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54/07/24 Family Backs Sam's Account of Murder Morning

Cleveland Press
Sheppards Describe Conditions at Home

The transcript of the dramatic inquest into the murder of Mrs. Marilyn Sheppard was being carefully reviewed today by Coroner Samuel R. Gerber and Detective Chief James McArthur.

Highlight of yesterday's testimony was a crossfire of questions which challenged Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard's account of the events of his wife's murder.

Dr. Sheppard denied having spent four nights in the same bedroom as Miss Susan Hayes, 24, former Bay View Hospital technician, at the home of Dr. Arthur Miller, another osteopath, in Los Angeles.

Other questions probed deeply into the family life of Dr. Sam and the murdered Marilyn.

Following are the key questions asked by Dr. Gerber and the responses of Dr. Sam's older brothers and sisters-in-law:

"Marilyn had trouble adjusting herself to the life of a doctor and to taking care of her son," Mrs. Dorothy Sheppard, wife of Dr. Richard Sheppard, testified at the coroner's inquest.

"I knew something was wrong when the mayor called that morning," Mrs. Stephen Sheppard told Coroner Gerber at the inquest. She described how she and her husband sped to the murder home.
family gathering to come to some decision whether she should be retained as a hos­
pital employee?
A: I know there wasn't.
Q: Was there any gathering
of the family to discuss the
conduct of Dr. Sam and Sue
Hayes?
A: No, sir.
Q: Is it correct that Marilyn
Sheppard thought very highly of
you and confided in you on
many occasions?
A: Yes, that was so.
Q: Did you ever confide
that she was having trouble
with her husband?
A: Yes, but in a way we all
did have the same trouble with
Dr. Sam. She said he worked too
long, and his hours at the
hospital were too long.
Q: Did she ever say any­
thing else about Dr. Sam and
any women?
A: Yes, she said he was away
from the family quite a bit and
asked me if I thought there
might be another woman.
At that time, I knew how much
time he was at the hospital
and in his office, and said
that there was just not time for
any affairs.
Q: Did she ever tell you
that Dr. Sam was seeking a
divorce? Did you ask her, whe­
ther she should get a divorce,
that the situation was un­
bearable?
A: I don't believe so.

Claims No Talk of a Breakup

Q: Did Sam ever tell you
the differences he and Marilyn
had, and did he ever tell you
how the two women were
in a relationship?
A: No. But I have some
information about Marilyn. I
cannot discuss it, however, be­
cause it was a condition that
she commented much less.

Q: Did you ever talk to
Sam about Marilyn?
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Maidy through the afternoon session, Dr. Richard Sheppard was called to the stand.

Dr. Gerber asked him, as a member of the board of trustees of Bay View Hospital, to deliver to the inquest, hospital records having to do with "dismissal, resignations or firings of office personnel."

In this he was apparently seeking the reason for the resignation early this year of Miss Susan Hayes, medical technician and friend of Dr. Sam. Dr. Richard said he would have to ask his lawyer, Dr. Arthur Petersilge.

Petersilge conferred with William Corrigan, another Sheppard attorney at the hearing, and then said: "In my opinion no member of the board would have the power to deliver such records."

"But as you know there are other means of acquiring them. I am sure they could be brought here under subpoena."

"That shall be done," Gerber replied.

The coroner then asked Dr. Richard to tell what happened on the morning of the murder.

The doctor told of getting a phone call around 6 a.m. of getting to the Sheppard home in 12 to 15 minutes after telling his wife to call his brother, Dr. Steve, and his father who was to go to Bay View Hospital and prepare to treat the victims.

At the Sheppard home, he said, he found "two or three other persons, including Mayor Houk and his wife. I glanced in the library and saw Sam half sitting and half reclining in a chair."

Dr. Richard said he asked a Bay Village officer for a kitchen knife and started up the stairs.

"I took a step or two into the bedroom and was stunned by what I saw. Marilyn was in the bed with her feet over the edge. Her head was not in the pillow. It was toward the center.

"Her head was in a large bloody area that seemed to be evenly spaced. I noticed the blood had started to clot and there were numerous cuts and abrasions."

"I took her pulse. There was none. I used the stethoscope on her chest, and there was no sign of life. However, there was some body warmth."

"I had brought the knives up with me with the thought of a possible cardiac resuscitation (heart massage). But it was obvious at that stage that there was nothing I could do."

"I raised the sheet. Her breast was bare, the nightgown rolled up. I didn't move the body other than to take her pulse. There was an officer with me at the time. I stepped back in the hallway and looked into Chip's room and he appeared sound asleep."

Dr. Richard continued, telling of how he came back downstairs to tell Dr. Sam his wife was dead and "with that he slid onto the floor and said, 'Oh, God, no!'"

Dr. Stephen arrived about then, Dr. Richard said, and both went up upstairs for another look at the slain woman. Downstairs again, they sent Dr. Sam to Bay View Hospital and young Chip, awakened and dressed, to Dr. Richard's home.

After a quick trip to the hospital for a check on their brother's condition, Dr. Richard said, both returned to the murder home, "looked in the library, saw the spilled contents of the medical bag, went upstairs to the other bedroom where Dr. Lester Hoversten had been staying."

"I was surprised to see that his things were still there. I thought he had gone on, but I heard later that he had gone to Kent the night before. Then I went downstairs and out on the porch and to the beach. I saw nothing unusual anyplace."

