

David Cassidy Learns to Live In Abnormal World of Idolatry

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MASON, Ohio—Sheriff's police to the right of us, to the

left of us and in front of us. All around us the crowd is staring at our stationwagon, and now the mob forms a narrow corridor, a gauntlet held



David Cassidy
He's object of mass adulation

back by still more guards and police. It is the abnormal world of teen idol David Cassidy, star of ABC-TV's *The Partridge Family*, and it is an uncomfortable place to be.

David and his TV family are filming an episode at King's Island, a new, sprawling \$30 million amusement center, located at a strategic nowhere in Ohio, near several major highways and home of the country's largest animated fountain and Coney Island's original carousel.

Just now about 25,000 people have paid \$6 each for unlimited rides (refreshments not included) and the chance to see David when he walks!

There is a sea of instamatic cameras, and the teenyboppers are dissolving into puddles of pure emotion. But moving David from the carousel to the watery log ride to film another scene has become a major logistical operation.

Inside the car, David toys with a bull horn. A woman in the front seat reminds him that his fans expect him to strike a heroic pose and look at them. He scowls at the suggestion; a million girls under 24 would melt if they were personal recipients of a Cassidy frown. When she adds

that it is a privilege to bring happiness to so many, David waves and smiles at the crowd, and enjoys the moment. Obviously he is a young (22) man who has come to grips with mass adulation.

Once the cars approach the trailers that will house the stars until they are needed for filming, everything stops. I cannot dash out of the car, we simply cannot walk anywhere. I must wait for the police to declare everything is safe, and for another cordon of police to form.

We can laugh at Danny Bonadue, who plays David's brother, as he takes helium from a balloon and talks with an Elmer Fudd voice for a few moments. But we are not free. Being a teen superstar keeps us from moving about as we want, something David says you get used to after a while. Quite a while.

A 50-man crew from Screen Gems, which produces *The Partridge Family*, has been brought to this amusement park, about 40 minutes from Cincinnati, for a tangle of reasons.

The Partridge Family is now in its third year, making it the granddaddy of prime-time teen TV shows. It needs refreshing if it is going to last

another few years, so the program will travel, and Cassidy's TV mother (and real step-mother) Shirley Jones will get a semi-permanent love interest. Love usually increases the ratings.

Taft Broadcasting, which owns the amusement park and the equipment trailers *The Partridges* are using, is paying transportation costs and the hotel bills of cast and crew. Taft also owns the Hanna-Barbera TV cartoon factory, so the park has a Hanna-Barbera Land and, in one scene, David will sing to a man dressed like a Hanna-Barbera Yogi Bear. Thus, Taft gets publicity for a new amusement park, and Screen Gems and the ABC network get a *Partridge* episode that does not have a California look about it.

In the episode, Cassidy falls in love with the amusement park's public relations girl, played by Mary Ann Mobley. After taking several rides in the park, she rejects him and a younger *Partridge* is smitten by her considerable charms.

Like so many *Partridge* stories, this is harmless (which is saying a lot of TVland). It contains a small message about communications within a family (Miss Jones has a heart-to-heart talk with David), plus two songs for the teen-agers (Miss Jones and David actually sing, but other voices are substituting for the remaining *Partridge* players).

In the opening scene, David sings ("Woah, girl, you made my day"). A select group of extras sits immediately in front of him as he sings — the sons and daughters of Taft employees. (Rank has its privileges, even in civilian life.)

In other scenes, the *Partridges* try nearly every ride in the park, going on the 61 mph roller coaster and the carousel at least 10 times.

Most of the rides take place early in the morning, when the amusement park is empty and no one feels very amusing. Miss Jones tells visiting reporters *The Partridge Family* is financially "quite marvelous" for her.

David says he is planning ahead now, because "I don't have a lot of time to meet girls and I don't have a lot of time to date..."

Later, however, executive producer Bob Claver, who was one of the original writers for *Capt. Kangaroo* on CBS, says that David's dates have sometimes delayed the start of filming. It's nice to know that, if you have to go to an amusement park at dawn, there are at least more than financial rewards for the job.