George Hodel, Surgical Experience and Practice

Mark Nelson and Sarah Hudson Bayliss February 28, 2006

George Hodel attended medical school at the University of California San Francisco from 1932 to 1935. He interned at San Francisco General Hospital from 1935 to 1936. Hodel's UCSF transcripts record the successful completion of 766 hours of surgical practice as well as his assistance with fifty-three surgeries and twelve autopsies. The degree of Medical Doctor was conferred upon him on May 23, 1936. From the mid-1940s until his departure for Hawaii in early 1950, George Hodel was a specialist who maintained three practices simultaneously. His private practice was in the Roosevelt Building, 727 W. 7th St., Suite 1242, Los Angeles, CA 90012. He also took appointments at the First Street Medical Clinic, 369 East 1st St., Los Angeles, CA 90012, and at the Los Angeles County Health Department. Though Hodel's primary professional concerns were venereal disease and administrative medicine, he had experience as a surgeon, as the following points indicate.

1. George Hodel took this photograph of surgical instruction in 1935, in an operating theater at the UCSF School of Medicine.

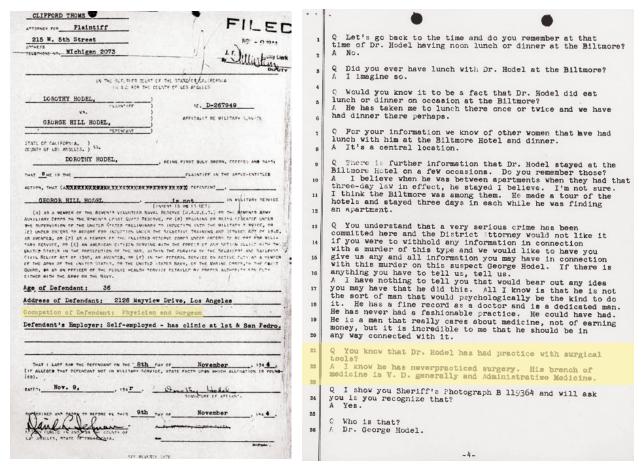


Hodel submitted this photograph to the spring 1988 issue of the Bulletin of Alumni Faculty Association of the UCSF School of Medicine. During the 1930s, the photograph had been enlarged and used as a mural in the medical school building. Hodel's classmates are identified in the UCSF bulletin as: (front row, left to right) Drs. Glaven Rusk, Edwin Bruck, Leroy Briggs, Herbert Moffit, Salvatore Lucia, and Guido Milani; (back row, left to right) Urriola Goiota, Clayton Mote, and Walter Port. The lecturer is identified as Dr. Jesse L. Carr. This image is reproduced on page 24 of our book Exquisite Corpse: Surrealism and the Black Dahlia Murder.

2. George Hodel's profession is listed as "Physician and Surgeon" on Steve Hodel's birth certificate. This document was discovered after the publication of *Exquisite Corpse*.

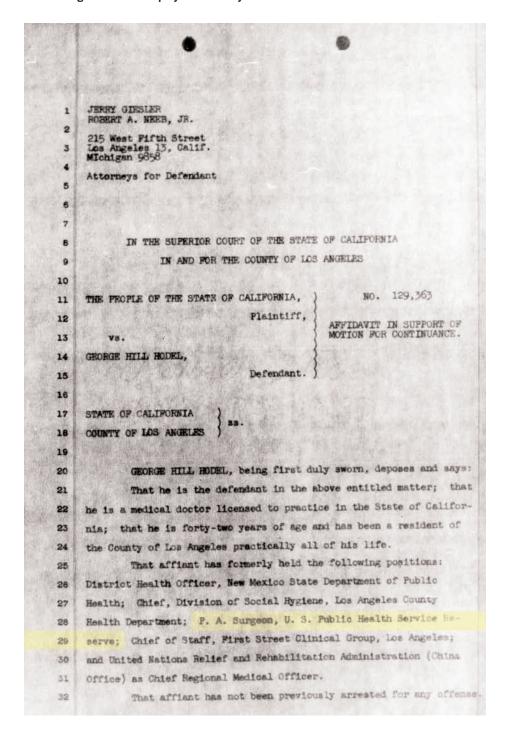
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3. On an affidavit signed by Dorothy Hodel and dated November 9, 1944, Hodel lists her husband's profession as "physician and surgeon." This document is among those related to the Hodel's divorce proceedings.



Though the Hodels divorced in 1945, they remained in close contact, often living together, until 1950, when George Hodel left for Hawaii. On March 22, 1950, under direct questioning from Lieutenant Frank B. Jemison about George Hodel's possible involvement in the Black Dahlia murder, Dorothy Hodel either lied or avoided Jemison's question regarding George Hodel's surgical practice. The affidavit is reproduced in Exquisite Corpse on page 168.

