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54/11/16: Views Prejudice in Bay Slaying

Cleveland Plain Dealer

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VIEWS PREJUDICE IN BAY SLAYING

Civil Liberties President Hits News 'Crusade'

A change of venue should have been granted in the Sheppard trial, Ralph Rudd, president of the Cleveland Chapter, Civil Liberties Union, said yesterday at a luncheon meeting of Sigma Delta Chi.

Speaking before the professional journalistic fraternity at Hotel Colonial, Rudd said that because of the volume of coverage given the Sheppard case by Cleveland newspapers jurors "might unconsciously carry a prejudice into the courtroom or be influenced by publication during the trial."

"The Sheppard case," he said, "is an example of newspapers pursuing a crusade in such a manner as to impair the rights of parties in litigation."

"The constant reiteration that Dr. Sam Sheppard was the chief suspect said to the casual reader that Sam was guilty."

Urges Reminder

Rudd did not question the prerogative of editors to print as much as they wanted on the Sheppard case, but said the newspapers' stories should include a constant reminder that an accused man is considered innocent until proved guilty.

Newspapers, he said, have not been conspicuous as fighters for civil liberties. They have gone a long way, he asserted, in supporting censorship of comic books and rarely are heard on the subject of fair hearings for persons accused in security cases.

"I don't believe the evidence is at all clear that comic books and movies are serious stimulants to crime," he said. "In the absence of such evidence, to ask for censorship of comic books is an infringement of civil liberties. Will newspapers be safe from censorship when their time comes?"

New members inducted into the fraternity were:

Harry Jones, Ted Princiotto, Tom O'Connell and Joseph Saunders of the Plain Dealer; Henry Ewald, Russell Faist, Everett Henrickson, John McKenna and Charles Haughney of the Cleveland News; Robert Clifford, Bill Roberts, Robert August and Tony Mazzolini of the Cleveland Press; Richard Fales of the United Press; Milton J. Wurzbach of American Steel & Wire Division, United States Steel Corp.; Art Bostwick of Fuller & Smith & Ross, Inc., and Earl W. McMunn of the Ohio Farmer.