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57/07/24 Court Fight on Sheppard Reward Seen

Cleveland Plain Dealer

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★ ★ ★ Court Fight on Sheppard Reward Seen

Police Here Have Claim in for \$10,000

A court battle over the \$10,000 reward money for the capture and conviction of Marilyn Sheppard's murderer appeared likely yesterday.

The money, put up by Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard and members of his family four days after the slaying, is still available in a savings account at the Cleveland Trust Co.

The account is in the names of John F. Curry, Joseph F. Gorman and Henry W. Speeth, Cuyahoga County commissioners.

But the board members have no concern with the money in their public capacities. Each is acting as an individual. The responsibility was accepted by Curry as a favor to Arthur E. Petersilge, one of the Sheppard family attorneys.

The money has been gathering interest since it was deposited. Under the agreement the interest on the \$10,000 returns to the Sheppards.

The \$10,000 also returns to the Sheppards if no claimants appear within five years after the offer was first made. That date is apparently July 8, 1959.

Curry said no one thus far had attempted to claim the reward. This information raised a furor in the Cleveland Police Department.

"We certainly have put in a claim for the reward," asserted Dan Crowley, secretary of the Police Relief and Pension Fund. "We did it in February."

Assistant City Prosecutor Louis V. Corsi affirmed Crowley's statement.

"I sure did put in a claim for the relief and pension fund," Corsi said. "But Curry has

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never made any acknowledgment of our claim."

Corsi and Crowley conceded that policemen as paid public servants had no right to claim any part of the reward individually.

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Consider Legal Action

But by practice, rewards have long been accepted by the department for the relief and pension fund.

The pension fund board meets Aug. 19, when the question of resorting to legal action to force Curry's hand will be discussed.

P. Decker
County prosecutors, who participated in the Sheppard prosecution, have refused to advise the county commissioners on disposal of the \$10,000.

The prosecutors point out that the commissioners are not acting as commissioners in their responsibility for the money but as individuals.

Sam Made Offer

Curry said he had been advised by one prosecutor not to award the money to any policemen or paid public servants whose job it was to find the murderer. But the prosecutor strongly denied ever having given such counsel.

The original announcement of the \$10,000 reward offer came from Dr. Sam in his bed at Bay View Hospital, July 8, 1954, in a signed statement which read:

"I have, with my family, authorized my attorneys to post a reward of \$10,000 for the arrest and conviction of the murderers of my wife."

Dr. Sam was convicted of the murder Dec. 21, 1954,