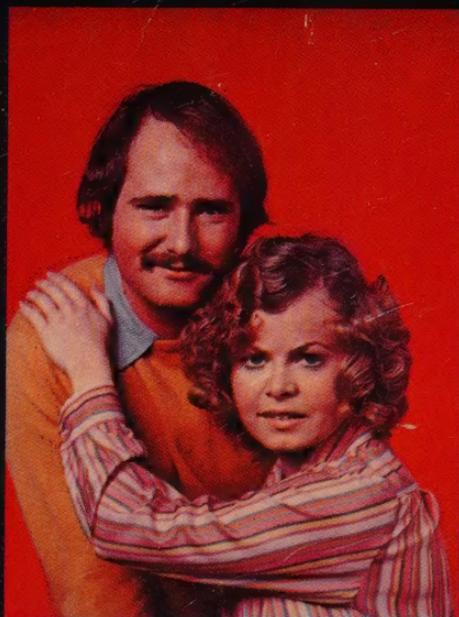
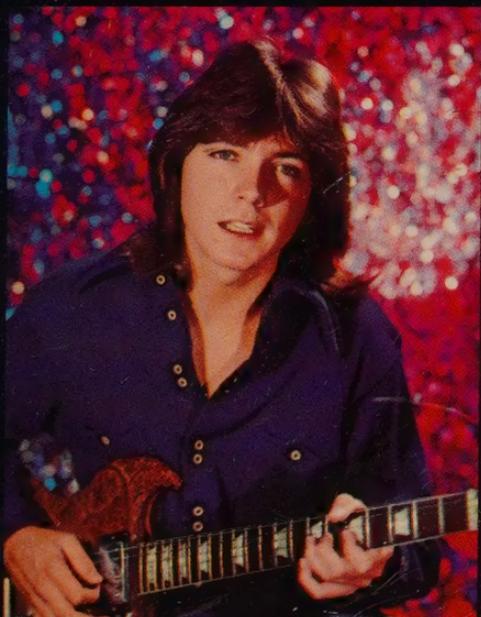
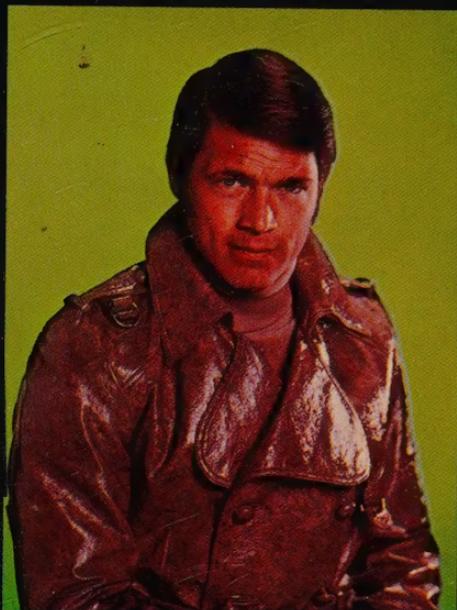


TV 72

PEGGY HUDSON





*"...I could never go to Disneyland.
I can't go to the zoo...."*

David Cassidy: Trapped by His Young Fans

As David Cassidy approached the restaurant where we were to have lunch, he was waylaid by a mother-daughter team of fans. Clutching a camera, the mother asked David if he'd please pose for a photo with her daughter. David complied. He's quite an actor. There he was, smiling at this girl, a total stranger, as though they were old friends. He's also a polite young man who keeps such bothersome moments in perspective.

The novelty of receiving such attention has long since worn off for David. Posing for snapshots with girls you've never seen before can soon become a drag. Still, David obviously feels an obligation toward all his fans. If he can give a moment or so of his time to make some teenager happy, he will do so whenever possible. Our impression of David at that moment, then, was that he was a kind young man. And that impression stayed with us throughout the luncheon interview we had with him.

As soon as we were seated at the table, we asked David

about the scene we'd just witnessed. Didn't he get tired of being besieged for autographs and having his fans make a big fuss over him?

He smiled wistfully. "Sure," he confessed. "But that's all part of it. I'd like to hang loose, but just about everywhere I go, people are always around. I hate to be rude, but I'll admit I don't always feel like smiling."

David didn't press the point, so we decided to do so ourselves: "Do you mean that being a teenagers' hero has its disadvantages?" we asked.

"I'm certainly not complaining," he said. "But, yes, there are disadvantages. You find yourself restricted. For example, I could never go to Disneyland. I can't go to the zoo. I can't go to movies or any place where there are lots of kids. But I may have found the solution." David smiled impishly.

What kind of solution, we asked.

"Well, I'm getting fitted for a beard," he said with a laugh. "Seriously! Starting this weekend, I'm going to try wearing a hat and a beard."

