



Witness Statements

Police Documents

7-16-1954

54/07/16 10:30am, Fred F. Drenkhan

Bay Village Police Department

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CUYAHOGA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, JULY 16, 1954 10:30 A.M.

The following is a statement of Patrolman Fred F. Drenkham, age 27, residing 477 Canterbury Rd. Bay Village, Ohio, with reference to the investigation of the homicide of Marilyn Sheppard, age 31, married address 28924 Lake Road, Bay Village, Ohio,

I am a duly appointed member of the Bay Village Ohio Police Department and am assigned to regular duty.

On the morning of July 4, 1954, Sunday, I received a telephone call at 5:57 A. M. a male voice stated "is this Les" I said no it is Fred, he said this is the Mayor something terrible has happened to Marilyn, I think it is murder - I said "where are you" he said "At Sam Sheppard's house" and said get the ambulance and get over here right away. I hung up the 'phone and told Dick Sommers, the Fireman on duty that the Mayor said that there was a murder at the Sheppard's home, and that we are leaving, they should come right away. I told Patrolman Roger Cavanaugh to take the other Police Cruiser and follow me over.

I arrived at the Sheppard's home at about 6:00 A. M. Mayor Houk or his wife Esther Houk met me at the Lake Road Entrance the door enters into a hall and as I entered this door way directly in front of me in the hall was a black leather Doctor's Bag, standing on it's end facing me with it's contents spilled out - I walked directly to a study which was to my right or on the East side of the hall - I looked into the study and saw Dr. Sam Sheppard half laying and half sitting in a large red leather chair, I believe I heard Esther Houk say "Go up stairs and see what you can do for Marilyn" She directed me into the kitchen which is directly opposite the study on the West side of the entrance hall, through the kitchen to a stairway which goes up three flights of stairs to a landing, and then three steps down into the living room, the stairs leading up stairs from the center landing. She followed me up stairs - directly at the head of the stairs there is a bedroom - I entered this room and observed twin beds, four poster type, on the bed closest to the door I entered I found the body of Mrs. Marilyn Sheppard. She was laying with her head about three feet from the head board on her back, with her right arm laying beside her, and her left arm folded over her stomach - the legs were bent at the knees protruding over the lower edge of the bed, beneath a cross bar. I observed many lacerations on her forehead considerable clotted blood about her hair and face. The upper part of her body from her stomach to her neck was covered with a checked blouse or shirt; the lower part of her body was covered with bed clothing; exposing only her stomach. She appeared to be dead at that time. Making an observation of the room I observed shades were drawn; there was blood spots on the door leading to the bedroom which was open; there was some cloths lying and hanging on a rocker at the foot of the bed in which she was lying; there were two pairs of ladies shoes; one pair was a white moccasin type, the other pair blue oxford tennis shoes. I immediatly went downstairs and outside to the police car and radioed for a doctor be sent immediately and that Chief of Police John Eaton, and Sgt. Jay Hubach be notified and come up. At this time I was informed that Dr. Richard Sheppard had been called already and was on his way - I then went to the house and to the study where Dr. Sam was; He was still sitting in the red leather chair, he had no shirt or under shirt on; he wore a pair of brown trousers. I also observed discoloration at the right side of his face at the eye which was swelling; there was evidence of a swelling at the right cheek at the corner of the mouth. I inquired as to what had happened and he related that he did not know, he had heard Marilyn scream, that he was fighting on the stairs; that he was in the water; that he came upstairs, at this time he clasped both hands at the back of his neck and turned his head and said nothing more. Meanwhile the members of the Bay Village Fire Department arrived ; Fireman Dick Sommers and Volunteer Fireman Roland Callihan were up stairs with the stretcher in the bedroom - As I was coming down the stairs I met Doctor Richard Sheppard coming in the hall from the Lake Road Door Entrance; Dr. Richard Sheppard went over to the study and looked in at Dr. Sam Sheppard, and I directed him to come with me upstairs immediatly, he proceeded me up the stairs and on the way he asked for some kitchen knives, I reached back and gave him three kitchen knives off a rack above the sink in the kitchen, he entered the room turning

