



## **Criminalist defends his work in Spector case**

**Henry Lee calls flap over a fingernail-sized piece, which a judge said Lee kept from prosecutors, a 'slanderous attack.'**

By Peter Y. Hong, Times Staff Writer  
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Prominent forensic scientist Henry C. Lee sent a passionate e-mail statement Wednesday defending his handling of evidence in the Phil Spector murder trial.

Lee, perhaps the nation's best-known criminalist, was found this month by Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Larry Paul Fidler to have kept a fingernail-sized object from prosecutors, who said it was a piece of acrylic fingernail from Lana Clarkson's right thumb, blown off by a bullet as she held her hand in front of her face.

Spector, 67, is charged with murdering Clarkson in his Alhambra home Feb. 3, 2003. He has pleaded not guilty and is free on \$1-million bail.

Joe Sudol, an aide to Lee at the University of New Haven in Connecticut, where Lee is a director of a forensics institute named for him, sent the statement to The Times and numerous other media outlets. In it, Lee called the fingernail controversy a "slanderous attack" and "a tactic to kill the messenger before the message is delivered."

Lee wrote that he had "all the documentation and records pertaining to what I did and what I collected at the scene," adding that "if necessary, I can and will make it public to protect my good name and professional reputation."

Lee had appeared before Fidler to defend himself, and said there was no fingernail-like object. Fidler said he did not believe Lee. The judge ruled that prosecutors could have witnesses testify that they saw Lee handle such an object, in order to challenge Lee's credibility.

Lee had not spoken to reporters since Fidler's May 23 ruling. Lee's office said he is lecturing in Italy, but declined to forward e-mailed questions or phone messages from The Times to him.

Lee's e-mail also said that he did "not know why my Chinese accent has become an issue in this case." A Times story had quoted a commentator who remarked that the Spector defense team's effort to discredit Spector's driver for poor English could backfire with the jury because of Lee's heavy accent.

Sandi Gibbons, a spokeswoman for the district attorney, said of Lee's statement: "Whatever he says should be said under oath on the witness stand."

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