

## DAVID CASSIDY:

### The Day A Little Of Him Died

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week they use the miracle of television to enter millions of homes, bringing with them heaps of hilarious humor, an occasional slice of pathos, and generous offerings of good clean fun. In doing this, they also afford the average viewer a glimpse (albeit highly romanticized) of what life might be like behind the scenes of the recording industry, a vicarious excursion into the musical group's whirlwind tours, an anything but Kerouac-like survey into life "On The Road."

The formula has been very much successful and David, along with the other members of the cast, is riding a skyrocket to fame, fortune, security, and stardom. Not bad at all for a young man, no matter how talented (and David is *extremely* talented,) who hasn't been out of high school for long and who is currently holding down his very first featured part in a TV series. The name, "David Cassidy," is rapidly approaching household word status, especially among the show's younger fans who would quite naturally tend to identify with him. He is a star now even though, a year ago, most of the viewing public didn't even know he existed.

But that's life. . . and, in this particular case, it is also death (in a way) because even though he is still very young, David's life has already been touched, perhaps even scarred, by tragedy. It was the seemingly ever present tragedy of drug abuse which touched David's life by taking the life of his nineteen year old best friend Kevin.

When David first heard the shocking news, he was almost speechless but finally managed to mutter, "Dear God, please let this be a dream."

But it wasn't a dream. The news was true and David lost his best friend through an overdose of drugs.

The loss was sorrowful and difficult for him to bear because Kevin had been not only just a friend but more like a brother to David. They had been very close, had got on well together, and even shared some of the same ambitions.

David remembers Kevin as a good entertainer and a warm individual, ready and willing to give all of himself or of whatever he might have to help out a friend whenever it was necessary. He remembers that,

throughout the major period of their friendship, Kevin usually chose to face up to difficulty, face up to his problems, and meet the day to day business of living face to face.

Kevin's eventual involvement with dangerous drugs has probably caused some consternation for David. After all, they had been close friends for a long time and Kevin had not previously shown the signs that sometimes indicate the potentiality of dependence on the dangerous drugs, the hard drugs like methadone, cocaine, heroin, morphine, and even LSD, which, although not a narcotic or even a "hard" drug, should be categorized with the dangerous drugs because its effects are highly unpredictable and it frequently causes permanent, or at least recurring, damage. . . it is a highly dangerous substance and should be generally avoided if one is to place any real value on either his life or his sanity.

With LSD in particular, the risks are too great to adequately compensate for whatever (and this is an especially dubious area) value might possibly be gained by means of the "acid trip." It is a sad commentary on the desperate plight of young people that so many are willing, in spite of all known dangers, to try the addictive drugs or LSD in hope of finding an alternative (no matter how short its duration might be) to a way of life which they find unbearable in its present form, an alternative to a rigidly structured (and in many respects archaic) society which stifles their creativity and sensuality thereby, in effect if not in actual fact, snuffing out their will to live.

The drug abuse situation is not a cause, or a problem unto itself, it is a symptom of inner turmoil, of a much greater problem, lying deep within the roots of the social structure in which we now live. Remember although it is widely used and almost universally accepted in even "the best circles", alcohol too, is a drug. . . and for some unfortunate people, its use can be physically addictive (and emotionally addictive on an even larger scale) just like the frequently publicized narcotics such as heroin, morphine, and the other opiates. In order to be properly dealt with an illness must be treated far beyond the symptomatic level at the surface, the cause of the illness must be cured before you can possibly cure the illness - you can sometimes arrest the progress of the illness or temporarily obstruct its advancement but you'll never actually cure the illness until you eliminate the cause of the illness. This is every bit as true for the illness, of alcoholism, or the illness of drug addiction, as it is for

Cancer, or anything else.

When David heard the news of his friend's death, he was on the "Partridge Family" set. He was not only horrified and shocked by the news but he was also stunned. Luckily, his stepmom, Shirley Jones was also there, filming at the same time and she could help to comfort him and to reassure him in this time of his great sorrow and need.

Now that the immediate feeling of frustration and anguish has passed, David has had time to think it over and has formulated some thoughts on the matter.

He says: "Let's face it. He had problems like everyone does, but nothing that couldn't be worked out. I guess he had girlfriend problems... career problems, don't they all go together? . . . but that isn't what killed Kevin."

Then, David thought for a moment, a veil of sorrow seemed to drift across his face -- a veil of sorrow tinged with bitterness and anger, as he carefully chose his words before interjecting: "I know my friend didn't commit suicide because he certainly wasn't himself at the time. It was murder! He was murdered by the people who manufacture and sell those drugs. No one can really do anything about it except the people themselves."

These are strong words for a young man of David's relatively few years, but they offer evidence of deep comprehension and deep understanding of the contemporary human condition.

He continued: "He was a happy but emotional boy. And, I guess, if you add drugs to a guy who is somewhat dramatic, it can be disastrous. I hope my friend's death is a warning to those young people who think drugs is the easy way out. It certainly isn't any kind of an answer -- it can only kill."

"And what bugs me is that the people who push the stuff are still walking around free. It just isn't fair."

"I guess all Kevin wanted was to prove to the other kids (or probably to himself) that he had his own mind. Any doctor will say that all youngsters need to rebel from time to time, that they tell their parents, 'I'm doing my thing right now, maybe in the end I will come back to your way of thinking, but right now, this is something I have to do.'"

Perhaps David's loss of his friend Kevin will not have been in vain. Perhaps Kevin's death and David's publicized anguish will help to dissuade even one young person from taking the first noxious steps on the drug lined path to oblivion -- a one way journey with a tragic destination.