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GERBER GRILLS SAM SUSPECT

Seeks Flaws In Confession To Murder

By HOWARD BEAUFAIT
News Staff Writer

DELAND, Fla.—Cleveland investigators today led Donald J. Wedler step-by-step through the tale of his sordid young life in the first step in their attempt to crack his confession in the Sheppard murder case.

“We're going to let him tell his story,” said Cuyahoga County Coroner Samuel R. Gerber, chief of the Cleveland team. “Then we're going to try to pick it apart piece by piece, particularly as to how he claims he murdered Marilyn Sheppard.”

Somewhere in the process, Dr. Gerber said, they will confront Wedler with photographs of the Bay Village housewife shortly after she was battered to death with maniacal fury in the bedroom of her home.

Questioned by Three

Wedler, 23, was paraded before visiting newsmen on his way to the small white-washed room on the second floor of the Volusia County Jail where he was questioned by Dr. Gerber, Deputy Sheriff Dave Yettra and James E. McArthur, retired head of the Cleveland Detective Bureau.

He looked little like a murderer and more like a frightened, emaciated child.

Although nearly six feet tall, he walks with a hunch that makes him appear smaller. His weight is listed at 160 pounds in prison records, but he looks closer to 140 pounds. His blond hair is long and bleached white in spots by the sun. He wears long Elvis Presley-type sideburns. His left arm bears a tattoo of a skull with an arrow through it and the single word, "Donald," above it.

Donald Wedler (left), “confessed” suspect in the Sheppard case, is questioned about murder of Marilyn Sheppard by (left to right) Dave Yettra, deputy sheriff of Deland, Fla.; Cuyahoga County Coroner Samuel R. Gerber and retired Cleveland detective inspector James McArthur in Deland today.—(AP Wirephoto.)
Past Life Probed

He was dressed in a clean white sport shirt and blue jeans when the questioning began shortly after 10 a.m. Cleveland time. Dr. Gerber emerged from the small room a little over an hour later to reveal details of the investigators' probing into Wedler's life.

He said Wedler's tale of his wanderings throughout the country sounded like a travelogue. Briefly, this is the story, as repeated by Dr. Gerber.

Wedler was born Oct. 25, 1933, in Washington, D.C. His father deserted him and his mother, Evelyn, two months.
Gardner, "I"...