

At that time, Jack Cassidy had never heard of Shirley Jones. But after she had shot to stardom in *Oklahoma!*, she and Jack were chosen to play the leads in a State Department tour of the same show, which was to play in Paris and Rome and other cities in Europe.

By that time it was 1955, and the family life of Evelyn Ward and Jack Cassidy was coming to an end. For the Cassidys' marriage had fallen apart. Jack Cassidy then fell in love with Shirley Jones—and David would never again live with both his parents at the same time. Evelyn and Jack were divorced in 1956.

To ease these fears, Jack assured David that he would always be able to visit his father whenever he wanted to. But even then they may both have realized that this would often prove to be impossible. For Jack Cassidy, in the years ahead, would frequently be touring in some musical comedy, or traveling the nightclub circuit in an act with Shirley Jones, and thousands of miles might separate father and son.

Fortunately, David did not resent his father's marriage to Shirley, which occurred in 1956, soon after his parents' divorce was final. He has admitted that he was prepared to dislike her, but as soon as he met her she completely charmed him.

Yet David no longer lived with both his father and his mother, and since Evelyn Ward was still working as a singer, he found himself staying once again with his grandparents from the ages of 6 to 10.

Shirley and Jack made their home in California after their marriage, and David visited them for the summer when he was 8 and 9 years old. Then, when he was 10, he and his mother moved out to California, so he was able to see his dad on weekends, when Cassidy was not touring.

For several years, Evelyn had known Elliot Silverstein, a talented young television director who later broke into movies with his highly acclaimed direction of *Cat Ballou*. In 1962 she and Elliot were married, and for the first time in seven years David was once again part of a family unit.

In no way did he ever attempt to replace David's real father. But without making any big thing of it, he let David know that he was available whenever he had any problems to discuss, and he tried to use a combination of firmness and kindness that would work in this rather delicate situation. At that time, the Silversteins and David were living in Cheviot Hills in West Los Angeles, not far from the 20th Century-Fox studio, while the Cassidys—Jack and Shirley—were only a few miles away in Bel-Air.

David has said that this was one of the happiest periods of his life, because he could be with his mother and Elliot during the week and visit his father on weekends. Yet he has also admitted that he felt a bit left out when he visited Jack and Shirley on weekends. For by that time they were raising their own young family—a family of which he never felt fully a part, though he loved his young step-brothers. Also, Jack worked a great deal in the East, on Broadway and in summer stock. So David didn't see him for months at a time.

But he did have Evelyn and Elliot, and as the only youngster in the house he received a good deal of attention. Un-

fortunately, Elliot also had to spend a good deal of time away from home on location as his movie work increased. But he was devoted to his stepson and when he was home the two were quite close.

Still, with its various interruptions, it cannot be said that David ever had a really settled family life outside of those few years, so long ago as hardly to be remembered, which he spent with his real parents before he was 5 years old. And it is no wonder that the whole idea of falling in love with one woman and spending a lifetime with her is alien to his own experience. It just never happened that way with his parents.

While David was living in West Los Angeles with Evelyn and Elliot, he attended Emerson Junior High School—the same school Marilyn Monroe had attended 20 years before—and then went on to University High School. It was while David was at University High that his life once again came apart—and this time the shock nearly destroyed him—for at the age of 16 his mother and Elliot separated, and were later divorced.

Suddenly David saw all his hopes for a normal life collapsing. For the second time in his young life, his family had disintegrated, almost as though it had never existed. And Elliot Silverstein, a man whom David had come to like and depend on, moved out of his life. Again David was left without a fulltime father.

New problems to solve

Because he had now reached an age which is difficult under the best of circumstances, David found he could not handle this new calamity. He began to come apart—not a mental breakup, really, but more of a spiritual collapse. Life had suddenly lost all pleasure and meaning for him, and—like too many of his generation—he slowly began to “drop out.”

He lost all interest in school and began cutting classes every day. It didn't matter where he went, as long as he didn't have to face his teachers and classmates and a curriculum of studies which seemed meaningless to him. He fell in with a bad crowd, dropouts like himself, and spent his days hanging around with them, accomplishing nothing, “rapping” pointlessly about trivia, talking about everything but the aching void within him.

His marks became so bad that he transferred to a “continuation school,” where he attended classes from 1:15 to 4 P.M. daily in order to comply with the state attendance law. But he learned nothing—sitting in class and paying no attention to what was going on, not studying at night, just drifting ever further into lethargy and hopelessness.

Then he fell seriously ill with mononucleosis, and for three months he lay in bed at home. But what seemed like just one more piece of misfortune turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Forced to stop seeing his friends, compelled to lie by himself hour after hour with nothing to do but think, he saw himself clearly, saw what he was becoming. . .

There was nobody to pull him out of his depression, his self-destructiveness. He had no close girl friend—how could he trust love, when love had proven so fragile for his parents, and for his mother and

stepfather? He had no friends he could trust—for he saw now how his “friends” had helped lead him into his present confused state. There was no father in the house to whom he could turn. Even his mother could not truly fathom the ache he felt in his heart, or reach out to bring him back from the depths of his depression. And so, with nobody else to save him, somehow David Cassidy found the strength to save himself.

He decided that he would not give up on life—or on his own future. He had never doubted, really, that he could be a success in show business if he really applied himself. And if he had to finish school in order to get into show business, then finish it he would. He would see, too, what he could do in the meantime about getting professional training.

After he had recovered from his illness, David stopped seeing his old friends and instead applied himself to bringing up his grades. He went to summer school between his junior and senior years, and also began working with the Los Angeles Theatre Group.

He transferred to Rexford, an excellent private school, for his senior year. He did very fine work, graduating in June of 1968. Two weeks later he was in New York City, studying voice with a private coach and making the rounds of producers' offices, trying to break into show business.

The rest of the story of David's success is well known—how he landed a job as the son in Allan Sherman's Broadway comedy, *Fig Leaves Are Falling*, was seen by a talent scout and flew to Hollywood to test for a movie. He didn't get the film, but landed a number of television roles in dramatic shows. And in December of 1969 he won the part of Keith Partridge opposite Shirley Jones in ABC-TV's *The Partridge Family*. The show was a hit, and a million-seller record followed—a song called *I Think I Love You*.

But although David sings convincingly of love, for him it's still just a song. In fact, he resents efforts to link him publicly with this girl or that. When it was rumored that he was engaged to actress Judy Strangis of *Room 222*, he firmly denied it. He dates no one girl regularly.

Yet, David's life seems full enough for the moment—too full, if anything. During the TV filming season he works a 12-hour day at the studio, often followed by night recording, and says that he spends only half an hour or so at home before collapsing into sleep.

He has a roommate named Say Hyman, a pal from Emerson Junior High School days, and they have been sharing a Laurel Canyon pad with two dogs. But by the time you read this, David will probably be living elsewhere, for fans have discovered his home and he no longer has any privacy there.

With a hit TV show, a gold record and an avid following of teenage and adult fans, David would seem to have it made. But recently another heartbreak threatened to scar his life once again. His father and Shirley separated after 14 years of marriage.

For David, who has become great friends with Shirley—he lived in a guest house on the Cassidys' estate during his New York acting days—the news must have been shocking. For the third time