

## 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*.

DISTRICT No. 1901		REGISTRAR'S No. 21948	
1. NAME OF CHILD <b>Hodel, Steven Kent</b>		2. MAIDEN SURNAME OF MOTHER <b>Harvey</b>	
3. PLACE OF BIRTH: (A) COUNTY <b>Los Angeles</b> (B) CITY OR TOWN <b>Los Angeles</b> (C) NAME OF HOSPITAL OR INSTITUTION <b>Queen of Angels Hospital</b> (D) MOTHER'S STATE BEFORE DELIVERY <b>7 hrs</b> IN THIS COMMUNITY <b>15 yrs</b>		3. USUAL RESIDENCE OF MOTHER: (A) LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN CALIFORNIA: <b>15</b> (B) STATE <b>California</b> (C) COUNTY <b>Los Angeles</b> (D) CITY OR TOWN <b>Los Angeles</b> (E) STREET AND NUMBER <b>2418 Valentine Street</b>	
4. SEX <b>Male</b> 5. TWIN OR TRIPLET <b>TWIN</b> IF SO - BORN <b>B</b>		6. NUMBER OF MONTHS OF PREGNANCY <b>8</b> 7. DATE OF BIRTH <b>November 6, 1941</b>	
FATHER OF CHILD		MOTHER OF CHILD	
8. FULL NAME <b>Hodel, George Hill</b> 9. COLOR OR RACE <b>White</b> 10. AGE AT TIME OF THIS BIRTH <b>34</b> 11. LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN CALIFORNIA <b>30</b> 12. BIRTHPLACE <b>Los Angeles, California</b> 13. USUAL OCCUPATION <b>Physician &amp; Surgeon</b> 14. CHILDREN BORN TO THIS MOTHER: (a) HOW MANY OTHER CHILDREN OF THIS MOTHER ARE NOW ALIVE? <b>2</b> (b) HOW MANY OTHER CHILDREN WERE BORN ALIVE BUT ARE NOW DEAD? <b>None</b> (c) HOW MANY OTHER CHILDREN WERE BORN DEAD? <b>None</b>		15. FULL MAIDEN NAME <b>Harvey, Dorothy Jeanne</b> 16. COLOR OR RACE <b>White</b> 17. AGE AT TIME OF THIS BIRTH <b>35</b> 18. BIRTHPLACE <b>New York, N.Y.</b> 19. USUAL OCCUPATION <b>Housewife</b> 20. INDUSTRY OR BUSINESS <b>Own Home</b> 21. MOTHER'S MAILING ADDRESS FOR REGISTRATION NOTICE: <b>2418 Valentine Street, Los Angeles, California</b>	
12. I HEREBY CERTIFY, THAT I ATTENDED THE BIRTH OF THIS CHILD WHO WAS BORN ALIVE AT THE HOME OF <b>Mrs. G. H. Hodel</b> ON THE DATE ABOVE STATED AND THAT THE INFORMATION GIVEN WAS FURNISHED BY <b>Mrs. G. H. Hodel</b> RELATED TO THIS CHILD AS <b>mother</b>		13. DATE RECEIVED BY LOCAL REGISTRAR <b>Nov 9, 1941</b> ATTENDANT - OWN SIGNATURE <b>Althea M. McArthur</b>	
14. REGISTRAR'S SIGNATURE <b>W. W. W. A.</b> M.D., MIDWIFE OR OTHER <b>M.D.</b> DATE SIGNED <b>11-9-41</b>		15. GIVEN NAME ADDED <b>1300 West Sixth Street, L.A.</b>	
16. (a) PREGNANCY, COMPLICATIONS OF: <b>Premature delivery</b> (b) LABOR, COMPLICATIONS OF: <b>None</b> (c) WAS THERE AN OPERATION FOR DELIVERY? <b>Yes</b> STATE ALL OPERATIONS: <b>Medio-lateral Episiotomy</b> (d) WAS A PROPHYLACTIC DRUG USED IN THE BABY'S EYES? <b>Yes</b> (e) YES STATE DRUG <b>AgNO<sub>3</sub></b> <b>13</b>		16. (a) DID THE BABY HAVE ANY CONGENITAL MALFORMATIONS? <b>No</b> DESCRIBE: <b>No</b> (b) WAS A SEROLOGICAL TEST MADE FOR SYPHILIS IN THIS MOTHER? <b>Yes</b> IF SO, AT WHAT PERIOD OF GESTATION? <b>Fourth</b> IF NOT, WHY NOT?	
STATE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH		U. S. DEPT. OF COMMERCE BUREAU OF THE CENSUS	



