

Route 66 Notes

Route 66 was an adventure crime drama television series that premiered on CBS on October 7, 1960. It continued until March 20, 1964. There were a total of 116 episodes. The series was created by Herbert B. Leonard and Stirling Silliphant. *Route 66* had its setting change from week to week on location.

Route 66 followed two young men driving through the United States in a Chevrolet Corvette convertible. Martin Milner starred as Tod Stiles, a recent college graduate with no future prospects because of circumstances beyond his control. He was joined on his travels by Buz Murdock played by George Maharis, a friend and former employee of his father's. His character left midway through the third season after contracting an illness. Near the end of the third season, Tod met a recently discharged Vietnam veteran named Lincoln Case. He was played by Glenn Corbett, who decided to follow Tod on his travels and stayed with him until the final episode.

In the beginning, George Maharis was signed to a contract by Herbert B. Leonard before the *Route 66* concept had been fully developed and was set to be a cast member. Actor Robert Morris was set to be the other lead. In 1959, the *Route 66* title was not yet decided upon and was tentatively entitled *The Searchers*.

Sadly, Robert Morris died in May of 1960 at age 25 from a cerebral hemorrhage, before the series could go into production. The title of the series became *Route 66*, the leads became Tod and Buz. Maharis was given the role of Buz. Martin Milner, who beat out several actors (including Robert Redford) was hired for the role of Tod.

The show had very little connection with the U.S. Highway reflecting its name. *Route 66* is one of few television series to be filmed entirely on the road.

Nelson Riddle was commissioned to write the instrumental theme when CBS decided to have a new song, instead of paying royalties for the Bobby Troup song *Get Your Kicks On Route 66*. Riddle's *Route 66* theme instrumental was one of the first television themes to make *Billboard* magazine's top 30. The song earned two Grammy Award nominations in 1962.

Route 66 Corvettes in the show: The show was never filmed in color, so no one ever saw a red Corvette on Route 66. Still, most people assume (and want to believe) that the car Tod and Buz cruised in was a Roman Red Corvette convertible. There never was a red Corvette in the show.....and there was a reason.

Because the show was filmed in black and white, to light the scenes properly when the guys were in the car, the Corvette's color had to be neutral and not reflect too much light. It had to work with the film crew's lighting scheme.

Episode For Class - Journey To Nineveh

Aired September 28, 1962 - Season 3

The tire chasing Buster Keaton is reminiscent of Keaton's rock tumbling down a hillside sequence from *Seven Chances* silent feature.

Filmed at Iverson Ranch - 1 Iverson Lane, Chatsworth, California (Iverson Pond fishing) and Lake Sherwood, California, USA

Tod shows no interest in the fishing taking place all during the episode, leaving it to Jonah and Buz to fish. In real life, Martin Milner was such an avid fisherman that he hosted his own radio show, "Let's Talk Hook-Up".

Martin Milner (Tod Stiles) - was born in Detroit, Michigan. While in the Army, Milner was encouraged by fellow soldier and future actor David Janssen to pursue an acting career. After his military service ended, Milner had a recurring role on *The Life Of Riley* from 1953 to 1958. He also made guest appearances on many television shows including *The Great Gildersleeve*, *Westinghouse Desilu Playhouse*, *The Twilight Zone*, *Wagon Train* and *Rawhide*.

In 1960, Milner was cast as Tod Stiles on the television series *Route 66* which ran from 1960 to 1964. By the mid-1960s, Milner and Jack Webb had a long-established working relationship. In 1968, Milner returned to television as LAPD veteran uniform patrol Officer Pete Malloy in *Adam-12*, a Webb-produced police drama. The series ran from 1968 to 1975.

George Maharis (Buz Murdock) - got his first break as an actor on the television comedy series *Mister Peepers*.

In 1960, Maharis co-starred with Martin Milner in *Route 66*. His work earned him an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Series in 1962. After appearing in 82 episodes, Maharis left the series during the third season, citing health problems.

Buster Keaton (Jonah Butler) - Joseph Frank Keaton was born in Piqua, Kansas. Keaton got the nickname Buster at the age of 18 months, after falling down a long flight of stairs without

injuring himself. An actor friend named George Pardey remarked, "Gee whiz, he's a regular buster!" At the age of three, Keaton began performing with his parents in *The Three Keatons*.

In February of 1917, he met Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle at the Talmadge Studios in New York City. Keaton was a natural in his first film *The Butcher Boy*. He was hired on the spot. Keaton appeared in a total of 14 Arbuckle short comedies through 1920.

