

A fake Buckwheat

Elvis is dead and still controversial, so why not Buckwheat?

The actor who portrayed Buckwheat in the *Our Gang* short films, William Thomas, did in fact die in 1980, but that was news to the folks at ABC's *20/20*.

Friday night, the news magazine ran a "Where Are They Now?" segment featuring Bill English, a man who claimed to be Buckwheat. In addition to his duties as a Buckwheat impersonator, English is a grocery store bagger in Tempe, Ariz.

A *20/20* spokeswoman told me it was an honest mistake, but one which presents a very delicate dilemma.

"We will be issuing a formal apology on the show Friday night to the family of William Thomas and anyone else who may have been hurt by the report," the spokeswoman said.

"However," she added, "the situation is a difficult one because this man (Bill English) does, in fact, believe he is Buckwheat."

20/20 execs heard of the phony Buckwheat through a letter from a watcher who knew the man from the grocery store where he told everyone that he was Buckwheat. She thought it would make an interesting story. It did.

This one is the real thing: David Cassidy, whose new album is due for release any milli-second, will appear (*and sing*) in the flesh (reported recently lifted) on Thursday's edition of the *Arsenio Hall Show*.

It will be the first time the king of the psychedelic bus has crooned on TV in 16 years. Set your VCRs on immortalize.