July 4, 1954, Initial Homicide Offense Report, Bay Village Police Department

Sergeant Jay Hubach  
Bay Village Police Department

Patrolman Fred Drenkhan  
Bay Village Police Department

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COMPLAINT REPORT
BAY POLICE DEPT.

Serial No. 54-194

Location 28924 Lake Rd. Nature of Complaint Homicide
Complainant's Name J. Spencer Houk Address 29014 Lake Rd.

Received by Drenkhan Letter In Person Time 5:57 A.M Date July 4, 1954

Officers Assigned Drenkhan & Cavanaugh

Details of Complaint See Offense Report

Disposition

Approved (Chief or Commanding Officer) Signature of Investigating Officer
In answer to a call from J. Spencer Houk arrived at the home of Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard, 28924 Lake Rd., and was met at the door by Houk. As I entered the Lake Rd. side door into a hall I saw a doctors medical bag on its end with the contents spilled on to the floor. This bag stood in front of a door on the right of the entrance hall which leads into a study. Dr. Sam. Sheppard sat in this room in a large red leather chair in a half sitting half laying position. I was told to go upstairs to Marilyn’s room and see what could be done. Mrs. Esther Houk the wife of J. Spencer Houk was also present when I arrived and she directed me into the kitchen which is just opposite the study across the hall to a stairway which goes up three steps to a landing, then down three steps in to the

Con't
Additional Details of Offense, Progress of Investigation, etc.

living room, with the steps leading upstairs from the center landing. On the first step I noticed a small pool of water. At the top of the stairs directly ahead was the bedroom of Mr. Sam & Marilyn Sheppard. Lying in the twin bed closest to the door was Marilyn Sheppard. She layed half-way down the bed with her feet under the cross bar of a four poster bed, her body was covered with bed clothing up to her lower naval, exposing her midrift, a checkered blouse which she wore was pulled up exposing half of her breast. She had been beaten about the head, above the eyes with an object which left deep gashes about an inch long about three or four being visible on her forehead. The room was covered with blood spots, the entrance door was spotted indicating that the door was open when the assault took place. The shades where drawn, at the foot of the victims bed to the right was a chair on which layed on the seat a pair of white shorts and a bra. On the back were two sweaters, a belt, and a pair of blue shorts. On the floor beside the chair was a pair of panties, a pair of white moc-casin slippers, and a pair of oxford blue tennis shoes. The room contained a night stand with a telephone on it between the two beds, and a dresser on the west wall. Nothing in the room appeared to be disturbed. The blood appeared clotted on the wounds and the victim appeared dead. Returned downstairs and summoned a Doctor, the Chief of Police and Sgt. Hubach, by Police radio, at which time I was informed by Houk that Dr. Richard Sheppard had been called and is on his way. Returned to the house, the dining area, which

This offense is declared:

Unfounded

Arrested

Exceptionally cleared

Inactive (not cleared)

Signed: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Investigating Officer

Signed: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Chief or Commanding Officer

This form is used by officer assigned to a case to report progress after three and seven days and weekly thereafter, also to report significant developments.
of the entrance hall appeared in order except for a desk, which is on the north wall to the west of a large door leading out on to a porch on the lake side or north side of the house. The desk appeared ransacked, three lower drawers being pulled out but not removed or disturbed to a great extent. The top of this desk which opens out to form a writing surface was open and appeared to be ransacked, enveloped, tax stamps and such where laying on the floor directly in front of the desk. The door leading to the porch was open. In the study where Dr. Sam. Sheppard sat in the red chair is a large office type desk, from which all the drawers were removed, except one. The drawers were on the floor and appeared to have been ransacked although the contents remained in the

ers. On the floor behind the desk there was a strong box, some tools and a watch, which contained blood, this watch was later identified as belonging to Mrs. Marilyn Sheppard. Questioned Dr. Sam Sheppard as to what had occurred, he stated that he remembered hearing Marilyn scream, of going upstairs, of fighting down the stairs, of waking up in the water, of coming upstairs. He made these remarks in that order, none of them being tied together. He then turned his head and held his neck with both hands and said no more. He wore trousers right but no shirt, his face appeared to have been struck on the left side. At this time Dr. Richard Sheppard, Dr. Sam. Sheppards older brother arrived and was taken upstairs where he examined Marilyn and pronounced her dead at about 5:12 A.M. He returned downstairs and examined Dr. Sam Sheppard.

