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COPPOLINO TRIAL 320

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NAPLES, FLA., APRIL 17 (AP)—DR. CARL COPPOLINO SWAM AND PLAYED GOLF DURING THE WEEKEND WHILE THE 12 JURORS WHO MUST DECIDE WHETHER HE IS GUILTY OF MURDER WENT FISHING IN A GROUP.

COPPOLINO IS ACCUSED OF FATALLY DRUGGING HIS FIRST WIFE, CARMELA, BECAUSE SHE REFUSED TO DIVORCE HIM SO HE COULD MARRY A RICH WIDOW.

THE TRIAL GOES INTO ITS THIRD WEEK TODAY AND THE FIFTH STRAIGHT DAY OF TESTIMONY BY TWO MEDICAL DETECTIVES THAT CARMELA DIED AUG. 28, 1965 OF AN INJECTION OF THE PARALYTIC DRUG SUCCINYLCOLINE.

THE DEFENSE, LED BY F. LEE BAILEY, CLAIMS DEATH CAME FROM UNKNOWN NATURAL CAUSES AND NO MURDER WAS COMMITTED.

THE TWO KEY PROSECUTION WITNESSES--DRS. MILTON HELPERN AND CHARLES J. UMBERGER OF THE NEW YORK MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE--HAVE STAYED WITH THEIR MURDER THEORY DESPITE INTENSE CROSS-EXAMINATION.

UMBERGER, WHO CONDUCTED SEVEN MONTHS OF CHEMICAL TESTS ON THE EXHUMED BODY OF THE DEAD WOMAN, SAID DEATH BY SUCCINYLCOLINE WAS THE ONLY LOGICAL CONCLUSION HE COULD DRAW.

CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER HELPERN, WHO MADE THE AUTOPSY, SAID HE ASSIGNED UMBERGER TO A SEARCH-FOR-POISON AFTER FINDING NO EVIDENCE OF NATURAL DEATH.

BAILEY HAS ATTACKED THE BASIS FOR THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE TWO WITNESSES--THAT THE UNUSUALLY HIGH QUANTITIES OF SUCCINIC ACID AND CHOLINE IN THE BODY COULD ONLY HAVE COME FROM THE DRUG.

THE DRUG LONG HAS BEEN CONSIDERED UNDETECTABLE AFTER DEATH BECAUSE IT BREAKS DOWN IMMEDIATELY INTO THESE TWO COMPONENTS.

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BAILEY DREW FROM UMBERGER THE FACT THAT EVERY MEMBER OF THE JURY HAS BOTH SUCCINIC ACID AND CHOLINE IN THEIR TISSUE NORMALLY.

HE CONTINUALLY ASKED WHETHER THE EMBALMING FLUID IN THE BRAIN COULD HAVE COMBINED WITH BODY CHEMICALS TO RELEASE ADDITIONAL CHOLINE. AND HE REPEATEDLY SAID--WITH AGREEMENT FROM THE WITNESSES--THAT SUCCINIC ACID ITSELF IS HARMLESS.

THE JURY IS NOT EXPECTED TO GET THE CAST FOR TWO MORE WEEKS. THERE ARE 30 TO 40 STATE WITNESSES REMAINING TO BE CALLED BEFORE THE DEFENSE GETS A CHANCE TO SHOW ITS SIDE OF THE STORY.

BAILEY SAYS HIS OWN MEDICAL EXPERTS WILL DISCLOSE A PIONEERING METHOD OF DETECTING SUCCINYLCOLINE IN HOMICIDE CASES.

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