



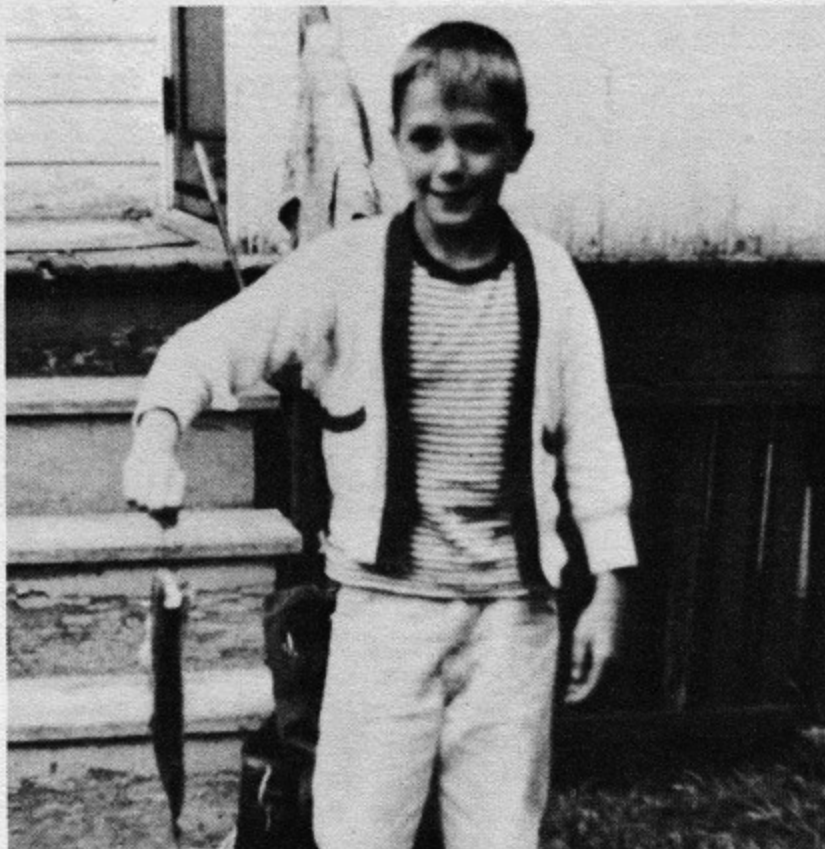
MY SON— DAVID

by **EVELYN WARD**

CHAPTER FIVE

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SYNOPSIS: In the May issue of 16, we got up to the point where David and I moved from West Orange to Los Angeles (for me — for work reasons; for David — so that he could see his dad Jack Cassidy and his little half brothers more often). Once we were settled in Los Angeles, in a beautiful new Spanish stucco hacienda, David found his life quite happy — what with making great new friends and eventually enrolling at Uni High School near Westwood, a “borough” of Los Angeles. Though we lived in the Cheviot Hills area, because David’s friends were at Uni — he was given special permission to go there. However, two strange things happened to David at Uni. One was: he discovered girls and became totally girl crazy!! The other was: after a few months, David realized that Uni was not the proper school for him.



Here’s David at the age of eight. He had just come back from fishing with his Uncle Stan. David got up at 5 A.M., slept on the fishing boat till right before sunset, woke up, caught this fish and came home just in time to get his picture taken with it!

I HAD BEEN WONDERING what was making my son David — who was generally a pretty happy, sparkling young man — so gloomy and miserable. Finally, he got the nerve to tell me.

“Mom, I feel awful,” he said. “I know I persuaded you to get me special permission to go to Uni because I wanted to be with my friends there, but now—” David paused for awhile and then he continued, “Well, it may be my friends—or maybe it’s just me—but I realize that I won’t learn anything or get anywhere in school unless I get transferred.”

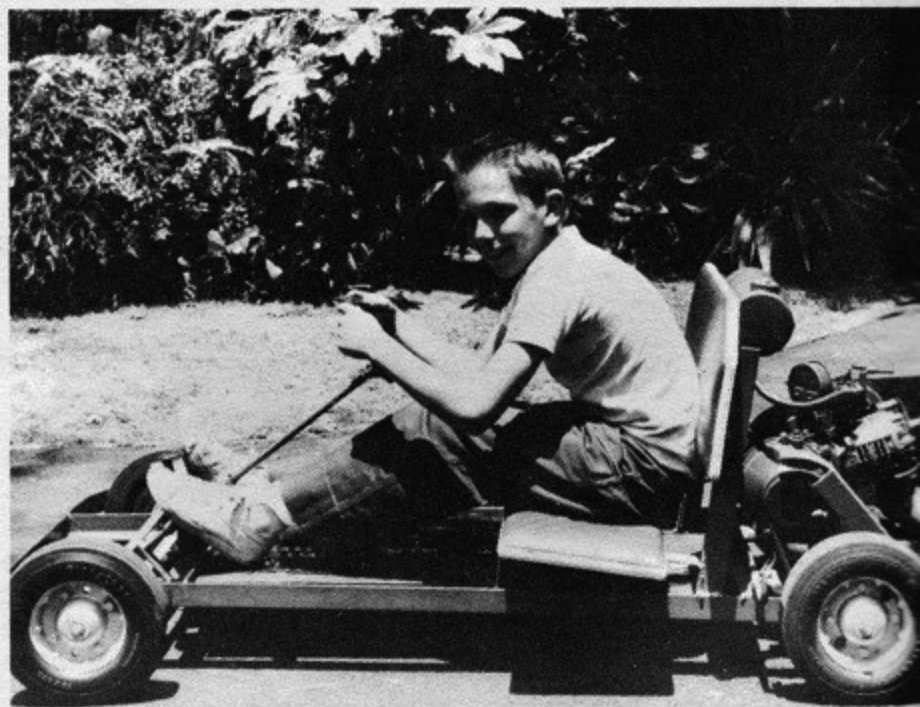
Again David paused, and I just sat waiting for what would come next. “Well, you see, Mom,” he continued, “we’re not lazy guys but somehow I seem to be more interested in having fun than in school work—and I guess I feel that I’m not learning anything.”

I found out later that another reason David didn’t like Uni was because it was so big. Basically, David is a “town” boy. He had grown up in small communities in New Jersey, had gone to a smallish school there and in Los Angeles, and now this sudden transfer to a school with a very large student body actually disoriented David. So, besides goofing off with his friends, he was having a hard time settling down to his studies. I spoke to the school psychologist about it and he said, “David is a very, very bright boy, but he’s just not applying himself. He’s going through a difficult time in that he is in a *growing* period of his life. Any youngster’s early teens are pretty rough, but for David they seem a little more so.”

Well, the upshot of it all was that I decided to put David in Hamilton High School, which was in Cheviot Hills near where we lived. So, at the end of the first half of the tenth grade, David was transferred to Hamilton, and he stayed there for the rest of the tenth grade plus part of the eleventh grade (this was while he was 16 and 17 years old).

Though David didn’t have an afternoon or a part-time job, for some reason he insisted (and, remember, I told you earlier that when David *finally* makes up his mind about something—well, it’s made up for *good* and there’s no stopping him!) on taking Hamilton High’s special program for boys who “work”. It proved to be a wise decision, because that group of boys had a special teacher and that teacher was very good for David.

By the way, I forgot to mention an interesting item. After David enrolled in Hamilton, he took a test to go to the Rexford School, a Beverly Hills private school where youngsters like Jon Provost and Dino Martin, Jr. were in attendance. David passed the test, but he didn’t have enough



At 12, David got his first “car”—a go-cart he used to “speed” around the track at a fast 15 miles per hour!