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DAVID CASSIDY

(Continued from page 27)

The fear of being hurt has led David to confess, "I've never been in love." And now he undoubtedly feels that, in the absence of any real family unit, he was chosen to play middle-man to squabbling adults.

David's case history tells the story—sadly. Born in 1950 to proud Papa Jack Cassidy and Mom Evelyn Ward, his father's marriage lay the shaky foundations for David's own reluctance to commit himself emotionally. Jack and Evelyn had met while both were singing in the chorus of a Broadway play, and after they married, both continued to work in show business to support themselves while they struggled along the long road to success. Show business was so ingrained into that marriage, that David's birth announcement took the form of a Broadway showbill: "Evelyn Cassidy in association with Jack Cassidy presents David Bruce—a new spring production," the announcement read.

But show business was no easy life. Traveling was strenuous—openings, closings, summer stock—and the insecurity of it all was embedded in David even as an infant. So David spent much of his first three years living with his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Ward, in New Jersey. But psychologists often say that the first three years are the formative years, the molding years, for a child. They are the time a child molds his first sensory impressions into an overall view of the world—and he attempts to feel his way around it. It is also the worst time for a child to be away from his parents, and Jack and Evelyn's absence could have had a disastrous effect on the young boy.

The following two years, however, did give David a chance for a little stability in his life—he lived with his parents in Rutherford, New Jersey between David's third and fifth birthdays, and these were happy times for the boy. Jack's career was on the rise with his role in the hot Broadway play, *Wish You Were Here*, and David made theatre history when, at the age of three, upon seeing his father for the first time on stage, he yelled, "That's my daddy," sending the audience roaring with gales of laughter.

From that time on, David reveals, he wanted to be a singer, an ambition from which no one could ever dissuade him. And he was soon to reach that top goal—but not before many trying and discouraging attempts. During this time, Shirley Jones was making it big on her own in the movie, *Oklahoma*, and she and Jack Cassidy were eventually chosen to play the leads in a State Department production of the same show slated for a European tour. It was 1955, David was five years old, and the Cassidy marriage was on the wane. Jack eventually fell in love with Shirley Jones—and David would soon never again be able to live with both of his parents at the same time. They were divorced in 1956.

David's pain was great—he was

heartbroken. He vividly recalls his first "meeting" with Shirley Jones. Already a veteran of summer stock production at the age of six—in a summer stock production of *Pajama Game*—Jack took David to the movies one day, and "we walked into the dark theatre and there in blazing color on the screen was this huge head of a beautiful lady with her mouth wide open, singing, Oooooooklahoma . . ."

"Oh, no," I thought, "Wow, she's weird!" David laughs now, remembering that six months later, when he met his step-mom-to-be in person, after having decided that he couldn't actually like any other woman but his real mom, "I couldn't dislike her. She was so nice. Such a really nice human being."

But David once again alternated between living with his grandparents and his mom, as Evelyn tried to continue her singing career. Shirley and Jack set up housekeeping in California, and David visited them during the summer between his eighth and ninth birthdays. Luckily, when he was ten, his mom moved out to California, so he was able to enjoy his two families. And in 1962, his mom remarried, to Elliot Silverstein, a television director who later rose to fame via his direction of the hit movie, *Cat Ballou*. For the first time in several years, David was once again part of a family unit. Of his new stepfather, he once said, "He's one of the brightest men I've ever known . . . I mean he was so alive, he wanted to know the why and how about everything—some of that rubbed off on me."

But David's new hero was soon to fade, ending one of the happiest periods in David's life. While he admitted to feeling a bit left out when visiting Shirley and Jack—they were already raising a brood of their own and Jack was traveling with summer stock and performing on Broadway—he was entirely welcomed by his step-father. Elliot, too, however, had to spend long periods of time on the road with his films, and, when David was sixteen, his second family collapsed. Problems were deep and unsolvable, and Evelyn and Elliot separated, later to be divorced. David was shattered, and confessed, "I've kind of missed him since he and my mom were divorced. It's weird. I'm kind of waiting for the day when I'm the actor and he's the director. It has to happen."

Two sets of parents, two sets of lives to adjust to. A father gone, and now a step-father!

The divorce left David with severe emotional hangups, and he entered into one of the most difficult periods of his life. Unable to study in school, and wanting very much to be in show business, he began to cut classes, and to hang around with the high school rowdies. "I had no interest in school," he says today. "I was lost." Things worsened, and he was finally transferred to a "continuation" school for problem children. On top of all this, he was beset by a sudden siege of mononucleosis which confined him to bed for several months. All contact with his friends was cut off—and David had time to think about the mess his life was in. His goal was set—he must make it in show business. When he was able to get on his feet again, he did a musical with the L.A.

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