

Eddie Hodges

Titles: 7 Sources: 2 Stills: 11

Born: Hattiesburg, Mississippi; March 5th 1947



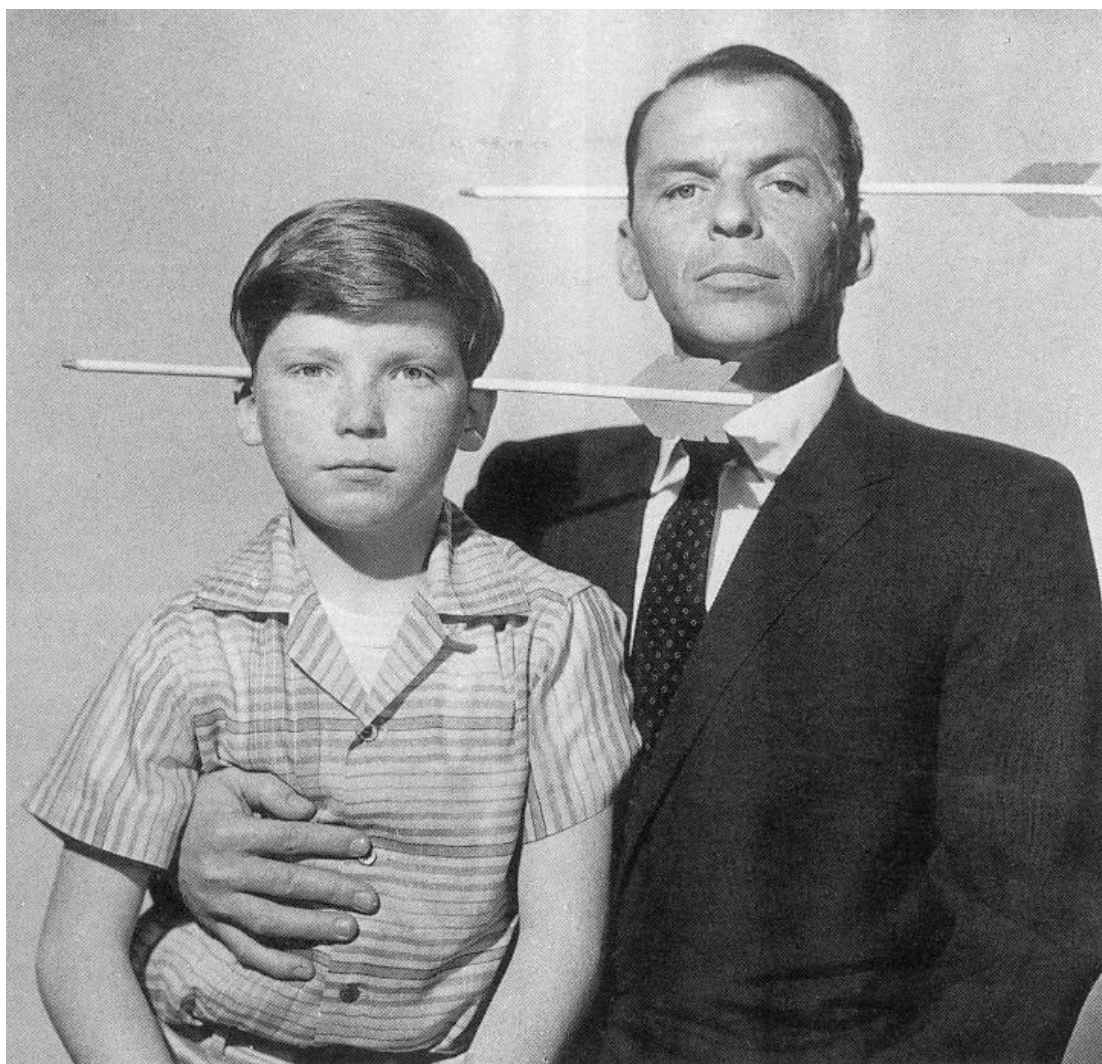
*Not all boy – or so the Variety critic judged – Hodges as an imperfect but jolly Huckleberry Finn
Source: original front-of-house still*

The Moving Picture Boy entry:

““Redhead Eddie’s family moved to New York in 1953. He appeared on TV in **"The Jackie Gleason Show"**, and then on **"Name That Tune"** where he won himself a \$25,000 prize. Soon afterwards he was playing on Broadway in *"The Music Man"*, before being cast as Frank Sinatra’s son in **"A HOLE IN THE HEAD"** and joining him in the joyous duet "High Hopes".

He was too young and too well-washed, though, to be up to playing Huck Finn opposite Archie Moore (who himself packed too light a punch on this occasion). They both did their best.

Later, like Johnny Crawford, Eddie became better known as a singer than an actor. His first hit was "I’m Gonna Knock on Your Door", and (perhaps in an effort to up-Huck himself) he recorded the original version of "Ain’t Gonna Wash For a Week". His last appearance in the charts was in 1965.



