

## 77 Sunset Strip

**Episode for class:** Once Upon A Caper aired on Friday evening, February 10, 1961 at 9:00PM on ABC. (Season 3 Episode 22)

The character of detective Stuart Bailey was first used by writer Roy Huggins in his 1946 novel *The Double Take* and later adapted into the 1948 film *I Love Trouble*.

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At the time, Private Detective programs were very popular at Warner Brothers: *77 Sunset Strip* (Los Angeles), *Bourbon Street Beat* (New Orleans), *Surfside 6* (Miami) and *Hawaiian Eye* (Hawaii) were all on the air during this period.

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### Broadcast History

- Friday at 9:30–10:30 PM on ABC:  
October 10, 1958 – May 29, 1959; **Season 1**  
October 12, 1962 – June 14, 1963 **Season 5**
- Friday at 9:00–10:00 PM on ABC:  
October 2, 1959 – June 29, 1962 **Season 2, 3, 4**
- Friday at 7:30–8:30 PM on ABC:  
September 20, 1963 – February 7, 1964 **Season 6**

## The Reboot that never was:

Warner Brothers decided on a remake of the television series itself and filmed two pilots, in 1995 and 1996, both of which were never aired.

**77 Sunset Strip** (1995) Unaired television pilot centered on Los Angeles detectives Spencer Bailey (Maria Bello), Scott Baker (Jim Caviezel) and Timothy Olyphant as Kookie filmed as a remake of *77 Sunset Strip* (1958). No reference is made to the original characters of the series, only the address.

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## The Cast

**Efrem Zimbalist, Jr.** (Stuart Bailey) - His father Efrem Zimbalist, was a concert violinist, composer, conductor and director of the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

In New York and made his Broadway acting debut in *The Rugged Path*, starring Spencer Tracy.

In 1956, he was put under contract by Warner Bros. and moved to Hollywood. Zimbalist's first recurring role in a Warner Bros. Television series was as a gambler "Dandy Jim Buckley" on *Maverick*, opposite James Garner in 1957. He made five appearances as the character.

After ~~77~~ *Sunset Strip*, Zimbalist was best remembered for his starring role as Inspector Lewis Erskine in the Quinn Martin television production *The F.B.I.*, which premiered on September 19, 1965 and aired its final episode on September 8, 1974.

During the 1980's, Zimbalist also had a recurring role as Daniel Chalmers, a white-collar con man, on his daughter Stephanie Zimbalist's television detective series *Remington Steele*. He also was seen in the television dramatic series *Hotel*.

In December 1941, Zimbalist married his first wife, Emily Munroe McNair. They had two children, Efrem "Skip" Zimbalist III and Nancy. In January 1950, Emily died from cancer.

In 1956, Zimbalist married Loranda Stephanie Spalding. Loranda's middle name was given to their daughter, actress Stephanie Zimbalist.

**Roger Smith** (Jeff Spencer) - appeared with Charles Bickford in "The Daniel Barrister Story" on *Wagon Train*. His greatest film exposure was the role of the adult Patrick Dennis in *Auntie Mame* with Rosalind Russell. He also played James Cagney's (as Lon Chaney) character's son (Creighton) in *Man Of A Thousand Faces*. He left *77 Sunset Strip* in 1962 because of a blood clot in his brain. He recovered from this after surgery.

Smith was married to Victoria Shaw during his time on *77 Sunset Strip*. Shaw was featured in an episode title *The Down Under Caper* which was written by Smith. They divorced in 1965. Smith married Ann-Margaret in 1967. Following his retirement from performing, he managed his wife's career and produced her Las Vegas stage shows. Their marriage lasted for 50 years until Smith's passing in 2017.

**Edd Byrnes** (Gerald Lloyd Kookson, III) - was born Edward Byrne Breitenberger. When Edd was fifteen, he dropped his surname (Breitenberger) in favor of Byrnes.

On 77 Sunset Strip, he played the character Gerald Lloyd Kookson, III aka Kookie. Edd had issues with the restrictions in his Warner Brothers contract, which forced him to turn down roles in *Ocean's 11* (1960), *North to Alaska* (1960) and *Río Bravo* (1959).

