.

Jemison: Is this a picture of him?

Colby: Yes. That's him all right. Smith said that some day he was going to fix Tamar. He was going to cut a chunk out of the calf of her leg and fry it and eat it in front of her eyes and then puke it up in front of her face.

(Charles Smith was arrested and charged by the DA's office, with Dr. Ballard in 1949, for assisting in performing the abortion of Tamar Hodel, but the case was later dismissed after Dr. Hodel's "acquittal" on the incest charges.)

- Documents in the file and witness statements connect Dr. Hodel to the drugging and superficial slicing of a young woman's wrists (Lillian Lenorak, his former-girlfriend) at the Hodel residence, in an effort to make it appear

she attempted suicide, and was emotionally unstable. This same woman had been previously interviewed by DA investigators and positively identified a photograph of Elizabeth (Black Dahlia) Short as being the girlfriend of Dr. Hodel and indicated they frequented the Biltmore Hotel together.

- Finally, DA investigator, Lt. Frank Jemison after being ordered to close out the Dahlia case file writes the following:

The undersigned advised Deputy Chief Thad Brown of this and it was agreed that the case would never be assumed by the District Attorneys office, that all the files and evidence would remain with the Los Angeles Police Department Homicide Division, (emphasis mine) and that temporarily, undersigned would assist in this investigation. Chief of Police Worton, when interviewed approved this plan. Copies of all statements and reports were given the Los Angeles Police Department for their files. See reports and statements for names of various officers working with undersigned. On October 3, 1950, the Grand Jury apparently had lost interest in these murders as they had not summoned undersigned for progress reports and Chief of the Bureau of Investigation, H. Leo Stanley advised the closing of the investigation.

CLOSED

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Lt. Frank B. Jemison, Investigator

The absence from LAPD files of any and all of these DA reports which connect Dr. George Hodel as the prime-suspect in the murder of Elizabeth Short and Jeanne French, support my allegations that the information was removed and all LAPD files were "sanitized."

Steve Hodel, Author of *Black Dahlia Avenger*  
May 26, 2003