Examined Brother Only Superficially

Q.: Did you make an examination of Sam at the house?
A.: Only a superficial examination. I noted a bruise on his forehead and cheek and blood was coming from his mouth and he had a split lip.

Q.: Do you know of any difficulties between Dr. Sam and Marilyn?
A.: No serious ones.

Q.: Any that were not serious?
A.: I believe they had several little difficulties that were common to any family. For example, they had an argument on Christmas as to whether they should go to her family on the East Side or to ours on the West.

Q.: Any rifts as to Sam's attention to other women?
A.: Not to my knowledge.

Dr. Richard had negative answers to Dr. Gerber's questions as to whether Dr. Sam had attended any party at Richard's house without his wife.

He said he had learned of Marilyn's pregnancy the Friday night before she was murdered when the three brothers and their wives spent the evening at Dr. Richard's.

He concluded his testimony by stating that he had told all he remembered of his hurried visit to Dr. Sam's on the murder morning and that he had touched nothing but the knives.

Dr. Gerber finished with three staccato questions:

Q.: Do you own a shotgun?
A.: No, sir.

Q.: Do you know of any of Sam's patients who had threatened him?
A.: To my knowledge, no. Since the trouble, I've heard something about that.

Q.: Do you know of anyone who'd want to hurt Marilyn?
A.: No.

With this reply, Dr. Richard was excused from the stand.
MRS. RICHARD SHEPPARD

A tall blond of stately bearing, Mrs. Richard Sheppard set the inquest room buzzing severa! times with sharp, and occasionally sarcastic, replies to the coroner's persistent questions.

At one point Gerber, questioning the witness on a letter she purportedly wrote to Marilyn Sheppard, asked:

"Did you mention in the letter adjustments that are to be made in the life of a wife of a doctor?"

With sarcasm in her voice, Mrs. Sheppard replied: "I may have. If you have such a letter, I would appreciate seeing it and would be better able to tell you."

The sarcasm continued when Mrs. Sheppard groped for a word to describe Marilyn Sheppard's reaction to reports about husband during a time when they were temporarily apart.

Mrs. Sheppard testified: "I believe that once when Marilyn was home in the summer time for a two months' visit with Chip, she was disturbed — no, not disturbed."

Q.: Disturbed?
A.: No.
Q.: Unhappy?
A.: No. (Then, very sharply) I would appreciate it if you would let me choose my own word, Dr. Gerber.

She Avoided People Who Said Bad Things

Q.: Did you ever hear Mrs. Ward make a sarcastic remark about Susan Hayes and Dr. Sheppard?
A.: I make it a practice of keeping away from people who make nasty remarks.

At this point there was a rule among the spectators, and Dr. Gerber warned them to be quiet or he would clear the room.

Mr. Sheppard steadfastly denied that Marilyn Sheppard discussed with her Dr. Sam's conduct in Los Angeles.

Q.: Did she ever tell you Dr. Sam was seeking a divorce.
A.: No. That's just a term used probably by everyone in this room at one time or another.
Q.: Did she ever discuss with you Dr. Sam's attention to women in Los Angeles while in school?
A.: No.
Q.: Did you ever discuss with Marilyn an incident that occurred at the Chapman home in California?
A.: Yes, she told me what a lovely ranch home they had.
Q.: Did she tell you anything to the effect that Dr. Chapman said that Sam and Marilyn were never to come into their home again, never visit them again?
A.: She did not.

After Mrs. Sheppard was dismissed and was leaving the room, she turned and cast a sharp, angry look in the direction of Dr. Gerber, causing another stir among the spectators.

MRS. STEPHEN SHEPPARD

Called to the stand late in the day, Mrs. Stephen Sheppard told of how she, her husband and a Dr. Robert Carver took Dr. Sam to Bay View Hospital, helping him to his feet, draping a coat from the closet over his bare shoulders.

She described Dr. Sam's entrance into the hospital on a stretcher. "He was shaking and moaning. His pants were wet."

Dr. Gerber asked if she touched anything in the murder home. He asked what she saw there.

A.: Marilyn's desk was disorderly. There was nothing else to be disturbed in the house because it is furnished very simply.

Q.: Describe the medical bag.
A.: It was on its side and the contents were spilled out.
Q.: Did you see Marilyn frequently?
A.: No, we were in different parts of the city. She had her activities and I had mine.

She said she had learned of Marilyn's pregnancy at the slain woman's home the week before the Fourth, after a sailing party.

Marilyn, Mrs. Stephen Sheppard said, discussed only "minor marital troubles" and none of these had to do with Sam's attention to other women.

Q.: What was behind the marital troubles that she discussed with you?
A.: Marilyn and I frequently discussed our children. She at first didn't like being tied down. She couldn't adjust to having a child.

Mrs. Sheppard said she entertained the night of July 3, that she retired about 2 or 2:30 after her guests left and that no one left her home between then and 6 a.m. when the dish call came from the murder home.
DR. SAM SHEPPARD, husband of the pretty murder victim, testified without his sunglasses and orthopedic collar at the coroner's inquest into the death of his wife, Marilyn.

ADDRESSING THE SPECTATORS, Dr. Stephen Sheppard pleaded his brother's innocence and asked the people "to put yourselves in the position of this family." He had completed his testimony to Coroner Gerber, left. Deputy Sheriff Carl Rossbach is at right.