

Exclusive Getaway Interview

# Fred Flintstone: he's off drugs and high on life

interview by Lance Progenitor

It's been fifteen years since *The Flintstones* went off the air, bringing down the curtain on a troubled 60's America. For a while, *The Flintstones* served as an icon, a beacon of honesty, virtue and untainted morality for a nation that had lost its way in the morass of Vietnam and civil rights demonstrations. But alas, as the very fabric of American society was being torn apart so too was this Camelot show in the kingdom of Burbank. One by one, all four principal actors met with near disaster or tragedy. In 1970, Wilma Flintstone was found in her Brentwood California home. It was death by "accidental suicide". Soon after, Barney Rubble was racing his new Porsche down a lonely stretch of Arizona highway. His estimated speed was in excess of 150 mph when he barrelled into a Pontiac turning left across the median; death was instantaneous. A drunk Betty Rubble decided to go for a midnight swim after spending the evening on *Flintstones'* producer Joseph Barbera's yacht. Her body washed up on shore hours later. And Fred Flintstone spent two years in a Denver detox ward after an unsuccessful love affair with Cathy Evelyn Smith. She dumped him after meeting his friend John Belushi at a party.

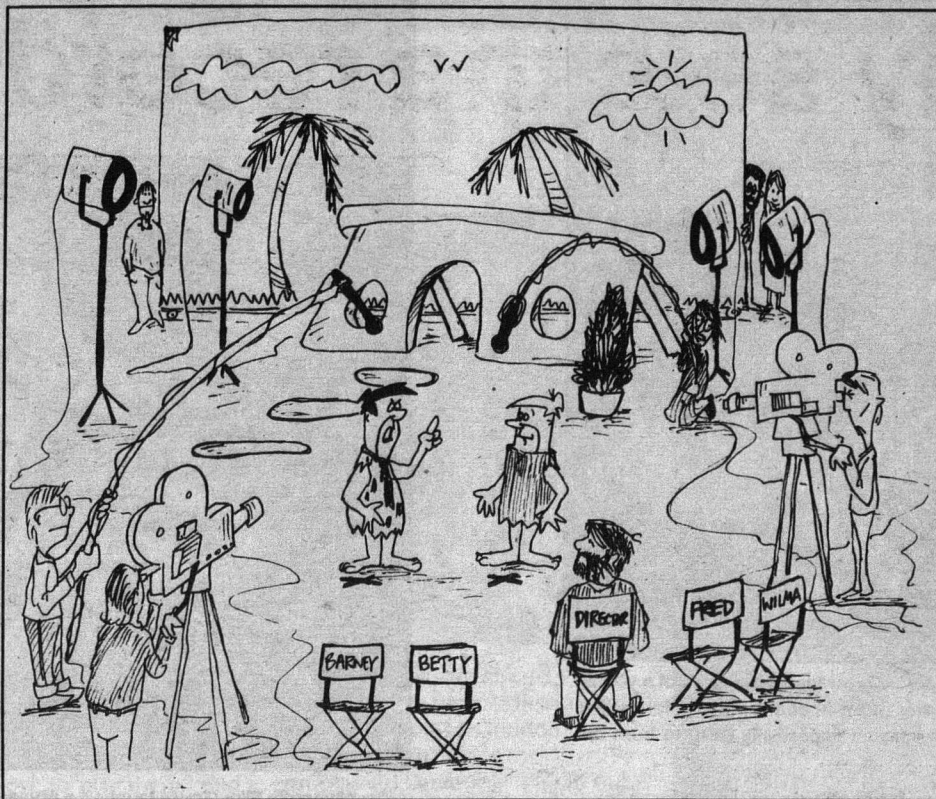
Last week *Getaway* Hollywood correspondent Lance Progenitor visited Mr. Flintstone and his new girlfriend Pia Zadora at their Santa Monica beachhouse and filed this report.

**Getaway:** *The Flintstones* began very slowly, nearly being cancelled by NBC after only a couple of months on the air, yet it slowly found an audience and grew until one year later it was the top rated show in the country.

**"Wilma...had a problem with pills and booze that she just couldn't handle"**

And then...BAM...the bottom fell out. The show was cancelled. What happened?

**Flintstone:** Oh, we had so much fun in the beginning. Things were really hectic. At that



On the set of *The Flintstones*: beacons of honesty and morality living on borrowed time.

time Bill (Hanna) and Joe (Barbera) were still writing the scripts and sometimes we didn't know what we were supposed to do in a scene until just before we shot it.

