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Family Backs Sam's Account of Murder Morning

Sheppards Describe Conditions at Home

PRESS 7-24-54
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.

DR. STEPHEN SHEPPARD

Next witness was Dr. Stephen A. Sheppard, Dr. Sam's brother, who lives at 19027 Inglewood Dr., Rocky River.

Q.: Calling your attention to July 4, 1954, were you notified of anything wrong at the home of Samuel Sheppard?

A.: Yes.

Q.: By whom?

A.: Mrs. Richard Sheppard, my older brother's wife, called my home at 6 a. m.

Q.: What were you told?

A.: I was awakened from a sound sleep, and she said, "We just got a call from Spen Houk from Sam's house and they think Marilyn is killed."

Q.: What did you do?

A.: I arose and dressed and my wife asked me if she could go along. I cautioned her that she'd have to hurry and for once in her life she dressed quickly, and we went.

Q.: What happened when you approached the house?

A.: We saw the Bay police ambulance in the driveway. We had been wondering if we would see an ambulance, on the way. When I saw the ambulance there I concluded Marilyn was beyond help. When we walked in my wife pointed to the den and we saw a doctor's bag on its side, the contents strewn in the area. I looked into the study and saw Sam on the floor. He was bare from the waist up. I spoke to him, I thought he was dead.

Q.: What did you say?

A.: How are you? —things like that, I don't remember exactly. He responded.

Q.: How did he respond?

A.: He said, "I think they killed Marilyn."

Q.: Then what happened?

A.: I left the room, went upstairs, through the living room where the fireplace is. I saw my sister-in-law lying in the bed in the northwest bedroom. Her head was in the middle of the bed. Her body was partly covered by a sheet. Her legs were beyond the end of the bed. It is an old-fashioned four-poster, with a bar across the front. Her legs were under the bar, and I could see her feet and legs up to her knees. Her face was completely battered. I believed I touched her wrist. Her head, face, shoulders were completely covered with blood. It was a horrible sight. I noted deep wounds, mostly above the eyebrows. I disturbed nothing. I determined she was dead and went downstairs to the study.

Q.: What did you do then?

A.: I went back downstairs to the study. I saw Sam, and asked him if he could walk. He was still on the floor. I gave him a cursory examination. He was incoherent and hesitant. He said he had been staggering around the house. Dr. Robert Carver from Bay View Hospital came into the room. Dr. Carver helped me get Sam to the car. Sam's clothes were wet. The hair on the back of his neck was wet. He was cold and in an apparent state of shock. My wife got some clothes from the closet.

Q.: Did you ask permission to take Sam to the hospital?

A.: No. From my experience the patient always comes first.

Q.: Did anyone tell you to take him to the hospital?

A.: No.

Q.: Did Sam talk to you at the hospital.

A.: No. He was in a state of

shock, we gave him sedatives and called for X-ray pictures.

Dr. Stephen Sheppard said his brother was dressed in summer cord trousers, gym socks, and he said that when he first saw Dr. Sam he noted an injury on the right side of his face. He said blood was coming from his mouth, and said his lips gave evidence of injury. He said, too, that there was evidence of an injury at base of the neck.

Q.: Was this contusion of a type which would remain evident for 8-10 hours?

A.: Yes.

Q.: Would it be in evidence at 4 p. m. of that day?

A.: Yes.

Q.: Then if Dr. Hexter did not see the contusion or dislocation, would it mean that he was wrong?

A.: I do not know Dr. Hexter, but I do know that all he did was look at the neck.

Q.: If Dr. Elkins did not see the contusion, would he be wrong?

A.: If Dr. Elkins said he did not see the contusions, I am sure he didn't see it, but I am equally confident that I saw what I have described.

Q.: What did you do after taking Sam to the hospital?

A.: I got back in my car, took my wife to Dr. Richard's house, and Richard and I discussed returning to Sam's home.

Q.: Did you return?

A.: Yes.

Q.: What time was this?

A.: About 7:30.

Describes Actions While at House

Q.: What else did you see?

A.: We saw Marilyn's desk had been gone through, and the paper, ledger and tax stamps on the floor. The screen door to the lake was open. Dr. Richard and I went upstairs and looked at Marilyn. At this time I noticed blood on all four walls. I got down on hands and knees to look under the bed. I put my hand in what appeared to be water. I told the officers we looked into the spare room, and looked into Chip's room. We saw nothing unusual. We looked into the guest bedroom. By this time, Mayor Houk's son was there. We discussed with an officer that Hoversten's luggage was not disturbed and the bed was unmade. We went into the bathroom. Coming out we talked with an officer about a cigaret butt in the toilet bowl.