**CLIFFORD THOMS**,  
ATTORNEY FOR Plaintiff  
215 W. 5th Street  
SAN FRANCISCO  
TELEPHONE Michigan 2073

**FILED**  
NOV - 6 1944  
J.F. [Signature] County Clerk  
CALIF.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
IN & FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

DOROTHY HOEL, )  
                    ) "PLAINTIFF"  
vs.                 )  
GEORGE HILL HOEL, )  
                    ) "DEFENDANT"

NO. D-267949  
AFFIDAVIT RE MILITARY SERVICE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, }  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, } ss.  
DOROTHY HOEL, , BEING FIRST DULY SWORN, DEPOSES AND SAYS:  
THAT she IS THE \_\_\_\_\_ PLAINTIFF IN THE ABOVE-ENTITLED  
ACTION, THAT (XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX) DEFENDANT \_\_\_\_\_,  
GEORGE HILL HOEL, \_\_\_\_\_ is not \_\_\_\_\_ IN MILITARY SERVICE  
(insert ID no if OK)  
(A) AS A MEMBER OF THE ROYAL CANADIAN NAVAL RESERVE (R.C.N.V.R.), OR THE ARMY'S ARMY  
Auxiliary Corps as the ROYAL CANADIAN NAVAL RESERVE, OR (B) TRAINING OR BEING TRAINED UNDER  
THE SUPERVISION OF THE UNITED STATES PRELIMINARY TO INDUCTION INTO THE MILITARY SERVICE, OR  
(C) UNDER ORDERS TO REPORT FOR INDUCTION UNDER THE SELECTIVE TRAINING AND SERVICE ACT OF 1940,  
OR OTHERWISE, OR (D) AS A MEMBER OF THE CALIFORNIA RESERVE CORPS UNDER ORDERS TO REPORT FOR MILITARY  
SERVICE, OR (E) AN AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVING WITH THE FORCES OF ANY NATION ALLIED WITH THE  
UNITED STATES IN THE PROSECUTION OF THE WAR, WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF THE SELECTIONS AND TRAINING  
CIVIL RELIEF ACT OF 1940, AN ALIENED, OR (F) IN THE FEDERAL SERVICE ON ACTIVE DUTY AT THE TIME  
OF THE ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES, OR THE UNITED STATES NAVY, OR THE MARINE CORPS, OR THE AIR  
FORCE, OR AS AN OFFICER OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE RETAINED BY PROPER AUTHORITY FOR DUTY  
EITHER WITH THE ARMY OR THE NAVY.

Age of Defendant: 36  
Address of Defendant: 2126 Mayview Drive, Los Angeles  
Occupation of Defendant: Physician and Surgeon  
Defendant's Employer: Self-employed - has clinic at lat & San Pedro.

THAT I LAST SAW THE DEFENDANT ON THE 8th DAY OF November, 1944.  
(IF ALLEGED THAT DEFENDANT NOT IN MILITARY SERVICE, STATE FACTS UPON WHICH ALLEGATION IS FOUNDED.)  
DATE: Nov. 9, 1944 Dorothy Hoel  
SIGNATURE OF AFFIANT.

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME THIS 9th DAY OF November, 1944.  
[Signature]  
PUBLIC NOTARY IN & FOR THE COUNTY OF  
LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

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.