This offense is declared: 

Unfounded  
Excepted by arrest  
Exceptionally cleared  
Inactive (not cleared) 

Cont. 

Signed Investigating Officer Date. 

Signed Chief or Commanding Officer Date. 

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The screened porch on the north side of the house enters on to a lawn, approximately 30 to 40 feet from the door of the porch there is a stairway leading to the beach, there were wet footprints or marks on the concrete portion on the stairs. There was no indication of anything or shrubbery being disturbed on either side of the stairway. A beach house which is at the bottom of the stairs approximately 10 ft. above the beach, surrounded by a platform, with another flight of stairs leading directly to the sand did not appear to have been disturbed. At approximately 6:20 A.M. there was about 4 to 5 ft. of beach at the foot of the stairs, with a small swell rolling on the beach from the northeast. The sky was clear and wind breeze was not noticeable. The beach showed signs of a struggle. On the far west pier, a "T" shape stone pier, to the east of the Sheppard home, belonging to Metropolitan Park there were two fishermen. These men were checked out and found to be Jim Crosley and his son, from Normandy Rd., Bay Village, O. and a friend who was visiting the one Arthur Baird. They stated that they arrived there at about 6:00 A.M. and had seen two juveniles playing on the pier. These boys left shortly and were unable to ascertain who they were. With the consent of Chief Eaton, the Cleveland Police Dept. was asked to assist and the Coroners office was notified. Dr. Steven Sheppard, Dr. Sams brother arrived and took Dr. Sam Sheppard to Bayview Hospital in his own car. Dr. Richard Sheppard took "Chief" Samuel Jr., Dr. Sam Sheppards boy who was sleeping in the room upstairs next east of his parents room on the same side of the house.

This offense is declared: Cont.

Unfounded [ ] Signed ____________________________ Date __________
Arrested by order [ ] Investigating Officer
Exceptionally cleared [ ] Chief or Commanding Officer
Inactive (not cleared) [ ]

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Additional Details of Offense, Progress of Investigation, etc.

house or hall, the rooms being divided by a closet, after waking the boy to his home at 23346 Lake Rd., Bay Village, O. Mike Grabowski, from Cleveland Police Dept. Bertillon and I examined house for sign of entry, none could be found. Pictures were obtained on the house and rooms. Det. Robert Schottke and Patrick Vareau arrived and assisted in the investigation. Dr. Gerber and Ray Keefe arrived and examined the body of Marilyn Sheppard, time of death was set at about 4:00 A.M. Dr. Gerber ordered body removed and taken to County Morgue, taken by Peace ambulance, 2914 Dover Rd., Westlake, O. Examination of sheet under body disclosed teeth chips which were found to belong to the deceased.

Investigation disclosed that Nancy and Don J.Ahern, 29146 Lake Rd., Bay Village visited the Sheppards during the evening of July 3, Saturday and had left at approximately 12:00 Am, July 4, that Nancy Ahern had lock the door leading to the Lake during the evening. Dr. Sam Sheppard was asleep on a day bed in the living room, the bed setting along the stair way wall which leads upstairs and that Marilyn Sheppard saw them out the front door. Statement were obtained from the Aherns. The first persons to be called were Mayor J.Spencer Houk and his wife Esther, of 29014 Lake Rd. They stated that they received the call at approx. 5:40 A.M.July 4, from Dr. Sam Sheppard asking them to come over right away. Statements were taken from the Sheppards. Statements were taken from Charles Bryson,26838 Lake Rd., neighbor to east and from Karl R., Helen F., Karl Jr., & Gretchen Houk.

