

GEORGE CARLIN BIOGRAPHY

George Carlin began his professional career in radio (KJOE in Shreveport, LA) in July 1956 at the age of 19 while serving in the USAF. The turning point for Carlin came in Fort Worth, Texas (1959) on KXOL. Together with newsman Jack Burns, he started developing comedy routines for an eventual nightclub act. Burns and Carlin stayed together for two years, eventually making a first appearance on *The Tonight Show* with Jack Paar. During this period, George met Brenda Hosbrook, whom he married in 1961.

In 1963, Carlin branched out to folk clubs and coffee houses where the audiences were more progressive, and he focused on the mainstream and the more outspoken, irreverent routines that were closer to his heart. Ironically, it was in the folk/jazz setting that he developed the first bits that got him on television, the ultimate establishment medium. "The Indian Sergeant," "Wonderful Wino," and "Hippy Dippy Weatherman" were all born during this period, as was George and Brenda's only daughter, Kelly.

Carlin burst onto the television scene in the mid '60s, making 58 television appearances in '65 and '66 alone. In 1967 he released his first album, *Take-Offs and Put-Ons* and began the transition to acting, his original goal. However, a guest shot on *That Girl* and a part in the Doris Day film *With Six You Get Egg-Roll* only served to make him feel that he wasn't quite ready for acting, and so he concentrated on his stand-up career.

Because of the influence television was having on his career, Carlin's material grew bland and safe and he increasingly felt bored and dissatisfied with his material. By 1970, the self-imposed restrictions no longer applied; his acting career had been put on hold, and the country was changing. The people who had inhabited the folk clubs and coffee houses of the early '60s were now the "counterculture," a large, ready-made audience which shared many of Carlin's out-of-step attitudes and opinions, and he began to drift in their direction. The irreverent tone returned to his material, he grew a beard, and began to dress more casually. However, the "new" George Carlin didn't sit well with the middle-class audiences nor with the nightclub owners. A series of incidents with audiences and club owners that year culminated in his being fired from the Frontier Hotel in September for saying the word "shit." From then on, his comic identity became more and more associated with the counterculture.

In 1972, a recording contract led to the release of *FM & AM*, an album which won a Grammy Award after going gold. It was the first of four successive gold albums that Carlin recorded during the first half of the 1970s. Ten of his "original" albums have been nominated for Grammys.

Carlin gained wide exposure for his stand-up routines on cable television, specifically Home Box Office. In 1977, he taped *On Location: George Carlin at USC*, a special at the California campus which initiated an unprecedented string of nine HBO comedy concert broadcasts, including the highly regarded *Carlin at Carnegie*, taped in New York in 1982. Carlin won Cable Ace Awards for *Doin' It Again* in 1990, and in 1992 for *Jammin'*

in New York. He also received an Emmy nomination for that performance. The CD from that show won him the 1993 Grammy Award for Best Spoken-Word Comedy Album.

In 1984, Carlin published his first book, *Sometimes a Little Brain Damage Can Help*, and in 1987, he was awarded a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame. In 1992, Carlin earned two Emmy nominations playing the part of Mister Conductor on the critically acclaimed children's show, *Shining Time Station*, seen nationally on PBS. In January 1994, *The George Carlin Show* premiered on FOX TV. Twenty-seven shows were produced before its cancellation one year later. In 1996, Carlin once again took to the stage of the famed Paramount Theater in New York City for the taping of an HBO Comedy Concert, *Back in Town*, which was nominated for a Cable Ace Award. A CD from that concert was released in September 1996.

In 1997, Carlin celebrated 40 years in show business, 20 years of HBO specials, and his 60th birthday. In February, HBO devoted an entire week to George Carlin specials, in conjunction with the Aspen Comedy Festival, which included the special *George Carlin: 40 Years of Comedy*. In March, he released a 90-minute video tape entitled *George's Best Stuff*, featuring highlights from his nine HBO specials. George Carlin still performs over 100 concert dates a year throughout the country.