



## Rodney Dangerfield

*November 22, 1921 - October 5, 2004*

Los Angeles, California

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Rodney Dangerfield, the comedian who turned a tug at his collar and five words, "I don't get no respect," into one of the most beloved acts in American entertainment, died at UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles on October 5, 2004. He was eighty-two. He had undergone heart valve surgery in August and never fully recovered from the complications that followed.

He was born Jacob Rodney Cohen on November 22, 1921, on Long Island, New York. His father was a vaudeville comic who was almost never home, and the boy grew up in Queens delivering groceries and selling newspapers and ice cream at the beach. He started writing jokes as a teenager and began performing at nineteen under the name Jack Roy.

The career went nowhere. Around the age of twenty-eight he quit show business to support a family, selling aluminum siding in New Jersey. He later joked that at the time he quit, he was the only one who knew. In the early 1960s he came back with a new name, a new persona and a new idea: a man so luckless that even his own dog would not fetch for him.

The break came on The Ed Sullivan Show in 1967, and the appearances piled up from there. In 1969 he opened Dangerfield's, a club on First Avenue in Manhattan that became a launching pad for younger comedians, and his televised specials introduced many of them to national audiences. At an age when most entertainers slow down, he became a movie star in *Caddyshack* in 1980, *Easy Money* in 1983 and *Back to School* in 1986. His album *No Respect* won a Grammy.

He worked steadily into his eighties, writing one-liners on index cards and testing them on anyone nearby. His gravestone at Westwood Village Memorial Park carries a final joke: There goes the neighborhood. Notice Nearby gives him, at last, a little respect on October 5.

## Services

Died at UCLA Medical Center, Los Angeles, California, October 5, 2004. Comedian, actor and founder of Dangerfield's comedy club in New York. Interment: Westwood Village Memorial Park, Los Angeles. Portrait: 1972 press photograph (public domain), hosted by Notice Nearby.

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