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55/01/07 Mother of Dr. Sheppard Kills Herself With Gun

Cleveland News

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MRS. ETHEL SHEPPARD



One of the last pictures of Mrs. Richard A. Sheppard taken during the murder investigation. The boy is "Chip" Sheppard, son of Dr. Sam Sheppard, who was visiting with his grandmother at that time. Today "Chip" was in the basement of the home of his uncle, Dr. Stephen, when his grandmother died in a second floor bedroom.

Body Found On Bed at Dr. Stephen's

BULLETIN

News of the death of his mother was given to Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard in County Jail this afternoon by his two brothers, Drs. Stephen and Richard. After the cell conference, Dr. Richard Sheppard said:

"Sam was all broken up by the news. He broke down and cried."

Dr. Richard said that he had to hurry back to Bay Village Hospital because his father had taken a turn for the worse and was critically ill and in danger of pneumonia.

Mrs. Richard A. Sheppard, whose son, Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard was convicted of the murder of his wife, committed suicide today in the Rocky River home of another son.

Detective George J. Gindra of the suburb said the elder Mrs. Sheppard, 65, shot herself with a .38 caliber snub-nosed revolver owned by her son, Dr. Stephen A. Sheppard, in whose home the tragedy occurred.

A note found on a card table near the body said:

"Dear Steve: I just can't manage alone without father . . . Mother."

(Her husband is a patient in Bay View Hospital at the present time.)

Dr. Steve found his mother's body sprawled across a bed in a second floor room at his home, 19027 Inglewood Dr., Rocky River.

The son had been called at Bay View Hospital by his wife, Betty, who told him she could not get into the bedroom which was locked from the inside.

When Dr. Steve arrived he let himself into the room with a key. Mrs. Sheppard still clasped the revolver in her right hand. She had been shot once behind the right ear.

After notifying police, Dr. Steve left immediately for Bay View Hospital where his father is recovering from an attack of pleurisy.

"What's going to happen to us next?" Dr. Steve said to a maid, Mrs. Maggie Schumpert, 55, before leaving the house.

Mrs. Schumpert and Dr. Sam's 7-year-old son, Chip, were the only other persons in the house at the time of the shooting.

Chip was in the basement playing with boxes, the maid said.

"About 11:15 this morning I heard some noise," Mrs. Schumpert said. "I thought it was Chip. I scolded him and told him not to make so much noise."

Chip had remained home from school with a cold.

At 11:30 a. m. Mrs. Schumpert said she received a phone call from "Miss Julia," a niece of Mrs. Sheppard Sr.

"She asked to talk to her aunt," the maid said. "I went to the second floor bedroom and knocked. There was no answer. I came down and told Miss Julia that she must be asleep and to call back later."

At the time of the phone call Mrs. Betty Sheppard was out shopping. She returned close to noon and went immediately to her mother-in-law's room, but could get no response.

Mrs. Schumpert told Rocky River police that when she arrived at the Sheppard house at 8 this morning she saw the elder Mrs. Sheppard sitting in the dining room. She said she appeared in good spirits and they chatted briefly before Mrs. Sheppard went upstairs.

Mrs. Sheppard took her life at almost the exact moment that attorneys gave up their fight for a new trial for her son on the grounds of newly discovered evidence.

Attorney William J. Corrigan told Common Pleas

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Dr. Sam's Mother Kills Self With Gun

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Judge Blythin that he was withdrawing the new trial motion because he had not found the expected new evidence.

The news of his mother's death was not conveyed immediately to Dr. Sam Sheppard in his fourth floor cell at County Jail. At the time of the shooting, another sister-in-law, Mrs. Richard N. Sheppard was visiting the prisoner.

The body of Mrs. Sheppard was removed to the County Morgue for autopsy, necessary in all cases of death by violence. The suicide note was turned over to Coroner Samuel R. Gerber.

The room in which Mrs. Sheppard decided to end her life was decorated in blue and white wallpaper with a floral design. Her body was across a maple four-poster bed.

The one shot fired from the revolver embedded itself in the wall just about the headboard of the bed.

Mrs. Sheppard had been in ill health since July 4 when Dr. Sam's pregnant wife, Marilyn, was found battered to death in her Bay Village home.

