

to care that much for your best friend!

From then on, Larry and I were inseparable, going places together, sharing our secrets, talking about sports, girls, school, girls, ambitions, girls, dreams, girls, and so on. I can still remember the feel of warm, sunny California summer days, as Larry and I sat on a long, grassy hillside and talked about our dreams and our hopes. We both had such big plans!

LOST TRACK OF EACH OTHER

But, as kids will, we drifted apart. I moved farther away, and even though we went to the same junior high, we saw less and less of each other as we met new friends, found new interests, and just sort of grew up. I always cared about Larry, but there were friends who were closer.

And then I stopped seeing him around, but I didn't really give it much thought; we didn't have the same activities or anything, and there was no real reason for our paths to cross. But one day, while I was sitting in a barber chair, a kid I thought I recognized came up to me and said, "You're Cassidy, aren't you? David Cassidy?"

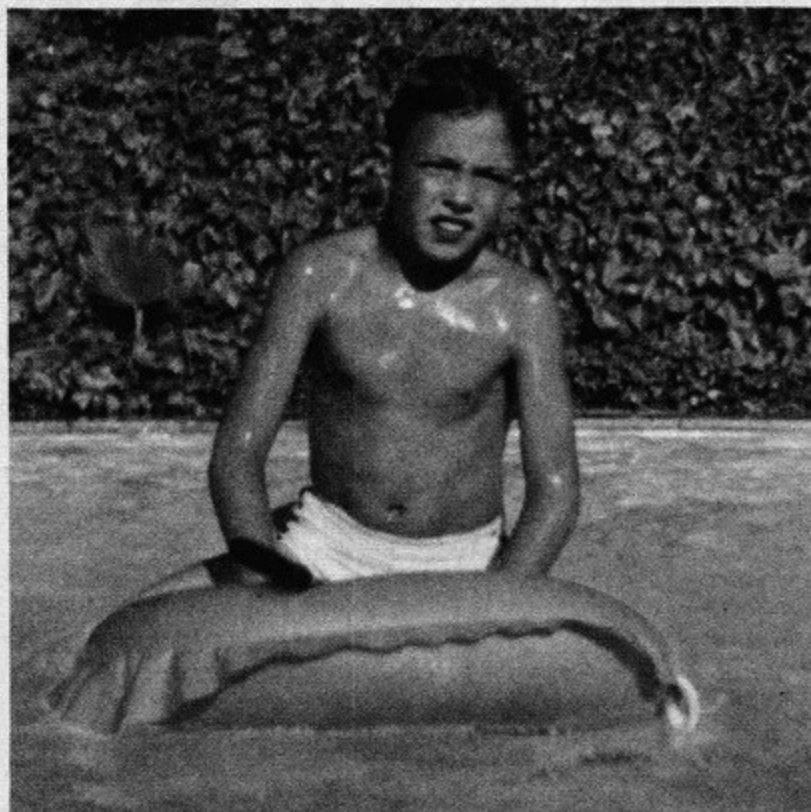
I was trying to think who he was, and I was embarrassed as anything, but I just said that I was, and asked him how he was doing, like I knew who he was all along.

I HEARD THE SHOCKING NEWS!

"Did you hear what happened?" he asked. I racked my brain for anything to help me figure out who he was, but I came up a blank. "No," I said.

"Really?" he said. "Well, it's your friend, Larry. He was killed about a week ago."

At first my whole body went completely numb, and then I heard someone laughing, laughing so hard that it sounded like he couldn't breathe. And then I realized that it was me, that I was rocking back and forth in the chair, laughing, and tears were rolling down my face. The kid backed away from me like I was crazy, and then he seemed to understand that I was just flipped out from shock and sadness, and he tried to make me feel better, but he was pretty broken up, too, and there wasn't much he could do. I remember throwing off the barber's sheet and running home in tears. It was weeks before I could convince myself that I was really over it.



CALIFORNIA LIVING REALLY AGREED with me as I was growing up. After living in New Jersey, being able to swim all year round was exciting! I went for a dip nearly every day! When I got older, I loved surfing.



THIS WAS TAKEN ONE CHRISTMAS. I'm seen here with my stepbrothers Shaun, who's now 12 & Patrick, who's now 8. I always managed to spend Christmas with both my families, which made it a busy holiday!

HARD AND SAD LESSON

But, actually, I'm still not over it. Larry was the first person I was ever really close to who died, and it was a terribly hard thing for me to go through, to realize that death was so *real* and could come so suddenly. It's a hard lesson and a sad lesson, and it's not one that you should think about all the time, but it's part of understanding what it is to be alive, I guess.

But I don't want to give you the idea that my early and middle teens were all tragic, or anything like that! No, indeed! There was something else going on, too, and that something else can be summed up in one word: **GIRLS!**

MY NEW HOBBY BECAME GIRLS!

Oh, I love girls! I love short girls and tall girls, light and dark, bashful and vivacious, happy or moody. I think I was fourteen when this lifetime hobby first occurred to me, and I haven't stopped thinking about it since!

I got around pretty well in junior high, dating one girl for a while, then moving on to another one. I even got a little conceited about it, but you know, there are girls who don't like you if you're *not* conceited! They figure if you've got a good opinion of yourself, you probably know something about yourself that they *don't* and they're willing to try to find out what it is! And I was always eager to oblige! I also had a few very deep, dark and secret crushes on "forbidden women"—usually student teachers who were like twenty-one or twenty-two! Of course, they were usually silent, noble love affairs (one-sided, of course) but it was remarkable how my grades rose and fell, depending on whether I wanted to impress the beautiful teacher—or be tutored by her!

Next month I'll tell you more about my love for girls, my first professional acting job and my big trip to New York where I got a part in a Broadway play! See you then!