This offense is declared: Cont.

Unfounded □ Signed: Investigating Officer Date 
Arrested by arrest □ 
Exceptionally cleared □ Signed: Chief or Commanding Officer Date 
Inactive (not cleared) □ 

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**SUPPLEMENTARY OFFENSE REPORT**

**BAY POLICE DEPT.**

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**Additional Details of Offense, Progress of Investigation, etc.**

Schuele, 28944 Lake Rd., neighbors to west. Although Karl & Gretchen Shuele came home at approximately 2:00 A.M. July 4, none could add any information relative to the case. Statements were obtained. Statements were taken from Dr. Richard Sheppard, 23346 Lake Rd., Bay Village, O, Dr. Richard A. Sheppard, 23048 Lake Rd. Bay Village, Ohio, Dr. Sam Sheppard's father, and Dr. Steven A. Sheppard, 19027 Englewood Dr. Rocky River, O.

Interviewed one Robert L. Rees, 3694 Walter Rd., North Olmsted, O. and wife who allegedly threatened Dr. Sam Sheppard after his son died on the operating table as the results of a auto accident, July 3, 1954. Statement obtained and subject released.

Received statement from one James Gorman, 2350## Frank St., North Olmsted, O.

See Sgt. Hubach report.

Received information from Paul Whitmer, 8904 Fuller, Cleveland, Ohio, Joe Tronti 402 S. E. 53 St. Clev. C. and John Tronti, 8904 Fuller, Clev. O. that they were fishing on pier nearest to Sheppard home in Huntington Park, July 4, and that about 1:00 A.M. three white juveniles came onto the pier and asked about picnic ground Jerry Schumacher, 18 yrs, 1618 W 47st Clev. C. came into station and reported that he and his companions Bill Hearn, 48th and Clinton, Clev. O. & George Tenaglia, 5211 Tillman, Clev. O. were on pier July 4, about 1:00 A.M. and spoke to three fisherman mentioned above. Statement taken from Shumacher and released.

Tenaglia questioned and related same story.

This offense is declared:

- Unfounded
- Signed
- Inactive (not cleared)

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Signed

Investigating Officer

Signed

Chief or Commanding Officer

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SUPPLEMENTARY OFFENSE REPORT
BAY POLICE DEPT.

Offense: Homicide
Serial No.: 54-194

Complainant: 
Address: 

Additional Details of Offense, Progress of Investigation, etc.

July 4th 1954 Contacted Sgt Boland of the Kent, Ohio P. D. to check upon Doctor Hoverston's story as to arrival etc., at Dr. Stevenson's residence of 189 North Chestnut St., Kent, Ohio.

See Hoverston's statement.

This offense is declared:

Unfounded [ ]
Exceptionally cleared [ ]
Inactive (not cleared) [ ]

Signed: JHHubach, Sgt. 
Date: 7-4-54

Investigating Officer

Chief or Commanding Officer

Date:

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SUPPLEMENTARY OFFENSE REPORT  
BAY POLICE DEPT.

Offense: Homicide  
Serial No.: 54-194

Complainant  
Address  

Additional Details of Offense, Progress of Investigation, etc.

Wednesday, July 7, 1954 met with Dr. Charles W. Elkins MD, 1620 Hanna Blvd. LIVE along with Mr. Mahon, Mr. Puréno, of the Prosecutors Office, Deputy Sheriffs Carl Rossbach & Da e Yettra, Coroner Dr. Gerber & Ray Keefe of the Coroners OFFICE at the Sheppard home. Dr. Elkins stated that there was injury to the spinal column of Dr. Sam or indications to indicate it as he could not use left hand or arm freely and there was definite lack of reflexes on that side of his body. That Dr. Sam Sheppard appeared coherent at all times. At Bayview Hospital Rossbach, Yettra and myself were refused a interview with Dr. Sam Sheppard by his brother Dr. Steven Sheppard.