The white-haired motherly woman kept in the background during the murder investigation. She suffered a mild heart attack during the trial of her son and for a time was a patient in her husband's Bay View Hospital.

She had been staying with Dr. Stephen Sheppard since her husband was taken ill and was hospitalized. She and her husband shared a large house next door to the hospital at 23048 West Lake Rd., Bay Village.

Mrs. Sheppard did not visit her son in jail, partly because of her health and partly because he did not want her to see him in such surroundings.

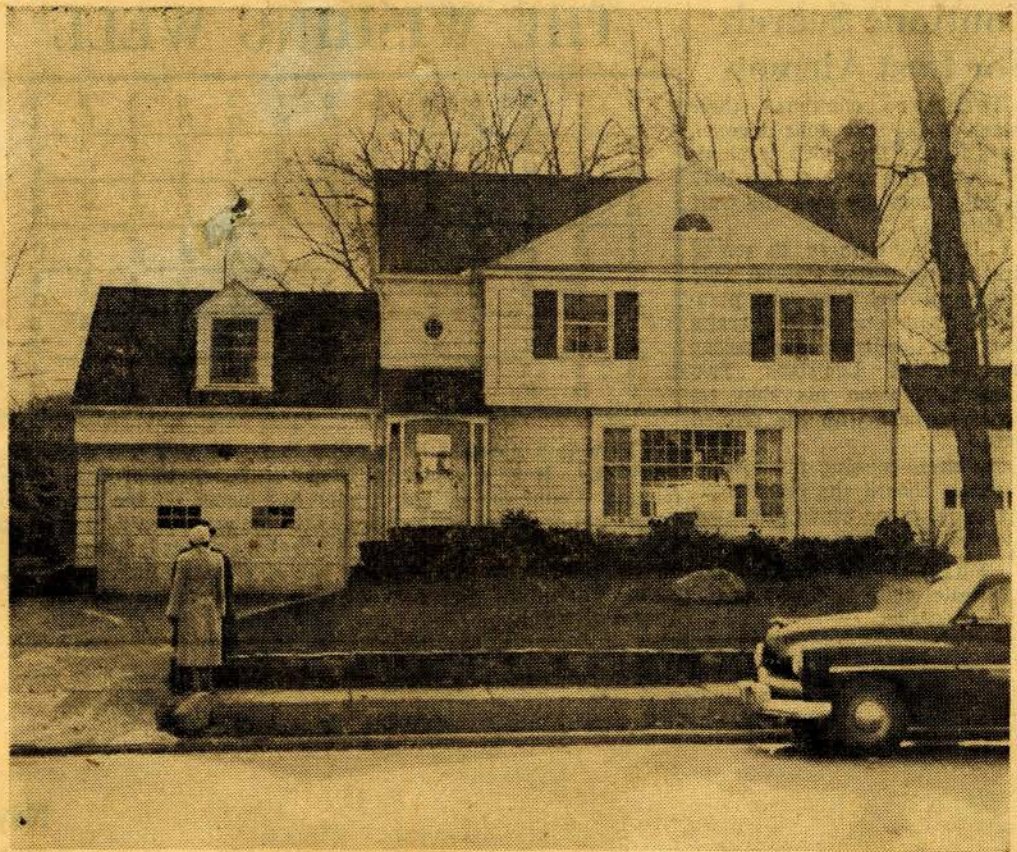
Attorney Corrigan and his son, William Corrigan, arrived at Dr. Stephen Sheppard's Rocky River home an hour after the suicide. They said they would have a statement to issue later.

Mr. and Mrs. Guilford Brown, 1861 Idlewild Ave., East Cleveland, aunt and uncle of murdered Marilyn Sheppard, were waiting to visit Dr. Sam when they learned of the suicide.

Mrs. Brown said: "I expected her husband to die before she did."

The aunt and uncle were too upset by the tragic news to see Dr. Sam. They conveyed the news to Mrs. Richard Sheppard when she came down from the jail.

Patrolman Richard Beyer of Rocky River, one of the first officers at the suicide scene, said that Dr. Steve's 9-year-old daughter, Janet, came home from school at noon and had been sent up to tell her grandmother it was time for lunch. When she got no response to her knocks at the door she told her mother.



Residence of Dr. Stephen A. Sheppard at 19027 Inglewood Rd., Rocky River.