

Bob Bailey Biography

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Bob Bailey starred in the role of freelance detective George Valentine in the radio drama *Let George Do It* throughout most of the period that the show was on the air. Starting in 1946 he played the role until replaced by Olan Soule for the last few episodes at the end of the series in 1954.

Robert Bainter Bailey was born into a show business family in Toledo, Ohio on June 13, 1913. He grew up in a theatrical atmosphere and during the 1930s he became a regular member of the Chicago radio community with recurring roles on shows such as *The Road of Life*, *Scattergood Baines*, and *That Brewster Boy*.

As with most of his contemporaries, the call of Hollywood came and in 1943 Bailey broke into film starring as Chester Wright, worldly confidence man, opposite Laurel and Hardy in *Jitterbugs*. He was also selected for a not-quite-so-prominent role in Laurel and Hardy's next movie *The Dancing Masters*. Although his dialog skills were first rate, Bailey looked visibly uncomfortable in broad comedy roles and so 20th Century Fox turned him into a dramatic actor. He had minor roles in five different features during 1944, but since his soft, boyish looks were not of the matinee-idol variety and since he lacked the rugged look of the typical Hollywood leading man, his scope was very limited. As a result, Bailey returned to network radio.

Following his involvement in *Let George Do It*, Bailey was cast in the lead role of insurance investigator Johnny Dollar in 1955 when CBS revived one of its most popular detective series *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar*. Bailey brought sensitivity and a new dimension the 'tough guy' role previously played by Hollywood actors Edmund O'Brien and John Lund. In 1960 when the show relocated to New York, Bailey, who was unwilling to relocate, lost the job. His *Johnny Dollar* shows are among the most popular and collectible recordings of vintage radio.

Bailey, now writing TV scripts, was given a small role in the movie *The Birdman of Alcatraz* in 1962, but following this he withdrew from show business and settled into a private solitary life, away from family and friends for years. Bailey suffered a stroke in early 1983 and then struggled with alcoholism as his health declined. He died in California on August 13, 1983 at the age of 70.

