



Sunday, 21 April 2019

## Rochester and the Future

Rochester was a great character.

Sure, Jack Benny paid him next to nothing, and had him do just about everything for him. But Rochester really ran Benny. He wore his clothes, drank his booze, smoked his cigars, sat around if he didn't feel like working, ran around with women when the plot called for it (and faithfully stuck with Susie when the plot called for it), and caroused with his Lodge buddies, winning cash from them on occasion. In the later years, the writers gave Rochester a buddy (played by fine character actor Roy Glenn) to set up his jokes.

Eddie Anderson's distinctive voice no doubt helped his character, too, though I understand he exaggerated it for radio.

Benny showed his genius at casting when Anderson's one-shot appearance as a stock porter character was so popular, he found a way to put him in the show on a regular basis. Anderson soon got cast in Benny's films and critics praised him. There were even gags on the Benny show about Rochester's fan mail.

When the Benny series went off the air in 1965, Rochester appeared in a couple of specials. Benny died in 1974. Here's what Anderson was doing post-Benny. This syndicated column appeared January 5, 1976. Anderson died in 1977.

### Eddie's Not Living In Past At 70, He Wants To Produce

By NANCY ANDERSON

*Copley News Service*

HOLLYWOOD — Eddie Anderson, who for almost 30 years as the sassy "Rochester" served Jack Benny well, turned 70 last September, but he's not living in the past. Instead, he's looking forward to producing a picture from a script he's writing.

"It's a comedy," says Anderson, "Integrated.

"I can't tell you whether it's going to be like 'Uptown Saturday Night' or any of the other recent comedies or not because I haven't seen them."

A studio or so is interested in the project, Anderson continues, and so are one or two friends with money who might bankroll the production.

Asked whether the humor in his picture will be more visual or verbal, the comedy star doesn't seem to understand the question. One gets the feeling that his hearing's not perfect, but, otherwise, Anderson seems to be in lively good health.

He says he is, continuing:

"I'm 70 years old, but a man's true age depends on how he feels, and I feel fine."

Anderson, whose pebbly voiced, pert-mannered Rochester made him almost as well known as Jack Benny during the three decades they worked together in radio, television and films, was born in Oakland, Calif., and entertained in vaudeville and nightclubs before Benny's radio show signed him for a single performance. "I first met Mr Benny when I went for an interview for the part," Anderson remembers.

"It was supposed to be a one shot, but he got so much mail about me that he kept me on."

As a result of his success with Benny, Anderson not only worked in pictures with his radio and television boss but also appeared in a number of others without him, notably "Jezebel," "Cabin in the Sky," and even "Gone With the Wind." His final film appearances to date were in "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad World" and "Divorce, American Style," in which he played a cameo role.

"But," Hollywood's most uppity butler assures, "I get calls to work in various television shows, and someday I may do a spot."

Since Anderson eschews the paths of glory, living quietly in a solid but less than fashionable section of Los Angeles and ignoring the premieres and glittering party scene, it's a miracle that his fan mail finds him.

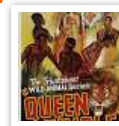
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## Blogs to See

### Rip Jagger's Dojo



Queen Of The Jungle!  
- "Queen of the Jungle" is a 1935 serial from Mascot

which takes footage from an even earlier silent film and tries to bond some new scenes. It's not reall...

11 hours ago

### Cartoon Research

Disney Rareties - This week, two Disney oddities in Mark Kausler's film closet - one, a lost educational film from the 1940s, the other some rare behind the scenes footage ...

13 hours ago

### News From ME

Sunday Evening - Convention's over. Now, we can concern ourselves with more important matters... like what kind of silly news stories is Trump going to create to divert attent...

14 hours ago

### Fernando Llera Blog Cartoons



Longest living animals in Chapultepec's Zoo in need of special

care. - ©2019 fernandollera.com  
23 hours ago

### Movies with Michael



Cowboy Church #19 - Hello my friends and welcome to another addition of

Cowboy Church. We start



REMEMBER? -- Rex Ingram (right) doesn't mind Rochester snuggling with Lena Horne on set of "Cabin in the Sky". At age of 70, Jack Benny's former butler keeps busy writing a story for possible film use.

Yet he receives encouraging quantities of it, much from young people and college students to whom he's a new personality.

