



THE DAVID CASSIDY STORY

PART 42

June 1970. The Partridge Family Show went into full production. By the time the actors and techs turned up at Columbia Ranch, much of the work for the coming season was already well in hand. . . .

Most of the scripts for the first session were ready and waiting; the music tracks for the first six segments were in the can; and—biggest surprise of all—David pretty well knew the entire script by heart!

"It never happened again!" he smiled. "But I didn't really expect it to, because that's not my natural way of working at all. In fact, I don't reckon there can be many folks in movies who ever approach their roles that way.

"Of course," he continued, "I always make a point of reading the script straight through a couple of times—no matter how small my actual part in it is. I figure it's important to fix the storyline into my head, so I can slot any little bit of it into the right context for each 'take'. But I learn the lines 'take' by 'take' as each comes up on the schedule. . . . Maybe I'll go over them the night before, but most times I just scan them through immediately before that particular take.

"That way, they just hold in for long enough. And I save time beforehand."

For that first show, however, time was no object. It was terribly important to David that everything go well in this show. For once in his life, he sat down and learned his lines right through—as though he'd got to perform them on stage, with no chances to check with his script between times.

As he pointed out, "It was quite a neat script, and I had a pretty important part. So I wanted to

use that chance, and not leave any room for mistakes."

After all, there would be spells when David hardly seemed to speak for the entire show! Those weeks felt rough at the time, but he can look back on them and laugh now.

"There were weeks," he recalls, "When all I had to do was keep smiling and say, 'Hi, Mom!' or 'Hi, kids!' a couple of times. I used to wonder how I had the nerve to accept my pay check and to kid myself that this was acting! In fact, I'd sometimes get kinda worried, in case it meant that they simply figured I couldn't make it—that this was all I was capable of doing!"

But David soon realized it had nothing to do with that at all. "Pretty soon I learned that, in a series like this, you have to be prepared to act as a team. You know, there'll be weeks when you kind of take the lead, and then others where you fade into the background for a while. Unless a show is really built around you as an individual, you just can't expect to hold the floor every segment."

SPECIAL AFFECTION

Luckily, that very first segment was written to focus the attention on Keith Partridge. So it really gave David a chance to show what he was made of as an actor.

The story was titled "Love At First Slight" and David still recalls how much he enjoyed working on it. "I guess I'd have had a special affection for the first show we filmed, no matter what," he told me. "But this one was really fun by any standard.

"At the time, I reckoned the story to be a bit crazy. Which was my mistake! 'Cos, before too long, I found myself pretty well living it out for

In an unguarded moment, David reflects the terrific strain of those first days with the Partridge Family.