Statement of Patrolman Fred F. Drenkhan^{N R} with reference to the investigation of the homicide of Marilyn Sheppard.

on the light; he walked around the bed in between the twin beds; he examined her; in a professional manner; he replaced the instruments in his bag, and returned the kitchen knives to me and then went down stairs and went to the study where Dr. Sam Sheppard was. I then informed Mayor Spencer Houk that I felt that we needed some assistance, and asked that the Cleveland Police Homicide Department be notified as well as Dr. Sam Gerber, County Coroner. Mayor Houk agreed that this should be done. Shortly thereafter upon the arrival of Chief Police John Eaton I called the Cleveland Police Detective Bureau and the Coroner's Office to obtain the 'phone number of Mr. Raymond Keefe, whom I notified. I then searched the premises for the weapon and other evidence. I made an examination of the premises, I went in the upper yard and down approximately fifty steps to a porch surrounding a beach house - from here I could observe the beach in both directions and there was no evidence to indicate that there might have been a struggle or foot prints on the beach, on returning up the stairs I saw the third step from the top several water blotches continuing up to the lawn, going into the porch and into the living room I observed a small pool of water on the threshold between the porch and living room.

At about 6:20 A. M. I was joined by Chief of Police John Eaton and Sgt. Jay Huback - I continued to look about the home and on the stairway and the landing leading upstairs there was small pools of water. At this time I noticed that Dr. Steve Sheppard, Dr. Sam Sheppard's brother, was present in the study, and while conversing with Sgt. Huback I saw Mrs. Stephen Sheppard, and Dr. Richard Sheppard, Jr. escorting Dr. Sam Sheppard's Son Junior, also known as Chip out the door leading to Lake Road. A short time later Detective Michael Grabowski of the Cleveland Police Department arrived and along with him we searched the premises for possible evidence for a forcibly entry before taking photos of the victim and scene. At this point Dr. Sam Gerber arrived, made an examination of the body and then ordered the remains sent to the County Morgue. Shortly after the body was conveyed to County Morgue by Pease Undertaking Home Ambulance.

Dr. Sam Sheppard was then taken to Bay View Hospital by Dr. Stephen Sheppard's in his car - Together with Cleveland Police Department Detectives Patrick Gareau and Robert Schottke, we made extensive search and examination of the property. Later on that day I went to Bay Village Hospital and photographed the face of Dr. Sam Sheppard but had no conversation with him. That day I also took photos of the home interior.

Q What was the condition of the doors (2) at the Lake Road entrance of the Sheppard home, when you first arrived

A I would say the screen door was closed but not locked, the inner door was open, and I was admitted by Mrs. Esther Houk

Q Describe the wearing apparel found in Marilyn Sheppard's room near the rocker when you arrived

A There were two pairs of shoes, one pair being white moccasin type, the other pair being a dark oxford tennis type shoe, along side there laid a pink panties, on the rocker there was a pair of white shorts, a white braw, two sweaters one of which was white, the other I believe was blue, a leather ladies belt, a white or beige man's shirt was hanging on one edge of the rocker over this hung a pair of blue shorts.

Q How many lights were on when you reached this bedroom

A I observed no lights when I reached the bedroom

Q Who called Dr. Richard Sheppard to the scene

A To the best of my knowledge, Mayor Houk did

Q Describe the condition of the living room on your arrival

A The door leading from the dinning area of the "L" shaped living room on the North side of the house, leading on to the porch the door was half way open the screen door leading from the porch to the lawn was fully open. On the North wall to the West of this door there was a desk which is a secretarial type was in disorder. On the floor in front of the desk their laid papers envelopes, tax stamps.

GERBER
ARREST
50

JD

Statement of Patrolman Fred F. Drenkham with reference to the investigation of the homicide of Marilyn Sheppard

Q What was the condition of the desk in Dr. Sam Sheppard's study

A When I first entered the study the top of the desk appeared in order, the drawers from the desk were removed except one, and were set about the desk on the floor.

