

mentary detective work and decided, "Since they left my suits but took the stereo, my guitar, and my bow and arrow along with some Levi's and all of my velour shirts, I figured they were young guys. One day I saw a guy walking down the street, and he was wearing a pair of my Levi's which I recognized because of a torn back pocket, and one of my velours. I followed him home. He had most of my stuff in his closet, but it turned out he was only keeping it for a friend of his, who by that time had already been thrown in jail for something else."

The producers of Adam - 12 should have been delighted that Kent had learned his part so well - that he could live it even when he was away from the studio. But Bob Cinader, while amused at Kent's exploit was also a little bit miffed about the incident. In mock despair, Cinader groaned, "I wouldn't mind if he got shot - that would be good publicity at least. But cracking his own cases just wastes our time. I won't even let Kent or Marty ride around in prowl cars any more; with my luck, they'd wind up as a witness in a case and I'd have to close down the set for a week."

Cinader is joking and yet his words reveal a problem about the show "Adam - 12", that also troubles McCord. How important are one's personal beliefs on a show about policemen? For although, Kent has learned to feel a certain amount of identification with his alter ego, Jim Reed, there are some very important differences between the two.

McCord will admit, "We're really very much alike. I was married at 19, he was married at 20. I haven't been in the Army and Reed has, and that's probably the one real difference between us." But McCord doesn't minimize the importance of that difference. "I was never drafted," he explained, "but I wouldn't have gone to Vietnam. I discussed it with my wife and I told her I'd go to prison if that were the only alternative. She agreed with my decision."

It is perfectly obvious that when McCord speaks about a subject like the war that he means every word that he says. His own strong and definite personality sometimes makes him feel irritated and impatient with the character he has to play on TV. Jim Reed is always cast in the role of the learner on "Adam - 12." He's the guy who makes mistakes and the wise older cops have to correct them.

Says McCord, "I have to admit that I get impatient to see a development in the character of Reed. I want

him to have more self-assurance in police matters. On the other hand, I talk to officers and they say it's just right, and that they were just like Reed when they were rookies."

Not only does McCord express some dissatisfaction about his rookie role but he has some sharp comments to make about the show business industry in general. Relaxing in his comfortable home off Hollywood Boulevard, Kent showed that he was capable of sounding off about the facts of TV life.

"Universal is getting to be a drag. There should be some desire to take creative chances, but there's none at the studio. I expect Universal is going to build a bridge to the LA Zoo any day now, so people could tour both at the same time. I wouldn't be surprised if they got out of film making altogether and just kept the actors around for the tourists to gawk at."

It's not that he doesn't enjoy working with the other men on "Adam - 12," Kent is quick to explain. "The show's been fun," he said, "We get out on the streets a lot, and I enjoy working on location. And of course, I really went through a crash course on acting. TV can really teach an actor a lot, especially when you have a good director to guide you."

"But I get terribly frustrated with the police restrictions - like, oh, well for instance, you can't put your hands in your pockets, so you wind up looking like a totem pole. Well, I presume that most people know the facts of life and very few policemen ever can live by the rule book. If the worst thing a cop does is to put his hands in his pockets then he is behaving very well indeed."

"But things have loosened up a little, and now we're getting to do it more like it really happens - rather than by the book. I think it's a mistake that we don't have more violence on the show. In the 15th episode I finally got to fire my gun and I did get to shout at a lady once."

Kent seemed to feel ambivalently about the effect of "Adam - 12" on the young people who watch it. "I know that we get a lot of letters from kids in the 10-15 year old range and they tell us that the show made them feel differently about joining the police force. I can't make up my mind whether this is a good thing or a bad thing. I mean, I know for sure that I wouldn't want to be a policeman."

"If I was given my choice on the show I would wear my hair long and put my peace medallion out in the open. When you're dealing with a tricky and emotionally charged issue like law enforcement, it's hard to remain aloof and tell yourself that

it's just entertainment that you are selling. I'm not wild about the idea of being a package that can say any lines that the scriptwriters give me."

"Of course I'm learning about acting. I do more shows in a season than many actors do in four or five years. And I'm grateful for the guidance that I get from Jack Webb, show's director, even if he is hard on me at times."

"I'll just have to wait things out a while longer and decide in which direction I want to go. Certainly I don't want to be typecast as a rookie policeman for the rest of my acting life. I'm against typecasting anyone, as I've said. All policemen aren't pigs and all of them aren't Kid Galahad either. The same goes for ordinary citizens. Just because I grew up in what was considered a "bad" neighborhood, it doesn't mean that every kid who lived there was a potential criminal."

"I don't deny that I feel warmer to policemen than I have before. I can compare their reactions in a situation to what mine would be on the show. I can even criticize them to myself and think how I would have handled a similar incident. I hate to see policemen bullying people just because they have a pistol and a squad car and other people don't."

"But working on one robbery case was enough for me. I don't want to put anyone in jail," Kent concluded.

**SUSAN DEY AND
DAVID CASSIDY
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dress shopping," she told me on the studio phone where I had finally contacted her, "If you don't mind following me around and helping me get in and out of dresses I'll be glad to talk to you. Why don't you meet me at a hangout on Wilshire Boulevard this Saturday morning."

Susan's idea seemed fine to me and we set an hour. "Don't make it too early," Susan begged me, "By the end of the week, I'm absolutely exhausted from this frantic schedule and I need a few hours of extra shut-eye at least once a week."

When I arrived at the teen place on Saturday morning, I was relieved to find Susan already waiting for me. I find that soda shops generally serve irresistible concoctions of ice cream, fudge and whipped cream and I knew