

He Lived American Dream, Found It a Nightmare

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why not?"

Cassidy and his friend, Bruce Johnston, co-produced the new album and wrote several of its songs. Called "The Higher They Climb, (the Harder They Fall)," the record is a kind of tongue-in-cheek chronicle of the rise and fall of a teen idol.

"IT'S LIKE putting a cover on the last five years of my life," Cassidy said. "I lived the personification of the American dream. People no longer want to become movie stars," he said, scratching his nose with his thumb as he talked, as he does quite a lot. "People want to become rock and roll stars."

The seven gold record albums that he did for Bell Records notwithstanding, Cassidy calls his new effort "the first album I've made that's representative of me as an artist." RCA, in its publicity material, says it is the album that "finally allows Cassidy to emerge as the knowledgeable, mature musician his stalwart fans always knew him to be."

Well, maybe, but the most obvious trait about the new David Cassidy is the intensive bad-mouthing of the old David Cassidy, the one to whom the stalwart fans were attracted in the first place.

WHAT WAS SO dreadful about being the idol of millions of juveniles? "I took a part in a television series ('Partridge Family') when I was 19, playing a 16-year-old," he said. "I finished at 23, playing a 17-year-old. That's the way television is, you don't grow up. They don't let you grow up."

"In the beginning it was sort of fun. It was like a loon. I never thought it would be anything that would be taken seriously. I never thought people would look at me as that person on the television show."

In the midst of it all, Cassidy rebelled via a cover story in Rolling



Wine Glass Gives Cassidy a New Image
... other RCA publicity photos show him smoking

Stone. The counter-culture publication photographed him in the nude, then further shattered the image by reporting that he watched a "Partridge Family" episode while smoking pot and quoted a 24-year-old woman, with whom he'd had a casual, on-the-road affair, complimenting him on his sexual prowess.

"The network went berserk," Cassidy said with a mean grin. "The Kellogg's people almost didn't want me to do the Rice Krispies commercial. Unfortunately, it wasn't quite as effective as I wanted it to be."

"EVERY DAY that I was on the set," Cassidy said, "I related to myself as the Billy Gray of the '70s."

"Remember Billy Gray? He played Bud on 'Father Knows Best.' All that 'Hey, Mom, can I borrow the keys to the car? Hi, Pop, can I go to the prom?' Screen Gems does it again, folks. Fifteen years later, but still in all, they've found them-

selves another Billy Gray.

"I wasn't living at home in a family situation like that. My parents got divorced when I was four years old! Nothing was real about it."

CASSIDY IS the son of actor Jack Cassidy and actress Evelyn Ward. He saw little of his father during his boyhood and has said that he felt shunned. Although he maintains a good relationship with his former stepmother, Shirley Jones (who played David's mother on "The Partridge Family" and is now divorced from Jack Cassidy), he is currently not speaking to his father.

"I'm incommunicado with my old man," he said. "I've never known him, and I never will. You can't miss something you never knew and I don't care to, quite candidly."

His own adolescence was far removed from Keith Partridge's "hey, before the premiere of 'The Par-

Mom, can I borrow the keys to the car?" wholesomeness. At 16, Cassidy was one of the thousands of dropouts who converged on San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district. He was "experimenting" with various drugs — marijuana, amphetamines, LSD, he says, but never became a "serious" user.

MONONUCLEOSIS took him back home to his mother's Los Angeles house. He finished high school, decided against college and came to New York to be an actor.

Perhaps the nicest thing that his father ever did for him occurred at that time. Jack Cassidy asked his own agent, a savvy show business veteran named Ruth Aarons, to look after David. Through her, he got a part in a Broadway flop, "Fig Leaves Are Falling."

When that show folded, Aarons reportedly offered him a choice: "Stay in New York and become an actor, or come back to Los Angeles and be a star." Cassidy went to Los Angeles and right away landed several good television shots. A juicy

role as a hemophiliac on a "Medical Center" episode sent letters pouring into the editorial offices of Sixteen Magazine, and that was six months tridge Family" in the fall of 1970.

WHEN DAVID Cassidy appeared at Madison Square Garden in 1972, he also stayed at the Plaza. Then, swarms of girls kept the lobby under siege. Two girls in hot pants found their way upstairs and lurked outside his room for hours.

On this visit, no groupies littered the hallways and he walked the streets of Manhattan without fear of molestation. He said that he pre-

fers it that way; that he will measure the success of his new album, not in terms of units sold, but in media response and in "getting people to listen who wouldn't ordinarily listen to a David Cassidy album."

"If they're liking you, or if they're not liking you, at least it will be for something you've accepted the responsibility for," he said.

The album was released last week. Soon enough he'll know whether they're liking him, not liking him, or asking their mothers, "David Who?"