



SIR LENNY HENRY, CBE: ACTOR, WRITER, COMEDIAN

"I'm a working-class kid in a working-class area, went to a working-class school and had working-class problems and dealt with being a very visible "other"

"He says he's just a bloke from Dudley who can sing a bit."

Born in 1958 in Dudley, West Midlands to a Jamaican family, Lenworth George Henry shot to fame in 1975 aged just 17.

He became a television sensation, working in *The Fosters* and *Tiswas* before moving eventually to Tracey Ullman's show *Three of a Kind*. Eventually Lenny would be given his own self-titled show, *The Lenny Henry Show*, running for 7 seasons. Lenny's impression of Steve Martin in '*Lenny, Live and Unleashed*' led to interest in his comedy from across the Atlantic, and he was offered a three film deal for £1.75m from Disney which began with the film *True Identity*. The film flopped at the box office and Lenny's contract was subsequently terminated.

Lenny has worked for Comic Relief for almost 15 years, and is now a key member of their fundraising team. In 1993 he wrote to *The Times* protesting against government cuts in foreign aid.

Lenny also spends time helping young black comedians start their careers. After creating the series '*Chef*' he encouraged the producers to hire more black workers on set, and as a result the programme is made with many black crew members. He won a Royal Television Society Silver Award medal for outstanding contributions to multi-ethnic programming in the UK, through his production company Crucial Films.