

# LONDON, I love you!

I LOVE YOU because you bowled me over at the airport soon as I stepped off the plane. It was Saturday night and somehow I expected... well, you know what Saturday's like. I sort of expected you to be at the movies or watching television or doing anything but trekking out to Heathrow to meet me in...

I LOVE YOU because London looks so green and fresh. Normally the roads leading to any airport are dull to say the least, but on the way in I saw all those little gardens, each with a maytree or a chestnut, a purple or white lilac or a beautiful magnolia just budding up...

I LOVE YOU because I could really be myself going round the town. You didn't mind my open-neck shirt, my casual jeans, my crazy furry boots that I bought in Europe. I'm strictly a jeans-and-sneakers guy. It takes strong men with handcuffs to get me into formal gear!

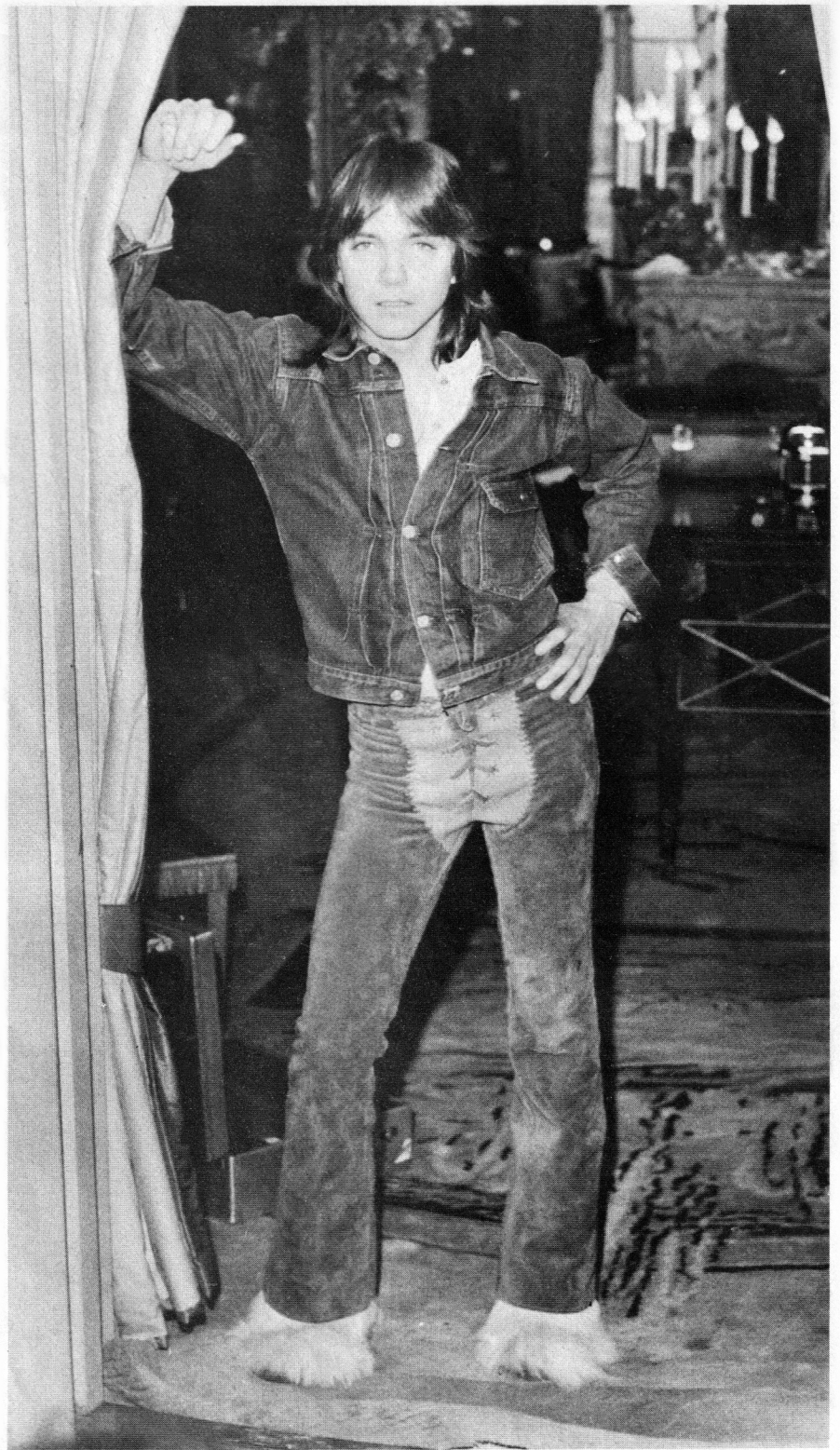
I LOVE YOU because even the rain in England has a sort of sad sweetness. I might change my mind about it if I had to live here, but that first sniff of Hyde Park with drops falling off the branches is something I'll always remember.

When it rains in Hollywood all you can smell are kerosene fumes washed out of the sky from passing planes!

I LOVE YOU because of your Queen and that fantastic parade by the Guards around Buckingham Palace. It's the uniforms and the bands that really turn me on because it's something out of another age, a fantasy like those old movies with Nelson Eddy and Jeannette MacDonald where everyone wore gold braid and called each other 'Your Royal Highness'...

I LOVE YOU because of your language, even though it made me look an idiot at first. Some pal in Hollywood — who knew I was going to stay at the Dorchester in Park Lane — told me it was pronounced 'Dooster' to rhyme with the way you say 'Worcester'. Well, how was I to know?

I LOVE YOU because of your food. You know something? You can really *taste* English cooking, though it broke my heart I never got stuck into roast beef and Yorkshire pudding. That's what I'm really coming back for



next time. But your fish-and-chips! We've got chip shops of our own in America now but boy, it doesn't taste the same there!

I LOVE YOU because of all those little souped-up minis darting in and out of the traffic like scalded cats. I'm crazy about fast cars but it was a chauffeur who did the driving whenever I went round the town. Maybe it was just as well. I still say you drive on the wrong side of the road!

I LOVE YOU because of those viddy viddy English shops in Picadilly that sell what they call bespoke foot-

wear for gentlemen. They don't just make you a pair of shoes, they lay them down like an ocean liner. Maybe they even launch them on your feet with a bottle of champagne!

I LOVE YOU most of all for accepting me as I am — a guy of moods: sunshine one moment shadows the next. This is something I can't help. I just like to withdraw into my shell at times, even when I'm with a crowd. I guess you understand that with your British reserve. You don't probe. You don't ask loaded questions. You just... well, you just treat me like a pal!