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7-12-1954

## 54/07/12 Hunt 'Maniac' in Sheppard Killing

Cleveland News

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### Recommended Citation

Cleveland News, "54/07/12 Hunt 'Maniac' in Sheppard Killing" (1954). *All Articles*. 64.

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CLEVELAND, OHIO, MONDAY, JULY 12, 1954

Wirephotos, Exclusive Evening News of the Associated Press and International News

# HUNT 'MANIAC' IN SHEPPARD KILLING

# Lack of Clews Baffle Police on Trail to Take

BY HOWARD BEAUFAIT

With the collapse of all tangible clews, search for the killer of Mrs. Marilyn Sheppard today turned to motive in an effort to break through the clouded mystery.

Possibility that the attractive Bay Village housewife and mother had been furiously beat to death by a schizophrenic or insane person was being considered by investigators.

Coroner Samuel R. Gerber and County Detective Carl Rossbach said they had virtually ruled out a "casual burglar" or prowler as the murderer because of the unusual violence of the crime.

The 31-year-old wife of Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard, one of the surgeon-directors of Bay View Osteopathic Hospital, was beaten on the head 27 times and with such force that her skull and the roof of her eyesockets were shattered.

Dr. Gerber pointed out that it was possible that the Sheppards had met someone who was schizophrenic, without realizing it, and that Mrs. Sheppard had been built up in the disordered mind as a person whom must be destroyed.

Schizophrenics suffer from a psychosis which is characterized by loss of contact with normal environment and by disintegration of his personality.

Investigators, searching for the motive, theorized that the nature of the crime indicated strongly that it was committed by someone insane or someone with a strong emotional attachment for Mrs. Sheppard, who was expecting a baby when she was slain.

## Investigators Baffled

The murder has baffled all who attempted to solve it since it was committed in an upstairs bedroom of the white lakefront home of the Sheppards a week ago yesterday at 28924 West Lake Rd., Bay Village.

A half dozen suspects have fallen into the police net. All have been released or cleared of suspicion in the killing.

The T-shirt worn by Dr. Sheppard the night he said he saw a tall, bushy-haired man standing over his wife's body is still missing.

Detective Rossbach considers the T-shirt one of the major missing parts of the crimson puzzle confronting him.

## Weapon Still Missing

Also still missing is the weapon used to bludgeon the woman into eternity. It is believed to be a tire iron, flat or square rod about 18 inches long.

Dr. Gerber said that blood spots found on the stairway of the Sheppard house and eight or 10 blood spots on the floor of a rear screened-in porch indicate the escape path taken by the murderer—

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# MURDER

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but have been of no help in identifying the killer.

Fingerprints and a palm print found on a living room desk have likewise proved of little value.

A bushy-haired man, reportedly seen by a Cuyahoga Heights resident in the vicinity of the Sheppard home near the time of the murder still remains a phantom.

## Insists He Was Sleeping

Through two lengthy sessions of questioning and cross examination, Dr. Sheppard has maintained that he was sleeping on a downstairs couch when he heard his wife moan his name. He said he ran upstairs, saw the tall man standing by his wife's bedside at the moment when he was struck from behind and knocked unconscious.

The osteopath, taken to County Jail for questioning Saturday, again said he did not know what happened to his T-shirt.

He again refused to take a lie detector test on the grounds that his present emotional state precludes an accurate reading of his answers.

While investigators returned to the Sheppard house to pick up the thread of a motive, Dr. Sheppard spent a quiet day at the home of his father, Dr. R. A. Sheppard, 23048 West Lake Rd., Bay Village, visiting with friends. One of his callers was the Rev. Alan J. Davis who attended Cleveland High School with the osteopath.

Assistant County Prosecutor John J. Mahon, who has been conducting an independent search for a motive, said he planned to confer with Police Chief John P. Eaton of Bay Village, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Ahern, neighbors who visited the Sheppards a few hours before the murder, and Thomas Reese, 4233 Silsby Rd., Cleveland Heights, father of Marilyn Sheppard.