

HI-FI PARTY WITH EDDIE GORODETSKY

By

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A TRUE STORY

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HI-FI PARTY WITH EDDIE GORODETSKY

Scene: 1

INTRO

VOICE: EDDIE GORODETSKY PROMO

JAIL BAIT JONES

It's the *Dreamtime* podcast with your host, Fred Bals

MUSIC: TURN YOUR RADIO ON

FRED

Lights off, windows open to the summer night,
half-asleep on the lounge chair, big old Maine Coon cat
stretched across my body, radio on.

Radio on, and sometimes I dream.

I dream of a woman in red smoking a cigarette. She
stands on a balcony and watches the city spread below
her. Soon she'll walk into the lobby of the Abernathy
Building, take the elevator up to the 8th floor and go
into Studio B.

Just close your eyes and you can see it as well as I
can. Unchanged since the '50s, mike dangling down from
the ceiling, peeling walls of sound insulation, two
turntables framing the empty deejay's chair.

Tex Carbone behind the glass, working at his sound
panel. The lady in red in a separate sound booth,
leaning into the microphone, huskily whispering out...

VOICE: ELLEN BARKIN

It's Night in the Big City.

FRED

No, I'm wrong. That's not what I see. That's not what
I hear.

SOUND: "BACK WHERE I COME FROM"

FRED

There's a banty rooster of a young man who has come up
to take the mike instead. He adjusts his guitar and
begins playing "Dusty Ol' Dust."

As he launches into the refrain of "So long, it's been
good to know yah," an announcer steps up to a second
microphone and reads...

VOICE: ANNOUNCER

(CONTINUED)

"You've been listening to 'Back Where I Come From.' Tonight's theme has been "The Weather," with Woody Guthrie....

FRED

"Weather? But, that song was from the 'Goodbye' show, wasn't it?" I ask the oblivious cat.

He stares at me, examines a paw, begins to clean himself. The voice on the radio fades off, static crackling through the air again before Dylan's cornhusker murmur finally resumes, talking about love and marriage.

VOICE: DYLAN FROM THE "WEDDING" EPISODE

VOICE: EDDIE GORODETSKY

EDDIE G.

(SMART-ASS EDDIE G.)

Ah, why a man would want to have one wife is a mystery.

Why he'd want to have two wives is a bigga mystery.

(DYLAN'S VOICE DISSOLVES INTO LAUGHTER)

FRED

"What?" I say, sitting up, cat bouncing off my lap to the floor. "Who?"

The voice continues on, getting more and more maniac.

VOICE: EDDIE GORODETSKY

EDDIE G.

This is going out to all our friends in Framingham, or as we like to say, Mahginmraf!

(THE DEEJAY'S VOICE SEEMS TO HAVE FORSAKEN ANY NEED FOR OXYGEN, WORDS TUMBLING OUT FASTER AND FASTER IN AN AVALANCHE OF ALLITERATION.)

VOICE: EDDIE GORODETSKY

EDDIE G.

Don't forget to listen to Juke Box Saturday Night coming up at 11 o'clock, an eclectic pastiche of various musical idioms spanning the '20s, '30s, '40s, '50s, '60s, and yes-sir-ree-bob, even the '70s. So stay tuned to Juke Box Saturday Night - 11 o'clock till 2 in the morning right here on the Rockin' 88, WERS!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

EDDIE G. (cont'd)

In the meantime, I'm your audio aesthetician, Eddie Gorodetsky, rockin' and rollin', boppin' and strollin', making it outta sight here on a Saturday night.

Won't you stick around? 267-7281! Make a dedication! And I gotta tell you, 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' was for Barbara and Ben Brown, and Lee and... Oh My God, I can't... Lee and Flora and Grady and his girl... who are there listening to **The Hi-Fi Party** tonight!

And if you want to be a member of the radio parade of dedications, 267-7281, and we had a request for some Earl King!

MUSIC: EARL KING: "DARLING HONEY ANGEL CHILD"

SCENE: 2

("DARLING HONEY ANGEL CHILD" FADES OUT AS FRED'S VOICE COMES BACK ON)

FRED

Thirty-one years ago he didn't sound at all like Pierre Mancini.

Boston has always been a good town for radio. Maybe not quite as good as New Orleans or San Francisco, but Boston does okay.

SOUND: WBCN AIRCHECK

FRED

WBCN - the commercial rock-n'roll giant that Eddie Gorodetsky also worked at for a short time - is gone now. But people who loved the Big Mattress, the Cosmic Muffin, Charles Laquidara and his alter-ego, Dwayne Ingalls Glasscock, would tell you that the real 'BCN was gone a long time ago.

WERS-FM, now in its 60th year of operation, was the first non-commercial radio station established in New England, and still serves as a live training ground for students at Boston's Emerson College. One of those students during the late '70s was one Eddie Gorodetsky from Rhode Island.

In 1978 Eddie was broadcasting The Hi-Fi Party on Saturday nights from 7 to 11, later moving the show over to Sundays in 1979, and occasionally sat in as deejay on "Juke Box Saturday Night," the show we just heard Eddie promo.

(MORE)

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FRED (cont'd)

Eddie was also working behind the counter at a variety of record stores, including Cheap Thrills, a long-gone Boston record chain of the '60s and '70s, at their Boylston Street store across from the Prudential Center, home of WBCN.

