

Coppolino Rejected Wife, Mrs. Farber Testifies

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NAPLES, April 19 — Mrs. Marjorie Farber, the jilted mistress of Dr. Carl A. Coppolino, testified at his murder trial today that he had returned to his wife, Carmela, on the ninth anniversary of their marriage to tell her—10 days before her sudden death—that he no longer loved her.

A few hours later, Carmela's father, Dr. Carmelo A. Musetto, testified that Dr. Coppolino informed him by telephone on the night of her death that an autopsy had just been performed, confirming his earlier report that Carmela had died of a massive heart attack.

Actually there was no autopsy until months later when suspicion fell on Dr. Coppolino, and the body of Carmela was exhumed.

The state contends that Dr. Coppolino, a 34-year-old anesthesiologist, murdered his wife by giving her a lethal injection of a paralyzing drug, and that his motive was to collect on her \$65,000 life insurance policies and then marry a wealthy divorcee, Mary Gibson. He did marry Mrs. Gibson less than six weeks after his wife's death.

The present Mrs. Coppolino, sitting near her husband, rose and exchanged icy stares with Mrs. Farber when defense counsel, F. Lee Bailey, told her to stand and be recognized by the witness.

Mrs. Farber had testified last December at the first Coppolino murder trial in New Jersey, when the defendant was acquitted of the murder of her husband, Lieut. Col. William E. Farber, in New Jersey, that Dr. Coppolino had put her under a hypnotic spell when they plotted together to murder her husband in 1963.

She testified then that on instructions from Dr. Coppolino she had tried to give her husband an injection of succinyl-

Ex-Mistress Tells Court He Told Carmela He Didn't Love Her Any More

choline, the same drug the state of Florida now contends was used in the murder of Mrs. Coppolino on Aug. 28, 1965. When Colonel Farber awoke, she testified, Dr. Coppolino smothered him with a pillow.

No reference to that case has been permitted in this trial. Mrs. Farber's testimony was limited to a brief reference to her affair with the defendant and to what she knew of his activities after they moved from Middletown, N.J., to Sarasota, Fla., in April, 1965.

Five times during her testimony, Mr. Bailey jumped up to ask for mistrial on the grounds of irrelevance and prejudice, and five times Judge Lynn Silvertooth denied the motion.

Tells of Trips Together

Mrs. Farber said she had met Dr. Coppolino in 1962. They went off on trips together, she said, to Miami Beach, twice to Puerto Rico, to Atlantic City and finally to Sarasota, soon after the death of Colonel Farber, at which time they bought adjacent homesites.

Mrs. Farber testified that on the eve of Carmela Coppolino's death she saw Dr. Coppolino sitting in an automobile with Mary Gibson. She said she went over to the car to remind Dr. Coppolino that Carmela was supposed to pick up her daughter, Monica, who was visiting Mrs. Farber's daughter that afternoon.

Later, she said, she received a telephone call from Dr. Coppolino.

"What did he say?" Frank Schaub, the prosecutor, asked.

A. He was very agitated. He said there was a black cloud over his head. He didn't

appreciate my 'Gestapo methods' and that I was spying on him."

Q. Did he sound disturbed.

A. Yes he did.

On the next day, after Carmela's death, they met at the house of Mr. and Mrs. George Thomson, neighbors of the Coppolinos. Later, at the Coppolino house, she said she had overheard a telephone conversation.

"I heard him say, 'They've already started the arterial work. That won't show anything,'" she went on. "Then I asked him what he meant. He said it meant there was no autopsy."

"Arterial work" was an apparent reference to the first stage of embalming.

A week later, she testified, Dr. Coppolino told her of breaking the news to his wife, on their wedding anniversary, Aug. 18, that he no longer loved her.

Mr. Bailey, on cross examination, tried to portray Mrs. Farber as a woman consumed by jealousy who, when she saw Dr. Coppolino with another woman, set out to destroy him.

Dr. Musetto testified that in two long-distance calls to Dr. Coppolino on the night of his daughter's death, his son-in-law had told him that Carmela had died of a "massive coronary occlusion" and, in the later call, that Dr. Millard White, medical examiner of Sarasota County, had performed an autopsy and found "a severe heart condition."

He also told the jury that Dr. Coppolino had for some years shown a devouring curiosity about a massive heart attack Dr. Musetto had once suffered. "He wanted it in-minute detail," the witness said.