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54/08/02 Mayor of Bay Denies He Changed His Story

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Mayor of Bay Denies He Changed His Story

Bay Village Mayor J. Spencer Houk today denied he had changed his account of the July 4 murder morning at Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard's home at 28924 Lake Rd.

Houk, testifying at the hearing on Dr. Sheppard's unsuccessful application for a writ of habeas corpus, said he had gone upstairs to the bedroom in which Mrs. Sheppard was beaten to death.

Earlier at an inquest, Coroner Samuel R. Gerber asked Houk: "Did you go into the bedroom upstairs?"

A.: "No, sir."

Just before Houk was excused as a witness under oath, Dr. Gerber asked again: "Did you go into Marilyn's bedroom while you were there?"

A.: "No."

But in his testimony this morning, the 42-year-old butcher and part-time suburban mayor was asked if he saw Mrs. Sheppard that morning and answered: "Yes. . . . She was horribly beaten about the head, lying in bed. . ."

His wife, Esther, who testified she had gone upstairs and asked her husband to call an ambulance, confirmed the inquest version in a telephone

conversation with a Press reporter.

Houk, reached at his butcher shop, gave this explanation:

"My wife went up first. I went up later. I didn't go up immediately. I told about all this in a signed statement. I don't recall who it was to. . . . I've made so many statements since this thing started. I'm sure I told it to Schottke and Gareau, the Cleveland detectives."

Detective Chief James McArthur, who previously disclosed that a lie detector test indicated deception when Houk was asked two questions, said the Bay Village mayor would be asked to explain the discrepancy in his sworn testimony.

The two questions on which the lie detector indicated deception, McArthur said, were: "What became of the missing T-shirt" and "Have you answered all questions truthfully?"