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54/07/08 Sheppard Tells Story Of Wife's Murder; Offers \$10,000 Reward

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Cleveland News, "54/07/08 Sheppard Tells Story Of Wife's Murder; Offers \$10,000 Reward" (1954). *All Articles*. 283.

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THE WEATHER

TONIGHT—Partly cloudy and continued cool. Low, 52.

TOMORROW—Sunny and warmer. High, 82.

U. S. Weather Bureau Official Forecast

CLEVELAND NEWS

"A FRIEND OF THE FAMILY"

FINAL

Sports, Stocks

Vol. 113, No. 162

PRICE: SEVEN CENTS

Telephone: PRospect 1-4800

CLEVELAND, OHIO, THURSDAY, JULY 8, 1954

Wirephotos, Exclusive Evening News of the Associated Press and International News

SHEPPARD TELLS STORY OF WIFE'S MURDER; OFFERS \$10,000 REWARD

Questioned at Hospital Under Subpena Threat

BY HOWARD BEAUFAIT

Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard submitted to questioning today in the murder of his wife and declared his innocence by offering a \$10,000 reward for the arrest of her slayers.

The prominent Bay Village osteopath gave his account of the violent killing to police and sheriff's deputies from his hospital bed after he was threatened with subpena action to remove him to the prosecutor's office.

Before the questioning began, Coroner Samuel R. Gerber came out of the Bay View Hospital room and issued a forthwith subpena for Dr. Sheppard after his attorney, William J. Corrigan, had objected to the questioning.

When the subpena was issued, Corrigan withdrew his objection, but not before Dr. Gerber and County Detective Carl Rossbach threatened to remove the osteopath from the hospital and take him to the prosecutor's office for questioning.

Corrigan also agreed to leave the room during the questioning after Dr. Sheppard's request to have a friend, Patrolman Fred Drenkham of Bay Village, present.

The question and answer session then proceeded under the direction of Rossbach and Deputy Sheriff David Yettra.

Dr. Sheppard was questioned about what happened to the white T-shirt he was wearing the day the murder was committed. He was also asked about his wristwatch which was found water soaked and stopped at 4:15. The crime was reported about 6 a. m.

In the first coherent account of the crime committed in his rambling lakefront home last Sunday morning, Dr. Sheppard was telling of his attack by a man he met in the darkness outside his wife's bedroom.

Dr. Richard Sheppard, a brother, told reporters before the questioning began that Dr. Sam told him he heard a second man in the bedroom clubbing his wife while he was struggling with his assailant.

He told Dr. Richard he was sleeping on a downstairs couch when he heard his wife scream and was struck in the darkness as he reached the top of the stairs. He did not get a sharp description of either man. He also told Dr. Richard of the struggle which finally reached a climax when he was knocked out and left unconscious on the beach in the rear of his West Lake Rd. home.

After the questioning started reporters were asked to move away from the door to the hospital room and were stationed at the end of the hospital corridor.

Before the belated questioning started, Dr. Sheppard issued a typewritten statement declaring his innocence and asserting he had lived an honorable life and never refused to talk to authorities about the events preceding and following the killing. He said he and his family had authorized their attorneys to post the \$10,000 reward.

A brother, Dr. Stephen Sheppard, had cleared the way for the questioning. He said Dr. Sam's condition was much improved, his mind was alert and lucid and he had given his permission, as his physician, for him to co-operate

with investigators and make a "complete statement of everything he knows."

Dr. Gerber entered the room with Deputies Rossbach and Yettra and Cleveland Homicide Detectives Pat Gareau and Robert Schottke.

The coroner explained that Dr. Sam could then co-operate and answer questions there, or he would be taken to a "less pleasant place more suitable to police questioning."

At this point Dr. Stephen said to his brother:

"Sam, you are of sound mind and you know what you are doing."

"I want to co-operate in every

Continued on Page 4, Column 1

Sheppard Tells Story Of Wife's Murder

Continued From Page 1

way I can," Dr. Sam replied.

It was at this point that Attorney Corrigan intervened.

Fills Out Subpena

Coroner Gerber then walked out into the corridor and filled out the subpoena in Dr. Sam's name. Returning to the room he served the subpoena and asked the patient: "Are you ready to go to the prosecutor's office for questioning?"

Corrigan objected to moving Dr. Sheppard on the grounds that "he is not in condition to leave here."

To reporters, Corrigan earlier had said: "If they have a case against him, why don't they arrest him."

Rossbach emerged from the dramatic session in the hospital room and said he was prepared to take Dr. Sheppard to the sheriff's office in County Jail for questioning.

Before the investigators arrived at the hospital at 11 a. m. Dr. Stephen Sheppard told reporters that he was "elated" with his brother's improvement and he was then ready to leave the hospital for his home.

Advices Co-operation

Although he said he had advised his brother to co-operate with police questioners, he explained that the final decision would be up to the attorneys.

Dr. Gerber and Rossbach, angry over what they termed as "stalling" tactics on the part of the attorneys and the Sheppard family, had gone to the hospital armed with blank subpoenas to force the interrogation issue.

Rossbach, heading the investigation into the crime, served an ultimatum on members of the Sheppard family and their attorney, Arthur Petersilge. He accused them of not co-operating with investigators.

"It has been five days now since this crime was committed, and we still haven't been able to talk to

Dr. Sheppard," Rossbach told Petersilge. "I don't want to take advantage of a man confined to a bed, but I must have action."

"May I be present at the questioning?" Petersilge asked.

"I do not need an audience, but if you are there I will not object," Rossbach said. "But I will ask the questions I intend to ask. If there is a maniac running around loose out there do you want to take the responsibility because you failed to co-operate with us?"

