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## 57/07/23 'Court' Drops Sheppard Case

Cleveland Plain Dealer

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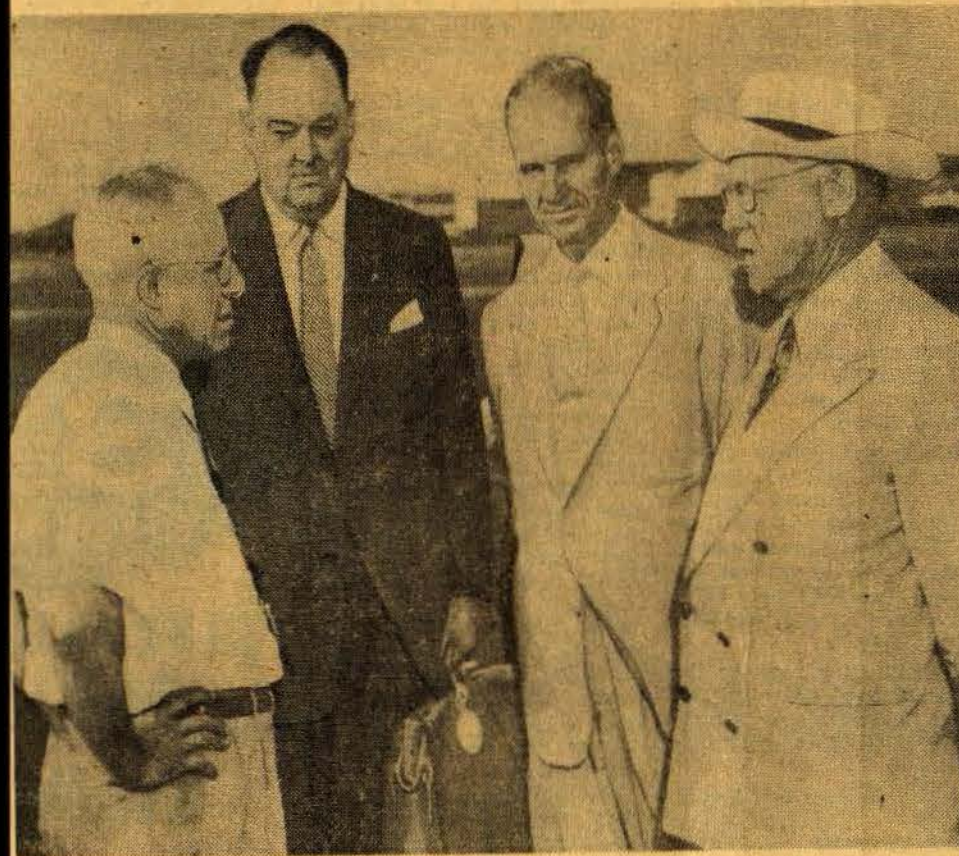
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# 'COURT' DROPS SHEPPARD CASE



Plain Dealer photo via Wirephoto Transmission

Dr. Samuel R.  
GerberPark Street  
Jr.Harry  
SpeegerErle Stanley  
Gardner

The Sheppard murder case was the subject discussed by these men at Port Columbus, Columbus, O., last night. Gerber is Cuyahoga County coroner. Street, a Texas lawyer; Speeger, publisher of Argosy Magazine, and Gardner are members of the unofficial "Court of Last Resort."

## Verbal Blast by M'Arthur Irks Gardner

Ex-Chief of Detectives Clashes  
With Writer Already Upset by  
O'Neil's Canceling of Lie De-  
tector Test

By JOHN G. BLAIR  
Plain Dealer Staff Writer

COLUMBUS, O., July 22—Mystery writer Erle Stanley Gardner and his "Court of Last Resort" withdrew tonight from the investigation into the Sheppard murder case.

Gardner, obviously miffed, shortly before had faced a verbal attack at the Columbus airport by James E. McArthur, retired chief of Cleveland detectives.



He also had been upset by Gov. C. William O'Neill's decision to cancel a lie detector test proposed for Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard, convicted wife slayer serving a life sentence in Ohio Penitentiary.

"We are going to fold our tents and silently steal away," Gardner said at a hotel press conference. "We are going to get the hell out of here. And we're not coming back unless pressure from readers of our Court of Last Resort is so great we must."

Gardner and his magazine-sponsored group plan to leave here Tuesday.

The mystery writer said he would make no attempt to see the governor, but hoped he would see some member of the official family and explain the circumstances which resulted in conflicts of information on the Florida suspect in the Sheppard case, Donald Joseph Wedler.

Gardner said he felt there had been an attack upon his integrity. He apparently referred to comments on a telegram he sent the governor telling of major conflicts between Wedler's story and existing facts.

### Expert Sent Back

The writer insisted all he had done was to send the governor additional information pertinent to the Florida suspect and his alleged involvement in the Sheppard murder.

John E. Reid, polygraph expert from Chicago who was to make the Sheppard lie detector test, was reached in Detroit, where his plane was grounded, and told to go back.

