

---

[All Articles](#)

[Newspaper Coverage](#)

---

7-21-1954

## 54/07/21 Dr. Sheppard Refuses to Take Truth Serum in Murder Probe

Cleveland News

Follow this and additional works at: [https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/newspaper\\_coverage](https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/newspaper_coverage)  
[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Cleveland News, "54/07/21 Dr. Sheppard Refuses to Take Truth Serum in Murder Probe" (1954). *All Articles*. 98.

[https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/newspaper\\_coverage/98](https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/newspaper_coverage/98)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Newspaper Coverage at EngagedScholarship@CSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Articles by an authorized administrator of EngagedScholarship@CSU. For more information, please contact [library.es@csuohio.edu](mailto:library.es@csuohio.edu).

**DR. SHEPPARD REFUSES TO TAKE  
TRUTH SERUM IN MURDER PROBE**

NEWS 7-21-54

# Cites 'Upset State of Mind,' Moritz Says

BY HOWARD BEAUFIT

Dr. Samuel M. Sheppard today flatly rejected two proposals that he submit to a "truth serum" test in the scientific search for the murderer of his attractive wife.

Dr. Alan R. Moritz, nationally known crime expert, announced that the prominent Bay Village osteopath had declined the test on advice of his attorneys.

Coroner Samuel R. Gerber and investigators said the serum would have made possible questioning of Dr. Sheppard in a semi-conscious state in the hope of throwing new light on the 17-day-old mystery.

Dr. Sheppard gave these three reasons for refusing the truth serum proposal:

**HE HAD ALREADY** been subjected to interrogation after the crime and while he was under barbiturate sedation, and he regarded that as equivalent to truth serum questioning.

**HE CANNOT FACE** further interrogation because he is still emotionally upset and his state of fatigue makes an ordeal of this kind impossible.

**HE IS RELUCTANT** to put himself in a position where he might involuntarily incriminate innocent people.

Mrs. Marilyn Sheppard, 31, was found brutally clubbed to death in the bedroom of her home at 28924 West Lake Rd., Bay Village, before dawn July 4.

Her husband said he was sleeping on a downstairs couch at the time when he heard his wife moan his name. He said he ran upstairs to see a man bending over her bed in a split second before he was knocked unconscious.

When he came to he said he ran downstairs and pursued the killer down the steps to the beach where he was again slugged into unconsciousness.

In suggesting the truth serum, Dr. Moritz hoped that details that Dr. Sheppard may have forgotten about the clubber he said invaded his home might be brought to light.

Dr. Moritz pointed out that in the period between unconsciousness and returning consciousness a person often develops a blind spot in his attempt to remember what happened and what he saw.

Dr. Sheppard on two previous occasions while being questioned about his wife's death refused to take lie detector tests on the grounds that his highly emotional state would make an accurate reading impossible.

### Serum Is Barbiturate Drug

"Truth serum" is the popular term for a barbiturate drug known medically as sodium pentothal. It is injected into a suspect's vein and projects the person into a twilight state between two worlds—the conscious and the unconscious. Its conventional and most common use is as an anesthesia in surgery.

The serum has been used in many murder cases to dredge a suspect's subconscious mind to bring to the surface things that have been unremembered or half forgotten. More often than not it has been effective in proving the innocence of a person suspected of serious crime.

The "truth serum" has been particularly effective in cases where

Continued on Page 4, Column 1

# Dr. Sheppard Balks At Truth Serum Test

7-21-54  
Continued From Page 1

circumstantial evidence pointed overwhelmingly to the guilt of a suspect, but police entertained a persistent doubt.

## Adaptable Moritz Thinks

Dr. Moritz thought the truth serum was particularly adaptable to the Sheppard case.

The serum was first brought into the Sheppard murder mystery by Dr. Moritz at a meeting last Saturday in the County Morgue amphitheater of all agencies investigating the crime.

Coroner Gerber, Assistant County Prosecutor John J. Mahon, Cleveland and Bay Village police all agreed that Dr. Moritz should proceed immediately with the serum proposal.

## Met With Dr. Sheppard

Accordingly, Dr. Moritz met with Dr. Sheppard and his attorney, Arthur E. Petersilge, late Monday. Both the osteopath and his counsel greeted the suggestion with enthusiasm, but asked time to think it over.

Dr. Sheppard, in a tentative acceptance, imposed two restrictions on the truth serum injection:

**IT MUST BE GIVEN** in a place, presumably a hospital, friendly to Dr. Sheppard.

**NO PUBLICITY** be given the experiment until the truth serum test was completed.

Dr. Moritz imposed one restriction of his own; that the serum be administered and the results be interpreted by someone selected by Dr. Moritz.

After this meeting, Dr. Moritz

was asked to lunch with Attorney William J. Corrigan, also retained by Dr. Sheppard, at the Union Club Tuesday noon.

After the luncheon, Dr. Sheppard called Dr. Moritz and rejected the truth serum proposal.

The next step was a modification of the original suggestion by Dr. Moritz, making still further concessions to the Bay Village osteopath.

Under the later proposal Dr. Sheppard was to take the serum administered by a high ranking psychiatrist who would be alone in the room with the patient. All police and investigators, including Dr. Moritz, would be excluded.

The psychiatrist would ask the questions of Dr. Sheppard while he was in the twilight state, digging particularly into the memory lapses that may have occurred after Dr. Sheppard was knocked into unconsciousness twice by the man he said killed his wife.

Another compromise restriction under this later proposal was that all answers given by Dr. Sheppard that might prove embarrassing to him would be a professional secret, known only to doctor and patient. But all information pertinent to the murder would be turned over to police.

Dr. Sheppard and his attorneys asked that they be given until this morning to answer Dr. Moritz second proposal.

## Serves As Impartial Expert

Dr. Moritz entered the case as an impartial crime expert who agreed to make his knowledge

and services available to both Dr. Sheppard and the four-way investigation into his wife's death. He announced yesterday that Dr. Sheppard had refused to cooperate with him in attempting to run down the murderer.

Dr. Moritz, while he was associated with the Harvard Medical School for crime experts and homicide detectives, saw the truth serum administered many times with startling and accurate results, although he never personally administered the drug.