4. On a affidavit prepared by George Hodel's defense attorneys, Jerry Giesler and Robert A. Neeb, Jr., George Hodel has listed "P. A. Surgeon" in his employment history.



As Hodel was preparing to stand trial on incest charges, his attorneys filed a motion for continuance to the Superior Court requesting that his trial be postponed. They argued that Hodel had received too much adverse publicity, which would prohibit a fair trial. The judge rejected their request and the trial began in December, 1949.

5. On transcripts of audio surveillance of the Hodel home, made by the Los Angeles District Attorney's office while they were investigating George Hodel for the murder of Elizabeth Short, George Hodel tells an unidentified woman that he has done "lots" of curettments.

nobist :	FILE - 111	
	1:45P	Hodel answers door bell, lets in woman - he talks to her abo
		renting her a room in return he will knock off the rent - a
		work she does for him such as cleaning and taking care of
		his quarters. Negro woman has her minor daughter with her.
	1:50P	Phone rings - Hodel says "Mrs Hodel is out - I can take
		message. He said he is going down to the beack about 4 PM
		today - talks about renting room.
	2:00P	Hodel again talking to negro woman. Hodel asks her daughte
		where she goes to school - the girl says-a catholic school.
	2:10P	Colored woman and child leaving. woman is going to think it
		over - about renting room. Woman then starts talking about
		Doctor's-Hodel tells her about his clinic at 1st and Centra
		Woman said she had a curettement (curettement ?) in 1944.
		Hodel said he has done lots of them. Hodel and woman con-
		tinue to talk about doctors, sickness, and other medical subjects. (Hodel seems to be acting overly nice to this wom
		He must be trying to talk her into renting the room, or ?)
		Hodel tells her that Dr. Hill, a colored Botor, lives next
		door.
	2:30P	Woman leaves
	2:50P	Phone rings 2 times, must have been answered in another room
		Hodel moving about desk.
	3:15P	Hodel leaves room - all quiet.
	3:45P	All quiet.
SPOOL 38	4:00P	Hronek, D.A.'s office, on duty.

During a curettment, ¹ or "D and C" (dialation and curettage), "the lining of the uterus is surgically removed to terminate a pregnancy, treat an incomplete abortion or miscarriage, or determine the cause of frequent or heavy periods." ²

^{1.} Rare variation of curretage. See: Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, Fifth Edition, Volume 1 (A-M), Oxford University Press, p. 579 and p. 680.

^{2.} American Medical Association Family Medical Guide, Fourth Edition, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey, 2004, p. 869. See also: American Medical Association Complete Medical Encyclopedia, Random House Reference, New York, 2003, p.435

A1. Addendum to original document; September 11, 2007

An affidavit dated July 11, 1942 notes that George Hodel was appointed a civil officer of the United States and lists his position as "Passed Assistant Surgeon (R) U.S. Public Health Service."

G. H111 OF THE UNITED STATES UPON APPOINTMENT TO OFFICE Before me, Lowell W. Lyons Before me, Lowell W. Lyons Notary Public (Name) Personally appeared G. H111 Hodel (Name) Personally sworn (affirmed), deposes and says: That he has been appointed to the office of		Surmame()	AFFIDAVIT TO BE EXECUTED E		Stane	lard Form No. 1641
Before me, Lowell W. Lyons (Change) (Change) Before me, Lowell W. Lyons (Change) (Change) personally appeared G. Hill Hodel (Change) (Change) who, being first duly sworn (affirmed), deposes and says: That he has been appointed to the office of Passed Assistant Surgeon (R), U. S. Public Health Service effective July 11 (Change) and that neither he nor anyone acting in his behalf has given, transferr promised, or paid any consideration for or in the expectation or hope of receiving assistance in securing su appointment. Surschibed and sworn to (affirmed) before me this JUL 11 1342 [SEAL] Surschibed And Sworn to (affirmed) before me this JUL 11 1342 [SEAL] GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES WASHINGTON, D. C. Receipt is hereby acknowledged of your affidavit under the act of December 11, 1926 (amended), re yo appointment as a civil officer of the United States focily passed Assistant Surgeon (R) G. Hill Hodel This receipt must be submitted to the proper Disbursing Officer or Disbursing Postmaster as his authority for making payment of salary. * The Surgeon General						
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In his original application for that post, dated March 10, 1942, Hodel notes that he was employed as Camp Surgeon, CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] in New Mexico from December 1936 through June 1937. (Page 1 of his application document lists his position as "Chief, Division of Social Hygiene, Los Angeles County Health Department," and gives his address at that department as 808 North Spring Street, Los Angeles, California). These documents were discovered after the publication of Exquisite Corpse.

