

# WHY I'LL NEVER RETURN TO ROME

the final part of our exclusive interview

**G**ETTING right away from his TV fame and the feverish excitement that goes with it has become David Cassidy's biggest problem.

But he managed to do just that recently.

Early this year he flew from Los Angeles to Rome, hired a Volkswagen van and set out on the road.

I asked David why he'd chosen to go to Rome.

"I discovered that The Partridge Family hadn't been shown in Italy or France, so I thought I was safe there," he told me. "It's almost impossible for him to move about freely—he's rooted wherever he goes in the States."

"I thought that if I went there I'd be able to have a quiet holiday without anyone knowing who I was."

And this was precisely what he did.

But, unfortunately, it started rather badly. In Rome, he was recognized by American tourists and had to sign autographs when he visited the famous art galleries and museums around St. Peter's Square.

But the real tragedy was that David was robbed.

Thieves broke into the Volkswagen van and stole his camera, his films and lenses, his American travel documents (which were worth 3,000 U.S. dollars) and his passport.

"That really cut me up," he said. "It took me three days to sort out my passport, and get some more money through. I had to spend all those days going from office to office, filling in forms, and signing bits of papers."

"It upset me and ruined the start of my holiday. Even now, I can't pick up my new camera without thinking about it."

As soon as I could, I got in the van and drove out of Rome as fast as I could, determined never to go back there again.

David drove up to the Italian Alps, and then through France to Flers, stopping overnight at small hotels. He drove himself all the way—and was luckily unrecognized in every town.

"I was pretty worried to start with, because I can't speak French or Italian," he said. "I got through OK, though it made me feel awkward at first."

One reason for going was that I'd been warned to learn to ski. I finally did at a small town in the Italian mountains—I'm not saying where it was, because I might want to go back there again.

"I'd never stood on a pair of skis before, and that felt pretty funny. I can tell you, I fell down a few times, but after I'd been skiing a few days, I became fairly confident, and started going on the longer runs."

David's holiday lasted four



weeks. For one month he was able to forget that he had 200,000 fans in his fan club, that he was due to start the third series of "The Partridge Family" in May, that he had three million-selling LPs with the "Family" and had to face audiences of up to 20,000 fans

at every concert. For one month, he was able to drive about Europe without any disguises—wearing just jeans and shirts. "It was a marvelous holiday—a real escape. But that business in Rome pckered me," he said. "I'd never been robbed

before. Those were the worst three days of my life. I'm very interested in photography, and I'd managed to buy myself some very good lenses. That's something you just can't replace. To go out and buy another camera just doesn't mean the same."

We were talking in his suite at the Doncheter Hotel. David was spending four days in London processing his records.

He'd had no time to go record shopping or sight-seeing, though he'd eaten out a couple of times, and been to see the musical "Godspell" (which David doesn't go to see in the States in case he's spotted).

"I loved it," he told me. "I love all sorts of music. I freed myself a long time ago of the barrier of only listening to one type of music."

As we talked about his career, it was clear that David had expected it to turn out very differently. He went to drama school, appeared in stage plays and had small TV parts before the shattering success of the series.

"I'd wanted to be an actor ever since I was three," he said. "I distinctly remember my father, Paul's Jack Cassidy, the Hollywood film star, asking me at that time, 'What do you want to be when you grow up?'"

"I want to be an actor like you," I said.

Can't repeat. Well, you can do that when you're old enough—but you'll have to go through high school first."

Soon afterwards, David's parents were divorced. His father remarried—and David was brought up by his mother and her parents.

"I don't see very much of my father at that time," he said.

But the ambition was still there. David knew he was going to be an actor. He never thought of doing anything else, though he did play guitar in a group at High School.

And now, unexpectedly, he's America's pop idol—and collecting fans by the score in Britain too. But David doesn't expect that to last too long (not that we agree).

"There are many things I'd like to do," he said when I asked him how he saw his future career progressing.

"I've been successful as an actor, which is my main career, but I'd also like to start writing songs, singing, producing my own records, and receding by other people."

"I see no reason why I can't continue to be an actor, and also work more in music."

David agreed though, that because of his career, his personal life has become—at he puts it—"a bit difficult." The pace at which he works is so staggering that he never has a chance to date girls, or make new friends.

"But we all have to work," he added. "We all have to earn money to live. This is just what I'm doing, and I'm glad to be doing it. This is what I've wanted to do ever since I was three."

"I guess I'm one of the lucky ones."