He said it would have to be preserved. We went down to the kitchen. We went down to the basement with Chief Eaton and noticed the lights were on down there. This is not unusual in that household. I asked if it would be all right to use the lavatory facilities in the basement. The officer said it was all right and I did. I went down to the beach. There were little or no white caps. At that time, I looked under the stairway to the rear of the bathhouse and found two pair of white gloves. The one pair was white cotton work gloves with reddish stains on them. The other seemed to be leather driving gloves. I went up the hill and asked for Chief Eaton and told him about the gloves and he came down with me.

Q.: There has been a lot of talk about Susan Hayes. To your knowledge was there any

family gathering to come to some decision whether she should be retained as a hospital 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.: I believe that was so.

Q.: Did you ever confide that she was having trouble with Dr. Sam?

A.: Yes, but in a way we all had the same trouble with Dr. Sam. She said he worked too hard, was away from home too long, and his hours at the hospital were too long.

Q.: Did she ever say anything else about Dr. Sam and any women?

A.: Yes, she said he was away from the house quite a bit and asked me if I thought there might be another woman. I told her that I knew how much time he was at the hospital and in his office, and said let's face it, there just isn't time for any affairs.

Q.: Did she ever tell you that Dr. Sam was seeking a divorce or ask you whether she should get a divorce, that the situation was unbearable?

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 he thought it would be a good idea for them to break up?

A.: I would like to answer this question in two ways. In regard to differences with Marilyn, the answer is yes. In regard to the thought of breaking up with Marilyn the answer is no.

At no time was there any talk of a breakup. These two people were completely engrossed in each other. They were deeply in love. There was never any thought or discussion about a divorce in the way that you mean.

Dr. Sam indicated several times that she was a little more sensitive than he liked. This was especially true after the baby came. She seemed to feel he was a little unreasonable in the long hours that he

had to work, and the hours he had to be away from home.

She felt the burden of the additional responsibility after the baby was born. Those were the differences described to me.

Q.: When did Marilyn become pregnant?

A.: I don't know.

Q.: When did you find out she was pregnant?

A.: One week before she was killed.

Q.: Do you know of any condition that could have caused Dr. Sam to be sterile?

A.: No. But I do have some information about Marilyn. I cannot discuss it, however, because it was a condition about which she consulted me medically.

DR. RICHARD SHEPPARD

Midway 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 back 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 anywhere."

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 several 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 her 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 ruffle among the spectators, and Dr. Gerber warned them to be quiet or he would clear the room).

Mrs. Sheppard steadfastly denied that Marilyn Sheppard discussed with her Dr. Sam's con-

duct 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.

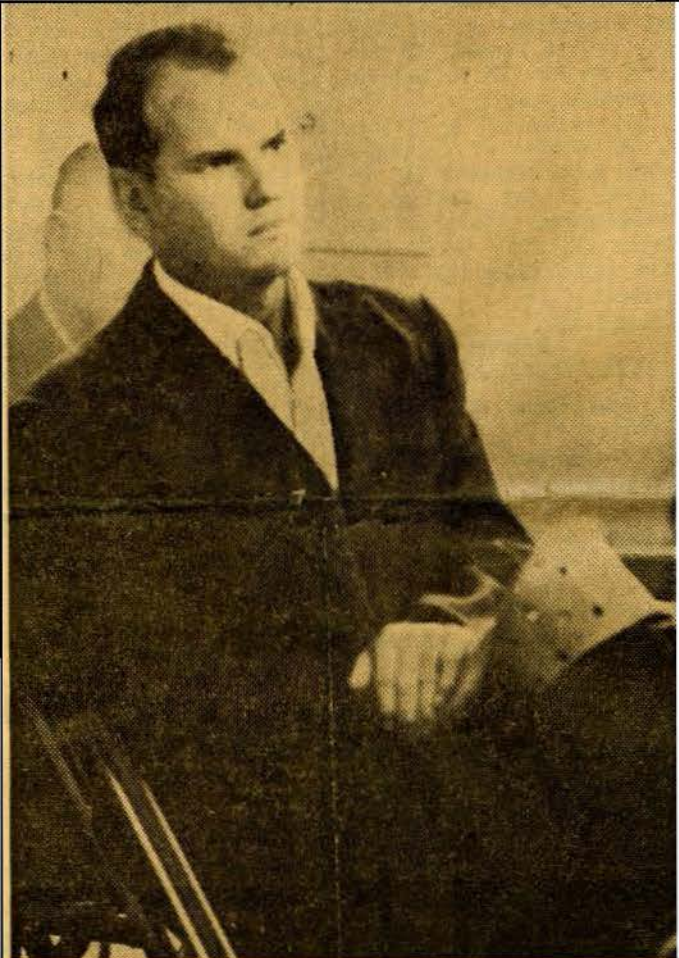
She said she had learned of Marilyn's pregnancy at the slain woman's home the week before the Fourth, after a sailing party.

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 distress call came from the murder home.



DR. SAM SHEPPARD, husband of the pretty murder victim, testified without his sun glasses 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.