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57/06/12 Dr. Sam Fan Mail Heartens Mystery Writer

Cleveland Press

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Dr. Sam Fan Mail Heartens Mystery Writer

Press 6-12-57

By BILL TANNER

At his hideaway in Paradise, Calif., novelist Erle Stanley Gardner paused to answer the telephone—and talk about the Dr. Sam Sheppard case.

"I'm up to my ears in work" said the 68-year-old mystery writer. "I'm getting a new television show ready for the fall and I've got two others on the air already. There are a million things to

do, but I have to admit that Sheppard case certainly is interesting."

Gardner is now in the process of "investigating" the Sheppard case on behalf of the "Court of Last Resort," a promotion of Argosy magazine.

Gardner, in last month's issue of Argosy, declared his intention to give voluntary lie detector tests to Sheppard and his brothers and their wives. He said it was to clear up some unanswered questions in the famous Bay Village murder of 1954.

"Deluged With Mail"

"We've been deluged with mail," said Gardner. "One letter took me to task for investigating the case, but all the others were in favor of it.

"There were a lot of interesting suggestions, too, on the nature of the weapon and what kind of procedure we should take in investigating the case.

"I'm convinced from the response we got that we ought to go ahead and try to give Sam Sheppard a lie detector test.

"If the people in Ohio want to block such a test, that's up to them, but our mail indicates that they want these questions answered and we can do it at no cost to the public.

"Our lie detector operators are the best in the country. If Sam Sheppard will submit to a test, I'm certain these men will be able to ascertain if he knows anything about the weapon.

"If he doesn't know, then we will know that he is innocent.

Says Others Cleared

"But don't get me wrong. We are not trying to prove that Sam Sheppard is not guilty. It would not surprise me at all that, if he took a test, it would show he is just filled with guilty knowledge.

"Now I'll admit that some

of our investigators were surprised to find out that his brothers were clean as a hound's tooth. Frankly, some of our men thought they played some part in the case, but we are absolutely sure now that they have no guilty knowledge."

Sam's brothers, Stephen and Richard, and their wives, took lie tests for Gardner last month. Gardner said they "passed."

Joshes Police

Gardner continued:

"Now I notice that your police question the value of a lie detector test at this time. Well, I agree partly to that, but again I say that if the operators are good a test will be of value no matter how late it's given—even 25 years later. And our operators are the best in the country.

"Besides, the police ought to make up their minds. If they don't think a lie detector test is any good, why do they spend the taxpayers' money on them?"

Gardner said the next issue of Argosy, out next week, will discuss the way a lie detector test is given. He said it may include some of the graphs taken from the tests given the Sheppards.

Sees "Public Service"

He said he has not yet asked Ohio Penitentiary officials for permission to test Dr. Sam, but has been assured by Dr. Stephen that Sam is willing.

"I warned Dr. Steve," said Gardner, "that if Sam backs out at the last minute, even on advice of his attorneys, it will point against him.

"We think we have a chance to perform a real pub-

lic service here and I hope the people of Ohio will make it possible for us to do so."