



David Cassidy, undercover cop, tries to get through to teenager Elissa Leeds on Channel 4 at 10 p.m.

# David's likable as police boy

WE'VE HAD THE police man, the police woman, even Sam, the police dog. So now it's time for (drum roll, please) — Police Boy!

David Cassidy, complete with shaggy mane, tight blue jeans and sessions on the couch with his wife, stars as an undercover cop in L.A. at 10 p.m. Thursday on NBC.

"David Cassidy — Man Undercover" is a slapdash affair (and, remember, series usually get worse each week, not better) with characters only vaguely conceived and dialogue that's too wretched to forget.

**IN THURSDAY'S** opener, one of the fleeing bandits yells, "Head for the hills, Ernie! There's no way they're going to get us now! You're doin' your thing, Ernie! You're doin' your thing!"

Cassidy's superior officer tells him with a snarl:



**Chris Stoehr**

"They're animals and I want them stopped!"

Not even Cassidy escapes the lines written by the jerks who put their names on this script. When he has infiltrated the gang of thieves, he returns to this officer and says, "You want me to set 'em for you, don't you?"

That, David, is the idea in undercover work.

But "David Cassidy — Man Undercover" has one interesting point: Cassidy himself.

While it's initially disconcerting to see the former teenage heartthrob — who still looks no more than 20 — bent in a crouch, pointing a gun at a crook, and yelling "Give it

up!" his performance seduces you.

Cassidy's okay. Really.

**LIKE MOST** of his TV brethren and sistren, he's better than his material, and he is that most important thing in TVdom: likable.

Besides knowing which way is up on a script, he has also contributed to the show's music, and this is the show's primary asset, next to his performance.

While the photography, setting and characters are determinedly routine, the music, which varies from a soft funk

to a driving funk to some good ol' rock and roll, actually makes the viewer feel good at times.

You may want to turn the picture off and just listen to the near-infinite car chases (if that's your thing) and the guitar licks that fly along.

Cassidy has co-written the theme song and sings as well on the soundtrack when the moment suggests itself. With a concept and plot this torpid, the moment almost always suggests itself.

TV shows are becoming more sophisticated technically and remain sophomoric in all other respects.

To be sure, Cassidy is no multi-talented giant of the entertainment industry. But the evidence Thursday night tells us that, for TV, he is a bundle of talent, light years ahead of the state of the rest of the art.