

A JACKIE EXCLUSIVE FROM THE STATES  
PART ONE OF OUR FOUR PART SERIES ON DAVID CASSIDY

# DAVID~On The Set...



Well, that's one way of getting round the set!

**T**HE man on the gate of the Columbia Ranch in Hollywood was quite friendly: "David Cassidy? Well, he'll be down at the Partridge House, or Studio 30."

It's like that with David, his presence seems to put everyone in a good mood. We drove through streets of houses that have only front walls, (they've been built as backgrounds to Western movies), and found that the Partridge Family were indeed at work in Studio 30. It's an enormous barn of a place—more like an aircraft hanger than a television studio!

It was empty at one end but at the other there was a lot of activity. Dotted amongst the cameras and in front of the set were a whole lot of gaily-coloured canvas-backed chairs with little partridges on them, and the name of a member of the Partridge family on the back of each one.

Then suddenly unannounced, David, wearing cream-coloured trousers and a multi-ringed sweater, strode purposely out of the set and past the chairs.

It was about 10 in the morning and he was looking pensive. When he re-appeared a few minutes later he'd changed completely: he was wearing a dark brown sweater with light brown sleeves and broadly checked trousers. He had a yellow script in his right hand and the other was stuck firmly into his trouser pocket.

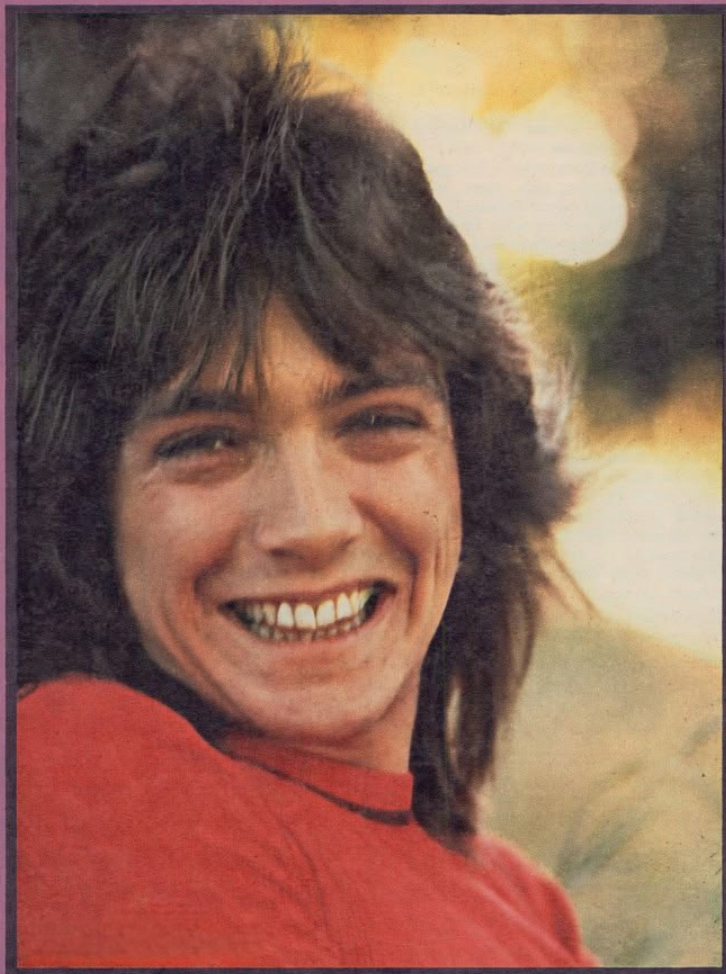
The thing that I really noticed immediately was his slimness and his freshly washed hair. He seemed very much alone as the unit prepared to shoot the next scene of the series, which has occupied this studio for the past three years.

His director Lee Phillips, who was originally an actor but now works behind the camera, explained that they were about to film a three minute scene. He thought this would probably take 45 minutes or so!

