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Talk of Trial Taboo In Dr. Sam Cell Block

BY DORIS O'DONNELL

There's one isolated place left where discussion of the Sheppard murder case is strictly taboo.

That's the fourth floor cell-block of accused wife-slayer, Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard.

When he returns each afternoon at 4:30 from a gruelling day in court his jail companions, observing a kind of unwritten gentlemen's agreement, never ask Dr. Sam a word about his "other life" in the courtroom below.

Sheriff's deputies report that Dr. Sheppard's 23 cellmates wander up and down "the range"—a guarded section of hallway outside the cellblocks—minding their own business.

Dr. Sam, the only first-degree murder defendant among an assortment of felons and other accused criminals, slips from a business suit and white shirt into blue denim slacks with elastic belting and a sweat-shirt.

He joins the others on "the range," stretching his legs after the tense hours of sitting in the hot, stuffy courtroom where he's on trial for his life.

Sometimes he showers before getting into his old clothes. Dinner time is around 5 or 5:30 p. m. and the fare is solid, though hardly Stork Club variety.

After dinner, he goes into the day room—a long bare room with drab benches and tables—where he plays pinochle "with the boys" or reads hot rod and sports car

magazines. The room faces E. 21st St.

Chief Jailer Michael Uccello reports Dr. Sam is friendly with his companions and shares with them fruit brought by his fam-

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ily. Only once since his imprisonment has Dr. Sam telephoned his mother. He did this by special permission of Sheriff Joseph Sweeney, who considered the fact that his mother, Mrs. Richard Sheppard, has not visited her son. She reportedly has a heart condition.

The pipe-smoking Dr. Sheppard has gradually lost his pinkish outdoors look, and grows paler every day. Although he eats everything set before him, his weight has dropped slightly, close observers said.

Newspapers are available to him, and "he can't help but look them over," a deputy said.

At 9 p. m., Dr. Sam and the 11 other men in the cell unit where he is assigned turn into their single rooms, and a deputy pulls a lever at a nearby control box. Automatically, and with a grinding noise, the 12 doors are barred. These are called escape-proof cellblocks.

More visitors cram the courtroom as the trial drags on. Yesterday's visitors included Mrs. James E. Robertson, 6544 Mayfield Rd., Mayfield Heights, who came with Mrs. Dave Yettra, 13603 Fourth Ave., East Cleveland. Yettra is a county detective who will be called to the stand later. Mrs. Robertson and her veterinarian husband live in a house, which figured in a murder and suicide of a veterinarian and his wife several years ago.

"The murder bedroom is a den, and the bullet holes have been plugged up," Mrs. Robertson said.

Fred W. Garmone's 19-year-old daughter, Judy, a student of

Dyke Business College, watched her father cross-examine Detective Robert F. Schottke, and waited until her father located Miss Dorothy Kilgallen for a quick handshake. Judy's friends were Roxana Gilbert, 25760 W. Lake Rd., Bay Village, and Joan Ogilvie, 13406 Hayden Ave., East Cleveland.

Two fellow-employees of Jurist James C. Bird also joined the gallery. They are New York Central employes Mrs. Florence Corrigan, 9754 Westwood Ave., Parma, and Miss Mary Louise Swetlik of Brunswick, O.

"Just curious," Mrs. Corrigan said.