SOUND: WNCN MATTRESS MISHEGAS

(LAQUIDARA AND SIEGAL WITH EDDIE GORODETSKY)

FRED

Maybe WBCN super-deejay Charles Laquidara walked into Cheap Thrills one day and struck up a conversation with the fast-talkin' kid behind the counter. Maybe Eddie scammed his way into 'BCN. At the time it wouldn't have been too hard, as the Rock of Boston was constantly attracting fresh young meat willing to sleep on studio couches and work for next to nothing as long as they could say they were working at 'BCN.

VOICE: DWAYNE AND DR. CLAIBOURNE

FRED

One way or the other, Eddie picked up a gig at 'BCN, writing sketches and jokes, and doing the occasional on-air turn, sometimes playing the frenetic Dwayne Glasscock's physician, Doctor Claibourne. Dwayne returned the favor in his own fashion, recording a few promos for Eddie's Saturday Night Hi-Fi Party, although he did keep referring to college station WERS as "bush radio."

VOICE: DWAYNE GLASSCOCK PROMO

FRED

From all reports, Eddie cut a dapper figure in those days, reportedly, "dressed to the nines in a zoot suit and carrying a metal suitcase full of 45s and vintage blues albums" wherever he went. He was reputed to be a pretty snazzy, jitter-buggin' fool, too.

VOICE: EDDIE CLIP WITH MENTION OF THE SPEAKEASY

FRED

Dian Shonk, then a waitress at the Cambridge watering hole recalls Eddie on the Speakeasy dance floor,

"...swinging a lovely young girl in a flowing skirt. I turned around with a tray full of empties to see him do a very fancy move where she slid on the floor between his legs and then was [supposed to] shoot back up and continue dancing. Well [Eddie] stepped on her skirt and when she shot back up the skirt stayed on the floor! ... a moment etched into my mind forever."

(CONTINUED)

SOUND: "THANK YOU" CLIP

FRED

Between the zoot suitin' jitter-buggin', deejaying, store clerking, record collecting, acting in Charles Laquidara's awful parody of an Italian art movie, "Nino, Nino, Nino," and generally being a Man Around Beantown, it's small wonder that Eddie reportedly dropped out of Emerson to pursue a full-time career in show biz.

Given that his path would lead from "Saturday Night Live," to David Letterman, to "Dharma and Greg" and "Two-and-a-Half Men," and eventually to "Theme Time Radio Hour," "who could say he made the wrong decision? Certainly not me.

But we're not here to praise Eddie G., nor even to bury him. We're here to take a closer look at another source of that tree with many roots that was Theme Time Radio Hour... its ancestor from the 1970s, Saturday Night Hi-Fi Party with Eddie Gorodetsky.

SOUND: HI-FI PARTY EXCERPTSCENE: 3SOUND: "4-H" CLIP

FRED

Mr. D. never did a promo for the 4-H Club as far as I know, but after listening to a few Hi-Fi Parties, you can sure tell a lot of the music for Theme Time Radio Hour was coming from a certain producer's record collection.

"Zindy Lou," that doo-wopper with the great hook? Our Host played it on the "Women's Names" show. Thirty years earlier Eddie G. was spinning The Chimes on a February Saturday night.

JB Lenoir's "Mama, Talk To Your Daughter"? On the "Mothers" episode. And yep, on that episode of "Hi-Fi Party," too.

Howza 'bout "A Man's Best Friend is His Bed?" Do I need to say it?

Artists like Junior Wells, Buddy and Ella Johnson, Jimmy Rushing?

An obsession with mentioning record labels?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FRED (cont'd)

A name-check of Syd Nathan, fast-talkin' owner of King Records?

A taste for corny old jokes? We already heard Eddie G. crack wise on the subject of marriage. Later in the same show he'd dryly point out that you'd never go hungry in the Gobi Desert, "because of the sand which is there."

We pause for your groan.

SOUND: "POPEYE PLAYED FOR A SUCKER"

FRED

If you're a fan of Theme Time Radio Hour, sooner or later you'll ask the question...

"How much involvement did Bob Dylan actually have with the show?"

The answer is, *"Probably not as much as the Sirius XM publicity machine would like you to think that he did..."*

VOICE: SEINFELD CLIP

FRED

"... not that there's anything wrong with that."

And there's not.

While Mr. D. probably wasn't scribbling out playlists or hunting through his record collection for "A Man's Best Friend Is His Bed," the bottom line is that he still did record the commentary for 100 Theme Time Radio Hours.

At an average 20 minutes of talk for a Theme Time show, that's well over 30 hours of narrative that Bob Dylan had to record, not even counting the time needed to do retakes. And this is a man who was also on tour for most of the show's run, recorded at least one album, was painting and working on the second volume of *Chronicles* and - I hope - on The Hank Williams Project - and God knows what else.

The amazing thing about Theme Time Radio Hour is not that Bob Dylan did it, but that it got done at all.

And without Eddie Gorodetsky, it wouldn't have gotten done.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FRED (cont'd)

So, let's raise our glasses and look 30 years back to the fast-talkin' young deejay of college radio station WERS-FM, host of "The Hi-Fi Party" who was at the start of a journey that would eventually lead to Theme Time Radio Hour.

SOUND: "THANK YOU" CLIP

SOUND: WERS SIGN-OFF

MUSIC: CLOSING THEME