Unlike many film and television directors Lee Phillips isn't a loud-mouthed person, shouting and screaming at the people he directs. He prefers to do things the calm way. Often during the morning's filming he was to be seen, one arm around David's shoulders, explaining quietly how such a scene should be acted.

"David takes direction very easily" Lee told me before they started. "He's interesting because basically he isn't an actor; but at the same time he doesn't have any pretensions. The funny thing is that I met him when he was only 12 or 13 at Shirley Jones's house, and he was dying to be an actor. The big thing about him is that he has a very easy, natural charm. He's a nice kid!"

Lee took up his position behind the camera, and his numerous assistants joined in a general shout of "rehearsal!" "rehearsal please," adding another shout of "David". When the shouting



had finished and conversations around the set had toned down to a whisper, Lee took over: "OK, settle please," he said quietly. "Are we settled? David." He beckoned David on to the set to start the scene.

David came in through the "bedroom" door. Shirley was sitting at a dressing-table fussing with her hair, as she turned to him and said, "Hi honey, tell me about your day?" David replied with a shrug of the shoulders, "Oh, it went pretty well," and sat down on the brass four-poster bed.

It looked fine to me, but the camera stopped whirring and Lee strode onto the set to show David just how he wanted him to act this part of the story—right down to a new way of shrug-

ging his shoulders ever so gently! The attention to detail was amazing and must make the work very exacting for the actors, not least David himself.

Gradually the scene was worked and re-worked. "It doesn't work this way," said David at one point. But Lee was there at his shoulder again, insisting firmly, "Oh yes it does." And a knock at the door was added before David entered.

Then Lee decided he wanted him to shake his head as well as shrug his shoulders. If you think this all sounds too easy, try it out yourself sometime in front of a mirror when you don't feel like it! Trying to act naturally is one of the hardest things in the world.

One of the problems of working in



David with "Mum" Shirley Jones.

Hollywood is that filming starts at 8 a.m. David has to be in by 7.30 in time for make-up and wardrobe, although he's usually there by seven.

Between shots David usually walks through the large studio and outside to his personal dressing-room. Inside there, he has a record player, and the room is dominated by a poster of John Lennon at the piano. The room itself is done out in natural wood, and there are plenty of chairs for guests. On the circular table is a large glass jar of multi-coloured sweets.

It's a luxurious dressing-room, with a bathroom and changing-room, besides the main "living"-room; but then David does have to spend a lot of time in here. Each series is 26 episodes long, and each takes a week to shoot. They make two series a year!

Back on the set Lee was acting out what he wanted David to do next. The two of them wandered away from the cameras and had an animated conversation. Then, laughing at some joke of David's, Lee returned behind the camera and David started work again.

The scene progressed, but later on David stumbled over one of his lines and called Lee in for assistance. "I think you'll find it acts easier if you switch your weight on to your left leg," Lee told him. And sure enough, it worked. "I love that, print it!" shouted Lee delightedly. And that was it!

All this time there had been almost as much activity off the set! A friend of a friend of someone to do with the production had brought his three little girls along. As David came through the bedroom door on the set, it almost proved too much for one of them who had to suppress a squeak of delight.

But later as he walked by, David paused, signed their autographs and had a quick word for each of his fans. Rather incredible—considering he's the one young man in America that everyone wants to stop for an autograph. He must get pretty fed up with it!

All the time, as David worked, the studio cameraman padded about silently, waiting for just the right moment to take a new David Cassidy picture!

Next door to the set is the one delight of David's working life. The tea stand.

Unlike most Americans, he doesn't like coffee. He much prefers to have a cup of tea (one of his most pleasant memories of his first British visit is the endless cups of tea!) and a doughnut, which makes him the envy of those on the set.

They, being mostly avid weight watchers, have to look enviously as he tucks into such treats. But then, at only nine stones, he can afford to!

Next Week: David's home life—and what he thinks of British girls!