

Saturday morning cartoon King William Hanna, at age 90 died in his Hollywood home in March of 2001. What follows are excerpts from a never finished British television documentary, an oral-history account of the glory days of Hanna-Barbera animation studios.

Jerry: I wasn't quite sure of the concept. You have to remember this was the 1940s, and I'm just this mouse from the Midwest, right? What did I know: I knew one thing—I didn't want to work with cats, I didn't care how much they paid me, which was \$65 a week, by the way. I was scared. But Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera knew it would work. So I get to the set and orchestra's ready to go, they've built this enormous kitchen...and I'm just petrified. Bill Hanna came over and talked to me, calmed me down. He said, "Jerry, just relax. You're not going to die. The cat is not going to eat you." I know it sounds crazy now, but this was very early in the cat-and-mouse thing. I trusted Bill. Everything was Ok.

Wilma Flintstone: I said to him one day, "Bill, you really oughta patent this stuff." I mean, the little woolly mammoth who vacuumed the carpet? I would have bought six of them to give as wedding presents or something! People don't know this, but Bill was the king of the modern Stone Age household gadgets. The décor, the look—that was him. Those houses were solid. He did let me keep one of the boulder sofas. I think he could have been another Rock Lloyd Wright, but he was so brilliant already at the cartoons.

Huckleberry Hound: Sometimes we'd all go over to Bill and Violet Hanna's place, on Sunday

afternoons. He'd barbeque, put on some jazz. It was nice. North Hollywood was like a small town, people didn't really gossip much, then. It was no big deal to have cartoon characters over to the house. He never treated us two-dimensionally.

Top Cat: He did have his favorites. I don't think I was one. I mean what am I? A yellow cat with a vest on. I said, "Bill, I can do more than scrounge around and bebop." I always wanted some adventure.



Quick Draw McGraw: It's true, the cartoons we did were cheaper. Over at Warner Bros., they worked those characters until they were exhausted—day and night. Sure, you could go work for Chuck Jones, and a lucky few go on the Disney gravy train, but sooner or later you would be strung out. Bugs, Daffy, Wile E.—I'd bump into them at the Brown Derby or somewhere around town and they looked awful, just completely wasted, taking one pill to get out of bed, and another pill so they could get an anvil in the head. Sad, is what it was.

This is what I liked about Bill: He knew the value of the nine-hour workday. His thinking was "Why do something in 500 drawings when you can do it in 150?" That's why we lasted so long. We weren't drawn to death.

Yogi Bear: People said the cartoons were cheap, that they wouldn't last, that nobody would cherish them. Just the other day

there's a cereal bowl with my face on it for sale on EBay. It's going for \$325. So, you tell me.

Snagglepuss: He never once asked me about my private life. He didn't care. Heavens to Murgatroyd, why should anyone care? At his parties, up at the house, I'd bring Sylvester with me and nobody gave a [expletive].

Boo Boo Bear: The wonderful thing with the cartoons that Bill and Joe did was that they were about us, the characters. It had to be, because too much action was hard to draw. That's why the same pine trees keep going by as I walk in the forest. The focus was on the acting, not on the backgrounds. Leave that whole Wagnerian forest thing to the snobs at Warner, you know what I'm saying?

Take for example, a picnic basket: You had to see the picnic basket, feel the presence of the picnic basket. Whether or not there really *was* a picnic basket. The magic happens inside of you. Bill taught us that.

Astro: Bill ras reat. Ren I ras reeling really rad, Rill understood. Re rame to ree me ren I ras at the Retty Rord Rinic. Robody relse did, rot even Reorge Retson.

Papa Smurf: Turns out he was making sure we'd all be taken care of in our old age. They were talking about a 24 hour cartoon channel. There'd be royalty payments and we'd go on forever. I'm sure that's what Bill wanted — for us to go on doing our thing!

