



## IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

I WAS sitting on a fence in David Cassidy's back yard. Above, the sky was clear blue, and we sat in the dusty lazy shade beneath an overhanging tree. Nearby sat his dog Bullseye and several cats stretched out panting from the heat.

For the first time David was telling me about his childhood. We'd never really got around to that before, because I knew that it was a painful period of his life, as his mother and father, Jack and Evelyn Cassidy, parted when he was young.

They were both in show business, she an actress, and he an actor/singer. In fact, you may well see Jack on television, guesting on a show—in which case you'll see where David's laughing eyes came from!

David told me of his feelings when his parents parted.

"I was hurt by it, I really was. I think I resented my father rather than sided with him—I think any five-year old would feel that he wants his mummy and daddy to be together. Of course I couldn't possibly understand and I didn't know that they were totally wrong for each other. Now, knowing them as adults, the thought of them being together is weird—I just can't imagine how they spent one week together, let alone eight years. It's ludicrous because

they're so unsuited.

"After that, I lived with my mother and my grandparents—that was fine by me. I wanted to live with my mother, I was closer to her than my father. It's strange, but all those years I never really knew my father properly—I knew him, of course, but not that well, not that close."

Because his mother was an actress, David was brought up in the theatre.

"It's strange, because I had two backgrounds. There was the theatrical influence, and there was the steady ordinary life that my grandparents led. I think that a lot of their plain commonsense American influence rubbed off on me. I mean I don't think of myself as being sophisticated or anything like that, I'm very average you know."

But on the other hand young David got a good grounding in the theatre as he watched his parents rehearse straight and musical plays, and he attended a lot of shows himself. It's this influence which sparked off his career in the theatre which led to his starring role in the Partridge Family.

But in the meantime he was also suffering from what a lot of young people feel at that stage in their lives—he had a total and utter hatred of school!

"I loathed school, from the first day I went there, but it was just something I had to learn to live with like everyone



David on the set of *The Partridge Family* with Radio Luxembourg's Tony Prince who was presenting him with various awards from Britain.



else."

And although he liked acting and the theatre he didn't like showbusiness as such very much either. Even though he's now very much part of it, he has also managed to keep out of the social side of it, which is why there is still a lot of jealousy about his success within Hollywood.

His house is a typical example of his own feelings towards success. I imagined that he would live in Beverly Hills in one of those houses that look like a stage set which all the stars—rock and film alike—seem to choose. Or in some very grand place overlooking the Pacific out by the beach. But David's has that homely lived-in feeling.

"It's no accident, I hate those other sort of houses," he said. "My house is very much my home. It's one of the reasons I'd like to spend less time touring because I'm so involved here. If something needs mending I mend it. I don't often call up other people to fix things for me."

"The most important thing is that here I can really relax, just like we're doing now."

David added that he steered clear of showbiz people.

"I can't bear to be around people like that too long, it has quite an effect on me, it makes me very unhappy. I just steer clear of them if I can. And I very rarely go to parties. In fact, the last party I went to, there were only about eight people there—four or five of them lived at the house and the others were just friends who came over."

"I'm not one for boogieing at parties here. Now my friend Elton John is really into going to parties. He seems to be at parties all the time, but that's different! As a matter of fact I think they all like parties in London and when I was in London I loved it too."

"But Hollywood is something else, so many people who live and work here are playing parts the whole time, and I just can't assume the role of being the rock 'n' roll star, I don't play it for other people."

"I don't expect them to treat me as a STAR, so I don't surround myself with that sort of crowd. I don't have to reassure myself all the time."

It was of course *The Partridge Family* that gave David his first starring role as an actor, that discovered his singing talents and helped him become a pop star. But it was the same series that imprisoned him with 26 episodes to be filmed every year, and tied him down to an exhausting schedule.

David is the first to admit that he owes a lot to the programme.

"But it just doesn't stimulate me any more," he told me. "It is an obligation

and we all have our dues to pay. This is mine."

Although he was loyal to the series that helped him, I could understand why he was glad that his role in it was nearly over—I felt that he was almost crossing off the weeks before he could escape and the series ended.

When we were together there was a screenwriters' strike on so the series had stopped. David was obviously benefiting from the break—I told him how well he looked now compared to when we'd met a year before on the set of *The Partridge Family*. The hours he worked were amazing.

David agreed: "The hours are incredible, aren't they? Up at six in the morning, not home till ten at night. And also you have to remember that I was recording for two, as myself and also for them, so consequently I would spend my free time recording and all my working hours on the set for them... and this was for them, and that was for them, and I didn't have any time for myself!"

"I mean there wouldn't be any time for you and me to sit here and talk like this. In fact, at the studio we'd probably have only half an hour together, or I'd have to keep coming back to you as I did during breaks in the filming. Not exactly ideal for conversation—or getting to know people—is it?"

"That's why I'm enjoying my holiday so much now."

In a way David's holiday was a mixed blessing, because although it meant that he had three or four months to himself in which he could do anything he liked, there was also the thought that he would have to go back to work and finish the last episodes.

In a way it was worse, because for the first time in years David had tasted freedom; freedom from worry, freedom from getting up at the crack of dawn every morning. Freedom from giving his whole life to other people.

Final part next week



David on the set of *The Partridge Family*.