In the second season it seemed like the sky was the limit. We were the top ranked program and we had the biggest budget of any television show in the 1960's. We started bringing in big name stars — Cary Grant, Ann Margaret, Otto Preminger, Alfred Hitchcock, Hoagey Carmichael, Ed Sullivan. We began to do more location shooting — Hawaii, Accapulco, and Texas. Things were going really well, but deep down we all knew we were living on borrowed time. Wilma was sinking deeper and deeper into an alcoholic haze, showing up later and later to the set. Barney never ceased complaining about the lack of lines he was getting. What was

more, he was one of those method actors. We used to wait ten minutes before every scene just to let Barney "find" his character. Betty and Joe of course were having this torrid affair that only they thought was secret. She had the fewest appearances and least number of lines, yet pulled in a cool \$10,000 per episode. When you consider I was getting \$8,000, well, you knew something was up.

**Getaway:** What was it like to work with Wilma?

**Flintstone:** Wilma was a wonderful lady but she had a problem with pills and booze that she just couldn't handle. When she was sober she was as fine an actress as I've ever seen, but on some mornings it was like she was in a different orbit. She would hold up the entire production as her assistants liter-

ally had to drag her from her trailer to the set. I remember one scene where I had a five minute harrangue to which she only had to feed me one tag line. She slurred the tag line 35 times. Finally we just had her stand there and we dubbed her voice in. It looks awkward because her lips never move but so far as the audience knows its just a splice in the film.

**Getaway:** Do you believe she committed suicide or do you believe the murder theor-

**"In the second season it seemed like the sky was the limit"**

ists. Do you think Robert Kennedy was with her the night she died?

**Flintstone:** Well since RFK was killed in 1968 my guess would be no.

**Getaway:** What did you do after *Flintstones* was cancelled?

**Flintstone:** I travelled the talk show circuit for a bit but that soon petered out. I returned to my first love — stage acting. A couple of off-Broadway plays I was in didn't pan out and I fell into a terrible depression. I hit the New York party circuit and that's where I met Cathy Smith and you media people have certainly presented the rest of that story.

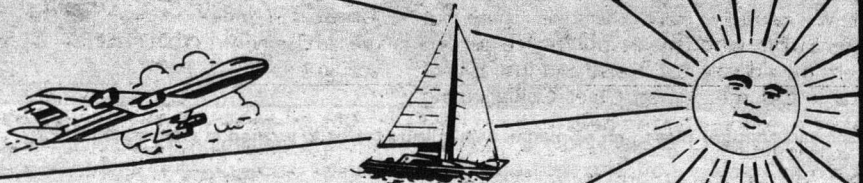
**Getaway:** How are things now? How has this experience changed you?

**Flintstone:** Well as they say, I'm off drugs and high on life. After I got out of Denver I met Pia and now see life in a totally different perspective. She is definitely my strength.

**Getaway:** If you had to pick one accomplishment of *The Flintstones* that you're most proud of, what would it be?

**Flintstone:** This may sound strange but I'm proudest of the technical breakthroughs we pioneered. For example, when we introduced *The Great Gazoo* we hired a young Frank Oz to make the muppet. He did an incredible job but it wasn't until *The Empire Strikes Back* and the introduction of Yoda that this sort of intricate puppetry received international acclaim. Everybody was calling Oz and George Lucas geniuses but hey, we did it first.

## HAWAII THURSDAY



Win a FREE trip for two to Hawaii

(includes airfare, hotel & transfers)

Sponsored by

**dewey's**

and

**TRAVEL CUTS**  
432-2592

Free prizes every Thursday in Dewey's lounge from 8:00 PM

- 8:00 — LP from SU Records
  - 9:00 — 2 tickets for Dinwoodie Cabaret
  - 10:00 — 2 tickets to SUB Concerts
  - 11:00 — \$25.00 cash prize
- (winners must be present to accept their prize)

\*\*\*\*\*

All winners will be eligible for the Grand Prize Draw on March 27, 1986, of a trip for 2 to Hawaii.

Contact **TRAVEL CUTS** for all your travel needs

432-2592  
Main Floor SUB

**INTRA**

Independent Travel Retailers Associated

**Europe**

**CONTIKI**  
HOLIDAYS  
for 18-35's  
Only

All the best fun, action and adventure in 21 countries... from skiing to Greek Island cruising... staying in villas and villages, castles and cabins... sun-lazy days and fun-crazy nights. Contiki — the only way to experience the real Europe!

Choice of Itineraries from C\$558

Anything from 10 to 61 days. Hundreds of departures from London to Europe, Scandinavia, Russia, Great Britain and Ireland.

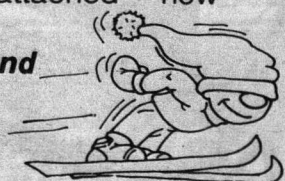
Hotel Tours Now Lower in Price

The best of Europe — with a bathroom attached — now even better value!

Skiing in Austria, France or Switzerland

Check out our winter ski packages.

As much fun as you can handle!



Come and learn more about the fun and excitement of Contiki.

**CONTIKI**

You can't beat it!

For information:

**INTRA** Edmonton Travel Agency Co. Ltd.  
Independent Travel Retailers Associated

9006-112 Street  
HUB Mall  
433-2494