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Sheppard Lie Test to Be Next Week

O'Neill Grants Doctor Chance to Clear Himself of Wife's Murder

By JOHN G. BLAIR

Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard will undergo a lie detector test in the Ohio Penitentiary early next week—probably Tuesday—in an effort to clear himself of the murder of his wife, Marilyn, it was learned last night.

Erle Stanley Gardner, mystery story writer and head of the unofficial "Court of Last Resort," told the Plain Dealer that four experts would interrogate the convicted Bay Village osteopath.

Permission for the examination was given by Gov. C. William O'Neill after Dr. Sam indicated he was willing to take the test.

Conducting the unusual examination will be Alex Gregory, Detroit lie detector technician; Dr. LeMoyne Snyder, Chicago physician and medico-legal expert; John E. Reid, Chicago attorney and polygraph expert, and C. B. Hanscom, University of Minnesota faculty member and polygraph examiner.

Quizzes Confessor

Gardner told the Plain Dealer by telephone from Deland, Fla., of his plans immediately after questioning Donald Joseph Wedler, 23-year-old Florida road gang escapee who has confessed slaying a woman here July 4, 1954. Circumstances of the alleged killing were similar to the murder of Mrs. Sheppard.

Wedler, who was sent to the Maryland Reformatory as a boy of 14, said he bludgeoned a woman when he was interrupted while looting a lake-front home.

Gardner said Wedler told him he used a pipe "with an
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Wedler
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elbow" in it to beat the woman when she sat up in bed as Wedler was rifling a dresser drawer in the darkened bedroom.

Wedler said he carried the pipe for protection, bringing it to Cleveland from California.

The convict, awaiting trial on the charge he fled the road gang, was dressed in a checkered sport shirt and blue jeans as he told of being under the influence of narcotics when he allegedly killed a woman here the first week of July, 1954.

Wedler said he arrived here early in July and had taken dope after meeting some friends. He was quoted as saying he was out of his head and was seeking money when he stole a car and drove to a residential area similar to Bay Village.

The prisoner said that he had "a floating feeling" from the drugs as he entered the house through an unlocked door and went to a second-floor bedroom.

Told that authorities here said Mrs. Sheppard was struck 35 times, Wedler said he never hit anyone that many times.

'Took Nothing'

He added that he struck a man with the same pipe at the top of the stairs. Wedler said he had seen the man on a couch in the living room when he entered the house.

Wedler added that he saw a satchel in the living room and lugged out the contents.

Dr. Sheppard's medical kit was found spilled in the first-floor hallway of the former Sheppard home in Bay Village.

Wedler said he took nothing from the house and ran 300 or 400 yards along the beach behind the house. He said that no one chased him and that he hrew away the pipe. Dr. Sam said he struggled with a man

on the beach and was knocked unconscious.

"Wedler is telling the truth or he thinks he's telling the truth," Gardner said. "We feel that with the board of experts that we are going to bring in, if Dr. Sam is innocent they will know it and if he's guilty they will know it."

Gregory, who gave Wedler two polygraph examinations, said that both tests showed the convict was telling the truth.

"I've recommended that Wedler be given a competent psychiatric examination as the next step," Gregory said.

He said Wedler may have become so engrossed in details of the Sheppard case from detective magazines that he actually believes he was involved in the case.

Exactly what weight a favorable result from the examination would have in Dr. Sam's case was problematical.

Legal authorities here said that the test was not competent as legal evidence and that Dr. Sam had exhausted his appeals in trying to gain freedom from his life sentence for second-degree murder.

Assistant County Prosecutor Saul S. Danaceau said the outcome of the test would have "no status whatever" in the courts.

"It does seem strange that Dr. Sheppard and his attorneys bitterly opposed a polygraph test when his emotions were evident right after the murder," Danaceau said. "Now, three years later, when the emotions are dulled, they are emphasizing such a test."

Aid in Investigation

Danaceau said the lie detector was not infallible but was a good lead in investigative work.

William J. Corrigan, who directed Dr. Sam's defense, said there had been "misrepresentation" that the osteopath had refused to take a lie detector test.

"There is nothing in the record that he refused to take a lie detector test," Corrigan said.

Corrigan said the only conversation about a lie detector examination was on the morning of July 4 just before Dr. Sheppard was accused by detectives of the murder.

"He said he would if it was a reliable test," Corrigan added. "One detective told him the test was infallible, and Dr. Sam replied that it was not infallible but if it was he would take it."

Corrigan also explained that Mrs. Sheppard was not killed by 35 blows on her head. He asserted there were only 16 wounds on Mrs. Sheppard's crushed head.

Shortly before Gov. O'Neill gave permission for the examination, Dr. Sam was shown an

enlarged Associated Press Wire-photo of Wedler.

Lt. Gov. Paul M. Herbert, who handled Dr. Sam's appeal before the Ohio Supreme Court, showed the photograph to Dr. Sheppard in the Ohio Penitentiary in Columbus.

Herbert said that Dr. Sam, after studying the photograph, said:

"I have a vague feeling that this is the man who attacked me."

Sheppard has maintained that a bushy-haired intruder attacked him twice after his pregnant wife was killed in her second-floor bedroom.

Gov. O'Neill, in granting permission for the test, told Gardner:

"This is in response to your request that the State of Ohio co-operate in giving Sheppard a polygraph test. Please be advised that, based upon the recommendation of Warden Ralph Alvis, the State of Ohio will co-operate in the administration of a scientific interrogation with the aid of the polygraph to be given by the Court of Last Resort to Sheppard."

Herbert said that if Wedler's confession stood up it was possible that a first-degree murder warrant would be sought before the Bay Village mayor's court. Following issuance of a warrant, Wedler would be extradited from Florida to face the charge.

"At the preliminary hearing we would present our evidence," Herbert said. "The lie detector test results could be introduced in the form of affidavits from Gregory. So could the confession."

He added that Dr. Sam did not want a pardon but would demand a new trial. He said Dr. Sam was encouraged by the development but was not building himself up too high because of past disappointments.