

Murder probe reveals nothing new

Written by Bruce Jacobs 簡

Sunday, 13 September 2009 09:09

When the administration of President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) announced it would reinvestigate two of the remaining unsolved murder cases from 1980 and 1981, many people hoped that new information would be found. The murder of the mother and twin daughters of then-imprisoned provincial assemblyman Lin Yi-hsiung (林義雄) on Feb. 28, 1980, and the death and apparent murder of Chen Wen-cheng (陳文成), a Taiwanese professor at Carnegie Mellon University in the US, on July 3, 1981, following his interrogation by the Taiwan Garrison Command created great concern in Taiwan. These murders took place after several years of liberalization under then-president Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國), a liberalization that came to a dramatic halt with the widespread arrests following the Kaohsiung Incident on Dec. 10, 1979.

The Ma government requested that chief prosecutor of the Supreme Court's Procuracy (最高檢察署) coordinate the investigation of the two cases. The chief prosecutor brought together Taipei prosecutors, the police, the Bureau of Investigation, forensic experts and detective bureaus on March 13 to begin the new investigation. Unfortunately, the recently released 50-page report reveals almost nothing new. Put in Chinese terms, the report is 50 pages of "empty words." Among the many names mentioned in the report, this writer's appears very frequently.

The report does reveal that Lin's telephone was constantly monitored, that all calls in and out were recorded, and it mentions many such phone calls (page 11). But the report fails to mention my phone call to the twins around noon on Feb. 28, possibly only a few minutes before they were murdered.

Instead, the report repeats the old line that "Lin's neighbors identified him as going twice to Lin's house at noon on the day of the case ... Thus, Bruce Jacobs became the first object of suspicion of the special investigation team. But Bruce Jacobs denied he went to the Lin family house at noon on that day and pressed the door bell. Furthermore, the police had searched his home and did not discover any evidence. The case did not develop and Bruce Jacobs left Taiwan in May 1980" (pages 8-9).

The report also fails to mention that the day I finally left Taiwan I was subpoenaed by the prosecutor's office and again questioned. This time I was allowed to question the one so-called eye-witness, a lady in her 50s who spoke only Hakka.

I asked her: "How many foreigners with beards have you seen?"

She answered: "One."

I then asked: "If you have seen only one foreigner with a beard, then how do you know it was me that you saw?"

She answered: "Because I have only seen one foreigner with a beard, therefore I know it was

Murder probe reveals nothing new

Written by Bruce Jacobs 簡

Sunday, 13 September 2009 09:09

you.”

Of course, the prosecution realized it had no case that would stand up in open court and I was released and permitted to go home after being under “police protection” for more than three months. None of this appears in the report even though it was clearly on the record, just as my phone call to the twins should have been on the record.

On pages 13 to 14 the report also mentions some blood spots found in my residence at International House, just across the street from the Lin family residence. The report tells how the police apparently tried unsuccessfully to find evidence of my blood type in many places, including clinics and from my former in-laws. According to the report, they were looking for people with Type O blood. I did not know about this search at the time but, if they had asked, I would have willingly told them my blood type was B positive.

On the night of Feb. 28 at the Jen-Ai Hospital, when I finally learned that auntie and the twins had been murdered, several people said it was the security agencies who had murdered Lin’s family.

I responded: “It’s impossible. They couldn’t be so stupid.”

At that time, the Chen and the Chiang Nan (簡) murder cases still had not taken place. Only with the full investigation of many US detectives did we learn of the involvement of Taiwan’s security agencies in Chiang Nan’s murder on Oct. 15, 1984.

Even today, one can see evidence of how flippantly this evidence was viewed in Taiwan at the time. Admiral Wang Hsi-ling (王), one of the most involved people in the Chiang Nan case, had a beautiful house built for him at the Ching-mei military prison and court. He even had an additional outdoor room so he could meet his girlfriends. In 2007, many of Taiwan’s former elite participated at Wang’s 80th birthday celebration.

In 1980, I thought either a Chinese Communist agent had come into Taiwan to murder the Lin family and create social disorder or that a crazy person — incited by the media that stirred hate against the Kaohsiung defendants — had killed auntie and the girls. Now, I believe that in order to examine the record properly, the files of the many security agencies need a complete re-examination. Only then can Taiwan begin the genuine Truth and Reconciliation process necessary to heal the wounds from the past.

Bruce Jacobs is professor of Asian Languages and Studies and director of the Taiwan Research Unit at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia.

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2009/09/13](#)