

# Actor-Comedian Profiled



WALTER BURRELL

## Hollywood Happenings

God isn't what he used to be.

For one thing, he's lost 116 pounds in less than a year, which is a spectacular change in itself. For another, he has more color TV sets than he knows what to do with. And he has terribly flat feet.

God, of course, is what he's called by his intimate friends. You probably know him as the inimitable Godfrey Cambridge, popular actor-comedian who began his show business career as a professional laughter in television audiences.

DESPITE GODFREY'S mounting success as both a nightclub performer and movie personality, the really big thing is his life these days is his diet.

"But don't think having lost 116 pounds doesn't have its bad side," he says. "I just finished a movie titled 'The President's Analyst' and since I was so big they made me a present of the wardrobe I wore in the film.

"The only problem was that as I continued to lose weight the clothes didn't fit, so I gave them back to Paramount Studios. I wonder if that makes me an Indian receiver?"

Another gift Godfrey received for appearing in "The President's Analyst" was a color TV set, which he promptly placed in his home next to the other three sets he's received for appearances in other films, including "The Silent Treatment," "The Biggest Bundle of Them All," "The Busy Body," "Bye, Bye Braverman" and two TV shows, "The Monkees" and "The Pat Boone Show."

ONE OF THE less publicized facts about Godfrey is that he's an accomplished writer, having recently completed a book titled "Put Downs And Put Ons." He's also contributed to the script of an upcoming movie, "Pardon Me, Sir, Is My Eye Hurting Your Elbow?"

"The marvelous thing about being a comedian, whether as a writer or a performer," notes God, "is that when you get mad at someone you can turn it into something funny and still get your point across."

This is clearly evident when Godfrey speaks out on any issue, as he did when I spent the evening with him recently in Hollywood. His comments are hilariously funny, yet strike home deeply, as in the following excerpts from his never-ceasing dialogue.

On the war: "Recently, when a G.I. met a Viet Cong in the bush, he yelled 'the devil with Ho Chi Min'. The Viet Cong yelled back 'the devil with Johnson'. While they were shaking hands a tank ran over both of them and the G.I. wound up getting a Purple Heart."

Interracial accidents: "A white woman ran into my car outside the Chateau Marmont Hotel in Hollywood the other day, jumped out of her car, ran over to me and said 'I'm married to a Negro'. I said 'that's great--I'll give you 2% off."

The Supreme Court: "I'm glad to see the Supreme Court has finally made interracial marriages legal. I'm certain that mulattoes across the country were reassured when they heard the news, too."

Negro crime: "Our soul brothers should move away from that violent kind of crime (which we're doing quite well in, by the way) and get into that white collar type of mass thievery. The middle class whites have been stealing for years, but they know how to make it profitable--and not get caught."

Negro leadership: "All you need to be a Negro 'leader' these days is five dollars and a new suit, because the whites will listen to anybody, so long as he says what they want to hear."

Hippies: "They're basically a white, middle class manifestation. It's quite disconcerting to



(Walter Burrell reports recent interview with Comedian Godfrey Cambridge in his "Hollywood Happenings" feature)

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go shopping in Beverly Hills, see a barefoot white boy and realize you're not in a poverty area."

Black self-determination: "It's simple: If I'm not for me, who will be? And if not now, then when?"

AND HOW does Godfrey maintain his steady flow of material? "I do my own writing," he says. Some of it is taken from tapes--I tape all of my shows so I won't lose any new material. Other stuff is gleaned from everyday experiences.

"That's why I'll drive to places rather than take a plane sometimes. Maybe something interesting will happen along the way, like the radiator may boil over and I'll have to spit on it."

Still other material comes from the "think sessions" he puts himself through in his home study room, and from the tremendous amount of daily reading he does.

Whatever the source, Godfrey MacArthur Cambridge has moved the American public as no other comedian has. Fellow comedian Buddy Hackett put it quite well when he said he'd rather "watch Cambridge on a bare stage than Lady Godiva bare on a horse." Millions of people would readily agree.

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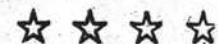
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