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9-10-1954

54/09/10 Mayor Houk in Hospital

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Cleveland News, "54/09/10 Mayor Houk in Hospital" (1954). *All Articles*. 507.

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Mayor Houk in Hospital

Bay Official Suffering From Nervous Strain

Don Ahern, neighbor of Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard, was called to the witness stand late today in Criminal Court as defense attorneys started their legal battle to free the Bay Village osteopath on bail pending trial on a charge of murdering his wife, Marilyn.

A guest at the Sheppard home on the eve of July 4, when Dr. Sam is accused of beating to death his attractive wife, Ahern was the second of 11 witnesses scheduled to be called at the hearing before Common Pleas Judge Edward Blythin.

Dr. Sam sat alongside a deputy sheriff incourtroom as the hearing opened. Whether he would be called to testify was not revealed by Corrigan.

Deputy Clerk Called

First witness to be called was Howard K. Reed, deputy county clerk, who had been subpoenaed by William J. Corrigan, chief defense counsel, to produce records showing that several other defendants in first-degree murder cases had been admitted to bail.

On the witness stand, Ahern repeated testimony he has previously given as to his and his wife's association with Dr. Sam and his wife. He re-told how he and his wife visited at the home of Dr. Sam and his wife the night of the murder.

In his questioning of Ahern, Corrigan tried to show it would have been possible for Marilyn's murdered to have entered the Sheppard home through the Lake Rd. side and gone to the second floor through the kitchen without being seen by anybody in the living room.

Mayor J. Spencer Houk* of Bay Village, one of the central figures in the murder investigation, has been hospitalized for a rest and treatment of a gastric upset stomach, it was announced today.

Members of the mayor's family said he "just gave out" and

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had collapsed under a nervous strain that caused him to lose sleep and 30 pounds in the past two months.

Taken to Lakeside Hospital

Mayor Houk was removed from his home to Lakeside Hospital last Wednesday at 10:45 p. m., two hours after a subpoena for his appearance at the hearings had been left at his residence.

Edwin Ross, assistant director of the hospital, said he had talked with the mayor's physician, Dr. Alfred K. Bochner, who said the patient would remain in the hospital at least until next Monday.

Dr. Ross has called in two specialists to give Mayor Houk a complete checkup, Ross said.

"Dad just gave out—he lost 30 pounds and was completely run down," said his son, Larry Houk, 16.

Subpenaes for Mayor Houk and his wife, Esther, were issued at the request of William J. Corrigan, attorney for Dr. Sheppard, who hopes to establish at the hearing that the presumption of guilt is not strong enough to deny the doctor his freedom on bond.

• Mrs. Houk to Testify

Mrs. Houk said she would testify. She and her husband were close personal friends and neighbors of the Sheppards.

Deputy sheriffs said they were unable to serve the subpenaes when they called at the Houk home, 29014 West Lake Rd., Bay Village and left them on the doorknob.

Mrs. Houk declined to discuss her husband's ailment.

Mayor Houk was questioned several times in the murder investigation and twice submitted to lie detector tests. He was officially cleared of complicity in the crime by Police Chief Frank W. Story.

The chief said that Houk had been questioned on complaint of Dr. Stephen Sheppard, brother of Dr. Sam, who charged that the mayor had been in love with Marilyn Sheppard.

Unable to Rest

Mayor Houk had to be restrained when he was confronted with Dr. Stephen's accusation at police headquarters.

The mayor, who operates a butcher shop in the west shore suburb, confided to friends that he has been unable to sleep and has been on the verge of a nervous breakdown since the murder investigation began.

Mr. and Mrs. Houk, neighbors of the Sheppards, were the first outsiders at the scene of the murder. They were called to the home at 28924 West Lake Rd. by Dr. Sam, who informed them that someone had "killed Marilyn."

Dr. Stephen Sheppard yesterday went to Trenton, N. J., to talk to a man held there for auto theft, who had written him a letter confessing the murder of Marilyn Sheppard.

Dr. Stephen reported to members of his family that the man is apparently a psychopathic personality who admitted having been a patient in an Ohio mental hospital. Trenton police are checking the man's story.