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54/11/20 Both Defense, State Find Aid to Causes in Schottke

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Both Defense, State Find Aid to Causes in Schottke

BY SANFORD WATZMAN

When Detective Robert F. Schottke finished testifying at the Sheppard murder trial yesterday the state and defense lawyers did not rush to shake his hand, but both sides were thankful for his testimony.

Schottke told of a six-hour investigation on July 4 that ended with his accusation of Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard. According to how his story is interpreted (and who is doing the interpreting), both these views are possible:

"The state called him, but so far he has been our best witness"—Defense Chief William J. Corrigan.

"His testimony was very strong. He got a number of important points across"—Assistant County Prosecutor Saul S. Danaceau.

Schottke's already famous words to Dr. Sam were at the center of the controversy. On the afternoon of the Fourth of July the osteopath heard: "The evidence points very strongly toward you. In my opinion you are the one who killed your wife."

"Here is an experienced detective," said Corrigan, "who takes what seems like the obvious solution instead of conducting a real investigation."

"His testimony shows that, up to the present time, all the state has developed is an accusation of murder. We're right back where we were on July 4."

"I think that the strongest point of his story," Danaceau said, "is that, as an experienced detective, he went to the scene and quickly tied the facts together. After he had a suspect, what was he supposed to do? Wait until Christmas?"

With 10 years behind him as

a member of the Cleveland homicide squad, Schottke, of all the law enforcement officials at the murder scene, was admittedly the one with the widest professional background.

In his six hours there on the first day these were among the things he accomplished, besides finding a suspect, his testimony went:

1—Assigned to "assist the Bay Village Police Department in a homicide," he did not sit back and mastermind the operation. He got down on his hands and knees and searched under the murder bed. Later, he helped search the beach and fields for a weapon.

2—He rapidly ascertained that the burglary, if there was one, was amateurish and unusual. He helped discover some facts that still are unexplained—the missing T-shirt, the two bloody watches, the neatly folded jacket.

3—He learned of Dr. Sam's affair with Susan Hayes and used that information in questioning the suspect.

On the witness stand Schottke was terse and colorless.

For 33 minutes Schottke read a statement Dr. Sam made to him and other investigators on the Saturday following the murder. On this point, too, the state and the defense found aid to their own causes.

"If the state hadn't introduced that as evidence, I would have," Corrigan said.

Because one of Dr. Sam's lawyers was present when that statement was made, the defense had its own copy.

Schottke's investigation did not end with the six-hour tour of duty on July 4. In addition to other leads he followed, he went to Los Angeles and returned with Miss Hayes, who is now a state's witness.