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ADELSON TOUCHED BY 'STAGE FRIGHT'

200-Time Court Witness Cites Serious Role

BY SANFORD WATZMAN

Dr. Lester Adelson, Witness No. 1 in the Marilyn Sheppard murder case and already a witness at least 200 times before, admitted he had had "stage fright of a sort" when he took the stand yesterday.

"I've addressed meetings of a thousand doctors and being in this court is my everyday work, but I don't think I ever felt that way since the first time I testified in a case," the chief deputy coroner said.

Dr. Adelson spoke so rapidly at first that Norman C. Stern, veteran court stenographer, had difficulty keeping up with the testimony. He slowed down afterward and assumed his familiar courtroom role of the untroubled pathologist who has most of his answers written down on a medical report.

"Lived With Case"

"I've lived with this case for four months now," the 40-year-old doctor said. "Anyone involved in it must feel the serious responsibility he is facing when he takes that stand."

His testimony, he said, involves only the multiplicity of injuries, the severity of injuries and the cause of death.

But the expert on autopsies had more to say after the witness oath was administered. For eight minutes he recited his qualifications in response to questions by Assistant County Prosecutor John J. Mahon.

This is testimony that Dr. Adelson does not always give. His qualifications are so well known in Common Pleas Court that they are frequently stipulated by opposing counsel.

But, as one courtroom observer pointed out, "nothing is being left out in this trial."

So Dr. Adelson went down the list:

He was graduated from Harvard College in 1935 and Tufts Medical School, Boston, in 1939. He was an interne and a resident physician for two years at Hartford Hospital, Hartford, Conn.

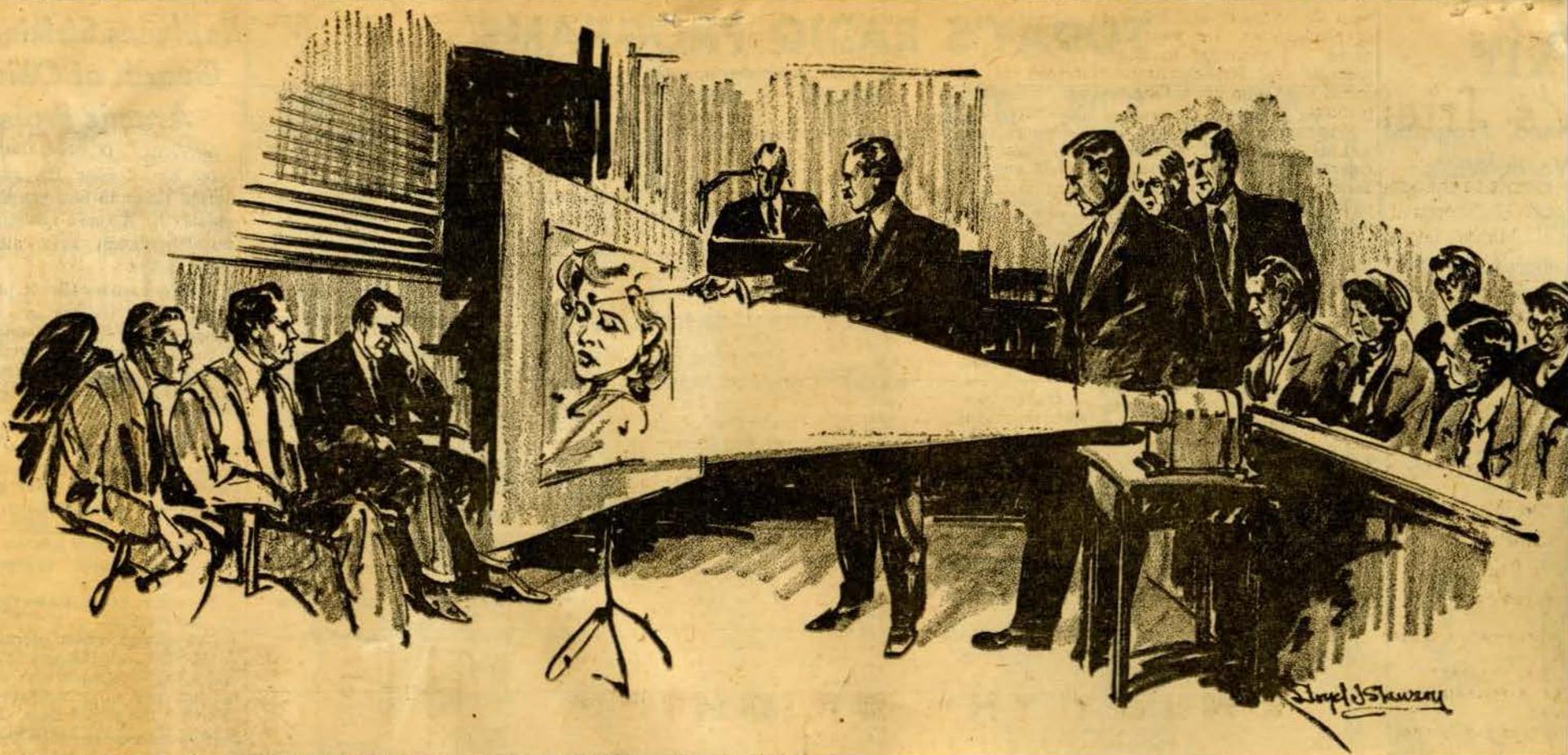
Served in Air Force

After serving as an Air Force surgeon in the South Pacific he returned to Hartford Hospital, where he was resident pathologist for 42 months. In the meantime he was a research fellow in pathology and legal medicine at Harvard Medical School. He joined the coroner's staff here in 1950.

He is a member of the Cleveland Academy of Medicine and the Cuyahoga County, Ohio State and American Medical Associations. He belongs to the Cleveland and Ohio Society of Pathologists.

Other professional affiliations are with the American Association of Pathologists and Bacteriologists and the American Society of Clinical Pathologists. He is a member of Alpha Omega Alpha and Phi Beta Kappa, honorary fraternities.

He has written learned papers



IN APPARENT PAIN, Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard (behind the screen) holds his head as Dr. Lester Adelson indicates with a pointer the wounds which killed Sheppard's wife, Marilyn. Color slides of the victim were shown the jurors and Judge Edward Blythin. Also in the sketch are a deputy sheriff, lawyers and Dr. Stephen A. Sheppard, brother of the accused. Plain Dealer Artist Lloyd J. Slawson drew this sketch.