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david cassidy

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job in show business, Jack Cassidy introduced him to a man who owned a textile business and David began work in the mail room there. It wasn't that his parents were against David becoming an actor. "They neither encouraged or discouraged me. They allowed me to see what it was all about," he explained.

But David hated his new job. "I was working at something I really disliked and around people not my own age—not my era at all. I had no friends and was pretty lonely. All I could think about was getting out and changing it. Which I eventually did."

While working in the mail room by day, David began studying at night at the David Craig School of Musical Comedy, spending his lunch hours going out on auditions.

And, finally, his chance to make a start on his career came about when he won a co-starring role in the Broadway musical *The Fig Leaves Are Falling*.

"It was one of the happiest moments of my life," he recalled. "I remember running out of the theatre, after getting the job, and skipping down 7th Avenue, doing the 'unhooked generation' kick, and just acting like an idiot. I was freed from a super-unhappy existence into something I really wanted to do. It was the big turning point in my life."

"A man from CBS saw the show and asked me to do a screen test for the movie *Hail Hero*—the role eventually played by Michael Douglas," he went on. "This was a good break for me. I didn't get the part, of course, but they saw the test over at Universal Studios, liked it and brought me out here to Hollywood to do another test."

After that, the hazel-eyed actor decided to remain in Hollywood and began working constantly. A guest starring role in an episode of *Ironside* was quickly followed by roles in *The Survivors*, *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, *Adam-12*, *Medical Center*, *The Mod Squad* and *Bonanza*.

Then his agent sent him to audition for the role of Keith Partridge—a 16-year-old with a talent for music—and David, who looks young for his age, fitted the role perfectly.

It was quite a strange coincidence that his stepmother was chosen to play his mother in the series because, at first, ABC executives didn't even know they were related. And, working together every day, gave David and Shirley a chance to get to know each other better.

David's very fond of all his family. "I see my father and Shirley about once a week—go over to their house for Sunday dinner, or something like that—more friendly than family. They're a good influence on me," he smiled.

Concerning a recent, short separation, he commented: "I knew it wouldn't last—that they'd go back together again. When I learned about the separation it amazed me, because they're always super-happy together

and I can tell they really love each other." Which reminded him: "I read an article once, that said my father resented me because I was becoming a bigger star than he is, and it infuriated me—because it was so ridiculous. We never even discuss how well his career is going, or how well mine is. He knows and I know."

David's also very fond of his real mother. "We've always had very good rapport. She's in New York now, so, I haven't seen her in quite a while. But she's very proud of me," he smiled. "It's kind of nice when other people can reap something from your success."

"I have a grandfather in New Jersey, who's 83, and feels the same way. And I go back and see him whenever I can. My mother tells me he never misses a show." Unfortunately, his grandmother, who helped raise him, died three years ago and wasn't able to see her grandson's sudden rise to fame.

David recently turned 21, and the fact that he's no longer a teenager doesn't bother him at all because he feels he didn't waste those years. "I feel like I've really accomplished something, and am at least going in a positive direction, whereas when I was 16, all these things were very much in the air," he explained.

At 16, David was studying at Rexford—a private school in Beverly Hills, attended by the sons of many famous celebrities. One of his closest friends was Jon Provost, who was then well-known for his role in the *Lassie* TV series. "At that time, he was acting and I wasn't," recalled David, "but it didn't make any difference to our friendship."

Dino Martin, son of Dean Martin, was also a student "although we were never close," added David. "I think I kind of resented him because at the time I had very little money and was just making ends meet, whereas Dino drove a Ferrari and wore nice clothes," he admitted, with a grin.

Another close friend committed suicide. "He mixed alcohol with sleeping pills," revealed David. "I was very upset. He was a brilliant writer, and it's a pity when you see this happen to someone you really like and care for. He really had a lot of talent, and a lot to give as a person, but he was really unhappy. There was nothing you could say or do for him."

Although he was exposed to it, David kept away from the "drug scene," and strongly believes there's too much talk today about drugs. "I think if people didn't make such a big deal of it, the problem wouldn't be as bad as it is," he explained.

"I was in high school when the whole drug thing started happening in San Francisco, and I saw a lot of people really go down to the depths—which is a pity. But those who really got carried away, were the ones whose parents were so opposed to it, so vehement."

"I think anything taken to its extreme is bad, whether it's drinking coffee or smoking marijuana. I, personally, don't see any more danger in smoking marijuana than in drinking alcohol."

As for young people today, he commented: "I think they want to be recognized—