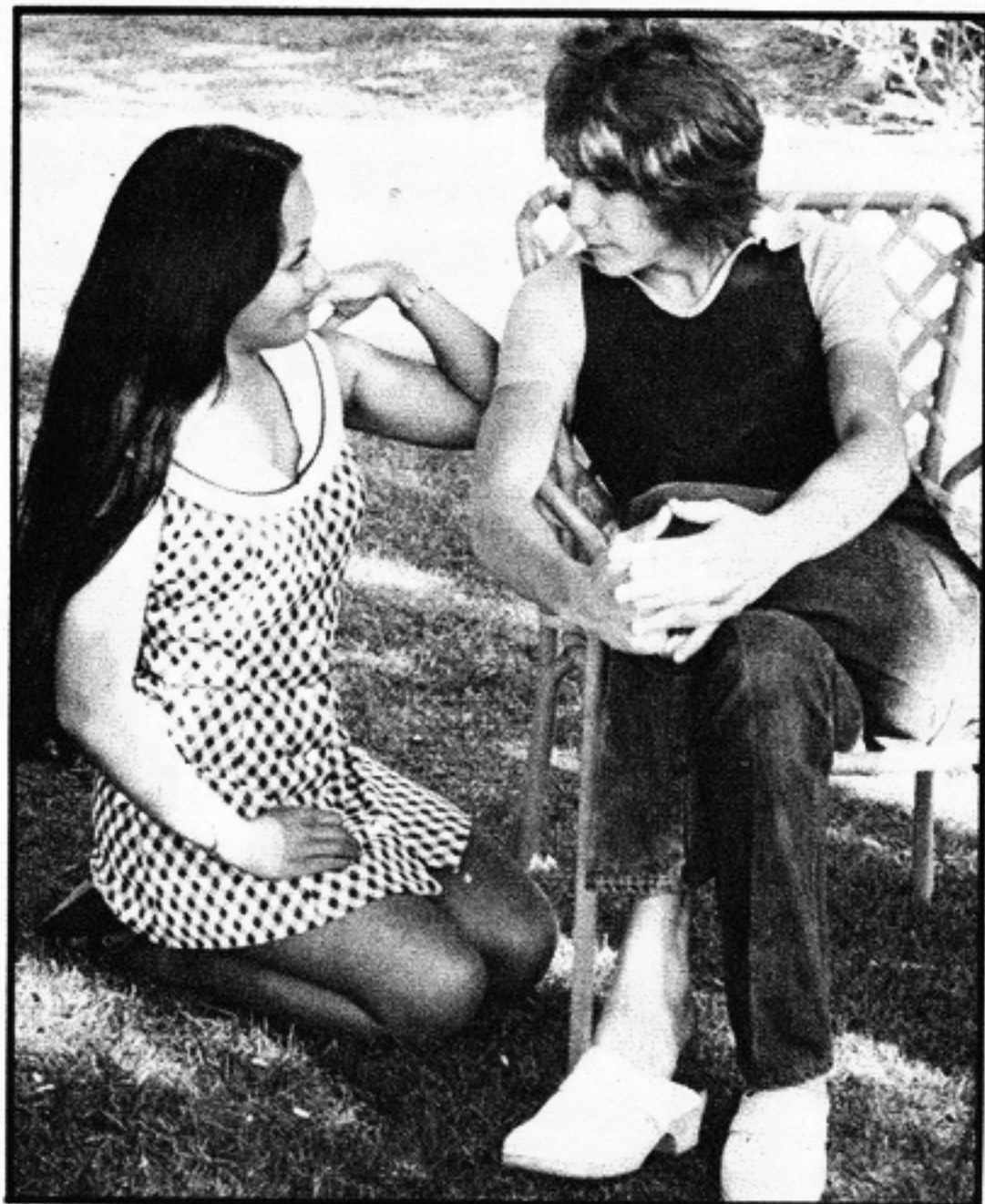


CONFESSION



birthday card. His laughter last year was genuine and spontaneous; this year the sparkle was gone.

I forced a smile on my lips and sat on the grass next to David's chair. For a few seconds he didn't even see me, then I quietly whispered, "David, happy birthday."

He turned to look at me and I was surprised to see the great hurt he was trying to hide. He smiled faintly, but it was a sad smile and I thought it made him look even lonelier than before! I chatted with him for a short while and was relieved when Kula attracted everyone's attention with her antics. I took that opportunity to slip quietly away from David's side and seek a place where I could think about what was going on before my eyes.

I leaned against the huge tree that shaded the entire lawn and watched David play with Kula and whisper-chat with Sam and Al. Although his lips were smiling, I could see in his eyes a sort of haunting look that he was hiding.

SAN FRANCISCO NEWSPAPER

I knew what was bothering him, and everyone at the party was trying to politely avoid bringing up the subject. It was obvious that David's thoughts were on an article about him that appeared in a San Francisco Pop newspaper. The article painted a black picture of David and reported that he had a rotten attitude to-

wards all of his fans. The entire article was built on words and thoughts that spelled suicide—the killing of a teen idol—David!

The *FaVE* and *Tiger Beat* offices were filled with letters all asking the same question, "Why?" *Why* David hurt them, *why* David betrayed them, *why* David made fun of them and their feelings. And we at our offices, who interviewed David and wrote stories about him felt lost too because we didn't know the answers—and we were asking the same questions!

Letters filled with accusations about our magazines creating a David Cassidy that didn't really exist hurt us. Letters demanded to know which was the "real" David—and we couldn't give answers.

When asked why he even agreed to the interview David lowered his head and slowly answered, "I did it because I was ill-advised. Some musician friends and other friends of mine claimed that I would be accepted in the 'heavier' music scene if I did the article. 'Friends'—hah! They might as well have ripped my heart out of me!"

HIS SIDE

David continued with his side of the story, "Besides I just put my trust in some people who I shouldn't have trusted! And the reporter—well, she won my confidence and then did a rip job on me!"

I tried to avoid David for a while longer. An important question was swimming around in my head