Since Rochester was a comedy figure and a white man's domestic, one would imagine that he's been target for the kind of criticism that killed "Amos and Andy." But Anderson says all the mail he's received has been complimentary.

"Mostly people just write and say they've enjoyed this performance or that, or that they thought Rochester was funny," he claims.

Like most rational fathers, Anderson is extremely proud of his children, including two daughters in college, a son in high school, and another son who was a star athlete until he fractured a knee.

"That's my son Billy," he says. "He made quite a mark in sports. He played at Compton (Calif.) Junior College, and then he played two seasons with the Chicago Bears. And he was on the all-Army team.

"Billy had been hired by the Chargers, but then he fractured his knee and that put him out of football. "He was a good all-around athlete. "Now he's manager of a maintenance company, and he's doing well at that, too."

So far, none of Anderson's children has shown any desire to become a performer, though their father thinks.

"All of them have indications of talent. "But I don't care whether they go into show business or not."

Asked how he spends his own free time, Anderson claims, "I stay pretty busy working on my script."

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:04](#)

Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

## 4 comments:

 **Gary Theroux** 21 April 2019 at 18:47

Do remember that the idea that Benny paid Anderson "next to nothing" was nothing more than a running gag on Jack's show. The fact was that Eddie became the highest-paid black man in the U.S. while working on the Benny show -- earning him, among other things, his own mansion and valet. Do not confuse Rochester and Jack's comic characters with the real people.

[Reply](#)



**Yowp** 21 April 2019 at 23:55

Fortunately, we have well-versed readers here who I highly doubt would confuse the two.

[Reply](#)

**Errol** 22 April 2019 at 11:18

What I loved about Anderson's Rochester character was the relationship between he and Jack. Rochester was in control, Benny knew he was in control, and as a whole, the audience knew he was in control and loved that dynamic.

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[Replies](#)



**Pokey** 22 April 2019 at 14:42

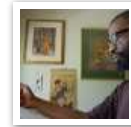
Same with me!

[Reply](#)

our music selection off with The Sons of the Pioneers' 1947 recording of the go...

1 day ago

 **The World of Knight**



**SATURDAY AFTERNOON** - Nice view. I actually drew it into a panel

today.

1 day ago

 **Termite Terrace headlines**

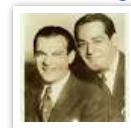


Animation Websites in the Archive #1 - The newest series!

These are some of the best websites on animation that are either unsung or just have been wiped out from the internet. Some of these si...

1 day ago

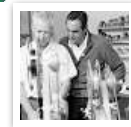
 **Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog**



The Classic Comedy Rorschach Test - \* In 13 years and 1072 posts, onl...

2 days ago

 **Yowp**



Fewer Drawings, More Gimmicks - Adult humour today isn't

what it was 60 years ago. Today, "adult" humour brings to mind a lot of sexual references and crudity. In other words, the stuff...

2 days ago

**Mark Kausler's CatBlog**  
**Racketty Ann's Mystery Flight!**

Here are pages 5 through eight of "Racketty Ann and the Lost World". There's delightful fantasy here as Racketty Ann and Bla Bla take a ride on the back o...

2 days ago

 **Peter Gray's Comics and Art**



New blog on my Art work...Original art...prints for sale petergrayart


ist@gmail.com for prices

etc.. -

https://petergrayart.blogspot .com/ Will update it like I do on facebook.

2 weeks ago

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Supervised By Fred Avery: Tex Avery's Warner Brothers Cartoons


Coming Soon To This Blog...

1 month ago

**What About Thad?**  
**Chris Reccardi Interviewed**  
- I don't want to start a practice of publishing an interview every time someone from Ren & Stimpy dies, but Chris Reccardi (1964-2019) was too important a f...  
2 months ago

**Likely Looney, Mostly Merrie**  
**That's all, folks!** - My posts have gotten thinner over the years. I'm aware of that. I've been hopeful for a long time, that I can remain active with blogging and sharing furth...  
6 months ago

**Kids, Eh?**  
**#1288: Bird Call** - #1288: Bird Call  
10 months ago

**Cartoons, Model Sheets, & Stuff**  
**Pete Hothead Model Sheets** - Here are a few model sheets from the first Pete Hothead short. Released in 1952 and directed former Tom & Jerry animator Pete Burness. Ted Parmelee was the...  
1 year ago