Q Did you know at that time what the weather condition was

A At was about sunrise, the sky was clear, there was no noticable breeze, the lake was quieting down but was still rough from the wind during the night

Q How far from the retaining wall at the Sheppard beach was the sand dry

A Not much more than a foot

Q How much of it was wet from the water washing up to the shore

A Well there was a visible beach of about three feet from the dry portion of the sand making it a total of about four feet from the waters edge to the retaining wall with the surf occasionally washing on it.

Q When did you first have an opportunity to question Dr. Sam Sheppard relative to the murder

A Thursday July 8, 1954 in the afternoon at Bay View Hospital

Q How do you account for this delay

A His attending Physician Dr. Stephen Sheppard ruled that the patient's condition would not warrant an interview for any length of time

Q When you did question him, did he state that he had seen a person in his wife's bedroom when he arrived at the head of the stairs

A He stated that he saw a form, the top of which was white at the bed side of where Mrs. Marilyn Sheppard was found - but did not discern any positive description of this form

Q Did he state how he sustained his injuries

A Yes, he stated that on entering the room where this form was he thought he had been struck from behind as he lapsed into unconsciousness, shortly thereafter he regained consciousness and found himself in a sitting position with his wallet in front of him and the badge that was in the wallet reflecting light

Q Did he hear a noise downstairs while getting up off the floor

A Yes, he immediately ran down stairs and went into the living room and in the door way he made out a figure, he chased this figure down the stairs to the beach where he encountered him and had a brief struggle and he again lapsed in to unconsciousness on the beach - he regained consciousness lying face down on the beach with the water wallowing back and forward

Q What was his answer when you questioned him relative to his ascending the stairs after he had regained consciousness on the beach

A He stated that he went up stairs to Mrs. Sheppard's room and covered her because of her modesty, he did not know the exact time but it was almost daylight

Q What was his reply when you stated you did not think a stranger could run down these steps in the darkness

A He said he did not know

Q At the time that you arrived at the Sheppard home can you state whether or not the Doctor's hair was wet or was there any indication that he been in the water at any time.

A No, I did not observe that

Q Do you recall whether or not there was any sand in his trousers

A No, I do not know

Statement of Patrolman Fred F. Drenkham with reference to the investigation of the homicide of Marilyn Sheppard.

Q Do you recall asking him whether or not the person he allegedly pursued had a weapon in his hand

A He said he did not see anything

Q The first time that you had an occasion to go down to the beach waters edge was there anyone else in the vicinity

A Yes, on the second pier east belonging to the Metropolitan Park there were two or three persons half way out on the pier which were later interviewed and whose identity is known to us

Q Did Dr. Samuel Sheppard inform you as to how he had received his injuries

A Yes, he thought he was struck by someone once when he first went up stairs but he was very vague as to what had occurred on the beach regarding his injuries

Q Do you know the extent of his injuries

A His attending Physician Dr. Elkins (Elkins) stated that his neck injury caused him to loose the reflexes of his left ~~eye~~ arm and that there was some damage to his teeth; and that he was coherent and could be interviewed

Q How many times did you attempt to interview Dr. Sam Sheppard between July 5th and 8th 1954.

A I attempted to interview him on the afternoon of July 7, 1954 but did interview him at length on July 8, 1954

Q Was there ever ^{any} indication ^{which} would show if there was one or more persons who walked up the steps from the beach to the Sheppard home or down the steps

A No

Q Did Dr. Sam Sheppard ever state that there might have been more than one man

A Yes, When he went up stairs the first time the form he saw at the edge of the bed, the upper part of it was white - the form that he chased down on to the beach was bigger than he and in dark clothing. Dr. Sam felt thought that there were two men

Q Is there anything else you can tell us

A No

Have you read this four page statement and is it the truth

Yes it is
True

Fred F. Drenkham

WITNESSES:

Jay H. Hubach
Carl Kossbaugh
Deputy