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David Cassidy

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was so nice. Such a really nice human being."

Meanwhile, David lived with his mother in a small town in New Jersey, and even though he did go back to New York once in a while, nothing really fazed him unless it affected his security in that small town. Then when he was ten, with an eye to her working in films, he and his mom moved to Los Angeles . . . "where things are really thrown at you, everything. It's really agitated here, you know."

The following year, his mother married movie director Elliott Silverstein, "One of the brightest men I've ever known, you know *Cat Ballou*, and now he's done *A Man Called Horse*. I mean he was so agitated and so alive he wanted to know the why and how about *everything*—some of that rubbed off on me. I've kind of missed him since he and my mom were divorced three years ago. It's weird. I'm kind of waiting for the day when I'm the actor and he's the director. It has to happen."

He lived with his mother and stepfather, he spent the weekends with his dad and his stepmother, sometimes he was torn between them. There was the time his dad wanted him to go with them to Arrowhead for a marvelous two weeks of camping in the snow, ice-fishing, the whole bit. The boy wanted to go, he really did, and he couldn't bring himself to tell his dad that it wasn't possible, his stepdad had to do it. Because the fact was, his mother and stepfather had planned something else that interfered time-wise.

It isn't easy for any child to have one set of parents in show business—let alone two. From a background like that you might expect a fairly mixed-up kid with some large problems, but what you find in David is a beautiful 19-year-old guy with dreamy eyes, a fierce grasp of reality, a practical determination to succeed as an actor, and a built-in resistance to the Hollywood scene.

That he's going to succeed acting-wise is pretty well assured by his auspicious debut on *The Partridge Family* where he is playing a role he can fall into like duck soup, as the oldest and most adoring son of his real-life stepmother, Shirley Jones. It's a role he won, as he's won every other part he's ever had. This is important to David. He is terribly proud of the fact that no one has helped him, he's done it on his own. If people have let him down they're not going to make it up to him that way. But as a matter of fact, it isn't the individuals who've let him down—to his way of thinking—it's the business. That's why he has a built-in resistance.

To assess that resistance, you have to climb the steepest hill in the labyrinth of twists and turns off Laurel Canyon. There, half way up the mountain, is the pad David shares with Sam Hyman, who became his friend when they were both in ninth grade at Emerson Junior High in West L.A. Sam is a film editor who will someday be a director, both boys are intensely committed to the art of filmmaking, but when it comes to the Hollywood social milieu, forget it.

"I'm not into that at all," David says. "I don't care to party. I just stay up here and live." He lives with his dog, Sam, and Sam's dog, Shish, in a spacious old place that is clean but lean—not a chair in the place, the beds are mattresses on the floor—sometimes the fellows eat, sometimes they don't. When they do it's usually frozen beef pies. What they always do is talk.

Sam's girl was there when I arrived and she and Sam and David and I sat around on the floor in David's room and talked about education. David says public education is a joke. He spent six months at LACC—nights because he was working days (a guest shot on *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, a guest shot on *Bonanza*). He says of this period, "I honestly went with the motivation of learning. I made the effort, but I just felt I couldn't benefit that much. It was a farce. I felt I could do better just working because this is what I want to do—it's what I've always wanted to do. I never doubted it. And no one either discouraged me or encouraged me. My mother said, 'You've seen a lot of the bad things and some of the good things about show business, David. You must do what you want.' But the bad things never detered her. She's back in New York now doing a play."

I asked him what some of the bad things are, and he tossed back his soft shining hair and said, "A lot of it is personal. A lot of the bad is what it does to a human being, because of the very nature of the business. A lot of the bad things that happened in my life didn't have to happen. They could have been prevented if my parents hadn't been in the business—they were victims of circumstance."

"It has to do with the pace and attitude of people in the business. I remember my dad taking trips to Europe all the time—he did *Oklahoma* in Europe with Shirley, that's where they met. I used to say 'Are you going to Europe again, Dad?' That's one of the bad things, the moving around. It's terrible for families."

"I also think people in the business tend to lose their sense of reality. I think success and failure are both hard to take over a long period of time. It's hard not to take rejection personally. As an actor I have to face rejection every time I go out for anything, and it's very difficult. On the other hand, if someone has talent, I don't think you can keep them down. If the talent is there—and the will—they're going to survive."

He saw it happen to his mother, who has been a good working actress, and to his father, who has had his ups and downs and is now back on top. "He just did *The Andersonville Trial* on television and I couldn't believe how good he was. Great. He's really a versatile actor. He's always had the whole *saucy debonair* thing going for him—the blue eyes, the teeth so white they have to tone them down for technical—but here he was playing a heavy."

He's also seen it happen to his beautiful stepmother, Shirley, an Academy Award winner who was the hottest thing in pictures for a while and is now zooming back again in a different age category: in *Happy Ending* with Jean Simmons, in *The Cheyenne Social Club* with Jimmy Stewart, and in *The Partridge Family* which unites her with David on ABC.

"That is the strangest, most wonderful thing that's happened," David says. "She's such a talented human being and such a nice human being, we've always gotten along great, and now we're really involved together. I really like her. She's like my friend."

"Shirley was never the wicked cruel stepmother. She never had that going for

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