

Former San Bernardino father, daughter were Spector business associates for 50 years

By Harvey M. Kahn

Pop music producer Phil Spector's murder story won't evaporate into the sunset because he is associated with the biggest news making machine in the world. It's called the entertainment industry. By the time he was 21, Spector produced two gold records and was a millionaire. From 1962 to 1982, former San Bernardino High School student Hal Blaine helped Spector bring in more gold while serving as his studio drummer on 20 hit records. The 73-year-old Spector is now serving 19 years for murder. It was Blaine's daughter, Michelle who got the first call that Spector had killed someone, even before the police.

Although the Blaine's are probably glad that they aren't portrayed in the current HBO motion picture Phil Spector, they were once the closest semblance of friends that the bizarre record producer had. Hal Blaine was the only musician that Spector gave carte blanche to in the studio. Blaine was usually all business but could fulfil the "clown master" role to keep things loose during late night Spector recording sessions. Michelle Blaine was Spector's personal secretary. He was "Uncle Phil" to Michelle when she was a little girl and later to her children.

Neither Hal or Michelle Blaine was called to testify in either of Spector's murder trials, nor were they consulted by makers of the Phil Spector movie starring Al Pacino and Helen Mirren that will run on HBO through May 1st. Hal Blaine said Los Angeles homicide



PHOTO COURTESY/Hal Blaine

Hal Blaine and Brian Wilson pictured in Gold's Studio circa 1968.

detectives came to his Palm Desert home after the Clarkson murder and interviewed him. He told detectives that he had never seen Spector in possession of a gun. Despite feeling betrayed by Spector after 40 years of accepting him as a family friend, the Blaine's did not make incriminating statements about Spector during the trials. "He had no buddy, buddy friends. Something was amiss. He had only working relationships. That was Phil," said Hal Blaine.

Hal Blaine was in the San Bernardino High School band in the mid-1940's and a 2008 Route 66 Cruisin' Hall of Fame inductee. He was selected to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2000. Among his many projects, he worked with Spector on John Lennon's Rock and Roll album and other Lennon

recordings. Blaine met Glen Campbell through Phil Spector 50 years ago. Earlier this year, Blaine finished work on Campbell's documentary and one about Brian Wilson, both for Warner Bros Pictures.

Michelle Blaine told True Crime Investigations reporter Aphradite Jones that the job of managing Spector eventually turned into babysitting. She stayed with Spector for a week following the Clarkson death. She said the official answer from Spector was that Clarkson was shot and killed by accident. She felt that Spector's peculiar behavior resulted from an abusive mother and his father who committed suicide when Phil was nine. But Michelle Blaine must have known more. She said Spector wanted to marry her to keep her



PHOTO COURTESY/HBO

Helen Mirren and Al Pacino in HBO movie "Phil Spector".

from testifying since you can't testify against a spouse.

In an email interview, Hal Blaine said that he and Spector spoke after Clarkson's shooting and that he believed Spector about it being an accident. "I've known Phil for 40 years. I never had any doubts about his original story," stated Blaine, who said that Spector had lied to him. "He did it and he said, 'They'll never convict me, I'm too rich.' Of course the truth came out in the second trial. I still owe a lot of my success to Phil and the hits that we made."

Hal Blaine had mixed feelings about the Phil Spector movie.

"Even with the disclaimer, it did nothing for me. Pacino was great. Mirren was great. The rest of it was Hollywood writer's taking poetic justice," said Blaine. "When you play with fire you will eventually get burned!! I don't think Phil will beat the third and final new trial that is coming up. I feel that Phil is not a murderer. I also feel that his gun play just went a little too far that fateful night. But Phil will always be remembered as the record producer that came from New York and created some of the greatest hits that came out of the L.A. recording industry."

Words to think about: Mexico's illustrious and violent history

By G. W. Abersold Ph.D

Carlos Slim Helu. Have you heard of him? He's considered the richest man in the world. More money than Bill Gates and Warren Buffet. He's a Lebanese/Mexican. He and his wife and their children were all born and raised in Mexico.

