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Sheppard's Ariane: Soul-Mate or Pawn?

By JANE SCOTT

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Warm-hearted woman with a deep sense of justice? Or, blonde pawn to sway the emotions of the State Board of Pardons and Paroles?

These questions are being asked by thousands of Clevelanders in the surprise engagement of German divorcee Ariane Tebbenjohanns and Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard.

Public curiosity rose to a high pitch after the engagement was revealed, suddenly, on the eve of the Bay Village osteopath's commutation hearing.

Received One Letter

Ariane had received only one letter from the convicted man, although she had been writing to him for more

than three years. She wasn't even put on his approved list for letters until Dec. 21.

She has only seen him once. She became engaged after being with him only four and one-half hours.

I found this attractive pen pal to be friendly, warm and well-mannered. She may be hard to figure out, but she's easy to like.

"I'm Really 33"

"I'm really 33, not 32," she volunteered, lighting up a cigarette. "But the news people got 32 so I let that go."

Medium tall (5 feet 6 inches) the trim woman with the high cheek bones carries her 116 pounds gracefully. You might type-cast her as the head of a Broadway model agency.

Maury Koblentz, Commissioner of Corrections, denied Ariane Tebbenjohanns permission to visit Dr. Samuel H. Sheppard again until he "checks into her status." He will also check to see if there has been any irregularity in prison rules.

"I've got such a bad cold — and with everyone calling I couldn't get to the hairdresser" she explained, smoothing her French twist before her TV appearance.

Fun-Loving

Up close you will notice that her platinum bangs are a little dark at the roots. Perhaps she wears a little too

much eye makeup, by Cleveland standards.

You have the feeling that a fun-loving personality lurks behind her serious ways. She burst into a face-lighting smile and then laughter just before being photographed by KYW color cameras.

"Can the laughter!" called out Dr. Sam Sheppard's attorney, F. Lee Bailey, only half-jokingly.

The German fiancée—mother of a nine-year-old girl — answered each question without a quibble.

Thinks He's Handsome

"Yes, I think he is handsome. And in very good mental condition," she continued, reverting to her favorite topic.

"I imagine that women threw themselves at him. Everything has come easy for him. His father has already the Clinic," she added.

Their engagement seemed a natural result of their communication, she said.

She said that she would be willing to be married in prison, but that Dr. Sam would not.

"He did not feel that this would be fair to me," she explained.

Fluent in English

Mrs. Tebbenjohanns speaks English fluently, as well as French and Italian. She is studying Spanish. Her father owned a Dusseldorf, Germany, firm, she said. She has never held a job.

Further indications that she is a wealthy woman came from an employee at her motel.

"She's got expensive clothes, with French and Italian labels. And a fur coat," the woman reported.

Ariane Tebbenjohann's brown eyes became serious as she said:

Is She for Real?

"You must be proud to be an American citizen. I come from a small and insignificant country. But this wrong conviction would not have been possible in my country! Please put that in your story."

Is she for real?

Like the Sheppard murder case itself, it is anyone's guess.



"I KNOW HE IS INNOCENT," German divorcee Ariane Tebbenjohanns (left) tells author Paul Holmes of "The Sheppard Murder Case" while interviewed by Record reporter Jane Scott. (Photo by George Heinz)