



THE DAY YOUNG DAVID ALMOST LOST HOPE!

It was one day in May of 1969, when I was on holiday in New York, that I decided to find a job on the stage as an assistant stage manager. I had experience in the theatre in Amsterdam and England, and I needed the money to return home.

It was at that time I met a young guy called David Cassidy who was an unknown, out-of-work actor trailing round the theatres of New York looking for work. He had a part-time job as a mailroom boy with a large firm of textile merchants in the Times Square district, which helped to keep him alive and pay for the rent.

CONFIDENCE

I don't think it was difficult for David to be out of work for so long because his agent-manager, Ruth Aarons, also managed David's father Jack, mother Evelyn Ward and step-mother, Shirley Jones. Ruth Aarons did a lot to give David confidence in himself and was the force behind him. She did more than anyone to boost his morale in every possible way.

It was not long after I had met him that he had got a job on the stage. He passed an audition for a play called "Fig Leaves Are Falling".

Unfortunately, the play didn't do too well. When it

finished David told me that he couldn't go on but I advised him not to give up but to carry on and see what happened. Although the play folded David was spotted by a film producer, who gave him a return ticket to Hollywood to make a screen test.

A screen test is something which every actor and actress longs for. It's like part of a dream come true. A step in the right direction on the way to stardom.

It happened for Robert Redford, Paul Newman, Barbara Streisand and finally David Cassidy. The film in which David was to have appeared was "Hail Hero". But, David regretfully didn't get the part. Mike Douglas, the son of Kirk Douglas, won the role.

But that producer paid for more than a round ticket home . . . without realising it he was financing a trip that was to produce one of the greatest and most likable pop stars in the business.

It was lonely for David in the early days. The only friends he had were at his place of work. But he was very close to his father. He moved down to New York when he was eighteen and took lessons in acting with the David Craig School of Musical Comedy.

With that valuable training behind him, David did some

work now and again with small theatre companies.

But he always turned to his mother—in the form of countless letters—when he was depressed. He'd pour out his heart, telling her what he had been doing and saying that there was always a chance despite his failure at so many auditions.

He told me that his mother wished she could be near him sharing his feelings and so on. But she had to work as she was an actress touring the country.

Ruth Aarons, who has known David since he was eight, looked after him when Jack Cassidy said that the boy wanted to go into the business and one day she revealed to me that she didn't realise that David possessed superstar quality until quite late. She was thrilled when he landed his first part on Broadway and she said it just goes to show what a person can do if he is determined.

HOLLYWOOD

Even though he failed to get that part in "Hail Hero", David decided not to make use of his return ticket but stayed on in Hollywood. The move paid off. Shortly afterwards he got a part in one of the "Ironside" productions. A very good way of getting into the business