

NEW HEARTBREAK FOR DAVID!

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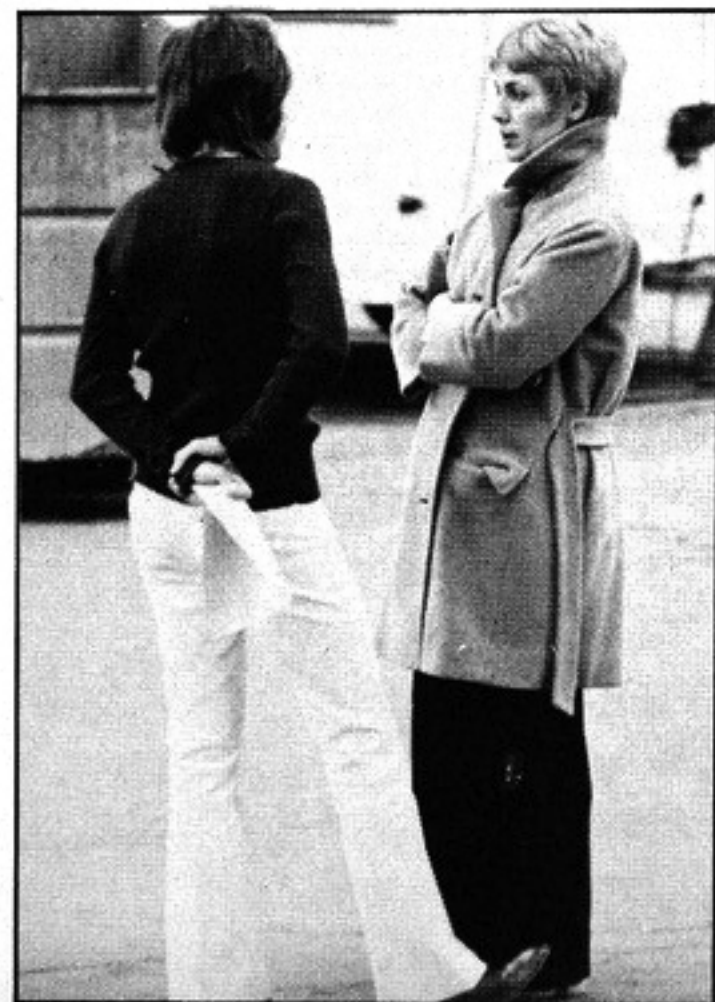
time, but at least he knew which side he was on!

HIS SECOND MOM

But since "The Partridge Family" began, David and Shirley had grown to love one another. His own mother has been living in the East, and David came to think of Shirley as his "second mom" and finally he realized that he was very happy his father had found such a warm and wonderful woman to share his life! He only hoped that someday he himself would be so lucky!

David got up and stretched out on the couch. He knew he should go back on the set. They were probably waiting for him. But he couldn't! He couldn't face Shirley! What in the world would he think of to say to her?

All he wanted in the whole world was to be up in Big Sur, all alone, with his problems far behind him. He knew exactly what he'd do: he'd go to a place he knew, the bank of a stream all overgrown with ferns and moss, and he'd listen to the rush of the water while he thought things through. Then, when his mind was



clear, he could come back to L.A. and work everything out!

But he *wasn't* in Big Sur. He was on the set, and Shirley was just on the other side of his door! Pretty soon he would have to get up, walk onto the sound stage, and face her!

HE HAD TO BE HONEST!

He couldn't be phony. He couldn't just give her a big smile and pretend like nothing had happened. He couldn't tell her that the phone had rung that morning at breakfast, and it had been his dad, with a tight, choked voice, telling him all about it! How could he tell her that he'd phoned in sick that morning so he wouldn't have to see her, but when the producer had called to see how he was, his conscience had gotten the better of him and he'd come in anyway?

For the fiftieth time in three hours he asked himself how he really felt. He knew he loved his father, and he knew he also loved Shirley. Suddenly he imagined what kind of pain *she* must be going through! The sadness in his father's voice had upset him so much that he hadn't really thought about it!

There was a gentle knock at the dressing-room door. Probably the assistant director, David thought. "In a minute," he called out. "I'll be right there." The knocking stopped, and he heard footsteps going away from his door.

David took a deep breath to clear his mind, and began to fix his make-up where his hands had smeared it. He hated make-up and the thought of having to fix it drove the sad thoughts from his mind for a mo-

ment. But then he found himself looking into his own eyes, and the sadness he saw there brought a wave of unhappiness over him. Without thinking about the make-up he had just fixed, he covered his face with his hands again and sat very still!

Once again there was a gentle tap at the door. David didn't say anything—he thought there might be tears in his voice! Then the door opened, and Shirley stepped in!

TALKING ABOUT IT

They faced one another as if they were a million miles away, without a word. Finally Shirley said, very softly, "David..."

"I know," David forced himself to say, keeping his voice very steady. "Dad called me."

He couldn't look at her any more. She stood silent for a moment. Through the door came the muted sound of voices out on the set. Suddenly the room seemed very small to both of them, and she turned to go. Her head was down, and she walked as if she was very tired, which she was. She hadn't slept all night.

Suddenly David was on his feet, and Shirley turned to face him. Without a word, they were in each other's arms, hugging one another so hard they thought their hearts would burst!

They separated, and looked deeply into one another's eyes. David could see the pain there, the lack of sleep, the loneliness.

"I love you," David said. Tears sprang to Shirley's eyes, and she smiled for the first time.

"Your make-up," David said. "It'll get all ruined."

"Yours is pretty bad, too," Shirley whispered, and they both grinned. David turned to the mirror.

"Well," he said, "let's fix it and get to work. We've got a whole set waiting."

When they stepped out of the dressing-room, the whole crew and cast was watching. They were both smiling, and the tension in the sound stage evaporated like water after a storm. David felt strong and happy. He knew he loved both Shirley and his dad, and there wasn't really *anyone* he should blame. Love was much more important, and he had enough of that for both of them!

