

David Cassidy returns

By JAMES BROWN

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HOLLYWOOD — A few years ago David Cassidy had the American Dream pretty well locked in his hip pocket.

He was the golden boy, Keith partridge, the baby-faced star of the hit TV series, "The Partridge Family," a bubble-gum music messiah whose records were certified gold, a flutterer of untold millions of prepubescent hearts.

He played to packed concert halls and was mobbed wherever he went. Teen magazines wanted to know what David Cassidy ate for breakfast. Toy stores stockpiled a healthy inventory of David Cassidy dolls. Kids wallpapered their bedrooms with David Cassidy posters. It was the star-maker machinery at full throttle.

And then he quit. Quit cold. Three years ago Cassidy called a press conference in England to announce that he was taking time off for a long rest. Insiders exchanged a few knowing winks. He'd come back, but fast. The teen-idol busi-



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ness is a short, swift ride and you'd better let it carry you as far as it can. Ask the Monkees. Ask Bobby Sherman. But David Cassidy decided to step out at the summit.

Cassidy is coming back now. Sunday at 9 he returns to television as the star of a two-hour "Police Story" in which he plays a rookie cop who goes undercover at a high school to crack a narcotics ring.

"I was emotionally and physically drained," Cassidy said the other day of his career break. "I was all used up. You can look at an experience like I had, that incredible media experience, and I think I took it to its farthest point. From there, it would have been a downhill ride and I just had to get out."

"I wasn't bored, I didn't sit around," Cassidy said, "and there was a time in those first couple of years when I wasn't sure I ever wanted to work again. But there's something about getting up in the morning and having something to look forward to. I discovered that I did want to work, I did want some-

thing to invest my time in.

"'Police Story' was just something that happened," Cassidy explained of his return. "I felt that the quality of the show merited my reading the script and I'd been wanting to work but hadn't yet found anything to do. This script was good, the cast (Vince Edwards, Dane Clark, Anne Lockhart, Dee Wallace) was good and the time was right."

Cassidy added that he and "Police Story" executive producer David Gerber have a further agreement to do an NBC World Premier movie and a possible series beyond that. Cassidy also has a new record contract with Warner Bros.-Curb, with a single due out shortly. So, if there was ever any question, David Cassidy has definitely retired.

Cassidy, 28, could well pass for that high school senior if looks were the judge. Very little has changed in that regard. But there's a calm, measured confidence about him now — an attitude of someone who flew through the hurricane and lived to tell about it. Cassidy, in fact, has mostly good memories of his teen-idol experiences.

"I feel fortunate to have gone through it. I wish everybody could," he said. "The best thing about it was the concerts, going out and exchanging all of that energy with thousands of people."

It's ironic that as Cassidy dropped out three years ago, his half-brother Shaun assumed his role as the multi-media teen-age heartthrob. "Shaun's an intuitive person," Cassidy said. "He saw me go through it when he was 13 years old. His girlfriends had crushes on me, and I know he had to suffer being my brother."

"But I'm glad for him that he's out there making it, doing it for himself. And we've become close. He saw me go through the pitfalls and when we talk, he knows that I'm the only one who can really understand what he's going through."