

# Cop show script not fair to David Cassidy

by PETER WILMOTH, who was a fan

IN 1973 I harbored an ambition to teach my large family the guitar, drums and piano so we could form our very own Partridge Family.

But my plans came unstuck when I realised that mum felt more at home in the garden than behind the keyboards, so I contented myself with a couple of Partridge Family records and the half-hourly weekday television ritual.

I even went to the extent of buying 11 late-edition 'Heralds' from the Point Lonsdale milk bar for the Partridges' full-color poster inside. Kiss fans, I know how you feel.

Back then, 'I think I love you' was my anthem, and Susan Dey was my raison d'être. Innovative pop music, I told my mother, was epitomised by the Partridges who practised in the garage, straight after the washing up.

My older sister, too, thought David Cassidy could do no wrong. Unfortunately, neither of us banked on him taking the lead role in a new, but thematically tired and old, police show on television.

The name of the show speaks for itself: 'David Cassidy — Man Undercover'. Tonight's episode 'Running the Hill' (Channel 7 at 8.30) — has lifted all the cliched lines and police

techniques from every other cop show that has graced the small screen.

In 'Running the Hill', Cassidy plays a young undercover police officer who is asked to solve a series of supermarket robberies in which several bystanders have been murdered.

Dan Shay (Cassidy) uses his knowledge of modified racing cars to crack the mystery by joining a race club whose members are prime suspects for the murders.

He is told by the chief of investigations: "They're animals and I want them stopped", causing us to duly shiver and shake.

The "plot" is intertwined with a feud between Shay and the senior police officer who has assigned him the task. As Shay tells his wife: "This guy has a tough time trusting me because I've got long hair".

We also have a tough time trusting Cassidy as a pretty, paunchy policeman. Although he can act, Cassidy is confined by an appallingly bad script that rips the credibility out from under his feet.

And the predictable actions plod on, sure as the too-clever one-liners that punctuate the action. When Shay finally admits he is a policeman and nabs two out of three "baddies", the third

escapes to fulfil his ambition to become number one driver on The Hill.

This turns out to be a foolish thing to do, because Dan Shay knows exactly where he will go. So do we.

We also know that Dan Shay will catch the killers/thieves/drivers, become emotionally involved with them (he's told to stop playing social worker) and bring his problems home to his wife. It's all been done before, and it would be more acceptable if it were done better.

Using the fast car theme was really an excuse to show some dust-flying action and some slick Porsches. Neck-breaking car chases are always a winner, too.

The programme is doomed with sloppy scripting, bad acting (except for Cassidy who has always been quite good), and an unconvincing and loosely told storyline.

*David Cassidy: an undercover cop cornered by a cliched script.*



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