



## Henry Diltz on photographing David Cassidy on the set of *The Partridge Family*, 1971

I had photographed the Monkees in 1967 for the teenybopper magazines in the US, so when *The Partridge Family* started I got a call asking if I would go to the set as they needed shots for magazine covers and posters. David is holding my camera with a telephoto lens, which was vital on a set as you have to be careful not to get in the way. He was close to my age and we talked for a few minutes when I first arrived. I had just spent three months living in Surrey, taking pictures of Stephen Stills at a big manor house that had belonged to Ringo Starr and Peter Sellers. After I told David this we hit it off because he was a frustrated rock'n'roller stuck in this role as the big brother of the Partridge family. He had a guitar with him and we bonded immediately, playing songs to each other in his trailer.

I got into photography by accident, really. I bought my first proper camera from a secondhand store in Michigan while touring the US with my band, the Modern Folk Quartet, in 1965. We spent the rest of the tour taking photos and had a big slide show in LA when we got back. The fact that these pictures could be projected huge on the wall was an epiphany for me. I started photographing everybody I was hanging out with, people like David Crosby, Neil Young and Mama Cass. They knew me as a musician, not a photographer, which meant I could quietly document what was going on. Buffalo Springfield (Stills and Young's band) were the first group that I shot. They were coming out of the back of a club as I was photographing this big painting on the wall, just for myself. They came filing out of the back door and I said, 'Hey, why don't you guys just stand there for a minute and I'll just take your picture?' I got a call a few days later from *Teenset* magazine who said they would pay me \$100 for it. That was the second epiphany.

As soon as *The Partridge Family* began, David couldn't go out of the house any more because he would be mobbed. Every little girl had pictures of him on her wall. I started going out on the road with him at weekends, and later accompanied him on his world tours as his photographer as well as his friend. I remember being on the rooftop of the BBC in London with several thousand girls below, screaming and yelling. Crowds of police with their arms interlocked and helmets knocked askew were trying to keep these girls back. It was very exciting, like being in the Beatles. Often there would be a decoy limo which I would travel in, and David would be in a van behind. The girls couldn't see in the window of the limo but thought David was in there so they would mob it anyway.

David must have felt quite isolated as he had to stay indoors a lot. Whether it was Tokyo, Australia or wherever, he was a prisoner in his hotel suite. After arriving in New Zealand one time, I remember waking up early in the morning jet-lagged, with girls outside singing, 'We love you David.' I just thought to myself, 'Oh my God, go away.' Luckily we could go out at night as the little girls were asleep by then. Every city we went to there would be a record promoter whose job it was to show David a good time. He would take us to the most famous restaurant in town, we'd eat smoked salmon, drink great wine, then go out to a club somewhere. It was very glamorous. That's what is great about being a photographer: it's like a passport into people's lives. You end up hanging out with people and glimpsing a life that you never would have otherwise. **Interview by Tim Burrows** *'California Dreaming: Memories and Visions of LA 1966-1975'* by Henry Diltz is available through Genesis Publications ([genesis-publications.com](http://genesis-publications.com))