Thursday, July 7, 1954, while searching Dr. Sam Sheppard's home on Lake Rd., a several pieces of what appeared to be human body parts were found, along with a complete human head, in the garage in a small storage space under the stair way leading upstairs by Ray Keefe of the Coroners Office and I. These were later found to be Laboratory specimens that were given to Dr. R.A. Sheppard, Dr. Sam's father, by the late Dr. Ralph Vorhes, Eyes, ear, and nose doctor, who died in 1942, his widow gave them to Dr. R.A. Sheppard who in turn gave them to Dr. Sam Sheppard.

At 1:00 P.M. along with Deputy Sheriff Rossbach and Yettra we interviewed Dr. Sam Sheppard at Bayview Hospital. See attached sheet.

This offense is declared:

Unfounded  □  Signed:  Investigating Officer  Date

Cleared by arrest  □  Signed:  Chief or Commanding Officer  Date

Exceptionally cleared □  

Inactive (not cleared) □

This form is used by officer assigned to a case to report progress after three and seven days and weekly thereafter, also to report significant developments.
Subject: Interview with Dr. Samuel Shepard at Bay View Hospital
July 8, 1954

Dr. Sam Shepard stated that sometime in the middle of the night he was awakened by his wife Marilyn calling Sam, Sam. That he got up, thinking that it was another convulsion from which she had been suffering from since she had become pregnant. He went up stairs and at the head of the stairs he could see a form, the upper part of which was white, standing at the foot of the bed in the room in which Marilyn and he occupy. Marilyn was making little gurgling noises. As he entered the room he felt that he must have been struck. The next thing he knew was that he was looking at his badge, which he carries in his wallet, that it was reflecting light from some place. He picked it up and stood up. He then looked at Marilyn and examined her be taking her pulse at the throat. He was stunned and dazed but realized she was dead. He then went to Chris room (Sam Jr.) and looked in at Chip. He didn't touch him but was aware that he was alright. He heard a noise downstairs and went down entering into the living room. As he went towards the dining area he saw a dark form outlined by the door leading to the porch on the lake side of the house. He chased this form out of the house and down the steps to the beach. As this form, which was in dark clothing, and was taller than he with bushy hair seemed to slow down on the beach and wait for him he came upon it with intentions of "really letting him have it". The next thing he knew he was wallowing in the surf with his face towards the beach. He got up and went upstairs to the house and on upstairs to Marilyn's room where he looked at her and covered her a little with a sheet because it came to him that she was always modest and it wasn't right for her to be like she was. He then went downstairs and tried to think of who to call, Mayor Houx was the only number he could think of so he called him. He could not recall where he was when the Housks arrived. He could not stated if it was light or dark when this took place but outside there was light from someplace, enought that he could distinguish objects. He was told that he was a suspect and that he would have to explain many things. He could not explain about his "T" Shirt or why his watch was found on the bank the way it was. He was asked to submit to a lie detector test which he refused because of his knowledge of it, and now it operated, that he would have a reaction because of his nearness to the tragedy.

This interview lasted 3½ hours.
Homicide 54-194

Additional Details of Offense, Progress of Investigation, etc.

Friday, July 9, 1954 Along with Deputy Sheriff Rossbach & Yettra and Dr. Gerber Coroner, Attorney's Petersilge and Corrigan and Dr. Sam Sheppard a visit was made to the Sheppard home at 28924 Lake rd. Dr. Sam Sheppards story remained the same. Dr. Sam Sheppard examined his medical bag, the contents were found to be intact except for a small case containing 3 or 4 Ampules, a grain of morphin and a black plastic case containing 2, 2 Two gram hypo needles which could not be located.

Continued investigation along with Sgt. Hubach, See combined report.

