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## 54/11/05 Voice of Deputy Coroner Etches Vividly the Wounds of Marilyn

Cleveland Press

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# Voice of Deputy Coroner Etches Vividly the Wounds of Marilyn

The deputy coroner's voice drones on. "That bruise also went down to the underlying bone. . . ." He uses his pointer, like a classroom teacher, to show the jury the spot he's describing on the projection screen.

Dr. Sam Sheppard isn't looking at any of this.

He is sitting behind the big screen on which the color slides of his wife's battered head are being shown to the court. And his eyes are closed. And he has his hands over his curtain-down eyelids.

But he can hear the voices. Prosecutor John Mahon is asking the questions. Defense lawyers are objecting regularly, led by William J. Corrigan. And Dr. Lester Adelson, the deputy coroner, is detailing, one by one, blow by blow, the life-draining wounds inflicted on Marilyn Sheppard by her vicious slayer.

Even before Judge Edward Blythin nodded for the courtroom to be darkened, as attaches set up the screen and the projector to show the seven color transparencies taken of the corpse at County Morgue, Sam Sheppard moved away from the trial table to a seat in front of a window, opposite the jury.

His guard, Deputy Jim Kilroy sat beside him, next chair. The screen was stretched up right in front of them, facing the jury. The screen's back is opaque so that the slides can't shine through.

## Brother Shows Up

Sheppard's brother, Dr. Steve, showed up from somewhere, sat beside Sam for a minute. Then Kilroy motioned him away. Dr. Steve slipped around to the chair next to Kilroy, so that the guard sat between the two brothers.

The jurors grew extremely quiet as Dr. Adelson picked up his pointer. Sam Sheppard closed his eyes, clasped his hands in front of him.

**Dr. Adelson:** "Slide No. 1 shows a front full-face view of . . ."

**Corrigan:** "I object . . . exaggerated picture . . ."

**Judge Blythin:** "Overruled."

Dr. Adelson goes on with his grim recitation.

" . . . Inch by inch and a half tear . . . extends from upper border of the eye socket . . . all the soft tissue beneath was torn right to the bone."

## Opens His Eyes

The murder trial defendant opens his eyes briefly, whispers to Kilroy. The guard looks straight ahead, chewing his gum, seven chomps every five seconds. Dr. Steve looks like he's napping, forefingers forming a steeple at his lips.

"Wound No. 17 is a purple brown discoloration of both upper and lower eyelids . . . a black eye," the deputy coroner continues. "Wound No. 21. . . . Wound No. 22. . . ."

Dr. Sam's clamped eyes meet his hands as he lowers his head. His head jerks convulsively, and you know for sure that he's crying. Now his left hand finds his mouth and his knuckles clench against it.

**Mahon:** "Do you have other films that show other injuries?"

**Adelson:** "The next film is a profile of the right side of the face."

**Defense:** "Same objection."

**Judge Blythin:** "Overruled."

Twenty minutes have passed. It's nearing an end now.

"There is almost complete separation of the fingernails. . . ."

" . . . the head of Marilyn Sheppard after the scalp has been peeled away."

## Sam Rubs His Eyes

Now Sheppard is rubbing his eyes hard, working on tears.

**Mahon:** "That red portion there, that shows hemorrhage,

does it, doctor?"

The defendant reaches for his handkerchief, holds it to his eyes for long moment, balls the handkerchief and presses it hard against his mouth.

The showing of slides of murder victim Marilyn Sheppard is over. The lights go on.

Sheppard stands up, his teeth biting his lips, the skin over his chin drawn into knots.

In seconds he has control of himself and once again is poker-faced in his chair at the trial table.