He walked off the ~~77~~ *Sunset Strip* set and in the ensuing months began to drink heavily and visit a psychiatrist, who administered drugs to him. His contract dispute was eventually settled, though not much to his advantage, and when he returned to "77 Sunset Strip" his role was upgraded from "sidekick" to "partner" and he wore a suit and tie. Audience reaction was not good, ratings dropped, and the show was canceled. The hip-talking, hair-combing image clung to him. Edd felt he lost the lead in *PT 109* (1963) because President John F. Kennedy didn't want to be played by "Kookie".

Byrnes appeared in episodes of *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*; *Burke's Law* and *Kraft Suspense Theatre*. He also made a pilot for a TV series titled *Kissin' Cousins*, based on the Elvis Presley film of the same name, with Byrnes taking the part of the lieutenant played by Presley in the film. However, it did not go to series.

On August 28, 1974, Merv Griffin hired Edd Byrnes to host the second and third episodes of the pilot for a new game-show called *Wheel of Fortune*. Two half-hour pilots were filmed. NBC bought the show, but didn't want Byrnes as host. Griffin replaced him with Chuck Woolery (1975 - 1981). He was later replaced with Pat Sajak (1981 - present). Susan Stafford was the hostess from 1975 to 1982. Vanna White joined the show permanently in December of 1982.

Through the 1970's and 1980's, Byrnes appeared in several of television series in guest roles. One of his later memorable roles was that of the Dick Clark-like dance-show host Vince Fontaine, of National Bandstand, in the 1978 movie *Grease*.

**Jacqueline Beer** (Suzanne Fabry) - was was Miss France in the 1954 Miss Universe Pageant. Soon after winning the Miss France contest, Beer signed a contract with Paramount Pictures. Her American film debut came in 1956 when she had an uncredited role as a model in the Bob Hope comedy *That Certain Feeling*. She also played Marianne in war drama *Screaming Eagles* in 1956 and Monique Souvir in the mystery/thriller *The Prize* in 1963.

Beer played the French switchboard operator who handled the phones for Sunset Answering Service, in Suite 103. The firm of Bailey & Spencer employs her answering service, as do other clients. Although she was not technically an employee of the firm, Suzanne was involved in casework from time to time, especially during Season 2.

Beer married Jean Antoine Garcia Roady, an accountant, on November 26, 1955. They had two sons and a daughter. In 1991, Beer married adventurer Thor Heyerdahl, and became part of his work, using her skills as an amateur photographer. Since his death in 2002, she has remained active in the Thor Heyerdahl Research Centre in Aylesbury, UK and is Chair of the Board of Directors.

**Louis Quinn** - began his career as a radio personality, hosting variety shows and writing comedy for Milton Berle and Don McNeill's Breakfast Club.

His writing career began at Warner Bros., where director Bryan Foy signed him as a writer in August 1940. He was the writer for seven feature films before he went into the military during World War II.

Quinn played mostly supporting roles in films. He was also the emcee for the premiere of *Mary Poppins* at Grauman's Chinese Theatre on August 27, 1964, though he did not appear in the film itself.

He was married to actress Christine Nelson, who appeared in four episodes of *77 Sunset Strip*. They were featured together in the episode titled *The Long Shot Caper* which aired on March 23, 1962. They also appeared together as lighthouse keepers "Mr. and Mrs. Keeper" in the *Batman* TV episode *The Joke's on Catwoman* in 1968.

In *77 Sunset Strip* comic relief is provided by Quinn's character Roscoe as the racetrack tout who frequently hangs around the offices giving horse-racing tips. However, he is sometimes used as an operative and is an ever-informed source for the word on the street.

**Frankie Ortega** - released *Swingin' Abroad* on Jubilee Records in 1958 and he composed the theme music for the television series *King of Diamonds* starring Broderick Crawford in 1961. He and his trio are best remembered for their frequent appearances as the house band at Dino's Lodge on *77 Sunset Strip*.

**Richard Long** - When his Rex Randolph character from *Bourbon Street Beat* was shifted to *77 Sunset Strip* in 1960, it marked the first time a character from one series was moved to another already established series. His character was said to have left New Orleans and relocated to North Hollywood, joining Bailey and

Spencer's firm and taking Office 104. The character was dropped after one season, but Long (once again playing different one-shot guest characters) was seen again on 77 Sunset Strip in Seasons 5 and 6.

