



Above: David at a Press Conference on his European Tour, and Below: In a more natural setting, making music.



"I was excited by the part as soon as I read the script, if that's what you mean . . . Like I said, I felt that the role of Michael could really show what I was capable of as an actor . . ."

"Did you see anything of yourself in Michael?" I asked.

He gave me a strange smile, as he replied: "You know, it's funny you should ask that, because I don't reckon that I was at all aware of it at the time. But now, looking back, I guess I brought a lot to that role from my own experiences."

"For instance . . .?" I prompted.

"For instance, Michael had this tremendous love for his mother, which, in him, amounted almost to an obsession. But, in playing the part, I could draw on my own deep love for my mother, so that it all became remarkably real for me . . ."

"I only had to imagine how I'd feel towards somebody if I figured that they'd made my Mom unbearably unhappy. You see, in the programme, Michael's Mom has died and he blames his Pop for all her unhappiness before her death. Well, I could relate to that. It didn't matter whether he was right or not . . . It was enough that he believed it, and I could believe it too."

For those of you who were unlucky enough to miss the episode "Fun and Games and Michael Ambrose" when it was broadcast in Britain, I had better fill in a few of the gaps . . .

The story hinged on the relationship between Michael Ambrose, a young diabetic, and his father, a best-selling novelist. The boy is determined to revenge his mother's unhappiness as he constantly threatens to miss out on the insulin shots which keep him alive. He finds an opportunity to carry out this threat when his father goes out East to appear on a television programme.

"It was all so real," was David's comment. "You know . . . the way that you can use someone's love for you as a weapon against them . . . as a way of hurting them real deep."

Certainly, the episode gave David magnificent opportunities as an actor. The role demanded great sincerity and intensity of emotion. Without those qualities, the whole story would have turned out phony and flat.

In fact, it emerged as one of the most poignant and touching episodes ever filmed in the series . . . Largely thanks to David's superb portrayal of Michael.

But, when I suggested that to David, he shook his head:

"Oh, no," he put in quickly, "it's awful sweet of you to say so, but anyone who says that is way off beam . . . I was very lucky to have

such a sympathetic part, so everyone tended to identify with me.

"But the show was a big team effort and I was just a little cog in a mighty big wheel . . . You know, I can't get over how lucky I was to have my first screen appearances on such great shows with the chance to work with actors like Robert Young and Raymond Burr. And, of course, in the 'Marcus Welby' movie I had a very fine actor playing my father, so that we really got to build up a relationship during that week of shooting." (That was John McMartin who played John Ambrose.) But it was Robert Young who made the really profound and lasting impression on David:

"I already admired him as a movie actor before I even got to work alongside of him," he told me. "But I was knocked out when I found out what a great guy he was off the screen too."

"I couldn't help hoping that I might end up being an actor of his calibre at the end of my career. And I reckoned I'd be happy if I could turn out to be half such a nice guy and half as happy as he was . . ."

#### HARD WORK

"He'd say how lucky he was to have such a wonderful wife, but you don't get the sort of relationship they had handed you on a plate . . . You have to work for it. But those two still loved each other so much that they seemed oblivious of that. It sure was wonderful to see them together . . . There was such a depth of caring and loving in their marriage."

It says a lot for David that he didn't feel more than a twinge of envy as he looked on at this happiness that he had been denied in his own life. He couldn't help wondering why his parents had been unable to find such an enduring, stable relationship. But, above all, he remembers feeling a tremendous sense of relief . . . Up to now, he had been convinced that a happy marriage and a show business career just could not go together. Now, it began to dawn on him that, if you waited for the right girl to come into your life and were prepared to give, as well as receive, love . . . Then it might work out after all . . .

DON'T MISS PART 31  
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