Dr. Lemoyne Snyder of Paradise, Calif., a medical and legal expert and one of the founders of the "court," was flying toward Columbus and could not be reached.

Gardner, vehement and sometimes profane, made a prophecy that "by the time Ohio wakes up to how the people feel about his case they will be damned glad to have someone help them out of the mess they're in."

His clash with McArthur



**James E. McArthur**  
The retired chief of Cleveland detectives is helping in the Sheppard investigation.

came at Port Columbus when the former Cleveland policeman and Dr. Samuel R. Gerber arrived with Deputy Sheriff David Yettra en route to Deland, Fla., to question Wedler.

Wedler has confessed killing a woman in Cleveland under circumstances similar to the Sheppard murder.

Gardner, accompanied by a retinue of writers and Harry Speeger, publisher of Argosy Magazine, and an attorney, Park Street of San Antonio, Tex., arrived at the airport from New York a few minutes before the Clevelanders landed.

### Gerber, Gardner Shake

Informed that Dr. Gerber was due in a few minutes, Gardner waited to greet the Cuyahoga County coroner. Gerber and Gardner shook hands warmly.

The mystery writer laughingly said to Gerber: "You already got the conviction. What are you doing now? Going down to get the evidence?"

Dr. Gerber laughed and Gardner added: "Well, we have a lot of fun anyway."

McArthur, bristling, stepped forward and half shouted: "This isn't fun to me! We are going to go into this a lot more thoroughly than has been done so far."

(Continued on Page 5, Column 7)



# Erle Gardner Withdraws Sheppard Case Probe

★ From First Page

Still obviously angry, McArthur added: "This is the second occasion I've had with this outfit."

## McClure "Burned"

Gardner replied: "Well, we did all right on the first," referring to the case of Theodore Roosevelt McClure of Cleveland.

"He burned," McArthur retorted.

McClure, sentenced to death for slaying a Cleveland grocer, maintained he was innocent. He was given a lie detector test by the so-called "Court of Last Resort," headed by Gardner.

McClure died in Ohio's electric chair.

"Don't take it personally," Gardner told McArthur. "We are just trying to do a job."

Gerber said to Gardner: "Wedler's story does not agree with the facts. And he can't change the facts."

McArthur then took Gerber's arm and said: "Listen, Sam. Let's not discuss the case here out on the street."

The Cleveland party left a few minutes later for Deland.

Gardner said he and Dr. Gerber were "old friends" and paid high tribute to the coroner's work. But, he added, "McArthur has a nasty attitude."

The mystery author said the "Court of Last Resort" might report on the Sheppard case in a new television series scheduled to start this fall.

"We will simply show the court in session and tell 44 million people about the facts of this case," Gardner said.

He asserted he had no intention of visiting Sheppard, now a personnel clerk at the penitentiary.

"I'm not interested in Sam Sheppard as an individual in the least," he said.

Gardner was visibly disturbed over Gov. O'Neill's decision to postpone indefinitely any lie detector test for Sheppard.

## Notes "Strangeness"

Sheppard is serving his sentence for the July 4, 1954, murder of his wife, Marilyn, in Bay Village.

"In view of the situation, we are now going to investigate the entire Sheppard murder case," Gardner shouted when first asked if his unofficial court, sponsored by Argosy Magazine, was going to drop out of the case.

Gardner originally had said the group's only interest was to conduct a lie detector test for Dr. Sam.

"If they have the right man behind bars there is something mighty strange in the refusal to let us give him the test," Gardner said. "If the Ohio officials want to crawl out on a limb we are going to investigate the whole case."

Gardner said that Alex Gregory, lie detector expert who quizzed Wedler, had disqualified himself for the lie detector examination of Dr. Sam.

In a telegram sent to Gov. O'Neill this morning Gardner said that when the "court" started its activities in the Sheppard case its sole objective was to give Dr. Sam an impartial polygraph test.

## Cites Bias Possibility

He added that the group's examination of Wedler might have created a feeling that the "court" was biased.

O'Neill said he called off the test in view of statements in the telegram that the "court" was "still not prepared to accept as true Wedler's confession."

The telegram added that "a lot more investigative work" was necessary as well as a psychiatric examination of Wedler.

O'Neill quoted the telegram as saying: "There are some very important major conflicts between Wedler's story and existing facts. These conflicts may have been the result of drug reactions, an attempt to rationalize his acts or just plain deception."

The governor told the Plain Dealer: "On the information that there was no confession verified as the truth it was decided that a test of Dr. Sheppard would be indefinitely postponed."

O'Neill added that the original communication from the "court" had said there was a confession that had been verified by a lie detector test given Wedler.

## Sees "Misunderstanding"

On his arrival Gardner told the Plain Dealer that O'Neill's action was the result of "a complete misunderstanding by the governor."

"There was no evidence of deceit in the test given Wedler," Gardner said. "But we are not satisfied with his story and we are not satisfied with Dr. Sheppard's story."



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