Such a disguise just might work, since his fans associate David with a clean-shaven, almost scrubbed appearance and since, on screen, he's invariably hatless. It may work for a time, that is. But fans are ingenious in ferreting out information on the ones they idolize — as David himself has found out. For example, there's the problem of trying to live in some semblance of privacy.

For a time, David lived in an old house in wooded Laurel Canyon, a Hollywood street that used to be a "good address" but which, more and more, is being taken over by groups of hippies who pool their "bread" to afford the rents. The casual atmosphere of the neighborhood suited David fine — until word leaked to the "outside" where he was living. David would come home from work to find young girls camped on his doorstep. Sometimes he'd try to sleep late on weekends — but the doorbell would always be ringing. Fans at the door would demand, "Is this where David Cassidy really lives?"

And then they'd want an autograph, or maybe just to reach out and touch him.

So, David moved. In the dark of night, he and some friends loaded his gear into a rented truck and unloaded it at David's new secret hideaway. But it didn't remain a secret long. David told us that fans had discovered his new place, too, and that he'd be moving again as soon as he could find suitable quarters. "I have to keep moving," he said good-naturedly. "I've been at the present place about six months. I lived in the first place about 10 months.

"Some day, I'm going to get a ranch, with a lot of land and horses, where I can run around and where the dogs can run loose. I have two dogs, a shepherd-mix named Sheesh and a wire-haired terrier named Sam. I also have a German shepherd who comes up to our house. She doesn't seem to belong to anyone. She trusts us. We may take her with us when we move."

When we had last interviewed David, *The Partridge Family*, in which he stars on ABC-TV, had not yet been broadcast. The impact the series — and David — have made since then on young viewers is almost incalculable. In addition to commanding a huge audience of viewers who'd rather give up their weekly allowance than miss a single episode of the show, *The Partridge Family* has made a number of hit records, both singles and albums. David himself has largely replaced Bobby Sherman on the covers of many teen magazines as the current teen idol, and he's also been cutting hit records of his own. Has all this taken him by surprise?

"Well, without meaning to sound blasé about it, I expected *something* like this to happen," David replied. "People kept telling me, 'When this series goes on the air, boy, it's going to be great for you.' I saw the potential for the show." But, he indicated, *nothing* can quite prepare a young entertainer for all that's happened to David in the last year.

"The first time I did a concert, it took about five years off my life," David said, flashing a smile that showed perfect



Its been quite a year for David with a hit TV show and busy singing career



Bobby Sherman and David get together for a "Partridge Family" episode

teeth. "It was in Seattle. I was downstairs and heard this big roar. There were thousands of kids out there! I just couldn't believe they were all there to hear me. Nothing can prepare you for that.

"Then, in Cleveland, Susan Dey (who plays Laurie on the series), Danny Bonaduce (the young financial wizard on the show), and I were grand marshals at a parade last winter. It was really an experience. We rode atop a fire engine, and it seemed that we were dragging the whole crowd with us when we passed. By the end of the parade, 10-to-20 thousand people were following us. They estimated that there were 200,000 people there in all. All I could see were the kids' hands waving, and all you could hear was their screaming. It was an eerie feeling."

We asked David if such crowds had ever caused him physical harm. "No," he said, "but I had a couple of bad moments in Portland. Fans swarmed around the stage, and a girl ran up and handed me a note. When I took it, she pulled off my ring. My father had given it to me. It had my family crest on it, so it really meant something to me. But instead of running away with it, the girl held it up to me. I guess she'd pulled it off my finger by accident. Anyway, I bent down to kiss her hand, to thank her, you know. That's when they rushed the stage."

Was that about the wildest crowd David had ever seen? "You won't believe this," he said, "but in Detroit 150 girls fainted and the police had to take them out. I couldn't believe it. The concert was outside, and the weather wasn't terribly warm. They just got carried away, I guess."

Besides the secrecy that such adulation has forced upon his private life, have there been any other changes?

"Yes," David said. "I don't have much time to relax. I take about six minutes a day and tell my friends, 'Well, this is it. I'm relaxing with you guys.'" David laughed. How did he spend the other 1,434 minutes of the day?

"Well, I'll be working on the show until about 6:30 tonight. Then I'll go to the recording studio to work on a

record. I'll get home from there at 10:00 p.m. or after, and my alarm will go off at 6:00 a.m. tomorrow. I have to be at the studio by 7:30 a.m.; and it takes me about 25 minutes to drive there. So that takes care of my time on week days. I spend three out of four weekends on the road, doing concerts. It's gotten heavy recently, and I'll admit I'm tired. I'm absolutely dead."

Tired as he was, David didn't forget his charming good manners. *He told us*, "Glad to have met you." Still, another test of his poise lay ahead. As he strolled from the restaurant, his hands shoved into the high front pockets of his brown bell-bottoms, two girls recognized him as he walked past their booth. One quickly shoved a menu at David. With a smile that masked his weariness, David signed it.

