

Meet George Jetson. He and his family debuted in 1962 with visions of the future. But what does that future really look like and should we be worried?

The Jetsons is a classic Hanna-Barbera cartoon series like Yogi Bear, Wacky Races, The Flintstones and Scooby-Doo. It made up one third of the classic Universal Studios theme park ride. And Kayne West is a big fan too.

Eddache

But 60 years later, what inventions and gadgets did The Jetsons get right about the-
[EXPLOSION!]

Future Eddache

Stop! I'm you from the future!

Eddache

The future?! Do I finally find a hat that suits me?

Future Eddache

I am from a future where I've watched every single episode of The Jetsons, including the movies, and I need your help to stop The Jetsons from ever happening! And also no, no hats will ever suit us.

Eddache

THE FUTURE IS A TERRIBLE PLACE!

The futuristic family lives in Orbit City, a view of future America where the courtrooms have commercial breaks and the skies are jammed with flying cars.

The Jetson family are George Jetson, his boy Elroy, daughter Judy and Jane his wife. George works at Spacely Sprockets where he canonically works 3 days a week.
"Yesterday I worked for two full hours"

His official role is professional button pusher.

"Busy? Take a look at my button pushing finger, what do you think?"

This seems to suggest a cynical view that people of the future will be lazy and entitled while things get done on their behalf, something other media suggests will happen. Even the most minor tasks are reduced to mindless button mashing, conveyer belts and sliding chairs.

Eddache

I know, I was going to make a video about all the inventions in The Jetsons that came true. Like the flying cars, because they're cool! I don't want to stop this from happening.

Future Eddache

Even in the past that's old news, there's literally thousands of articles covering that topic, roombas, smart watches, video calls, self-driving cars that crash themselves. It's been done.

This is about a future that is too dangerous to allow to happen rather than some fancy inventions like a dial that makes the buildings go up and down.

Eddache

Oh yeah, I've always wondered, with all those sky buildings, what's on the ground?

Future Eddache

The answer will shock you. It's the ground.

Eddache

Oo!

The question of what's under all these suspended buildings and floating islands is one people ask a lot and the show makes it no secret, it's just the ground.

One popular fan theory is that in a shared universe twist, The Flintstones actually live on the ground level while The Jetsons live above them. [1] Perhaps a sort of meta-commentary on a class divide, with the poor living like primitives below and the elite living at the top. Except in the movie The Jetsons Meet The Flintstones, they actually travel in time back to the stone age and have the world's most ambitious crossover.

"And I bet Wilma is making Jane feel right at home in the kitchen"

However in one episode we do see evidence of homelessness as someone appears to be living on the ground level, so there is a class divide created by the tall towers of the future.

Eddache

I mean this stuff seems rough but what's so terrible about the future?

Future Eddache

Black people!

Eddache

Gasp!!

Future Eddache

Let me finish, there are NO black people in the future.

Eddache

...

Future Eddache

Why didn't you gasp? Why aren't you gasping!?!

Eddache

Do we still get flying cars?

Future Eddache

EDDIE!

The original run of The Jetsons ran from 1962 to 1963 and in all 24 episodes, there's not a single black person in the show, not even in a crowd shot. But why?

Following World War 2, there was a renewed optimism for the future. Coupled with the launch of Sputnik-

Eddache

Which is a funny word.

Future Eddache

It really is.

-it created a fascination about future technologies. This is seen in Googie-inspired architecture, like the Las Vegas sign, the Space Needle and the Atomium in Belgium.

[Eddie in LIVE ACTION]

I'm here at the Atomium in Belgium, it's an enormous futuristic atom-shaped building built during Expo 58. Designed to exhibit advancements in science and technology, to make a better life for mankind. And it's also got enormous balls-

As well as these comics by Arthur Radebaugh, which present a future which, while still looking very 60s, you can see the clear influence The Jetsons took when creating its own future.

But these also depict a future with the absence of black people.

Journalist Matt Novak said:

[The Jetsons] was expressly written as a postwar family living the American Dream — an American Dream that just so happened to be thrust into the mid-21st century. Who then was the American Dream meant for? The uncomfortable truth is that black people were systematically excluded from the postwar institutions that allowed many other white families (like our fictional Jetsons) to achieve that American Dream.

