

= Ronnie Rocket =

Ronnie Rocket is an unfinished film project written by David Lynch , who also intended to direct it . Begun after the success of Lynch 's 1977 film Eraserhead , Ronnie Rocket was shelved after Lynch felt he would be unable to find financial backing for the project . He instead sought out an existing script on which to base his next film , settling on what would become 1980 's The Elephant Man .

Ronnie Rocket was to feature many of the elements which have since come to be seen as Lynch 's hallmarks ; including industrial art direction , 1950s popular culture and physical deformity . The script featured a three @-@ foot tall man with control over electricity ; Lynch first met Michael J. Anderson when tentatively casting for this role , and later cast him in Twin Peaks and Mulholland Drive as a result .

= = Overview = =

Ronnie Rocket concerned the story of a detective seeking to enter a mysterious second dimension , aided by his ability to stand on one leg . He is being obstructed on this quest by a strange landscape of odd rooms and a threatening train ; while being stalked by the " Donut Men " , who wield electricity as a weapon . In addition to the detective 's story , the film was to show the tale of Ronald d 'Arte , a teenage dwarf , who suffers a surgical mishap which leaves him dependent on being plugged into an electrical supply at regular intervals ; this dependence grants him an affinity over electricity which he can use to produce music or cause destruction . The boy names himself Ronnie Rocket and becomes a rock star , befriending a tap @-@ dancer named Electra @-@ Cute .

The film was to make use of several themes that have since become recurring elements within David Lynch 's works , with a write @-@ up for The A.V. Club describing its contents as " idealized 1950s culture , industrial design , midgets , [ and ] physical deformity " . In addition , the film features two separate but connected worlds , another hallmark of Lynch 's writings . The film 's art direction would have featured a heavily industrial backdrop , setting the action against an " oil slick , smokestack , steel @-@ steam @-@ soot , fire @-@ sparks and electrical arcs realm " , similar to the direction ultimately taken in the depiction of Victorian England in The Elephant Man and the planet Giedi Prime in Dune . Although Lynch 's first two feature @-@ length films were shot in black @-@ and @-@ white , he had hoped to film Ronnie Rocket in color , inspired by the works of French film @-@ maker Jacques Tati . Lynch planned to experiment for some time in order to find the right balance and application of color for the film .

= = Background = =

After releasing 1977 's Eraserhead , a black @-@ and @-@ white surrealist film and his début feature @-@ length production , Lynch began work on the screenplay for Ronnie Rocket . Lynch and his agent Marty Michaelson , of William Morris Endeavor , initially attempted to find financial backing for the project . They met with one film studio on the matter , with Lynch describing the film to them as being " about electricity and a three @-@ foot guy with red hair " ; the studio never got in touch again .

Lynch also met Stuart Cornfeld during this time . Cornfeld had enjoyed Eraserhead and was interested in producing Ronnie Rocket ; Cornfeld was working for Mel Brooks and Brookfilms at the time , and when the two realized that Ronnie Rocket was unlikely to find sufficient financing to be produced , Lynch asked to see some already @-@ written scripts to work from for his next film instead . Cornfeld found four scripts he felt Lynch would be interested in , but on hearing the name of the first , the director decided his next project would be The Elephant Man .

Lynch would return to Ronnie Rocket after each of his films , intending it at different stages as the follow @-@ up not only to Eraserhead or The Elephant Man , but also Dune , Blue Velvet and Twin Peaks : Fire Walk With Me . After producing The Elephant Man , Lynch had planned to cast Dexter Fletcher in the title role .

In 1987 , after having released Blue Velvet , Lynch once again attempted to pursue Ronnie Rocket .

While scouting actors for the eponymous role , Lynch met Michael J. Anderson , whose work in short films the director had previously seen . As a direct result of meeting Anderson during this time , Lynch would cast the actor in a recurring role in the television series *Twin Peaks* , with his first appearance coming in 1990 's " Episode 2 " . Anderson would also appear in Lynch 's 1990 short film *Industrial Symphony No. 1* , and the 2001 film *Mulholland Drive* . Lynch also visited northern England to scout a possible filming location ; however , he found that the industrial cities he had hoped to use had become too modernized to fit his intended vision .

The project has also suffered setbacks due to the bankruptcy of several potential backers ; both Dino De Laurentiis 's De Laurentiis Entertainment Group and Francis Ford Coppola 's American Zoetrope were attached to the project at different times ; both production companies went bankrupt before work could begin . Lynch had stayed with Coppola in the latter 's home in Napa County , California , while Coppola and musician Sting read the script several times ; however the failure of 1982 's *One from the Heart* forced Zoetrope to file for bankruptcy .

= = Legacy = =

Having been temporarily unable to begin production on the film for some time , due to De Laurentiis owning the rights , Lynch stopped actively pursuing *Ronnie Rocket* as a viability in the early 1990s . However , he has never officially abandoned the project ; frequently referring to it in interviews as " hibernating " . The director has expressed interest in filming the project in the same manner as *Eraserhead* , using a small crew , building the sets himself and living on them during the length of the production . He has also claimed that he will revisit the film when he is at the stage in his career " when I don 't really care what happens , except that the film is finished " .

Speaking of the film 's difficulty in attracting financing , Fletcher has said " I should imagine that the big money heads at whatever studio it was couldn 't get their brains round it at all . It 's fine for the artist to read and enjoy , but for accountants it was probably a very different proposition . But that 's David Lynch all over in a lot of ways " . The *Guardian* 's Danny Leigh has compared the script 's reputation among film fans to those of Sergei Eisenstein 's unproduced adaptation of *An American Tragedy* and Michael Powell 's unmade adaptation of *The Tempest* . Leigh recalled having read a photocopied version of the script in the early 1990s , and felt that it " might have aged far better than *Wild at Heart* " . Film @-@ maker Jonathan Caouette has expressed interest in reviving the project , though he believes Lynch will " do it someday " .