He owns all the communication systems in Mexico, plus hotels and a myriad of other businesses. He's not alone. Mexico has more millionaires in proportion to their population, than any other country. Including the U.S.A.

Mexico has and has had an illustrious and violent history. Revolutions, genocide, social upheavals and political unrest. The recent drug crimes and murders are devastating the entire Mexican economy. Tourism is particularly in jeopardy.

There are a number of Mexican features that are worthy of notice. The tourist centers like Acapulco, Cancun, Cabo and Puerto Vallarta are known world wide. They still attract millions of visitors each year.

The ruins in Mexico are still a major attraction for natives and tourists alike. The pyramids outside of Mexico City; the ruins in the Yucatan, Palenque, Monte Alban and countless others offer exciting viewing.

However, one of the least known

and most important venues was the advent of the Mexican muralists. Their emergence followed the Mexican Revolution. Their emphases were often political and social. They depicted violence and conflict.

Four men in particular received international acclaim. Jose Clemente Orozco, Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros and Rufino Tomayo. They were all left-wing liberals and anti-establishment. In fact, Siqueiros was an out and out communist.

To see their murals, many of Tomayo's are in a museum in Oaxaca; Rivera's in Cuernavaca, Siqueiros' in the government buildings in Mexico City, and Orozco's in Guadalajara.

My personal favorite is Jose Orozco. He was a liberal Christian. One of his most dramatic murals is in Baker Library at Dartmouth College. It's called, "The Revolutionary Christ." I have a copy of it; a gift from the college.

Some years ago I read an impression of it by Bishop Garfield Oxnham of the Methodist Church. He described it this way. "My first reaction was one of revulsion! Orozco had gone too far.

It was Orozco's last panel, done in rich colors. A towering figure of Christ dominates all. He stands with feet apart, flesh torn, triumphant. At his side is an ax, the handle grasped tightly by his right hand. In the background are tem-

ples and tabernacles overturned in ruins amid the spoils of war, as though some terrible earthquake had made scorn of the religions of man.

Rising above shattered stone and splintered timber is the Christ. Then one sees that the ax has been laid to the root of the tree. The cross itself has been cut down. It lies beside the stump from which it has been severed, and the Christ stands astride it.

And then I knew that a dead figure hanging from a cross is not the sign of my faith.

No, he is Christ triumphant, living now and forever more, freed from the flesh, victory over men who vainly believe they can destroy the spirit by crucifying the body.

He lives; his eyes do see, beholding in every man a brother and envisioning what man may become as a son of God; his ears do hear the cries of the oppressed, the low moan of the sorrowful, the glad shouts of children at play, and, like the sound of the sea, the swelling notes of joy chanted by the millions of men in that morrow when justice shall roll down as a mighty stream and righteousness shall cover the earth.

His hands and feet are free, the hands of healing, the feet of the second mile; he speaks, and men learn of the way and the truth and hear that judgment will be rendered upon the simple rule, 'Inas-

much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me—Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

Christ, alive and free from an imprisoning cross before which many bow to worship but from which too few hear the summons, 'Follow me'—how can he march, if he be nailed to a cross?—a living Christ, who, having been lifted up, does draw all men because of his gift of self but who leads all

men because of his mastery of death—this is the revolutionary Christ, whose message will be Jubilate."

OROZCO SPEAKS AS CLEARLY AND AS LOUDLY TODAY AS HE DID A HUNDRED YEARS AGO. NO MESSAGE IS MORE RELEVANT AND DEMANDING FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY at this EASTER season. Amen. Selah. So be it.

FINAL TRIBUTE
Funeral & Cremation Service

DIRECT CREMATION
\$760.⁰⁰ COMPLETE

We have five complete funeral packages, casket included!

They are so Beautiful!

738 S. Waterman Ave. San Bernardino
on corner of Waterman & Central

(909) 234-4476

FD1731