

# David Cassidy's Fans Are Older But They Still Are Faithful

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THE ELEVATOR door opened and, at the unexpected sight of David Cassidy emerging into the hotel lobby, several mid-teen girls began to squeal. Cassidy was noticeably startled by the recognition and uncomfortable in the midst of the mini-hysteria.

He had been through it before — on a much larger scale — and he ran away from it. He didn't like it then and he hopes the teeny-bopper adulation won't consume his life again as it did through the early 1970s.

Cassidy has re-emerged after a four-year trip into seclusion, a luxury made possible by the millions he made in his previous career. In a role diametrically opposed to the darling of the young, this time he plays an undercover policeman in a television series on NBC (Thursday, 10-11 p.m.) with the unimaginative title of "David Cassidy: Man Undercover."

For four-and-a-half years, Cassidy was a superstar to the young. As one of "The Partridge Family" kids, he quickly became an international hero for young girls. His records sold in the millions. His tours here and abroad attracted crowds in the tens of thousands. He profited by millions of dollars.

But the adulation and hysteria weren't music to his ears. The agony was in the compressed existence he was forced into as a result of the extraordinary popularity. On tour, he was a prisoner in a hotel room wherever he went.

He was a young man with great success, but no time for himself.

"I was working seven days a week. A television series, recording at night, concerts on the weekends, press interviews during lunch and photo sessions during breaks," Cassidy reflects. "I resented it all because it denied me relationships, friends and a social life. I was a BIG star, yet I kind of felt dwarfed."

WHEN IT REACHED the point where it became "hell to do one more show," Cassidy quit. He was reclusive for the first year and later traveled widely, bought property, spent time in Hawaii and married actress Kay Lenz.

About six months ago, Cassidy was ready to come back to work — as an actor. He was perhaps as startled as anyone when among the offers was a starring role as an undercover cop on a special "Police Story" segment.

It was his comeback role. The ratings and reviews were good. There was no initial thought that it would lead to a series. But NBC soon realized its assets as an early-season replacement for a floundering show.

Not the least is a fandom that is maturing and remains faithful. Since "The Partridge Family" remains on television through syndicated reruns, Cassidy is now also recognized by the new teeny-boppers, but their reaction is hardly as physical.

He carefully selected the role of undercover cop Dan Shay because it was

so different from anything he had ever done, including his pre-Partridge acting career. Cassidy says he wasn't quite sure the audience would like him in the role, since most people are ambivalent about undercover cops; he also wondered whether he looked the part, with light complexion, sandy hair and clean look.

"I'm not playing him as super-macho, or very physical," Cassidy reports. "I'm trying to make him vulnerable. I'm not macho enough and I'm not very physical. I don't intend to carry an adventure show. I'm still only five feet, eight inches tall."