

THE HEAVY MOB

DON MURFET, a cheerful chubby character, is a man who loves children.

But he is also the man whose job is to guard pop star David Cassidy on his British tour.

And he admits that he is not happy at some of the things that have happened as security guards tried to keep the fans from their idol.

Incidents like the hosing of young girls after one concert. And the use of guard dogs to control a teenage crowd near Cassidy's hotel.

Proud

Murfet runs Artistes Services, a London firm which supplies teenybopper stars such as Cassidy and the Osmonds with bodyguards and heavies.

He is proud of his agency. All his employees are what he calls "street market boys."

Like him they come from poor backgrounds and have learned to survive the hard way.

"We've never lost a fight," he says proudly.

Murfet supplied



DON MURFET: "We've never lost a fight."



DEBORAH THOMAS

reports on the guards who protect the stars... and the fans from themselves.

twenty-five guards for Cassidy's Wembley concert but there were at least three other security organisations with men at the concert hall.

Although Murfet does not approve of the hosing, he believes the Wembley authorities had little alternative.

"The fences were smashed outside the hall and the kids at the back were surging on the ones in front. Children could have been killed. I'd rather have a kid saturated than with a broken leg."

"But if my little girl came home soaking wet, I'd break the guy's arm."

"The concert hall is where the real crush comes—where you've got 3,000 or more fans who freak out. They want to get to their idol and I can't blame them."

"But you've got to keep the crush of bodies off the little tots at the front."

Mr. Michael Sykes, permanent head of Wembley security, told me he had employed even more guards than when the Beatles were on the bill.

Mr. Len Went, publicity manager for Wembley Stadium Ltd., said: "Our chaps would rather handle a Cup Final crowd of 100,000 than 8,000 teenyboppers."

"The hosing was very brief and in their own interest. The teeny-

boppers are a bit reckless. It was quite an ordeal for our chaps."

Murfet feels the London concerts were a big success but "I don't see a very justification for dogs at the hotel."

"Keep dogs on the building sites where they belong. We're dealing with girls, not criminals. We're there to control them, not fight them."

"Our motto is 'Be firm and gentle.' We love kids, all of us, and we don't want to see them slapped around and pushed about."

Mr. Ted Ruddock, manager of the Esso Motor Hotel, Wembley, where David Cassidy was staying, called in the dogs and handlers when fans tried to smash their way into the hotel. He still feels he did the right thing.

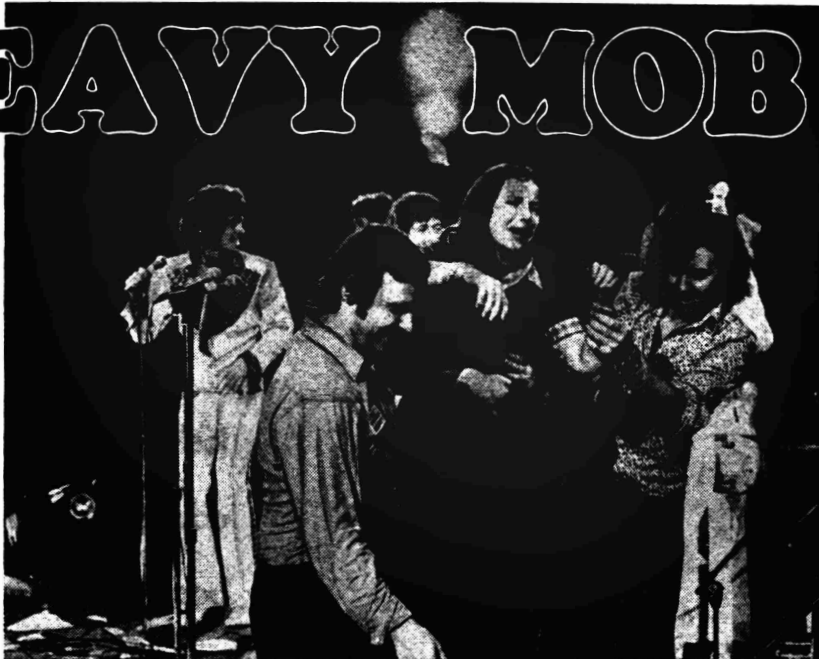
Surge

"We've used this firm, K9 Security Services, of Weston-super-Mare, since the hotel was at the bricks-and-mortar stage."

"Mr. Cassidy's security people would never have been able to handle this situation on their own. If those girls had surged through the glass front they would have been cut to shreds."

"All I know is, I've still got a hotel and Mr. Cassidy didn't get hurt."

Mrs. Meg Williams, who runs the Weston-super-Mare guard dog



Don Murfet (left) helps escort a weeping fan from a London concert by the Osmonds.

firm with her husband, Leigh, told me:

"Our dogs are not vicious or snarling. They were controlling the crowd and doing their job. Nobody was bitten except David Cassidy's security bloke."

"They are trained as guard dogs but they are all family pets. Two of them live at home with our three small children."

Robert Paterson, promoter of the Cassidy tour, said: "I was absolutely horrified when I opened the papers."

"It looked as though I was running a combat course instead of a concert. It really wasn't like that."

One of Murfet's most difficult jobs is to move Cassidy from place to place without the star being caught by fans.

Vans, cars, trucks, fire-engines, limousines, ambulances—even helicopters—are laid on to whisk Cassidy away.

As they surge over the bonnet of a decoy limousine, David hops out of a red Ford. As they wrestle with the door of an ambulance, he sprints out of a furniture truck.

But erasive action can

backfire on you. On the Osmonds' tour, 14-year-old Donny sprinted off the wrong way and got lost.

Murfet claims there was a hosing incident on that tour as well, but he whisked the girls into a hotel room and dried them out before the mishap was discovered.

Sneak

The most intrepid tale of the tour is of three little twelve-year-old girls who locked themselves in a back-stage lavatory at Wembley for two-and-a-half days with bags of sandwiches and a flask of coffee.

"I walked in with David Cassidy and saw six little feet under the door," laughed Murfet.

The fans' latest trick is to book into Cassidy's hotel. Then they can't be thrown out for sneaking round the corridors.

Not that they ever get to the bedroom door of their beloved. For wherever David is, Paddy the Plank—Murfet's heaviest heavy—is next door.

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