*"Everyone knows that ants - can't - move a rubber tree plant". While shooting **"A HOLE IN THE HEAD"** Hodges and Frank Sinatra lodge a firm complaint with the producers of *Robin Hood* in the studio next door.*

Source: The Moving Picture Boy

On screen, he was in **"C'MON, LET'S LIVE A LITTLE"** (67), **"THE HAPPIEST MILLIONAIRE"** (67) and **"LIVE A LITTLE, LOVE A LITTLE"** (68)."

Spurious "from his own lips" article in **The Film Show Annual** c1960:

"When I was chosen to play Huck in **"THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN"**, it was the happiest day in my life.

I'd always wanted to act the part since first reading the book a few years ago. It took me a full year to finally finish the story because I kept re-reading chapters that I liked as I went along.

I remember how excited I was playing and singing in *"The Music Man"* with Robert Preston on the stage in New York. And it was sure fun being with Frank Sinatra in the movie **"A HOLE IN THE HEAD"**. But you might say playing *"Huckleberry Finn"* was a dream come true.

There were lots of things I liked about being in the movie. Of course, I had always heard of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios - where the picture was made - and it was fun being there for the first time. All the people on the set - like Samuel Goldwyn Jr, the producer; Michael Curtiz, the director and all the cast and crew - were very helpful to me.

Just being Huck for a little while was really great. I'd never travelled down a river in a raft, but sure did a lot of it up on the



Hodges' **"ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN"** was an insipid but colourful version, pruned of the darker elements of the story, but one of its saving graces was a warm and tender performance from ex-boxer Archie Moore as runaway slave Jim. He did not evince the anachronistic self-possession of many later black actors in the role.

Source: original front-of-house still

Sacramento River where we made some of the picture. That's something I'd always wanted to do.

Later in the movie I pretend to be the World's Youngest Lion Tamer in a circus. That's when I got a chance to play with lots of animals, besides having the fun of being an impostor. That was real sneaky. And in the circus scenes I met Buster Keaton and Andy Devine, two actors I certainly admire.

My girl friend in the movie was Patty McCormack, who was in *"The Bad Seed"* on Broadway. She's sure a good actress and lots of fun. But I didn't get a chance to be with her too much during shooting because both of us still go to school, and for three hours a day had to go to class on the set. However, the movie was still filming at Hallowe'en time, and Patty came to a goblin party I gave at the Beverly Hills home I was staying in with my mother, father and sister.

Talking about school, my sister Diane and I have a tutor, Mr Jenkin, who travels with us wherever we go. Diane doesn't want to be an

actress, but we like to study together. Our home town is Hattiesburg, Mississippi, but most of the time we're in New York or Hollywood for television and motion pictures.

Perhaps my biggest thrill in working in **"HUCK FINN"** was meeting and getting to know Archie Moore, the world's light heavy-weight boxing champion. He plays his first film role as the runaway slave, Jim.

Archie and I have many scenes together and, of course, we are the ones who start out together on the raft down the Mississippi River. Later we're joined by Tony Randall and Mickey Shaughnessy, who are real characters. They play impostors in the film and call themselves "The King" and "The Duke" and they were really funny.

Archie and I became good friends during the filming and I used to kid him about his swimming. We have to go into the water several times in the movie, but Archie doesn't like the water too much. He never really learned to swim.

Archie would teach me how to box between scenes when I didn't have to go to school.

I'll never forget playing Huck and I hope they decide to make a picture of "The Further Adventures of Huckleberry Finn". I'll do the part again, if they want me."

What the Critics said:

"Good version of Twain's story with an appealing Hodges (Huck) and excellent Archie Moore (Jim)." — **Leonard Maltin**

"To celebrate the 75th anniversary of Mark Twain's book... Samuel Goldwyn Jr produced **"THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN"** with Eddie Hodges a sprightly Huck and world lightweight champion Archie Moore surprisingly good as Jim."
— **The MGM Story**

"Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn is all boy. Eddie Hodges' Huck isn't. Therein lurks the basic reason this production of the Twain classic is not all it could, and should, be. There is something artificial and self-conscious about young Hodges' all-important portrayal of Huck, a lack of actor-character chemistry for which he's certainly not wholly responsible. An equal share of the rap must be shouldered by director Michael Curtiz, not only for the youthful star's shortcomings in the role, but for a general slack, a disturbing shortage of vitality noticeable at several key junctures." - **Variety**

FILMOGRAPHY

<i>Year</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Role</i>
--		The Jackie Gleason Show	US TV
--		Name That Tune	US TV gameshow – he won \$25,000
59	12	A HOLE IN THE HEAD	
60	13	THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN	in title role <i>with Patty McCormack, Sherry Jackson</i>
62	15	ADVISE AND CONSENT	
62		JOHNNY SHILOH	<i>with Kevin Corcoran</i>
62		SUMMER MAGIC	<i>with Hayley Mills</i>
67	20	C'MON, LET'S LIVE A LITTLE	
67		THE HAPPIEST MILLIONAIRE	
68	21	LIVE A LITTLE, LOVE A LITTLE	