

Exclusive Photo: In Memoriam, Edd Byrnes of ‘77 Sunset Strip’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 16, 2020 - 2:40pm

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CHICAGO – In the strange old days of three TV Networks and the fan-based crossovers that would come out of it, there was Gerald “Kookie” Kookson the Third of the ABC-TV show “77 Sunset Strip” (1958-1964). Kookie loved rock ‘n roll, hair combing and cracking wise like a beatnik. For some reason, he became a break out star and full partner in the private investigation office of the title. Kookie was portrayed by Edd Byrnes, who passed away on January 8th, 2020, at age 87.



Back in the Day: Edd ‘Kookie’ Byrnes
Photo credit: File Photo

Edward Byrne Breitenberger was born in New York City (he dropped the unwieldy last name and added a “d” to Edd when he became an actor). His father died when he was age 13, so he held a number of jobs throughout high school, including as a male prostitute when he was 17. Based in New York City during the early days of television, he started getting roles on series, and eventually moved to Hollywood. He made his major film debut in “Reform School Girls” in 1957, signed with Warner Bros. studio the same year, and then scored “77 Sunset Strip” in 1958. Kookie became his breakout character, and he parlayed it onto the Billboard charts.

His post “Strip” career was marred by a contract dispute with Warners, during which time he lost a number of prominent film roles. Like Rick Dalton in “Once Upon a ...,” he did spaghetti (Italian) westerns in the 1960s, and then mostly TV guests spots up until the 1990s. Because of his connection to the 1950s, he had a role in “Grease.” Edd Byrnes died of natural causes at his home in Santa Monica. Photographer Joe Arce of HollywoodChicago.com took his photo at The Hollywood Show Chicago in 2009.

The source for this article was Wikipedia.com. Edd “Kookie” Byrnes, 1932-2020.



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