

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Ruben Santiago-Hudson

PERSON

Santiago-Hudson, Ruben, 1956-

Alternative Names: Ruben Santiago-Hudson;

Life Dates: November 24, 1956-

Place of Birth: Lackawanna, New York, USA

Work: Los Angeles, CA

Occupations: Actor; Screenwriter; Stage Director

Biographical Note

Actor and writer Ruben Santiago-Hudson was born on November 24, 1956 in Lackawanna, New York to Alean Hudson and Ruben Santiago. He graduated from Lackawanna High School; and earned his B.A. degree in theatre from Binghamton University in 1978, and his M.F.A. degree from Wayne State University in 1982.

Santiago-Hudson first appeared in the 1988 film, *Coming to America*. He then played Captain Billy Cooper on the daytime drama *Another World* from 1990 to 1993. Santiago-Hudson made his Broadway debut as Buddy Bolden in *Jelly's Last Jam* in 1992, and starred in August Wilson's *Seven Guitars* in 1995. He wrote the autobiographical play *Lackawanna Blues* in 2001, and adapted it into the award-winning 2005 HBO film of the same name. He co-starred opposite Phylicia Rashad in *Gem of the Ocean* on Broadway in 2004; and, in 2007, he starred in a PBS Nova documentary about the life of Percy Lavon Julian. From 2009 to 2011, he played Captain Roy Montgomery in ABC's *Castle*. Santiago-Hudson returned to Broadway to star in *Stick Fly* in 2011, and directed August Wilson's *JITNEY!* on Broadway in 2017.

Santiago-Hudson's other film credits include *Bleeding Hearts*, *Blown Away*, *Domestic Disturbance*, *Which Way Home*, *The Devil's Advocate*, *American Gangster*, *Mr. Brooks*, *Shaft*, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, and Showtime's *Solomon and Sheba*. He also made appearance on the television shows *The Cosby Mysteries*, *New York Undercover*, *NYPD Blue*, *Touched by an Angel*, *The West Wing*, *Third Watch*, *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*, Showtime's *Billions*, the TNT series *Public Morals*, and five episodes of *Law & Order*. Santiago-Hudson received the 1996 Tony Award for Best Featured Performer in *Seven Guitars*, and was awarded the 2006 Humanitas Prize in writing for the HBO film adaptation of his play *Lackawanna Blues*, and the 2009 NAACP Lifetime Achievement Theatre Award. In 2013, Santiago-Hudson won the

Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Director, an Obie Award for Direction, and was nominated for the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Director of a Play for the Off-Broadway production of *The Piano Lesson*. In 2016, he won an Obie Award for Special Citations: Collaboration of the play *Skeleton Crew*. He also received an honorary doctorate of letters from Buffalo State College in 2006, and Wayne State University in 2015. In 2014, The Ruben Santiago-Hudson Fine Arts Learning Center was named in his honor in his hometown of Lackawanna, New York.

Santiago-Hudson and his wife, Jeannie Brittan, have two children: Trey and Lily, in addition to his two older sons: Broderick and Ruben III.

Ruben Santiago-Hudson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on August 8, 2016.

Related Entries

Lackawanna High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

State University of New York at Binghamton [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

BA

Wayne State University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

MFA