

## **Easter egg murderer convicted of beating, raping and murdering Mayumi Komatsu**

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SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. -- A man who said he flew into a rage when a missionary for the Unification Church came to his door selling Easter eggs was convicted of beating, raping and murdering the woman.

Testimony showed that the defendant mistakenly thought he had killed the victim, but that she regained consciousness as he was driving her off to bury her and then fell out of his truck and was run over.

David Spooner, 23, of Redlands, was convicted Wednesday of first-degree murder in the course of a rape in the death of Mayumi Komatsu, 22, of Nagoya, Japan, who came to his door in April 1985 selling eggs to raise money for the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church.

A psychologist who interviewed Spooner after his arrest said the defendant recalled that he ordered the woman to leave his house because he feared she might try to 'brainwash' him. He said he became enraged when she did not go, then beat her over the head with a rifle butt.

He said the frightened woman ran into a bedroom, where he raped her and beat her again. When she responded too slowly to his order to get dressed, he told the psychologist, he flew into another rage and choked her unconscious.

Believing she was dead, Spooner put Komatsu in the back of his pickup truck and drove off to bury her. But as they rode through town, he said, he saw her struggling to stand up.

He stopped to check on her condition -- wondering whether he should 'take her to the hospital or finish her off,' he said.

The woman had already climbed or fallen off the truck, however, and was run over by a car. She died at the scene, and an autopsy showed she suffocated on her own blood.

The Superior Court jury rejected defense arguments that Spooner's actions were not premeditated but the result of a spontaneous, uncontrollable rage.

Prosecutor Victor Stull said Spooner, who has been treated since childhood at institutions for the emotionally disturbed, faces a maximum term of life in prison without possibility of parole when he is sentenced June 18.