

months between the time you do a show and the air date, when the country sees it). It was really weird! I *looked* pretty much like I thought I'd look, but my *voice* was something else altogether. In my own ears, I sounded like I was about eleven years old! And also, I kept licking my lips, probably because I was so nervous. The director should have caught it and told me, but he was busy elsewhere, and there I was, licking my lips every fifteen seconds in front of a hundred million people! Nobody else says they noticed it, but to me it looked like I was this very strange young man doing an imitation of a snake! All in all, watching myself for the first time wasn't the most fun I've ever lived through, but I sure *learned* a lot!

Apparently I wasn't too terrible, though, because I kept getting more and more work—in fact, I was working almost all the time. I was on "The F.B.I." and "Bonanza," "Medical Center," and others. Pretty soon, I was even getting a little fan mail, and was *that* ever a thrill!

### A NEW ROOMMATE AND HOUSE

It was right about at this time that I moved in with my friend from high school, Sam Hyman. We had gotten to be even better buddies since I came back from New York than we had been when we were in school together, and by going in together on the rent, we could afford a house *twice* as good as the ones we could have gotten alone. We searched for quite a while, and wound up with the house up in the Hollywood Hills.

Then, one day before we had moved in, my agent called and asked me if I wanted to read for a new series, something about a singing family that makes rock and roll records. I wasn't exactly impressed, until she told me that I could play the guitar in the show, and on records, if I got it. Suddenly it seemed like a great idea, and I hurried down!

Whatever doubts I may have had about the show were washed away when I studied the first script out in the hall, before they called me in to read a scene for them. I loved it! I thought it was really fresh and funny, and I suddenly realized for the first time that I wanted the part very badly! That did it. I got nervous!

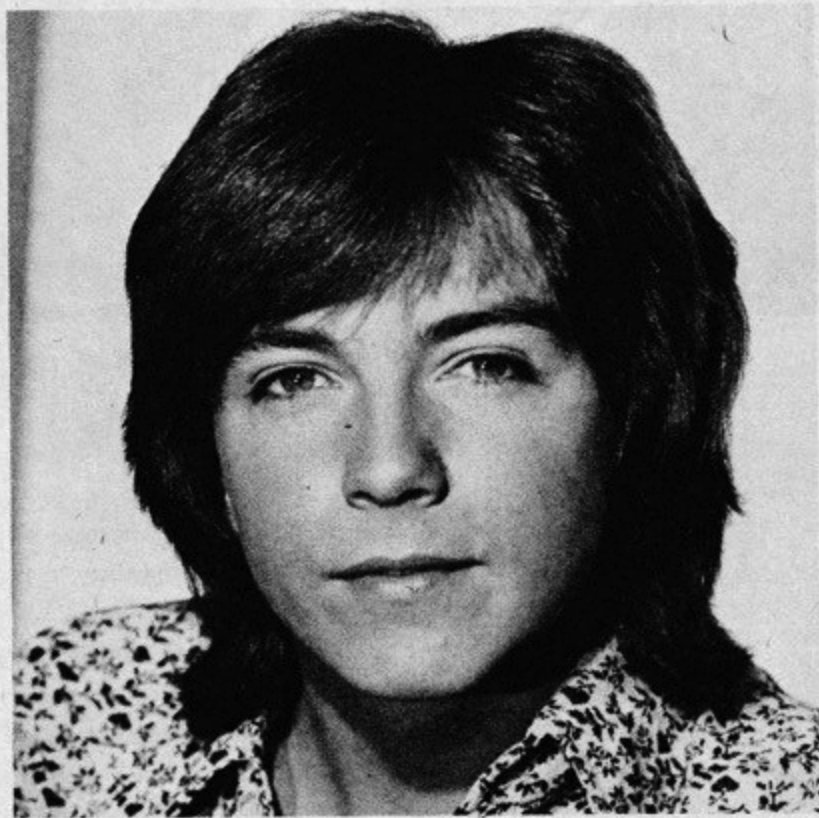
I don't know how I got through the reading. I've been calmer talking to *policemen* than I was at that first reading!

Well, for some reason they called me back for a second reading, and then a third. And then, from out of the blue, they told me that they were thinking of using *Shirley Jones* for the part! How did I feel about it?

I told them it was fine with me, which it was, and that was the last I heard of it until I walked in on the first day of shooting the pilot, and there she was! It was really kind of a foggy thing, I didn't really know where we were until we started to act together, and suddenly I knew it was going to be great!

In fact, I got on fantastically with all of them! Filming a pilot is usually pretty tense, because the series will never go on the air if the pilot isn't good, but we all got along like a real family! I spent all my time talking to Shirley and laughing with Susan and talking about New York with her, and horsing around with the little kids.

And then, when I thought everything was as good as it could get, the best part of all started to happen! We went into the recording studio! I honestly think about half the time that recording is my favorite thing in the world. There's something about a studio, with the musicians behind their partitions, and the great, shining microphones



and the giant playback speakers, that creates an environment that's just *perfect* for doing your best work!

Of course, all the way through, we didn't know if anyone would ever *hear* the records! If the series hadn't gone on the air, none of them would ever have been released. I'll never forget our record producer, right after we cut "I Think I Love You," saying over the loudspeaker from the control booth, "If we get on, that's a smash!" I have to confess, I wasn't that sure!

Well, it all happened, all the dreams came true, and now the show is on the air and there are actually people who *pay* me to sing and act and play guitar, instead of me paying *them* for the use of their studios! (I better not let *them* know I love it that much, or they'll start charging me admission.) And a million other fantastic things have happened too, like the record making number one, and meeting all of you, and even writing my life story like this!

But I have a strange feeling. I feel like I could keep writing and keep writing until I come to this exact present moment, and at the moment I reach it—I would disappear! It probably wouldn't happen, but I don't want to chance it, so I'll call it the end right here. Although I suppose I could probably write another chapter as soon as I've lived enough to *fill* one!

Goodbye for now. I love you.

David