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DAVID CASSIDY

(Continued from page 27)

it became clear that his hands, his face, his clothes, were caked in *blood!* David was covered with blood, and his eyes were red and swollen, as though he'd been crying.

"Oh, My God! What happened?" was the general reaction.

"It's Sam," answered the star, his voice cracking. "He's hurt real bad. I'm afraid he may not make it."

David walked off to the washroom to get cleaned up. A few minutes later, he returned, took a seat and told the story of how his best friend was tragically and, as it turned out, fatally wounded.

"I was sitting in the kitchen, finishing up a cup of coffee," said the star, "when suddenly I heard a ruckus going on outside. The noise of a struggle was quite a ways off but it was growing closer. It must have been going on for a while before I was able to hear it.

"Well, I ran out as quick as I could, but it was too late. The barking and growling had stopped. And there was my dog, Sam, lying on the ground, whimpering. His neck and chest were a bloody mess. I just managed to catch a glimpse of the other dog slipping away under the fence and making tracks."

Somehow, the other dog had snuck onto the land surrounding David's house in the Hollywood Hills. Although the intruder was nearly twice his size, Sam, the ever loyal watchdog, made every effort to ward off the menace, and he did so, although it ended up costing him his life.

David picked Sam up in his arms and immediately rushed him to his car. He held the wounded pup in his lap all the way to the vet, zooming down out of the hills, cutting and weaving through Hollywood traffic. He finally arrived at the animal hospital. By this time Sam was unconscious. The vet's expression was grim. He slowly shook his head as he examined the bleeding dog. "Looks real bad," he said. "Why don't you go on home and call me later. I'll give you a progress report, but don't get your hopes up. It doesn't look good."

David wanted to stay, but the vet insisted that it would be a while before they could tell if Sam had any chance of surviving the deep gashes that had cost him so much blood. So David went to the studio, still covered with Sam's blood.

He didn't feel much like going through with the day's shooting, but the old adage "Time is money" is especially true in Hollywood, and David is so integral a part of *The Partridge Family*, that to shoot around him would be impossible. The show must go on, and David went on. He even did a song, winking and smiling at the cast of appreciative young girls, hamming it up as much as ever. But on the inside, David's heart was broken.

During every break in the filming, he ran to the phone and rang up the vet. "Any news?" he asked, knowing in his heart what the answer would be.

"No change," said the vet, time after time.

For days David waited, until finally, in the afternoon of the third day, the vet called.

"I'm afraid I've got some bad news for you," he said. "We did all we could, but he never regained consciousness."

"Why don't you get yourself another dog?" suggested a friend. "No, not for a while," said David, a lump swelling up in his throat. Although Sam was just a mutt that had latched onto David a while back, he and his master had grown very attached to one another. They say a dog's a man's best friend, and that's especially true if the man is young and sentimental like our David.

Despite his sudden wealth, fame, and popularity, David is quite a sentimentalist. On his fifteenth birthday, his father Jack Cassidy gave him a ring that *his* mother had given *him* on his fifteenth birthday. To David, this is the most valuable gift he has ever received. "I never wear any other jewelry at all," says the star, "but, even though it's only a cheap imitation sapphire, this ring doesn't leave my finger."

With the confusion and continuous harassment that comes out of nationwide popularity, a boy needs to hold onto some of the simple things. David described his former house in rustic Laurel Canyon as "early orange crate" design. His idea of a perfect weekend is to camp out with a couple of buddies around Big Sur, and just get away from the screaming fans. With an income of over a quarter of a million yearly, David somehow manages to keep his spending down to around fifty dollars a week. He rarely makes the disco scene, but would rather visit a coffee house and listen to the current top folk singer perform.

A guy whose sentiments run in so simple and natural a direction can really grow to love a dog. David took Sam camping with him; he took him along when he felt like driving out to the desert around Palm Springs, just to be alone and think and relax.

For a star like David, it's hard to find a place where you can really be alone. "I can't go out anymore," he explains, "because I'm recognized wherever I go, so I stay home a lot. My next vacation, I'm going to Jamaica. They don't see *The Partridge Family* down there, so nobody will recognize me."

"He's a private person," says Shirley Jones. "His contemporaries pooh-pooh the family TV series, and his friends put down the whole teen-age idol thing. He really feels as if he is copping out on his friends."

"We can't conceive the idea of the teen-age idol," says David's friend and housemate, Sam Hyman (after whom the dog was named). "David's not ego-tripping. He can be the life of the party, but he's not 'on' all the time. It's great that he's so successful, but he's really just a very honest, sincere, nice guy."

Sam (the dog) saw David as David. The publicity meant nothing to him; he was not embarrassed by David's peculiar status among America's teen-aged females. He was neither impressed nor disappointed in his master.

But everyone *but* Sam was aware of David's position as number one Partridge of the Partridge clan. With fans crushing him, showbiz people catering to him or