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News 10-30-56

Claim New Evidence in Sam Case

By SANFORD SOBUL

The Marilyn Sheppard murder case was reopened today with startling suddenness.

Assistant County Prosecutor Saul S. Danaceau announced he had returned from an out of town trip with "vital new" information that requires thorough police investigation.

Warden Ralph Alvis of the Ohio Penitentiary where Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard is serving life for the bludgeon murder of his pregnant wife 27 months ago said the prisoner "seemed happy" and unaware of any new developments.

At City Hall the assistant prosecutor's new development in the 27-month-old crime in Bay Village ran into a stone wall. Mayor Anthony J. Celebrezze said he would not permit the Cleveland police department to investigate the new evidence.

Cites Manpower Shortage

"Because of a police manpower shortage and because we haven't been paid for previous work in the Sheppard case we will not assign any Cleveland police to any outside investigation," the mayor said after a conference with Police Chief Frank W. Story and Safety Director John N. McCormick.

After the City Hall meeting Chief Story said the information turned over to him and McCormick by Danaceau was "sketchy and was no better or worse than 50 or 60 other leads

Sheppard's Case Reopened by State

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we have investigated in the past two years."

Woman Gives Evidence

While Danaceau would not disclose the nature of his new evidence, it was learned that it came from a woman in a nearby state who told of an argument and fist fight Dr. Sheppard had with a man friend of this woman. It supposedly took place in Dr. Sheppard's home previous to the slaying.

According to the woman's story, the man involved in the dispute with the Bay Village doctor is now also held in an institution.

Cleveland homicide detectives said the story was "fantastic."

Enlists Sheriff's Aid

Danaceau had asked that homicide detective Robert Schottke and Sgt. Harold Lockwood be assigned to run down the new evidence. When he was told Cleveland police would not be available to him, the prosecutor, enlisted the aid of Sheriff Joseph Sweeney and Deputy Sheriff Dave Yettra.

Danaceau said that the new information in the murder case came as the result of a phone call he received last week. He said he spent last Friday interviewing someone out of the state who gave him information of such a vital nature that the case would be reopened.

Chief Story and McCormick, following an early morning conference at the prosecutor's office said Danaceau "had not shown" them his new evidence, but he held a paper in his hand from which he read a name.

Sheriff Sweeney told reporters that both he and Yettra would thoroughly investigate the story that throws a new light on the crime.

Will Not Affect Sam

Officials were all agreed on one part of the new development. They said even if it is true it will not upset the murder conviction against Dr. Sheppard.

Two brothers of the convicted wife killer, Drs. Richard and Stephen Sheppard, were reached in Detroit where they are at-

tending an osteopathic convention.

Both said they had no knowledge of new developments in the case. They reiterated their faith in Dr. Sam's innocence.

Danceau said he did not think the reopened investigation would change the aspects of the case and that Dr. Sam would stay in the Ohio penitentiary.

Dr. Sheppard lost all appeals in the lower courts for a reversal of the second degree murder conviction, and is now awaiting word from the U.S. Supreme Court on a final appeal there.

Marilyn Sheppard, 32, was pregnant at the time she was beaten to death with an unknown instrument in the upstairs bedroom of her lakefront home in Bay Village, July 4, 1954.

Indicted in 1954

Her husband was indicted for her murder on Aug. 17, 1954, and brought to trial in October. He denied the crime and said the killer was a bushy-haired man he encountered in the bedroom door.

Dr. Sam testified at his trial that he was knocked unconscious by the mysterious intruder and came to in the lake at the foot of the cliff in front of his home.

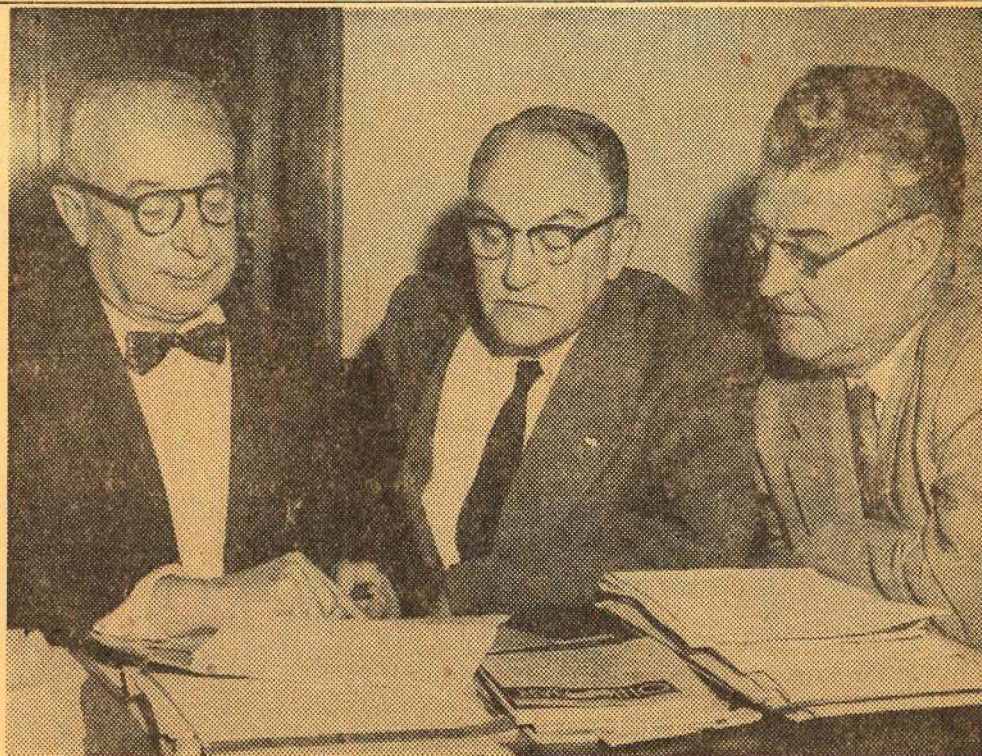
On Dec. 21, 1954, a jury found Dr. Sam guilty of second degree murder. He was sentenced to life imprisonment.

The jury believed testimony that he had killed his wife during a fight over Susan Hayes and other women in his life.

Stressed Affairs

The prosecution maintained that "Dr. Sam's affair with Susan Hayes and other women provided fertile soil for precisely what happened in this case."

The handsome young doctor entered the Ohio Penitentiary in July, 1955, without hope of parole for at least 10 years. In January of this year he was assigned to the prison hospital as a nurse. His conviction prohibits him from practicing medicine.



Assistant County Prosecutor Saul S. Danaceau (left) confers with Police Chief Frank W. Story (center) and Safety Director John N. McCormick, on new evidence in the Sheppard murder case.