Keaton made a cameo appearance in *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*. He starred in five films for American International Pictures: *Pajama Party*, *Beach Blanket Bingo*, *How To Stuff A Wild Bikini* and *Sergeant Deadhead*. Keaton's last role was in *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*.

Joe E. Brown (Sam Butler) - Brown had a cameo appearances in the motion pictures *Around The World In 80 Days* and *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*. His best known role was that of aging millionaire Osgood Fielding III in the 1959 comedy *Some Like It Hot*. Another memorable role was that of Cap'n Andy Hawks in the 1951 remake of *Show Boat*.

Joe E. Brown and Buster Keaton also appeared together in the television episode titled "The Silent Partner" of the series *Screen Director's Playhouse* which aired on December 21, 1955.

Jenny Maxwell (Suzy Butler) - Sadly, Jenny Maxwell is probably remembered more for the way she died than her film and television appearances.

In 1958, Maxwell was discovered by film director Vincente Minnelli. He had brought her to Hollywood, where she auditioned for a role in *Some Came Running*. Maxwell did not get this part, but was offered guest star roles in television. She appeared in television series such as *Bachelor Father*, *Father Knows Best* and *Bonanza*. In 1961, she had a role in *Blue Hawaii* with Elvis Presley. Though she was not the film's female lead, Maxwell did appear in several of its main scenes. Maxwell continued frequently appearing in television roles throughout the 1960's, mainly in guest star roles.

Maxwell married Ervin M. Roeder, a successful attorney who was 21 years her senior, on February 15, 1970 in Los Angeles. According to Jenny's friends, the marriage was a disaster. By 1978, Jenny decided she was done, but was encouraged by her lawyer to wait until the marriage had lasted ten years so she could get a larger community property settlement. By 1981, they had separated a couple of times and Maxwell had already filed for dissolution. They were living apart at that time.

Ervin "Tip" Roeder was furious that Maxwell would receive a large divorce settlement. Trying to avoid this financial issue, he approached some of his "associates" about retaining a person to kill Jenny. To hide his involvement, Roeder himself was to be shot but only wounded.

On June 9, 1981, Maxwell had a minor surgery at a hospital. Her soon-to-be ex-husband offered to drive her home from the hospital. On June 10th, Maxwell and Roeder had lunch at a restaurant together. Afterwards, they drove to Roeder's residence in Beverly Hills. When they arrived, someone shot both Maxwell and Roeder. When Roeder called for help, Maxwell was already dead. The wound to Roeder's abdomen was fatal and he died a

few hours after the shooting. A more detailed account can be found in the book *Murder of an Elvis Girl: Solving The Jenny Maxwell Case* by Buddy Moorehouse.

Edgar Buchanan (Magistrate Abe Chumley) - In television, Buchanan's roles as a regular cast member in television programs included Red Connors in the Western *Hopalong Cassidy* and J.J. Jackson in the crime drama *Cade's County*. Buchanan is best remembered as Uncle Joe Carson in all 222 episodes of *Petticoat Junction*. He was the only actor from the show to do this. Buchanan was also in 17 episodes of *Green Acres* and three episodes of *The Beverly Hillbillies*.

Guy Raymond (Constable) - On television, Raymond portrayed Cliff Murdock the *90 Bristol Court* series trilogy in *Harris Against the World*, *Karen and Tom*, *Dick and Mary*. His Murdock character was the only one who appeared in all three of the programs. Raymond was married to actress Ann Morgan Guilbert who was Millie on *The Dick Van Dyke Show*.

John Astin (Gas Station Attendant) - is best remembered as Gomez Addams in *The Addams Family*.

He played submarine commander Matthew Sherman on the television series *Operation Petticoat*. Astin also made several appearances in the first two seasons of *Murder, She Wrote*.

David Lowell Rich (Director) - directed nearly 100 motion pictures and television episodes between 1950 and 1987. In addition to the 21 episodes of *Route 66* he directed, his credits also include *Ben Casey*, *The Twilight Zone*, *The Alfred Hitchcock*

Hour and Marcus Welby, M.D. He is the brother of sitcom director John Rich who directed 41 episodes of *The Dick Van Dyke Show* and 81 episodes of *All in the Family* during his nearly 50 year career.

REFERENCES

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What Really Happened to 1960s Starlet Jenny Maxwell?