

But at the time I told, he bit his lip as he tried to control the sense of frustration at being powerless, powerless to prevent these silly rumours.

I've known David to be worried about his fans before. He's just that kind of a guy, sensitive and concerned about the feelings of the people who care about him.

But there's also the kind of pain that David doesn't want to talk about. And that's the kind of pain that is much more personal, a much deeper kind of pain.

Of course, you all remember his first painful experience with publicity. You can imagine how painful it was to be told about his parents' divorce, to hear about it from well-meaning friends who had heard about it in the newspapers.

Maybe that's the price celebrities pay for their fame. But no one can deny that it's very expensive. So in a way, you might think, David ought to be prepared for the unpleasantness that comes along with stardom.

#### TENDER HEARTED

But I can tell you, anyone as vulnerable and tenderhearted as David can never really become used to pain. It just never seems to get any easier for him.

One of the most recent and saddest examples of this sensitivity, unfortunately, took place here at David's press conference during his last visit. The conference was going along fine. The press had some interesting questions, and I could tell David was enjoying himself. He was relaxed, smiling and laughing.

It was almost as if we were all at a party together. And then, about half way through the "party", it happened.

Just as everyone was beginning to enjoy them-

selves, someone had to ask David about his friend Kevin.

Kevin was one of David's close friends when he was at school. Unfortunately, Kevin died as a result of using drugs. This hurt David a lot. He and Kevin had known each other since they were in junior school. Of course, when Kevin began to use drugs, he and David drifted apart.

But even though they drifted apart, David and Kevin never completely lost contact with each other. It's just that they didn't have so much in common any more.

When Kevin died about four years ago, it gave David a shock and feelings of sickness he could never forget. From that time on, David resolved not to have anything to do with drugs.

#### OLD QUESTION

And when I watched David's face at that press conference, I could see that all the sickness and pain he had felt when Kevin died was suddenly right back inside him.

Again, he bit his lip and looked down, but like the real professional he is, it was only a moment before he looked up and answered the old question about Kevin and his tragic death. And then, he politely closed the subject.

But that was just about the end-of-the-meeting. There were a few more questions, but most of the members of the press present were so disappointed and awed by David's obvious pain that I think all they really wanted to do was leave him alone.

I didn't see David after that, because he left immediately to board a plane back to California. But I did get a word with him over the telephone about a week later.

I tried to tell him — for all of us — how sorry we were

about that question. But before I could get the words out, David interrupted me. "Please, Pat, don't worry about it. I could tell you and some of the other journalists were upset. But believe me, I've gotten used to awkward questions over the past few years.

"It's funny when you stop to think about it. Most of the questions are usually polite, and pretty interesting. It's only every so often that an embarrassing or awkward question comes up.

"I know the journalists that ask them don't mean to hurt me, but sometimes I guess with all the pressure and hurry, they just get a little bit careless. Still, all things considered, I think I get a more than fair share of good reporting."

When you stop to think about it, David probably does get a higher percentage of fair press than just about anybody you can name in the music business.

#### SPECIAL REASON

But there is a pretty special reason for that, too. You see, David is a really nice guy; no one I've ever met has been more co-operative or pleasant. He's always eager to talk about his plans (even though he doesn't really like to talk about himself, David knows that people want to know about him, so he cheerfully agrees to do it.)

What more can you ask for?

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The guy at the right  
of David is Roger  
Pusey, also a Radio  
One producer.  
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