In 1965, at the age of 38, Long began his role as attorney Jarrod Barkley, the oldest son of rancher Victoria Barkley played by Barbara Stanwyck, in 112 episodes of *The Big Valley*, a Western that ran on ABC from 1965 to 1969. The series was set in the 1870s. Long also directed 2 episodes of *The Big Valley*. In 1953, Long had costarred with Stanwyck in the film *All I Desire*.

From 1970 to 1971, Long and Juliet Mills starred in the ABC sitcom *Nanny and the Professor*

**Robert Logan** - pursued sports in high school and was attending the University of Arizona on a baseball scholarship when he was discovered by a Warner Bros. talent agent. He was cast in various Warner Bros. TV shows such as *Maverick* and *Surfside 6*.

When Kookie advanced to being a full-fledged investigator on 77 Sunset Strip, Logan became the newly hip, slang-speaking parking attendant J.R. Hale for seasons 4 and 5.

Later, Logan acted in a full season playing frontiersman Jericho Jones on *Daniel Boone* in 1964. During the 1970's and 1980's, Logan appeared in various films and television guest roles.

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## 77 Sunset Strip Location

For several years the 1930's, 8524 Sunset Blvd. was the Asia Bazaar, an imported goods shop owned by modern dance pioneer

Ruth St. Denis that sold oriental fabrics and antiques. It was later taken over for use as an auction house by the adjacent David Tennant Galleries. After Tennant moved out at the end of May 1945, the space became Charochka, one of two Russian restaurants on the Strip at the time. It was here through the end of 1947.

By the early fifties the space had been renamed, remodeled and opened as a dining spot called the Alpine Lodge. By May 1954, 8524 was reopening as Club Trocadero.

It was renamed Dino's Lodge in 1958. Dean Martin did not own the lodge. His name was used and Martin received a percentage for the use of his name. In February 1962, Martin severed all ties with the restaurant.

In reality, "77 Sunset Strip" office was the Mary Webb Davis Modeling Agency located at 8532 West Sunset Boulevard in then west Los Angeles and now West Hollywood. This location may have been the best known location of its time. Fans were keenly aware of "77 Sunset Strip."

What we discover as we walked under the white awning and opened the door to the Mary Webb Davis Modeling Agency was only a long stairway to the offices above street level. There was nothing more than the entryway and stairway at street level. No Bailey and Spencer offices. The offices were filmed on the Warner Brothers Studios lot in Burbank, California.

"Chez Denis" (Shay-Da-Knee) restaurant succeeded Dino's (1978 to 1983). "Chez Denis" maintained the same exterior and interior look of Dino's.

"77 Sunset Strip" ended its run in 1964. The Mary Webb Davis building was succeeded by the Tiffany Theater in November 1966.



The Tiffany opened on November 2, 1966 and was owned by producer Robert L. Lippert and veteran exhibitor Harold Goldman.

On June 10, 1977, the Tiffany began showing *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* at midnight on Friday and Saturday nights. It rapidly became a hub of the Rocky Horror cult while remaining a prime destination for a variety of overlooked films, new and old.

As Rocky Horror became more popular, the crowds grew and 2 AM shows were added on Friday and Saturday nights. The Tiffany closed its doors after its final midnight screening of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* on March 13, 1983.

The Tiffany's facade remained relatively unchanged until May 1997, when the theater was shut down for interior improvements and an exterior redesign, modernizing the look by covering the upstairs suite windows with stucco. It reopened in September of the same year. All that remained to commemorate these original 77 Sunset Strip sites was a sidewalk plaque.

Since then, a major new construction began, giving the Strip an entirely different appearance. The plaque was carefully removed, intact, with the assurance that it will be, once again, placed in front of the new building at 8524 as part of the completed construction in 2017.

### **The plaque reads:**

The Warner Brothers Television Series

"77 Sunset Strip"

Filmed On This Site

From October 19, 1958 To February 7, 1964

Season 6 of *77 Sunset Strip* exterior was filmed at the Bradbury Building located at 304 South Broadway, Los Angeles, California 90013.

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## **REFERENCES**

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Vintage Los Angeles: What Ever Happened to Dino's Lounge?  
By Alison Martino

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