



IN POLICE CUSTODY NOW, Kim Beh (left) is believed to have murdered Prof Lee (right) during a robbery attempt with two others at his house off Holland Road on Dec 12, 1993. The NUS professor's partially decomposed body was found two days later in his ransacked bedroom.



Don's murder: Suspect in custody after 13 years

Malaysian believed to have stabbed, strangled NUS don during robbery

► Jean Loo

A MALAYSIAN man wanted for the murder of a gay professor 13 years ago has finally been arrested.

The 36-year-old Chinese Malaysian, whose nickname is Kim Beh (Golden Horse in Hokkien), was arrested by Malaysian police for theft offences last June. Released

from prison in Malaysia on Friday, he was brought back here and is in police custody.

Kim Beh is believed to be part of a trio whose robbery bid ended in the murder of Professor Lee Kok Cheong, 54, at his two-storey, semi-detached house in Greenleaf Place off Holland Road in December 1993. The others had been dealt with earlier.

The former head of the National University of Singapore's English Language Proficiency Unit had been persuaded to invite the men home. In October that year, he

had become attracted to 22-year-old Too Yin Sheong, a business manager at a karaoke lounge, whom he had met in a coffee shop.

On Too's first visit to his house three weeks later, Prof Lee tried to get intimate with him. Uncomfortable, Too said he had excused himself. In a police statement, he said: "He sat very close to me and touched my body and thighs... I then realised he was gay."

Two to three weeks later, Too told the story to his friends, Kim Beh and 35-year-old Ng Chek Siong. He mentioned the

antiques in Prof Lee's house and that he seemed wealthy.

Kim Beh then suggested robbing him and asked Too to arrange a meeting on the pretext of introducing him to the professor. On Dec 12 that year, Ng waited in the car while the other two went into the house to meet Prof Lee.

While the professor was distracted, the pair went into the kitchen, got hold of knives and used them to hold him up while they searched for valuables.

Too said that before they fled, Kim Beh stabbed the don and strangled him with a cord.

The professor's partially decomposed body was found two days later. His legs and hands were bound with a belt and telephone wire and there was a pillow over his face.

Kim Beh fled the Republic. Too was arrested on Dec 23, 1997 at the Woodlands Checkpoint. Ng was arrested by Malaysian police in May 1998 and extradited to Singapore.

Too was found guilty and appealed against his murder conviction and death sentence, but it was dismissed by the Court of Appeal.

Judicial Commissioner Chan Seng Onn found he had taken part "passively" in the killing of Prof Lee by doing nothing to help the man while Kim Beh was strangling him.

Ng was given eight years' jail and 10 strokes of the cane for robbery, theft and cheating.

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Sunday Times reporter wins top award

HE HAS been on the job for only 17 months but he works like a seasoned journalist.

His resourcefulness and versatility won Sunday Times reporter Jeremy Au Yong the Young Journalist of The Year Award. It was given out last week at the Singapore Press Holdings' (SPH) annual awards to honour journalistic achievements in its English and Malay newspapers division.

The second child of two bankers was born in Penang and came to Singapore in 1998 under a Ministry of Education Asean scholarship.

After his A levels as a triple science student in Hwa Chong Junior College, he received an SPH scholarship to study computer engineering at the University of New South Wales where he graduated with first class honours in 2004.

Since joining The Sunday Times in 2004, he has written a number of impactful stories, including that of a racist blogger who was a Public Service Commission scholarship holder.

His first overseas assignment, a series on the drug problem in Australia last December, brought out his keen eye for detail. It won the Feature of the Month award and drew praise from readers who learnt about a different side of Melbourne and Sydney.

Mr Felix Soh, deputy editor of The Straits Times, said:

"What I find exceptional about him is his spirit. He's always eager to take on the most challenging assignments and never fails to produce results."

Not surprisingly, Mr Au Yong, 26, loves his job. He said: "One moment I could be looking for a murder victim's family and the next I'd be talking to people in pubs about their drinking habits."



A JOURNALIST WITH SPIRIT, Mr Au Yong is always eager to take on challenging assignments.

PHOTO: BRYAN VAN DER BEEK