This offense is declared:

- Unfounded
- Red by arrest
- Exceptionally cleared
- Inactive (not cleared)

Form 3 CW 10/10

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S~~LEMENTARY OFFENSE REPORT
BAY POLICE DEPT.

Offense: Homicide
Serial No.: 54-194
Complainant:
Address:

Additional Details of Offense, Progress of Investigation, etc.

July 14, 1954 - Richard and Betty Knitter of 765 Kenilworth, Sheffield Lake, Ohio came in to report that on the early morning of July 4th they were returning to their home from Loews State theatre in Cleveland they saw man in vicinity of cemetery.

They state that upon leaving the movie at 2:30 A.M. they walked to their car and drove out to Bearden's Drive In where they stopped for a sandwich. They estimate the time to be between 3:30 & 4:00 A.M. when they went past the cemetery and they noticed a man on the North side of Lake Road walking East toward Cleveland. This man was white, between 32-42 years of age, wearing dark blue trousers, light colored short sleeved shirt. Wide nose, bushy crew cut hair light auburn in color, bushy eyebrows, long sideburns.

At this time Lakewood Police Dept. contacted in regards to someone drawing sketch of this description.

Pat. Larry Adler came out and made such sketch. This is on file.

This offense is declared:

Unfounded □
Red by arrest □
Exceptionally cleared □
Inactive (not cleared) □

Signed: JEHubach, Sgt EPDRenkhan, Pat. Date 7/14/54
Investigating Officer

Signed: □
Chief or Commanding Officer
Date: □

This form is used by officer assigned to a case to report progress after three and seven days and weekly thereafter, also to report significant developments.
GEN. DESCRIPTION
ED. HEIGHT - 170 LBS. LARGE EYES & NOSE - SMALL MOUTH & EARS - CLEAN SHAVEN - LONG
SIDE BURNS - HAIR CUT CLOSE AROUND BASE
OF HEAD - CUT-BROWN CREW CUT - BUSHY
YE BROWS. DRESSED IN DARK TROUSERS &
SHIRT SHORT SLEEVED SPORT SHIRT. WALKED
NORMAL - ABOUT MIDDLE AGED POSSIBLY
12 TO 42 YRS. OLD.

AS DESCRIBED TO ME BY MR. & MRS. KNITTER OF 785 KENNILWORTH
SHEFFIELD LAKE.

Ptl. Richard B. Hollar # 22
2nd Div. Police

THIS PARTY WAS SEEN IN THE VICINITY OF
MR. SHEPPARD'S HOME ON JULY 4TH. AT
ABOUT 2:30 - 3:00 A.M. SUBJECT WAS
IN THE NORTH SIDE OF LAKE ROAD WALKING
EAST.
I was called at my home at about 6:10 A.M. July 4th, 1954 by Fire Chief Walter Koch and told to go down to the Shephard residence that there was some kind of trouble down there. Took possibly ten minutes to arrive at the scene. Upon arrival I was met by Richard Sommers and Ronald Callahan, firemen operating ambulance, and Dick said to me; "get hold of yourself - it's Marilyn - she's been murdered". Went immediately to Lake Road entrance to house and upon entering hallway was met by Mrs. Esther Houk who directed me through the kitchen toward the stairway which leads upstairs. Before entering the kitchen I noticed a bag, medical, which was upended and contents dumped out upon the floor. From the kitchen there are three steps up to landing and then off there are three steps down into the living room. This landing there are stairs which go up and directly north from front of house and lead to upstairs hallway off of which all bedrooms and bathrooms are accessible. The bedroom directly at the top of the stairs and on the north side of the house was the doctor's and his wife's bedroom. Upon entering the room noticed blood splattered all over door which was standing open. There were twin, four poster, beds in this room the one closest to the door of entrance, being the one upon which the body of Marilyn was laying face up, her head being about three feet from the head of the bed and her legs, bent at the knees, were protruding over the end of the mattress but under the cross-piece.

