

David Cassidy back and happy about it

BURBANK — There was David Cassidy sitting at home after not working for four years, with the word spreading around town that he didn't want to work, when the telephone rang.

It was producer David Gerber, explaining about a "Police Story" movie about to begin filming. Gerber told David he had him in mind for the lead from the beginning of the project.

"He also told me," David said, having a bite of lunch between shooting, "that he knew I didn't want to work. The fact was I did want to get back to work and had been reading scripts, none of which I liked. I told this to Mr. Gerber and he sent over the 'Police Story' script."

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Young (28) Cassidy read the script and liked it. He made it, it was telecast on NBC-TV last May 26, it earned him an Emmy nomination, had the highest rating of any 'Police Story' ever and, after the numbers were in, had Fred Silverman of NBC call Gerber of Columbia Pictures and suggest the character David played should be turned into a series character.

The result is now called "David Cassidy: Man Undercover," and it began Nov. 2 on NBC-TV.

David is excited about it. "I think it is going to be a good series. Everything has been so rushed getting it ready, that our stories can only get better — and they are good to start."

David is a very nice, quiet, sensible, wife-loving (he is married to Kay (Lenz) and animal-loving young man who, as he gets older, begins to look more and more like his handsome Father, the late Jack Cassidy.

"I think I always looked like him," David says, proudly.

Meanwhile, he is working very hard on the series, being in nearly every shot. He even stayed up until 4 a.m. the night before we talked composing the theme for the show, which he will shortly record.

"With this show I have the opportunity to play a character with integrity and in TV, that's rare commodity. It's not merely a cop show. The plots are secondary to human relationships. It deals a lot with the personal life of Daniel Shay, the role I play.

"He has a wife and he knows the difficulty of the position his undercover work puts her in. He is also forced to bring his work home with him."

David smiles and adds, "It's

much like the situation I'm in right now. I have never been able to combine work and a social life. I wish I could."

One other aspect of the show which delights David is the fact that he is being accepted in the industry as an actor.

"There is this feeling that if you sing, you can't act and if you can act, then you can't sing. Look at my father. He was a wonderful actor and he had a beautiful voice. When David Gerber saw the dailies of the two-hour movie he told me, 'You're not bad. In fact, you're marvelous. They had to convince me to go along with you.'"

David adds that after that episode, people came up to him on the street to compliment him on his performance. That, he says, makes it all worthwhile.

Now that the teen-age idol era has passed (that curse from "The Partridge Family"), he says his life is more normal. "Not that I would call my life normal."

At least, however, he can go places without a horde of screaming girls following him everywhere. That legacy now belongs to his half-brother Shaun.