

Doctor Links 5-21-67 Noguchi Actions L.A.T. News to 'Pep Pills'

Witness Also Testifies on 'Graveyard' Humor That Is Common to Profession

BY RICHARD WEST

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Dr. Thomas T. Noguchi appeared to show many of the effects which result from taking too much of a particular kind of drug, acting Coroner Russell Henry testified at Noguchi's dismissal hearing Tuesday.

Dr. Henry first described for the Civil Service Commission some of the effects of overdoses of Dexamyl, a half-barbiturate, half-amphetamine "pep" pill often prescribed by doctors for diet control.

They include euphoria ("on Cloud 9"), a "feeling of omnipotence," nervousness and irritability, difficulty in sleeping, a "disconnected outpouring of ideas," a paranoid fear for personal safety and "a hostility for other people."

Question on Identity

Dep. County Counsel Martin Weekes asked Henry, "Did you observe these in any person in the coroner's office?"

"Yes," said the acting coroner.

"Who was that person?"

"I regret to say, Dr. Noguchi," Henry replied.

But under cross-examination by Noguchi's counsel, Godfrey Isaac, Henry said he never saw Noguchi take any capsules or any kind of medication.

Dr. Henry told the hearing in the Hall of Administration that while he was chief medical officer of Oregon before coming here, he did considerable research into "deaths due to 'rainbow pills'."

"Rainbow pills," he explained, consist of a series of multi-colored pills which doctors prescribe for weight control. "One is usually

Dexamyl," he said.

Isaac brought out in a series of questions that it was digitalis in the "rainbow pills" which "probably caused the deaths," and not Dexamyl, which does not contain digitalis.

'Graveyard' Humor

Dr. Henry admitted that he himself has a "graveyard sense of humor" and said that Dr. Noguchi, too, is a "fun-loving man."

Isaac asked him if this type of humor is used to relieve tensions.

"If it isn't," Henry replied, "you'd better look out—there's something wrong." He added, "I'm sure that the public would not appreciate our graveyard humor."

Earlier, a deputy medical examiner called to testify against Dr. Noguchi admitted under questioning by Isaac that he himself had once given parts of bodies to a woman pathologist to take out of the coroner's office.

The witness, Dr. John Wallace Graham, said that this was an "allowable" practice in the office.

He said the woman pathologist, Dr. Eunice Larson, who worked as a part-time medical examiner in the office, had informed him that Dr. Noguchi had given her permission to take the tissue.

Noguchi's counsel, Godfrey Isaac, asked Graham if Noguchi had not called him into his office to discuss the matter.

"No," Graham said.

Isaac said he understood that Dr. Larson had left the employ of the coroner's office "because of the controversy of her taking tissue out of the office."

Dr. Graham did not recall this.

The lawyer asked Graham if he recalled whether the body in a homicide case on which he worked

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had to be exhumed because Graham had forgotten to take fingerprints as required by state law.

"No," Graham said.

Did Dr. Noguchi, Isaac went on, ever prepare a memorandum "as the result of your failure to do this?"

"No," the witness repeated.

Graham also denied, un-

der questioning by Isaac, that he had ever told personnel in the mortuary division of the coroner's office that they did not have to fingerprint homicide victims.

Question About Party

Isaac inquired of Graham if he was "upset" last Dec. 20 because Dr. Noguchi had not invited him to his Christmas party.

"No, I was not," the pathologist said.

Isaac asked Graham if he did not once say he was "entitled" to work on a particular body in the autopsy room at the coroner's office.

Graham replied that he wanted to work on this body only because the table on which it lay was near a dictating machine, which he wanted to use.

Under questioning by Dep. County Counsel William Kerr, Graham said he

heard Noguchi say that someone was trying to kill him (Noguchi) in July or August, 1967.

Isaac argued that this question was improper as it dealt with matters before Dr. Noguchi became coroner.

O. Richard Capen, commission president, sustained the objection and ordered the answer stricken from the record.

Capen also sustained an objection by Isaac when Kerr asked Graham if he had "ever heard Dr. No-

guchi talk about suicide."

The witness said he had in October or November, 1967.

"I charge this is an . . . unmitigated lie," Isaac declared.

Graham said Dr. Noguchi "talked hopefully and enthusiastically about the prospect of another air crash" after a helicopter crash last year.

He said Noguchi also talked about "liquidating" individuals.

On the basis of Graham's 200 hours of basic psychiatric training in medical

school and a month of psychiatric experience during his internship, Kerr asked Graham to give his opinion of Noguchi.

Graham said Noguchi's behavior had changed "to a point where he was definitely abnormal."

The witness said that when he "received notice" that Dr. Noguchi had "made threats on my life," he went to Herbert McRoy, administrative deputy in the coroner's office, and asked for an investigation.

The three-member Civil Service Commission, which is being asked by Noguchi to override his firing by the Board of Supervisors and reinstate him to the coroner's job, recessed the hearing Tuesday afternoon until 2:30 a.m. Thursday.