"No, we want to, co-operate in every way," the attorney replied.

Coroner Gerber said he had issued the subpoenas in blank, and the names would be filled in as the witnesses were required.

The Sheppards, all osteopaths, operate the Bay View Hospital.

Attended Wife's Funeral

Rossbach and Dr. Gerber said they decided upon the drastic action of subpoena after Dr. Sheppard was considered well enough to take a 35-mile automobile trip to attend the funeral of his wife, but they were not permitted to question him when he returned to the hospital.

Dr. Stephen Sheppard said that his brother had been so emotionally upset by the funeral ordeal that it was necessary to give him a sedative and he was not in condition to be questioned.

Charges "Stalling"

Assistant County Prosecutor John J. Mahon, who will assist in the inquest as a representative of the prosecutor's office, said the investigation "has bogged down" because of the "stalling by the Sheppard family."

"We're not going to stand for it any longer," he said, adding:

"If it was possible for him to take a long trip and see a parade of visitors in his hospital room there is no reason why he can't talk to us. His condition can't be too bad if he can see visitors."

The seven-year-old boy, Samuel Jr., is nicknamed "Chip." He will

be questioned by Patrolman Fred Drenkham of Bay Village who knows him as a friend. Rossbach said he would be in an adjoining room with the door open when the boy is interrogated.

Slept During Killing

"Chip" was asleep in an adjoining bedroom with his door open when his mother was hacked and beaten to death early last Sunday morning in their home at 28924 West Lake Rd.

Meanwhile, a diver, Bill Virgin of Lorain, prepared to go beneath the surface of Lake Erie in front of the Sheppard home to search for the missing weapon with which Mrs. Shepard was bludgeoned.

Investigators believe the slayer hurled the weapon, possibly a wrench or square metal rod, into the lake in fleeing from the murder scene.

Virgin, using deep water equipment, planned to explore an area 250 feet east and west of the Sheppard home, and 200 feet out from shore probably tomorrow.

Visited by Friends

Rossbach and Dr. Gerber pointed out that after investigators had been refused permission to talk with Dr. Sheppard he had several other visitors, including Otto Graham, professional football star and a personal friend, reporters, photographers and Attorneys Petersilge and Corrigan.

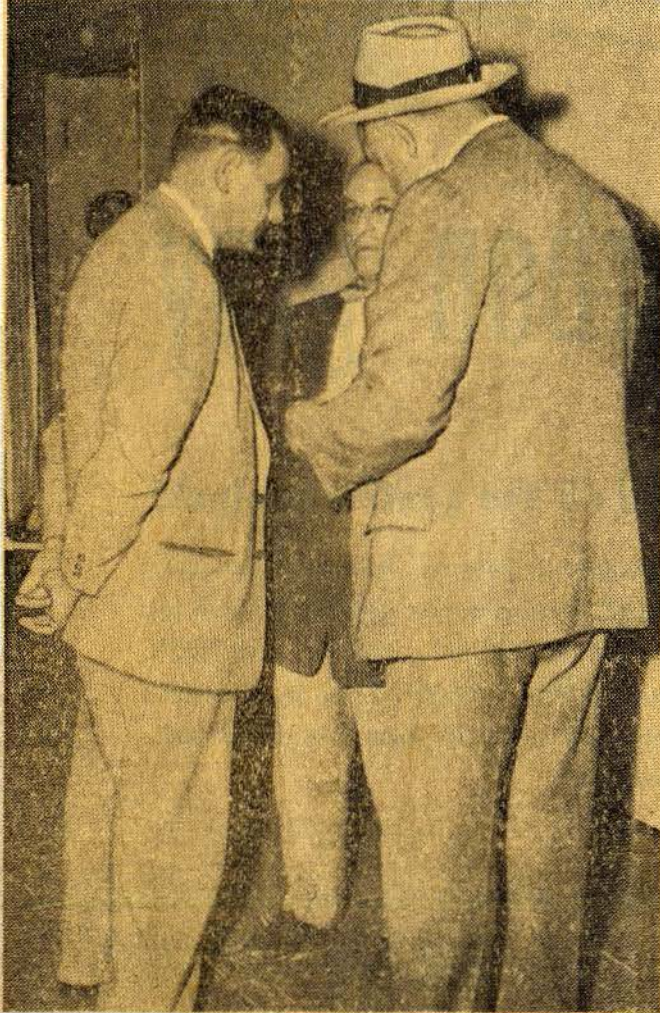
When asked by a reporter if he intended to co-operate with police questioners, Dr. Sheppard said: "Heavens, yes."

"Do you feel well enough to be questioned?" the reporter asked.

"My doctors tell me I am not in shape yet," he replied. He is suffering from a fractured vertebra in his neck, a swollen jaw and a spinal concussion.

Dr. Sheppard's brothers pointed out that Police Sgt. Jay Hubach of Bay Village had been permitted to ride to the funeral with Dr. Samuel and question him on the way.

Hubach said, however, that the conversation had been "general" and that, at the request of the Sheppards, the murder had not been mentioned.



Bay View Hospital was the scene of confusion today as county officials attempted to, and finally did, question Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard on his story of his wife's murder.

Deputy Sheriff David Vertra, County Coroner Samuel E. Gerber and County Detective Carl Rossbach are shown as they conferred before entering the room of Dr. Sheppard, where at first they were not allowed to question him.

Room 119, with "No Visitors" sign, is shown (center) as Attorney William J. Corrigan (against door) entered with group of police officials to intervene in questioning.

Last photo shows Detective Rossbach reading subpoena to Patrolman Cy Lipaj of Bay Village, ordering Dr. Sheppard's appearance before the prosecutor. Dr. Sheppard finally was questioned at the hospital.