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Ariane

Press 4-6-70

Had Hint of Trouble

"I have had a very strange feeling for the past two months that something would happen to Sam—that he was in trouble. I can't explain the feeling but it was there."

So Ariane Sheppard greeted the news today that her former husband—a man she crossed the ocean to meet and marry—had died in Columbus.

"Maybe it's better this way," she said with tears in her eyes as she talked to Barbara Benson, reporter for the Hollywood Sun-Tattler, a Scripps-Howard newspaper.

"He wasn't really himself. He was in a another world from taking drugs," she continued. "No, of course I wasn't in love with him any more. I felt sorry for him."

Miss Benson asked her twice if he had ever admitted to her that he killed his first wife, and Ariane snapped "no comment" to each question.

Turn to Page C 8.



SHEPPARD FAMILY TOGETHER — Sam Sheppard and his second wife, Ariane, are shown with his son, Sam Jr. (Chip), after his prison release in 1964.

Ariane Says She Believed "Sheppard Was in Trouble"

Continued From Page One

Ariane said she plans to fly to Cleveland from Hollywood, Fla. for the funeral. She is currently vacationing there at the home of friends—former Clevelanders Mr. and Mrs. Irvin Eppler.

"HE WAS A VERY tragic figure," she said. "He was a victim of everything that has happened to him for the past 16 years.

"He was a very tragic figure. It doesn't make any difference whether you think he committed murder or not. He just wasn't strong enough to face up to what had happened to him.

"While we were married, he took drugs. He took any kind of drugs he could get. I think maybe he was still taking them, but that is something we will have to let the coroner decide."

ARIANE SAID she hadn't heard from Dr. Sheppard for two months.

"I thought that was very strange," she

said. "Normally one of the family would bring me news of him. But nobody had heard anything of him. I last saw him the day of the divorce. Of course, he was out of town a lot with his wrestling and he had the new wife."

Ariane received word of her former husband's death early today when Dr. Sheppard's new mother-in-law, Mrs. George Strickland, telephoned her from Columbus.

"She called me right after the rescue squad had left," Ariane said.

"**MRS. STRICKLAND** discovered that he had died. She and his wife, Coleen, took turns sitting up with him all night."

Ariane would not comment when asked if Sam had ever unlocked the secret of Marilyn Sheppard's death.

"I don't feel I can comment on that," she said. "I might be moved to talk about it later, maybe in a book."