This offense is declared:

- Unfounded
- Cleared by arrest
-optionally cleared
- Inactive (not cleared)

Signed: [Signature]
Date: 7-21-54

Investigating Officer

Signed: [Signature]
Date: [Signature]

Chief or Commanding Officer

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Additional Details of Offense, Progress of Investigation, etc.

The body was in the position so that her legs were toward the North and her head toward the South. The head was very bloody and showed indications of many severe lacerations about the forehead mostly over the left eye. There was clotted blood coming from the mouth. There were no apparent signs of life. The body was clothed by a shirt or blouse of varicolored checks which was pulled up over the chest. The arms were at her side, the left one being bent at the elbow over her stomach. A sheet was over part of the left hand and her lower extremities.

A hasty perusal of the room at this point disclosed no disorder or signs of a struggle. The shades of the windows to the North were pulled. The window on the North side but to the extreme West was partly open. There was a screen on this window. Upon a rocking chair in the corner of the room nearest the death bed there were several articles of clothing. On the seat were a pair of white shorts and a bra. Upon the back of the chair was another pair of blue shorts and a tan or beige shirt with rolled up sleeves. Under the shirt were two sweaters one of which was baby blue in color. There was a pair of moccasin type loafers, light in color, next to rocking chair.

At this point started a search of the entire premises. Went down stairs to the living room. Here I noticed secretary desk on North side of wall and to the West of doorway leading to the lake. The desk had the appearance of being ransacked. Three lower drawers were left ajar and top of desk was in disarray. There were papers, tax stamps, etc., on the floor. Went out North door, which was halfway open, onto large screened in porch and out screen door, which was open all the way, into back yard and down the stairway to the beach house at which point I was joined by Dick and Ronald. At foot of stairs at beach there was a strip of sand about two or three feet from the concrete retaining wall which was not awash from the rough water. At this point there were not any visible signs of footsteps or a struggle. There were some fishermen on the pier at Huntington Park and Dick and Ronnie walked over to talk to them regarding anyone they may have seen upon the beach. Returned upstairs to yard where I talked to Fred Brenchman and we discussed the situation while we walked into the porch. It was at this time that I first noticed the water spots. After getting a first hand run down of case thought it would be better to question fishermen myself. Started down to beach again at which time I ran into Chief John Eaton and Mayor Houk who were just

This offense is declared:

Unfounded □
Closed by arrest □
Exceptionally cleared □
Inactive (not cleared) □

Signed ____________________________________________________________________________ Date ____________
Investigating Officer

Signed ____________________________________________________________________________ Date ____________
Chief or Commanding Officer

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Additional Details of Offense, Progress of Investigation, etc.

returning from beach. They said that they had already talked to fishermen. At this point I went out to police cruiser and radioed the station to put out a broadcast to all surrounding cities and villages to pick up and hold all transients or suspicious persons on the highway.

After making this request the Mayor walked up and we talked about this case and in discussion of what happened the night before he said that he thought the Ahearns were over that night. The Mayor and I drove over to the Ahearns to talk to them. Shortly after arriving there was called to check out some transients brought in by Avon Lake, P.D.

I was busy for some time checking out numerous transients brought in by other departments. Upon returning to the scene one more was told that Cleveland Homicide and Bertillion had been over the scene and gotten pictures. At this time the chief detailed me to the hospital. I was relieved of this duty about 4:10 P.M. Returned to station to see what had developed and then went back to the house. It was at this point that I first entered the Doctors study. While making a telephone call I noticed that a woman's wrist watch was laying on the top of the desk. This watch had the appearance of blood on it. I mentioned this to the Chief and as I showed it to him I noticed that the watch was at 11:30. I am sure the watch was running at this time and Fred Drenkhan can verify this.

This offense is declared:

Unfounded
□ Used by arrest
□ Exceptionally cleared
□ Inactive (not cleared)
□

Signed: [Signature]
Investigating Officer

Date: 7-71-55

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