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57/07/20 Killer or Liar? / Gerber Wants Lie Tests for Sam, Brothers

Cleveland News
Killer or Liar?

This is the picture Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard looked at and said: "I have a vague feeling that this is the man who attacked me," Donald Wedler, 23, has told authorities he thinks the woman he killed three years ago was Mrs. Marilyn Sheppard, for which crime Dr. Sam is serving a life sentence. Cleveland law enforcement officials do not believe Wedler's story. However, Cuyahoga County Coroner Sam R. Gerber today is trying to go to Florida to prove the story true or false.

GERBER WANTS
LIE TESTS FOR
SAM, BROTHERS

Cuyahoga County Coroner Samuel R. Gerber today stepped into the latest developments in the Sheppard murder case.

He said the newest phases have prompted him to take three courses of action. He will:

ASK FUNDS from the County Commissioners to go to Deland, Fla., and question Donald J. Wedler, 23, a fugitive who has "confessed" the slaying of Mrs. Marilyn Sheppard July 4, 1954.

ASK PERMISSION from Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard that representatives of the county be present Monday in Ohio Penitentiary when a lie detector test is administered to the convicted wife-slayer.

ASK PERMISSION to give lie detector tests to Dr. Sheppard's brothers, Drs. Richard N. and Stephen A., and their wives.

Henry W. Speeth, president of the County Commissioners, said the funds probably would be granted for the coroner's trip to Florida. "I don't see any reason why not," he said. "We don't want to interfere with justice or stop any information from coming forth."

"Since the crime Wedler says he committed was in Cuyahoga County, its representatives should go to Florida and question him," Dr. Gerber said. He indi-
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cated he probably would take a county detective with him. Sheriff Joseph M. Sweeney said he would cooperate with the coroner. "If the coroner wants to take one of my men I'll certainly let him."

Wants Own Tests
The Court of Last Resort, an unofficial crime investigation group, will administer the test to Dr. Sam.

"Different interpretation from such tests can be made by different operators," the coroner said. "I would like a man—or several men—from the state to ask additional questions and perhaps administer a separate test."

He said he sought lie detector tests for the doctor's brothers and their wives because "they have volunteered to take tests given by the Court of Last Resort."

Monday Is Date
"This indicates they think some people believe they may have had something to do with the killing. I'd like to question them, too," he said.

The coroner's announcement was the first evidence of interest in the new developments by an official here.

The lie detector test for Dr. Sam will be administered Monday in the Ohio Penitentiary, it was announced today in Columbus.

The test will be given by Alex Gregory, a Detroit lie detector expert, John E. Reid of Chicago and C.B. Hunscom of the University of Minnesota. Permission to conduct the test was granted yesterday by Gov. C. William O'Neill.

Wedler is in the Volusia County Jail in Deland. Last night he told 30 crime experts and newsmen he was certain his wife, Mrs. Sheppard, killed the victim. She was convicted of murder, was asked to take a lie detector test administered by Gregory, who is a member of the Court of Last Resort, which is headed by mystery writer Erle Stanley Gardner.

In his cell, Dr. Sheppard looked at a picture of Wedler. "I have a vague feeling this is the man who attacked me," he said.

Wedler said last night that he was taking dope at the time of the Sheppard killing. He told newsmen how he stole a car and drove July 4, 1954, to a "Cleveland suburb." He said he was looking for a house to loot.

He said he saw a door slightly open at what presumably was the Sheppards' home. He entered, saw a man sleeping on a couch, then went upstairs to a bedroom. He heard a sound from the bed, where a woman was sleeping. Now he is certain the woman was Mrs. Sheppard.

Pipe Was Weapon
He then took an eight-inch iron pipe he had brought with him and beat the woman "several times" to keep her quiet. He was questioned sharply on the number of times he hit her, since medical examination showed she received 35 blows.

"I was foggy with dope," he said. "I don't remember."

Dr. Gerber, who examined the woman at the time of the murder, was asked to comment on Wedler's description of the weapon. "From that description, I don't think it's possible such a weapon was used," Dr. Gerber said.