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54/07/30 Why Isn't Sam Sheppard in Jail: An Editorial

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Why Isn't Sam Sheppard in Jail?

(AN EDITORIAL)

Maybe somebody in this town can remember a parallel for it. The Press can't.

And not even the oldest police veterans can, either. Everybody's agreed that Sam Sheppard is the most unusual murder suspect ever seen around these parts. Except for some superficial questioning during Coroner Sam Gerber's inquest he has been scot-free of any official grilling into the circumstances of his wife's murder.

From the morning of July 4, when he reported his wife's killing, to this moment, 26 days later, Sam Sheppard has not set foot in a police station.

He has been surrounded by an iron curtain of protection that makes Malenkov's Russian concealment amateurish.

His family, his Bay Village friends—which include its officials—his lawyers, his hospital staff, have combined to make law enforcement in this county look silly.

The longer they can stall bringing Sam Sheppard to the police station the surer it is he'll never get there.

The longer they can string this whole affair out the surer it is that the public's attention sooner or later will be diverted to something else, and then the heat will be off, the public interest gone, and the goose will hang high.

This man is a suspect in his wife's murder. Nobody yet has found a solitary trace of the presence of anybody else in his Lake Rd. house the night or morning his wife was brutally beaten to death in her bedroom.

And yet no murder suspect in the history of this county has been treated so tenderly, with such infinite

solicitude for his emotions, with such fear of upsetting the young man.

Gentlemen of Bay Village, Cuyahoga County, and Cleveland, charged jointly with law enforcement—

This is murder. This is no parlor game. This is no time to permit anybody—no matter who he is—to outwit, stall, fake, or improvise devices to keep away from the police or from the questioning anybody in his right mind knows a murder suspect should be subjected to—a police station.

The officials throw up their hands in horror at the thought of bringing Sam Sheppard to a police station

for grilling. Why? Why is he any different than anybody else in any other murder case?

Why should the police officials be afraid of Bill Corrigan? Or anybody else, for that matter, when they are at their sworn business of solving a murder.

Certainly Corrigan will act to protect Sam Sheppard's rights. He should.

But the people of Cuyahoga County expect you, the law enforcement officials, to protect the people's rights.

A murder has been committed. You know who the chief suspect is.

You have the obligation to question him—question him thoroughly and searchingly—from beginning to end, and not at his hospital, not at his home, not in some secluded spot out in the country.

But at Police Headquarters—just as you do every other person suspected in a murder case.

What the people of Cuyahoga County cannot understand, and The Press cannot understand, is why you are showing Sam Sheppard so much more consideration as a murder suspect than any other person who has ever before been suspected in a murder case.

Why?



The Suspect