

# Man arrested for rape and murder of Mayumi Komatsu while she fundraised for the Unification Church in Redlands, California on April 5, 1985

Edward Simons

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## Life in prison sought for suspect in missionary's death

By EDWARD SIMONS  
Sun Staff Writer

**SAN BERNARDINO** — A prosecutor said Tuesday that he is seeking life imprisonment for a Redlands man charged with sexually assaulting and murdering a Japanese missionary who was last seen alive selling Easter eggs for her church.

David Arthur Spooner, 22, is charged with the April 5 rape or attempted rape and murder of Mayumi Komatsu, 22, in his parents' house in Redlands.

He was arrested after his parents told authorities, who were searching house to house for Komatsu, about finding bloodstains in their home, including some on their bed.

Deputy District Attorney Larry Balderama filed notice in Municipal Court here Tuesday that Spooner is charged with the special circumstance of murder during the commission of a rape or attempted rape.

The special circumstance carries the possibility of either the death penalty or life imprisonment. Balderama said Spooner's youth, a clean record and his history of mental problems figured into the decision to seek life imprisonment instead of death.

Spooner was arrested for Komatsu's death after a house-to-house search in the area where she was last seen. Spooner's parents told authorities they had found blood in their house a few days before and said their son told them it was from having sex with a woman who was menstruating, said sheriff's Sgt. Dick Lake.

He said Komatsu was in the Redlands area April 5 selling Easter eggs for the Unification Church, founded by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon. She was last seen on Mulvihill Avenue, he said.

Her body was discovered about midnight that night in the middle of Greenspot Road and was inadvertently hit by a car full of teenagers before the road could be blocked off, said Steve Levine, the deputy public defender assigned to defend Spooner.

Komatsu's body wasn't identified until April 9, when her friends filed a missing person report with the Redlands Police Department.

The door-to-door search by sheriff's deputies led them to 106 Mulvihill Ave., where Spooner lived with his parents.

An April 10 inspection of the house showed "quite a bit" of blood had been sprayed over the pillow cases in the bedroom where Spooner's parents slept, Lake said. In addition, there was a large bloodstain along one edge of their mattress — the sheets had been washed — as well as spray patterns on two walls of the bedroom, Lake said.

Spray patterns are caused by blows to a body, Lake said.

Blood was also found on the hallway floor of the house and in Spooner's bedroom, Lake said.

Spooner was arrested at work that day and has been held without bail since, Balderama said.

Balderama was reluctant to give details about the case, but Levine said the prosecution will attempt to show Spooner killed Komatsu by beating her with the butt end of a rifle.

Levine said he believes Komatsu tried to jump out of Spooner's vehicle while it was traveling on Greenspot Road, hitting her head and causing her death.

The autopsy, both attorneys agreed, doesn't address the subject of whether she was alive or dead when she was taken to Greenspot Road.

Levine said Spooner was "a troubled young man."

He said Spooner's mother gave him up at the age of 5 years, and the boy grew up in numerous foster homes before moving back in with his natural mother and her husband. Spooner has a history of mental health problems, the attorney said.

Spooner was a mental health outpatient at San Bernardino County Medical Center for three years, beginning when Spooner was 13 years old in 1978, Levine said.

Reports from other hospitals are "trickling in," he said.

Komatsu, of Nagoya, Japan, arrived in New York about seven months ago to attend a training seminar for Unification Church missionaries, said Joe Coyne, director of the Artesia branch where she was stationed.

Komatsu and other church members were selling eggs for an Easter fund-raising drive, Coyne said.

Spooner's preliminary hearing is scheduled for June 27, Levine said. The hearing will be to determine if there is sufficient evidence to warrant a trial.

### Water

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larger percentage of the Bunker Hill Basin's water.

"But they will never do it as long as I'm here. I will stand up and protect their water rights... but I won't support any enhancement of them," Ayala said.

He also disagreed with arguments from the Riverside interests that water quality in the Bunker Hill Basin might deteriorate.

"Come on now. Don't they think we're concerned about that, too? It's our water. We drink it, too," he said.

with Sen. Robert Presley, D-Riverside; and assemblymen Steve Clute, D-Riverside, Bill Leonard, R-Redlands, and Gerald Eaves, D-Rialto.

Ayala didn't specify what amendments he was considering, but he said approaching the problem from the angle of declaring the flooded area an earthquake hazard zone, as was proposed at a San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District workshop Monday, is not far-fetched. The high groundwater does increase the chances of liquefaction occurring

Reader advisory: RAPE AND HORRIFIC MURDER [cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=dannd=SBS19850605.1.5](http://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=dannd=SBS19850605.1.5)

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