

■ David McCallum said recently: "I can't stand my fans much longer."

A simple, declarative statement—but behind it are the results of months of harassment, lack of privacy and plain overwork. When I called MGM Studios recently, I was told that David had an extremely busy schedule, that his life was not his own and that he would soon have to begin turning down some interview requests and personal appearances if he were to avoid complete nervous exhaustion.

He gets up at 6:30 in the morning, reports to the studio an hour or so later and from that moment on, he's plunged into a world of bright, glaring overhead lights, the peering glass eyes of movie cameras, the everpresent confusion of hovering technicians, script girls, producers, publicity men and other intruders into the creative world of acting. When he should be concentrating on his dialogue for "The Man From U.N.C.L.E." or simply

closing his eyes for a few minutes' rest, he instead is forced to be sweet and charming for some visiting journalist or try to look his very best for an upcoming publicity photo session.

There's a limit. But, apparently, it wasn't reached until a few weeks ago. And his fans were the cause.

The series of incidents in question occurred when David flew to New York for the purpose of hosting a "Hullabaloo" segment. As soon as he arrived at his hotel, he was met by a crowd of shouting, screaming fans who somehow managed to find out where he was to stay. It was necessary to fight through them to get into the hotel and the incident was so chaotic that several policemen were required to keep David from being crushed behind the feet of his eager worshippers.

And there were other occasions. He'd be sitting in a restaurant enjoying a good meal with his wife Jill when some fans

would push their way over to him and demand autographs. He was supposed to stop in the middle of dinner, smile obligingly and be the gracious young Scot he indeed was. He did all this, to be sure, but it made an impression on him. Basically on the shy side and a bit introverted, David didn't take kindly to the rudeness shown by his fans that time and during other encounters as well.

One after the other. Autographs. Be charming. Nice. Polite.

There seemed to be no end to the intrusions, the demands on his time. He'd be in his room at the hotel and he could hear them outside, early in the morning as well as close to midnight, waiting for him to step near a window or down in the lobby or—Waiting . . .

If he went outside, they'd be there. If he ducked through a side entrance, they'd be sure to find him . . . somehow.

By the time he left New York, his nerves

were frayed and he growled at his family after arriving back in California. A few hours rest at home weren't enough to calm him and he soon found himself returning to the studio for more shooting, more lines of dialogue to learn, more of the duties of stardom.

His fans are largely responsible for the "necessary" parties, premieres, and so forth, with taking a certain part of it away from him. But on his fans and his fans only must be placed the blame for interrupted dinners, not being able to walk along a street in broad daylight without being mobbed, for the necessity of having bodyguards with him on trips to New York—all the other factors behind his recent cry of "I can't stand my fans much longer!"

It's paradoxical to note that, without a following such as he has, David would still be a relative unknown in the acting pro-

fession. His public made him what he is, popularity-wise, and because of this, his fans are saying, in effect, "We own you body-and-soul." But what they do not realize is that he must have privacy, peace, quiet. Acting is hard, sweaty work. It takes a lot of strength and stamina to stand up under five days of filming, four weeks a month, nine months out of the year. For the three remaining months, he should be permitted to rest. But, usually, he isn't, because there's a movie to make, a tour coming up, over and over again, the same tiring, exhaustive routine.

And with fans breathing down his neck wherever he goes, things are made so much worse, particularly when the fans are rude and impulsive, tearing at his clothes, his hair, his flesh, unmindful of how seriously he could be hurt. A mob creates havoc and havoc spawns often fatal injuries and when a crowd of fans see David, they do become a raging, screaming, un-

thinking mob, striving to get as close to him as possible. For a while, it was thrilling, fun, an ecstatic experience. But, repeated again and again, it became a dangerous, potentially lethal ordeal . . . a nightmare that must surely give David many sleepless nights.

So this is why he complained, "I can't stand my fans much longer. He's a nice guy. He likes people. He's grateful to those who gave him a dream and turned it into reality—stardom. But he'll change it something isn't done. And the new David McCallum would be a lot less charming, a lot less desirable than the old one, the guy who has gone out of his way to give interviews and sign autographs.

It's up to you. Will you give him peace and privacy? Or a nightmare world of chaos and confusion?

The kind of guy David McCallum becomes in the months ahead hinges upon your answer. ●



DAVID McCALLUM—
**"I CAN'T
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by Roger Elwood