1 JERRY GIESLER  
2 ROBERT A. NEEB, JR.  
3 215 West Fifth Street  
4 Los Angeles 13, Calif.  
5 Michigan 9858  
6 Attorneys for Defendant  
7  
8 IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
9 IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
10  
11 THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, } NO. 129,363  
12 Plaintiff, }  
13 vs. } AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF  
14 GEORGE HILL HODEL, } MOTION FOR CONTINUANCE.  
15 Defendant. }  
16  
17 STATE OF CALIFORNIA } ss.  
18 COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES }  
19  
20 GEORGE HILL HODEL, being first duly sworn, deposes and says:  
21 That he is the defendant in the above entitled matter; that  
22 he is a medical doctor licensed to practice in the State of California;  
23 that he is forty-two years of age and has been a resident of  
24 the County of Los Angeles practically all of his life.  
25 That affiant has formerly held the following positions:  
26 District Health Officer, New Mexico State Department of Public  
27 Health; Chief, Division of Social Hygiene, Los Angeles County  
28 Health Department; P. A. Surgeon, U. S. Public Health Service Reserve;  
29 Chief of Staff, First Street Clinical Group, Los Angeles;  
30 and United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (China  
31 Office) as Chief Regional Medical Officer.  
32 That affiant has not been previously arrested for any offense.

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.

HODEL FILE - 111 / 3 3

1:45P Hodel answers door bell, lets in woman - he talks to her about renting her a room in return he will knock off the rent - any 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 beach about 4 PM today - talks about renting room.

2:00P Hodel again talking to negro woman. Hodel asks her daughter 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 Central Woman said she had a curettemst (curettement ?) in 1944. Hodel said he has done lots of them. Hodel and woman continue to talk about doctors, sickness, and other medical subjects. (Hodel seems to be acting overly nice to this woman He must be trying to talk her into renting the room, or ?) Hodel tells her that Dr. Hill, a colored doctor, 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 4:00P Hronek, D.A.'s office, on duty.  
38

During a curettment,<sup>1</sup> 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."<sup>2</sup>

1. Rare variation of curetage. 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."

**HODEL**  
(Surname)  
**G. Hill**  
(Christian name)  
(Full name of officer to be typed or printed in this space by administrative office)

**AFFIDAVIT TO BE EXECUTED BY CIVIL OFFICERS  
OF THE UNITED STATES UPON  
APPOINTMENT TO OFFICE**

Standard Form No. 1041  
Form approved by Comptroller General, U. S.  
December 27, 1927 (revised)  
Amended May 8, 1940

Before me, **Lowell W. Lyons** Notary Public  
(Name) (Title)  
personally appeared **G. Hill Hodel** **Los Angeles, California**  
(Name) (Address)  
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**  
(Name of office and place)  
effective **July 11**, 19**42**, by **The President of the United States**  
(Name and title of appointing authority)  
and that neither he nor anyone acting in his behalf has given, transferred, promised, or paid any consideration for or in the expectation or hope of receiving assistance in securing such appointment.

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to (affirmed) before me this **JUL 11 1942**  
day of \_\_\_\_\_, 19\_\_\_\_  
[SEAL] \_\_\_\_\_  
10-12304 Commission Expires Nov. 24, 1943  
(Signature of notary for other offices)

**GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE, OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
WASHINGTON, D. C.**

Sir:  
Receipt is hereby acknowledged of your affidavit under the act of December 11, 1926 (amended), re your appointment as a civil officer of the United States effective **July 11**, 19**42**  
**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.

Comptroller General of the United States.  
By \_\_\_\_\_

\* **The Surgeon General**  
**U. S. Public Health Service**  
**Washington, D. C.**

\* In this space officer will fill in his name and the address to which he wishes receipt forwarded.

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*.

11. Postgraduate courses, institutions of office experience, giving inclusive dates.

Post-graduate course in venereal disease control, University of California, February to May 1939.

12. Give a brief résumé of your activities from time of graduation to the present time, including a statement of all positions which you have held, giving inclusive dates.

Intern, San Francisco County Hospital, 1935-36.  
Camp Surgeon, CCC, New Mexico, Dec. 1936 - June 1937.  
District Health Officer, Second Health District of New Mexico (County of McKinley and County of San Juan; headquarters, Gallup, New Mexico); Chief, McKinley County Venereal Disease Clinic; July 1937 - April 1938 (while health officer was on leave).  
Social Hygiene Physician, Los Angeles County Health Department, in charge of venereal disease clinics at Santa Monica, Whittier, Compton, and East Los Angeles; May 1938 - ~~March~~ January 1941.  
Chief, Division of Social Hygiene, Los Angeles County Health Department, January 1941 to present.