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54/11/07 State Seeks To Reaffirm Its Autopsy

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STATE SEEKS TO REAFFIRM ITS AUTOPSY

Dr. Adelson, Prosecutors
Confer on Corrigan's

Blasts at Report

BY TODD SIMON

Building new theories of what caused Marilyn Sheppard's death yesterday, William J. Corrigan, defense lawyer for the husband on trial, hunted holes in the state's autopsy report in which to plant seeds of doubt.

Prosecutors were getting set to erase any doubts. They huddled with their weary first witness, Dr. Lester Adelson, deputy coroner.

The doctor, who did the post mortem work, will be given a chance to reaffirm his testimony on redirect questions when Corrigan finishes his cross-examination. State's lawyers will seek to squelch Corrigan's theory that it was inhaled blood, not the cracked up skull and brain wounds, which ended the 31-year-old mother's life.

Four flights above the prosecutors' offices, Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard listened to the Ohio-State-Pittsburgh football game and was buoyed back into good spirits by visiting relatives after his worst court day.

Slumps in Chair

It was a pale, limp Dr. Sam slumped in his chair, who recoiled from the gory explorations by Corrigan into the autopsy report Friday. He was plainly relieved when that was over for the day.

Friday was the first day, too, when Dr. Sam went through the whole court session with no relative there to smile or whisper encouragement. His brother, Dr. Stephen A. Sheppard, was out of town, and Dr. Steve is the lone defense witness allowed in the courtroom.

County Jailer Michael Uccello said the Sheppards had requested the right to see Dr. Sam on Saturdays, now that future witnesses in the bedroom murder trial have been banned from court.

Dr. Sam's Friday former visiting hours are blocked out by the court session. So the osteopath's elder brother, Dr. Richard N., and his wife, Dorothy, his wife's uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Guilford R. Brown, and his father and a fellow osteopath, Dr. David Williams, came to see him yesterday afternoon.

Doctor "Emotional"

Asked whether Dr. Sam, an osteopath surgeon, had helped him prepare his medical cross-examination of Dr. Adelson, Corrigan said: "A little. Not much. He's too emotional about it."

He agreed that his day-long, inch-by-inch attack on the state's autopsy and its cause of death had been hard on the accused.

He has "a few questions more" for Dr. Adelson, he said, for tomorrow morning.

"Not a whole morning," he said.

Where Corrigan hunted and pecked at his death findings, Dr. Adelson will then be questioned again by John J. Mahon, assistant county prosecutor in the state's driver's seat at the trial table.

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SEEK TO BOLSTER
AUTOPSY REPORT

(Continued From First Page)

From his office, where he coaches the state's counsel, County Prosecutor Frank T. Cullitan said: "After the way Corrigan minimized those wounds, I'm tempted to tell John just to get up and ask: 'Marilyn Sheppard is dead, isn't she? She was beaten to death, wasn't she?' and then sit down."

Parries Question

Besides trying to make the state's autopsy look sloppy, Corrigan had also tried to prove that Marilyn's head wounds could have been made by some many-pronged tool—something like a garden cultivating fork with three or more tines—making several wounds at each blow.

He had even said to reporters: "I think I know what the weapon was."

Asked if he would bring it in and match it against a model of Marilyn's head, or against

life-sized photographs, he said: "No. How should I know what the weapon was?"

When his many-pronged weapon theory came out, Prosecutor Cullitan said: "We don't know. Maybe Corrigan does. We don't have any eye-witnesses on our side."

Marilyn's dentist will be called as a witness to say that her teeth were brittle and broke easily, Corrigan told reporters.

Aherns Are Next

That would be to support his thesis that her teeth got chipped by biting the finger of her attacker.

After Dr. Adelson is done, the state will call Donald J. Ahern to the witness stand. He and his family were dinner guests of the Sheppards at their home, 28924 West Lake Road, Bay Village, the night before the fatal clubbing. The Aherns are neighbors of the Sheppards.

Ahern's wife, Nancy, will be next. The Aherns were the last outsiders to see Marilyn alive, according to the state's version of the case.

It was they who saw Dr. Sam wearing the white T-shirt that was gone when, at 5:50 a. m. July 4, authorities got first word of the slaying. The T-shirt is still missing.

Tells of Conversation

At the coroner's inquest in August, Mrs. Ahern returned to testify a second time and told of a conversation in which Marilyn told her Dr. Sam had been having an affair with another woman.

But because that was not in the presence of the defendant, it is hearsay. It cannot be put into evidence in a trial.

Common Pleas Judge Edward Blythin, anxious to move the trial along, looked up the court's book of rules and declared that the trial would be in session 9:15 a. m. to 4:30 p. m. each day.

He thought Corrigan took too long examining Dr. Adelson.

A cynic around the courts said: "Corrigan's trying to make the trial end on Christmas Eve." That is considered "acquitting night" at the Criminal Courts Building.