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MSL

ACADEMIC ENDEAVORS

July 18, 1954
Cleveland, Ohio

The Cleveland News
Cleveland, Ohio

Attention: Mr. Howard Beaufait

In re: Sheppard Murder Case

Like many other Cleveland citizens, my husband and I have followed with keen interest the Marilyn Sheppard murder case. My husband had occasion to meet Mr. John Spencer Houk in a business way sometime late in 1949. At that time, Mr. Houk operated a meat market at Stall # 61 at the old Central Market. At that time, Mr. Houk was a candidate for the position of Mayor of Bay Village, Ohio. It is remembered by my husband that Mr. Houk appeared at my husband's office attired in an informal and casual manner which was somewhat surprising in view of his candidacy. He appeared to be an athletic and outdoor type of man although he apparently did not deem it necessary to wear a tie or be clean shaven. He seemed very confident however of his election. At that time, he was known as John S. Houk and he resided at 488 Kenilworth Rd., Bay Village, Ohio. He has been a butcher and a meat dealer, as have other members of his family, for many years.

Having followed the murder case from day to day through newspaper accounts and radio several pertinent questions have arisen in my mind:

- (1) In 1948 the "Houks" resided at 488 Kenilworth Rd., Bay Village, Ohio. Is there any ~~xxx~~ significance to their moving within a few doors of the Sheppard's?
- (2) Was the close friendship with the "Sheppard's" confined solely to Dr. Sheppard?
- (3) How frequently did the Sheppard's and Houk's meet socially? Did Mr. Sheppard's professional schedule permit him to be present on these occasions?
- (4) Did the Sheppard's receive any telephone calls that evening and was ~~the~~ the fact that the Doctor was asleep on the couch disclosed to the caller?
- ★ (5) Did Mr. Houk profit from the Central Market fire? Did Mrs. Sheppard have any suspicions or information, possibly regarding the fire, that could have been damaging to Mr. Houk?
- (6) Could the murder weapon have been a butcher's tool or implement? In line with this thinking, have Mr. Houk's purchases been analyzed?
- (7) Did Mr. Houk go to his butcher shop on Sunday or Monday? Who cleans the blood-stained garments usually sent in from his butcher shop?
- (8) Did Mrs. Sheppard resent the ^{close} friendship between Mr. Houk and the Doctor?
- (9) How and when did Mr. Houk acquire a stiff leg? It is not recalled that he was so handicapped in 1949? Does this handicap effect his personality? Does it cause him to walk heavily on his right foot? Footsteps on the beach indicated that the Doctor struggled with such an individual? Could this fact have slowed his escape?

(10) Has it been determined as to who answered the telephone at the Houk residence when Dr. Sheppard called in the early morning? Do Mr. & Mrs. Houk share the same bedroom?

(11) Was it "thoughtlessness" or "thoughtfulness" on the Houk's part to pour the Doctor a glass of whiskey when they arrived on the scene and found him dazed and alone after his wife's murder? The Doctor refused the drink.

(12) Did Mr. Houk have a key to the Sheppard residence? Is there any obstruction between the beach areas of the Houk's and the Sheppard's.

X (13) Who furnishes the meat and meat products for Bay View Hospital?

(14) Could Mr. Houk fit the description of the murderer as given by Dr. Sheppard?

X (15) Have the house, grounds, and lake frontage of the Houk's been searched?

The above questions are being submitted only as an interesting line of reasoning and are not intended to cast suspicion on any innocent person or persons. The violent nature of the murder and the public's anxiety and demand for a quick solution, together with the announced reward for clues leading to the apprehension of the murderer or murderers have naturally aroused my interest.

Should it be necessary for any reason to identify myself, I will bring the carbon copy of this letter to the "News" upon request placed in your paper.

" A News Subscriber"