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54/11/04 Mahon Has Cool Court Technique

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John J. ("Those are the facts") Mahon will tell the jury today exactly what he thinks. He will give a "businesslike" speech," he said, telling how he expects to prove Marilyn Sheppard was murdered by her husband, Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard, and then he will present his witnesses in "a businesslike way."

If the chief trial prosecutor is able to prove his case and overcome Dr. Sam's assertion of innocence he will have achieved another victory by "setting the record straight," as he describes it.

Mahon's record is about 100 murder-charge convictions in 22 years as a state's attorney. Old-timers at the Criminal Court Building maintain that he had the same poker face and spoke in the same monotone in every one of those trials.

He has scored most of his successes by a bulldog-like approach to the trial issues. He scoffs at oratory and is stubbornly unaware of whatever impression he may be making on a jury.

But on cross-examination he often catches the witness in a pair of legal jaws and dares him to break loose.

The 63-year-old widower, who has three children and eight grandchildren, was elected Tuesday to a seat on the Common Pleas bench.

Danacea, 58, who sits at the Sheppard trial at the No. 2 chair on the prosecutor's side, is the legal expert of the state's team.

While he ranks immediately beneath Cullitan and over Mahon, he has taken a back seat in the trial because much of his experience has been in the civil branch.

In his own criminal cases Danacea helped win convictions against former Police Lieut. Ernest L. Molnar (bribery) and Willie Hoge and Arthur (Little Brother) Drake (extortion).

Father of two and grandfather of five, Danacea has been in the prosecutor's office for 18 years. It was in his first-hand observation of murder trials that Danacea gradually came to change his view about the death penalty.

But it is outside the courtroom that Danacea scored one of his greatest achievements. He was the chief author in 1931 of the city charter of Cleveland.

Parrino, a 37-year-old bachelor, joined Cullitan's staff in 1949 after serving with an army intelligence outfit. In the early stages of the Sheppard investigation he did much of the police spadework.

Parrino has won recent attention by his convictions of Ralph (Bull) DiBiase, head of a large gang of safecrackers, and Emmett (the Prophet) Cobb, a notorious pandrer.