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Grave Jury Masks Feelings

BY DORIS O'DONNELL

The most important people in Dr. Sam Sheppard's life are five women and seven men sitting on his jury.

All strangers to him, the dozen plus a woman alternate juror, hold the key to his future in their hands. What they think, how they react to him and to the other witnesses and the conflicting stories told, is anybody's guess.

It'd take a mind reader to probe the depths of their thoughts for the clew of the future.

Both the state and defense play their part for their sole benefit. So far the state, through its three prosecutors, has underplayed its hand, treating all witnesses with uncommon courtesy in a quiet dignified manner. The defense on the other hand has been aggressive, dramatic, and noisy.

Through all this, the jury remains solemn, attentive and alert. They may be forgiven for yawns late in the afternoon. Especially after hours of long technical and

repetitious testimony.

Since Dr. Sam took the stand they have looks of rapt interest, although they are not on the edge of their chairs waiting for each word from his lips.

Dr. Sam, unlike the majority of other witnesses, has turned in his witness box facing the jury directly. He speaks to them as though they were in his lecture class, and he expects full, undivided attention. Only when he described his wife's battered body did he close his eyes and turn away from the jury.

They, in turn, have been almost completely dead-pan. A few times, rare times, too, there have been occasions for brief chuckles. The jury has not chuckled. They have not smiled, even wryly, at the defense's inept jokes or remarks.

To spectators they appear serious and objective, weighed down with the tremendous responsibility of deciding whether the youthful defendant did or did not commit the heinous crime of which he is charged.

No matter where they are or what they do after they leave the courtroom each day, the shadow of Dr. Sam hangs over them.

How did they look as Dr. Sam unraveled his life story up to the very moment of his arrest on July 30th?

Howard Barrish, juror No. 1, has the vantage point in the box. He is closest to the witness and can see each facial expression, each twitch of an eyelid, each sigh, or other emotional reaction. He remains wide-eyed, pale, and relaxed.

Next to him is Mrs. Betty Borke, the juror who startled the court Friday by attempting to ask Dr. Sam a direct question.

Frank Kollarits is wide-eyed most of the time and looks around the courtroom, taking in the whole picture.

Mrs. Luella Williams remains aloof and dignified, showing no signs of emotion at all, while the alternate juror, Mrs. Lois Mancini will nod and smile to reporters at the long press table before court convenes each morning.

Everyone in the room would be willing to give more than a penny for their thoughts.

One of the big surprises of the trial has been the vocabulary used by Dr. Sam Shepard in relating what oc-

curred after he was awakened by his wife's screams on the morning of the murder.

In the account of his two struggles with the bushy-haired prowler whom he links to the murder, Dr. Sam never saw anything—he “visualized” everything. He didn't determine that his son, Chip, was safe—he “evaluated” it. And he never did anything without being “stimulated” to do it.

In his early testimony, he referred to July 4 as the day “this thing” happened. Later, he referred to the murder as “the tragedy.”

The words "Dr. Sam" were no sooner out of her mouth when Judge Edward Blythin sharply reminded her no such thing could be done. She settled back in her seat, wishing the earth could swallow her up, no doubt.

Edmond Verlinger chews gum, keeps his hands clasped before him, and in his swivel chair revolves frequently to see the questioner and the witness at his convenience.

William C. Lamb, next to him, is the least restless of all jurors. He seems completely relaxed and slouches in his chair.

Mrs. Louise Feuchter on the other hand leans on her arms, resting them on the chair rests, and shows obvious signs of fatigue and strain at the end of each day.

Jack Hansen, No. 6, has a perpetual quizzical look, but he, too, seems resigned to the long, tedious experience.

Mrs. Anna Foote has a look of extreme conscientiousness, while her companion, Mrs. Bernice Orenstein, is more calm and relaxed.

James C. Bird, the next juror, moves around frequently in his chair and throws his arms over the back of it.

Frank Moravec, the senior member of the jury, frequently removes his eyeglasses, closes his eyes, but obviously isn't cat-napping. He opens his eyes to slits long enough to let everyone know he's awake.