

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SEATTLE INCIDENT CASE ATTORNEY BARRY LANGBERG

In response to recent developments in the Seattle Incident case, Barry Langberg, an attorney for the Soka Gakkai, wrote the following article for the World Tribune:

The most recent attempt of Nichiren Shoshu to discredit the testimony of former Seattle police officer Ronald Sprinkle is yet another unsuccessful attempt by Nikken Abe to rewrite history. As with their former attempts to prove that the events in Seattle in 1963 did not happen, this effort also fails. Nichiren Shoshu's current actions are similar to those of the past: presenting false, misleading or incomplete "evidence": in an attempt to convince the court that the events could not have happened as Mrs. Clow and Officer Sprinkle have testified.

First, Nichiren Shoshu presented the court with aerial photographs purportedly showing that the route Mrs. Clow said she drove from where she was staying to 7th and Pike Street was impassable. However, once enlarged photographs were examined and all of the details of the streets could be seen, it was clear that the route was open just as Mrs. Clow had testified.

Second, Nichiren Shoshu attempted to prove that Ron Sprinkle's partner, Officer Vic Mayhle, who also remembered the incident in March of 1963, was not telling the truth. Mayhle stated in his affidavit that he remembered when this incident occurred because it was shortly before the famous "Goldstein Incident" that occurred at the famous Playboy tavern in downtown Seattle. [The Goldstein Incident, which received a lot of press attention at the time, involved a famous boxer who got into a fight at the tavern.]

Nichiren Shoshu presented the sworn affidavit of Seattle police officer Donald Cameron (who was apparently working for Nichiren Shoshu) stating that he was one of the officers that had participated in the Goldstein Incident and had arrested Goldstein. Cameron swore under oath that he remembered the incident very clearly and Vic Mayhle was not present. However, we obtained the actual trial transcript of the Goldstein trial.

During that trial, Cameron himself testified that not only was Vic Mayhle present at the scene but he, Cameron, had gone to the scene in the same car with Officer Mayhle. Mayhle also testified at the trial as to exactly what happened during the Goldstein Incident. There was no doubt that Mayhle was present and that Cameron had not been truthful in his sworn affidavit.

Third, Nikken Abe, during his own sworn testimony before the court, presented a diary that supposedly proved beyond a doubt that he was in bed at 1:00 on the morning of the incident and thus could not have been in an altercation with prostitutes sometime after 2:00 a.m. as Officer Sprinkle had testified. However, when experts in altered documents made a scientific examination of Nikken's diary, they concluded that the important entries that supposedly proved Nikken's innocence were written in a sequence and with ink that was completely inconsistent with Nikken's testimony.

Now, in a final desperate attempt to convince us that what did happen did not happen, Nichiren Shoshu presents incomplete and misleading documents and testimony concerning Officer Sprinkle and his service in the Air Force Reserves. Similar to their previous attempts to discredit the truth, this one will also fail. In fact, it has already failed in the United States District Court, Western District of Washington at Seattle.

On Aug. 26, Nichiren Shoshu made a motion in the United States District Court, Western District at Seattle, Judge William L. Dwyer presiding, requesting monetary sanctions against Ron Sprinkle for his purported “perjury.” Both Sprinkle and the Soka Gakkai filed replies to that motion with the court, setting forth only some of the evidence proving that Sprinkle had been truthful. On Sept. 27, Judge Dwyer denied Nichiren Shoshu’s motion for sanctions finding that Nichiren Shoshu had not presented clear and convincing evidence that the testimony was false.

It is important to note that there is no doubt that Ron Sprinkle is telling the truth. His own actions themselves lead to this conclusion. Sprinkle’s reputation for honesty and integrity as a police officer was very high. His father was a police officer, his cousin was the sheriff of King County, Wash., and others in the family were police officers. In an effort to show everyone he had absolutely nothing to hide, Sprinkle voluntarily offered to take a polygraph (lie-detector) test. The test was administered by one of the leading polygraph examiners in the world—a man who helped train polygraph examiners at the FBI, the United States Secret Service and the Japanese National Police.

A polygraph examination was administered to Sprinkle concerning the truthfulness of his testimony about the events that occurred on 7th and Pike Street in March 1963. Sprinkle passed the polygraph test with complete truthfulness. The polygraph examiner concluded, to a reasonable certainty, that Sprinkle was telling the truth.

Years ago we had conducted an investigation concerning Sprinkle’s military service. We concluded that there was absolutely no doubt that Sprinkle was working in March 1963 as a Seattle police officer. This conclusion was supported by the testimony of Officer Vic Mayhle, who was Sprinkle’s partner on that evening.

It was also supported by the testimony of former officer James Williams, who was Sprinkle’s partner at the time of the Goldstein Incident. It is also supported by the testimony of former officer Ed Marion, who remembers talking to Sprinkle in March 1963 about the incident with the Asian man (Nikken Abe). Furthermore, in recent weeks, following the new accusations by Nichiren Shoshu, we have again conducted an investigation.

The evidence will show that Nichiren Shoshu has presented Air Force and Seattle Police Department documents in a manner that is very misleading and incomplete. Important documents and facts that Nichiren Shoshu knows about are omitted from their presentation. These facts make perfectly clear that Sprinkle’s presence on the street working as a Seattle police officer in March 1963 is completely consistent with his record of military service.

We also have a photograph of Ron Sprinkle taken from the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* newspaper of March 29, 1963. In the caption below the photograph, it states, “Mr. and Mrs. Ronald C. Sprinkle who were married recently in Bayview Manor are now at home in Seattle.” We will soon present a very large amount of both testimony and documentary evidence to prove exactly what that newspaper picture implies. In March 1963, Officer Ron Sprinkle was living at home, working as a Seattle police officer, and encountered Nikken Abe at 7th and Pike Street in an altercation with prostitutes.

THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE SEATTLE INCIDENT CASE

This is the fourth year in the ongoing Seattle Incident trial, which started in Tokyo in 1995. The trial stems from a defamation lawsuit filed by Nikken and Nichiren Shoshu against the Soka Gakkai and its publications in 1993.

In order to prove he has been libeled, Nikken must convince the court that Mrs. Hiroe Clow's account of his March 1963 encounter with prostitutes in Seattle is untrue. Mrs. Clow's account was carried in Soka Gakkai publications, which led to this suit.

On Aug. 10, a special edition of *Daibyakuho*, the temple members' newspaper in Japan, attempted to discount the testimony in the trial of former Seattle police officer Ronald Sprinkle, a defense witness who was one of the two officers that detained Nikken that evening. Mr. Sprinkle's testimony corroborated Mrs. Clow's story. According to Nikken's attorneys, however, Officer Sprinkle was not with the Seattle Police Department but the Air Force at the time of the incident.

Recently, there have been two developments in the Seattle Incident case:

1) On Sept. 28 in the Seattle Incident Trial in Tokyo, Soka Gakkai attorneys presented evidence refuting Nichiren Shoshu's claim that defense witness and former Seattle police officer Ronald Sprinkle was not present at the site of the Seattle Incident in March 1963 because he was on active military duty.

2) In a separate case, the United States District Court, Western District of Washington at Seattle, on Sept. 27 denied Nichiren Shoshu's Aug. 26 motion requesting monetary sanctions against Mr. Sprinkle for purported "perjury."