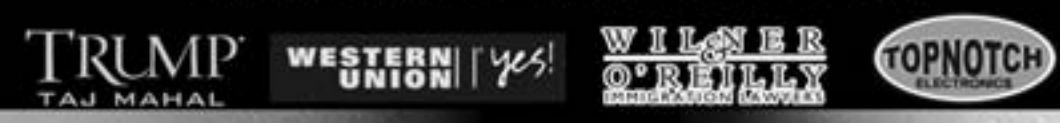


A MUSICAL PHENOMENON WITH TWO CONCERT GIANTS  
IN THE BIGGEST EVENT OF THE YEAR!!!



**GARY VALENCIANO** **MARTIN NIEVERA**

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**IMMIGRANT LIVING:  
101 AND BEYOND**



MONETTE ADEVA MAGLAYA

SLEEP now Annie Le. The interest in the riveting case of 24-year-old Annie Le, the slain third year Yale doctoral/medical student of Vietnamese descent, in the basement of a two-year-old state-of-the-art research facility in New Haven, Connecticut is winding down and disappearing from the news radar. Le was seen on video entering the research building on Tuesday, September 8, 2009, five days before her wedding, but never leaving.

The grief over the untimely loss of a promising, brilliant, young woman will overwhelm and linger for a long time particularly for her immediate family and friends. But more so for Jonathan. Sorrow weighs heavily like a black cloud upon Le's long-time sweetheart, best friend and bridegroom-to-be, Jonathan Widawsky. Also 24 years old, Widawsky is a doctoral student in Physics at Columbia with whom Annie was to be married in elaborate ceremonies, with 160 guests in attendance, at the North Shore Ritz Country Club in Long Island on Sunday, September 13. It was the same day her bruised, mangled body was discovered by Max, a German Shepherd cadaver dog, stuffed and crammed to fit in a tiny crevice in a basement wall that housed utility wires. Annie had been dead six days.

Overwhelming forensic evidence, more than 300 in all, based on matching DNA samples, electronic swipe cards and video tapes, uncovered in the days that followed, by the police and FBI point the finger to a 24-year-old lab technician, Raymond Clark, who did janitorial duties cleaning mice cages and basement floors. Autopsy reports indicate Clark, a muscular 5'9" 190 pounder had allegedly hit and strangled the 4'11", 90 pound Le as she fought back fiercely for her life, scratching him with her fingernails on his chest, arms and back and getting his DNA on her and on her clothes. News stories suggest Le's blood is on Clark's clothes found hidden behind a ceiling tile as well as on his work boots which bore his name.

**Of mice and murder: Sleep now Annie**

*"For certain is death for the born  
And certain is birth for the dead;  
Therefore over the inevitable  
Thou shouldst not grieve."*

— Bhagavad Gita

The point of the violently tragic and fatal alteration was work-related, according to the police, not romantic in nature. I shake my head in disbelief. All these mountain of grief in the fabric of many lives because of mice and their droppings? I think not. At this point, we can only guess at the reasons why, because Clark clammed up and refuses to talk. The larger issue is about ego and self-image. The mice were there simply as props.

Clark, whom coworkers called a "control freak" and who always made a big deal with scientists and doctoral students about cleanliness protocols considered the basement and the mice and its cages his domain where he rules with near-absolute authority, never mind that as a custodial worker, he was the lowest man on the totem pole of a research facility. Could it be that the diminutive Le had the temerity and gumption to put him in his place, deflate his ego, bring him down several notches to the point where he flew into a rage, saw black and strangled her? We will never know for certain. But with the preponderance and nature of overwhelming evidence, prosecutors do not need to establish motive to get a conviction.

Clark considered himself Lord of the Mice and he had to distinguish himself from all the rest by signing for work every single day, including that fateful day, with a green pen. That green pen which Clark reportedly dropped accidentally in a crack on the wall where Le was found could be irrefutable, physical evidence. Investigators report that he came back to work the day after the murder with fishhooks, wire and bubble gum to try to retrieve that green pen, to no avail.

Clark allegedly didn't like the way Le handled the mice as Annie conducted research as a member of a scientific team working on molecular biology, specifically on enzymes that have long-term implications for

curing cancer, diabetes and muscular dystrophy. Two worlds collided in the basement: one, of an upwardly mobile, rising star who was voted by her high school student body as "the next Einstein" and who has so much to offer the world as a doctor, a scientist and human being and sadly, on the opposite side of the spectrum, a young man whose controlling nature, short fuse and seething disrespect for the value of others may well spend his life in a cage ironically, just like the mice whose cages he cleaned. He sits pale and wan in solitary confinement in heavy, self-imposed, stunned silence.

As a modern survival technique I find helpful, I pay scant attention to the news specially when the toxic levels of murder, mayhem and politics get to be too much for one's well-being and functioning and the only option, it seems, is to tune out and live in ignorant bliss. Annie's case, however, strikes a deep chord not only because I empathize deeply with a pint-sized Asian-American woman just trying to do her level best but also as a human being increasingly hard pressed to make sense of the increasingly senseless horrific things that happen to people like Annie. She loved to wear dangling earrings, plunging necklines and bargain shopping and showed a sense of humor that balanced a sharp, brilliant mind. She wrote 120 college applications and won \$160,000 in scholarship grants. She was sweet and smart and did everything right. It is times like this that I am sorely tempted to wonder out loud and yell to that cosmic void the ancient question: Why do bad things happen to good people? Or why do evil men thrive? But then of course, there is no answer.

The answer lies from that tiny, quiet voice from within. When things become patently absurd, one needs to rely heavily on a basic tenet of faith in the absolute goodness of God and the kindness of most men

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