**Dr. Grob's Animation Review**  
**Zozor ruine la réputation de sa famille (Zozor Ruins the Reputation of His Family)** - After his move to the United States in 1912 Émile Cohl starting experimenting with putting the idiom of comic strips to the animated screen, being the firs...  
2 hours ago

Blog Archive

- ▼ 2019 (211)
  - July (22)
  - June (30)
  - May (32)
- ▼ April (31)
  - Woody See Him?
  - Blow Your Head Off

[Who Bites Nails and  
Plays With a Garter?](#)

[Makin' Educational  
Whoopie](#)

[A Tale of Two Deer](#)

[Taking the Scissors to  
Tex](#)

[The Gangster That  
Gangsters Loved](#)

[Looney Tunes Hidden  
Gag](#)

[Zooming Cat Head](#)

[Keep Smiling!](#)

[Rochester and the Future](#)

[Canadian Designs in  
Motion](#)

[Ginsboig, You Say?](#)

[People the Beautiful](#)

[King For a Day](#)

[McKimson Lion](#)

[Stars, Stripes, and a Pig  
With a Tuba](#)

[Television Not For Jack  
Benny](#)

[James Dietrich](#)

[Killing the Bagpipes](#)

[Ain't We in Da Wrong  
Pitcher?](#)

[Muriel Landers](#)

[The Indian Chief Really is  
an Indian](#)

[Let's Try This Plot, Rudy](#)

[Didya Hear the One  
About the Golfing  
Grasshopper?](#)

[Satire the Ward Way](#)

[Nyahh, Wolf!](#)

[Chicken Soup, Please](#)

[Phyllis the Fraud](#)

[Turning Chicken](#)

[Cartoon Rule 514:  
Skunks Smell](#)

► [March](#) (31)

► [February](#) (30)

► [January](#) (35)

► [2018](#) (379)

► [2017](#) (380)

► [2016](#) (396)

► [2015](#) (389)

► [2014](#) (390)

► [2013](#) (388)

► [2012](#) (397)

► [2011](#) (106)

## Labels

[Aline Mosby](#) (16)

---

[Art Davis](#) (30)

---

[Bad Luck Blackie](#) (9)

---

[Bob Clampett](#) (72)

---

[Bob McKimson](#) (51)

---

[Bob Thomas](#) (53)

---

[Chuck Jones](#) (133)

---

[Columbia](#) (25)

---

[Cynthia Lowry](#) (24)

---

[Dick Thomas](#) (12)

---

[Don Patterson](#) (16)

---

[Earl Wilson](#) (6)

---

[Erskine Johnson](#) (36)

---

[Felix the Cat](#) (24)

---

[Film Daily](#) (50)

---

[Fleischer](#) (136)

---

[Frank Tashlin](#) (21)

---

[Fred Allen](#) (37)

---

[Fred Brunish](#) (9)

---

[Friz Freleng](#) (126)

---

[Gene Deitch](#) (16)

---

[George Pal](#) (9)

---

[Grant Simmons](#) (3)

---

[Hanna and Barbera unit](#) (91)

---

[Hanna-Barbera](#) (2)

---

[Harman-Ising](#) (54)

---

[Henry Morgan](#) (13)

---

[Irv Spence](#) (8)

---

[Jack Benny](#) (400)

---

[Jay Ward](#) (29)

---

[Jimmy Durante](#) (15)

---

[John Crosby](#) (78)

---

[John Sutherland](#) (23)

---

[Johnny Johnson](#) (25)

---

[Kenny Baker](#) (6)

---

[King-Size Canary](#) (6)

---

[Laugh-In](#) (10)

---

[Maurice Noble](#) (12)

---

[Mel-O-Toons](#) (4)

---

[MGM](#) (498)

---

[Norm McCabe](#) (4)

---

[Pat Matthews](#) (9)

---

[Paul Julian](#) (13)

---

[Sara Berner](#) (5)

---

[Screwy Squirrel](#) (32)

---

[Spider-Man](#) (1)

---

[Terrytoons](#) (67)

---

[Tex Avery](#) (411)

---

[Tom and Jerry Human](#) (24)

---

[Tralfaz Sunday Theatre](#) (14)

---

[Ub Iwerks](#) (64)

UPA	(51)
Van Beuren	(80)
Vernon Scott	(40)
Virginia MacPherson	(14)
Walt Disney	(125)
Walter Lantz	(211)
Warner Bros.	(519)
Who Killed Who	(10)

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