

THE DAVID CASSIDY STORY

PART 51

Oddly enough, it was David's return to health that started off one of the most painful incidents in his 21st year. Once again it had to do with two things that have plagued David ever since. The two are closely related, especially in David's case. The twin worries? Rumours and drugs.

"I was always a subject of rumours, from the very first time that the *Partridge Family* took off. I was warned by Shirley and my dad that this sort of thing goes on all the time.

"But I guess I never really expected either the sort of rumours or the number of them. I just wasn't really prepared."

The first season was bad enough, but after things got moving again, David was the top man in the rumour market.

The most obvious ones, of course, were the ones that dealt with David's marital status.

"It was always being announced that I was going steady, engaged, or married. Either that, or my marriage was just about to happen.

"I guess it was suggested a few times that I was living with one girl or another, but I think most of the rumours dealt with marriage."

This was an especially sore point with David, for a number of reasons. First of all, as we all know, there was no truth in it at all. David was simply too busy to marry, or even to think about it. Most of the time, he didn't even have time to think about going out with a girl, yet alone marry her.

Now, he can laugh about it. But at the time, it was a sore point. And if it was a sore point with David, you can imagine how his fans in America reacted to it.

We spoke to Lilian Lees, who was one of David's oldest and most loyal American fans. She told us that she "Usually knew that the stories were false. But that didn't make things too much easier.

"For one thing, even though we had the fan club to rely on, we used to hear from girls outside the club that David had eloped with some starlet or other.

"It was o.k. for us, 'cos we knew that if it was true, we would have heard about it from the fan club secretary. But there were a lot of David's fans who hadn't joined the club, and I really felt sorry for them. Some of them used to call me on the telephone and ask if it was true. They were in hysterics as often as not, and it really took some convincing to make them see that it was just a wild rumour."

DAVID'S WORRIES

David, of course, was, if anything, more worried for his fans than he was for himself. After he got used to it, he could always have a laugh with his mates about it. But he was concerned for his fans, because he knew that they would be genuinely upset.

"Sometimes, girls would come running up to me and scream 'Tell us it's not true, tell us, TELL US!' I didn't even know what it was they wanted me to tell them half the time, until they showed me a paper or magazine with some crazy headline about me in it.

"I used to feel really sorry for them, but all I could do was try to comfort the ones that I could see, and make sure that my office got my denials out to the papers.

"Still, sometimes it was impossible to make people believe the truth." The truth, of course, was something that was published more and more rarely as time went on.

The rumours began to enlarge and enlarge, as journalists who were more interested in selling their publication than telling the truth began to print anything that might bear the slightest resemblance to the truth.