<https://gizmodo.com/why-are-there-no-black-people-on-the-jetsons-508743667>

The scarcity of black characters wasn't exclusive to The Jetsons as it was the same industry-wide across many shows in 50s and 60s television, even in other Hanna Barbera shows. We all-too-well understand this sort of thing to be a product of its time. But I guess to set The Jetsons our own future, turns this product of the time into something more dystopian.

In this era, the few black characters we did see were often seen in subservient roles, like the Mammy stereotype such as Hattie McDaniel's Oscar winning role in Gone With The Wind. The maid/cook/nanny character, often portrayed as older with a large figure, is a happily devoted servant to a white family, but would be a little sassy with the occasional quip. And in The Jetsons, they purchase Rosey The Robot, the all-in-one maid, cook and nanny, but they're warned she's a less-desirable model.

"The old girl's still eager, isn't she? But of course very H O M E L Y"

She lives happily with her new family and isn't afraid to give the occasional sassy remark. So maybe the reason we're not seeing the minorities of the future, is because their role in a 1960s society has been replaced with 2060s robots.

By all accounts non-white people do exist in the future. Just not in The Jetsons city.
"Aren't you going to finish your coffee dad?" "Nope, came out too strong this morning but don't throw it out. Some pygmies from Africa may show and want to dip their spears into it."

And the show alludes to the Civil Rights movement but with Martians instead.
"The girls need me for their protest meeting at the United Planets building. I get to carry a sign, 'Martians Go Home'"

Eddache

Wow, maybe we should do more to diversify our characters, like do we *both* need to be a white guy?

Future Eddache

I'm you. I'm literally you from the future, did you forget already?

As you can probably tell, the future of The Jetsons is really just the 1960s but with more robots. It's frozen in time.

The Jetsons returned for a second series, being brought back 20 years later in 1985. And this time, the characters aren't all white people. Like this guy, Abby Andromeda, there we go, a black guy. The future is saved. Except in the last shot, they accidentally animate him as a white guy. YOU WERE SO CLOSE!

The 80s series did a lot to try to free up The Jetsons, moving away from stock sitcom plots that were often lifted with other shows, stuffy mother-in-law jokes and entire episodes dedicated to why women are terrible drivers.

The 80s series also tried to fix a huge problem that the 60s series created, that Jane Jetson might have been a child bride.

You see, in the 60s series, we learn George is 40 years old.

"You should live to be 150"

"I've got 110 good years ahead of me!"

We learn Jane's age in the very first episode and it requires far less maths homework.

"Don't be smart, you know I'm only 33"

George is 40 and Jane is 33, an age difference of 7 years, which wouldn't be unusual were it not for daughter Judy.

"If I was only 15 again"

If Judy is 15 and Jane is 33, that means Jane gave birth... when she was 18 years old. Was Jane pregnant at 17? By someone who was 25? Now marriage and consent laws differ state

to state and this wasn't an unusual thing back in the 1950s and 60s, but by the 1980s, it had become a bit more taboo.

So the 80s series tried to retcon this age difference. Like an episode about how George dated Jane in college, steering them to be about the same age here.

But then in a much later episode, Judy says:

"Mom was pretty young when you were married, wasn't she?" "Well, yes - That was a long time ago and things are different now."

This is an interesting admission. Like, is this the show itself acknowledging that some things from the original series might be seen as a bit dodgy in a modern light, because "it was a long time ago and things are different now"? All while scrubbing away the college prom retcon in the process.

So to recap, George is 40, Jane is 33, Judy is 15 slash 16 so therefore Jane gave birth to her first child when she was about 18. But hey, since the minister that had wed them turned out to be a fake, another 80s retcon, their marriage never counted in the first place. So if she was a child bride, she's not anymore. In the eyes of The Jetsons, it's something MUCH worse, *they're unmarried parents!*

"Daddy, how could you!" "How can I show my face at school?"

Future Eddache

God, imagine being unmarried parents. Unthinkable. It's unthinkable. I can't even think it.

Eddache

Yeah me too, three four five six seven-

Going from the 60s animated sitcom for adults into the 80s kids cartoon, The Jetsons seemed to benefit from this change with improved ratings.

"If your beast doesn't stop molesting my poor jezebel I'll have him impounded"

Please don't say molesting in a kids show.

- But it was short-lived. The Jetsons movie from 1990, which while it had some really nice sequences blending CG elements with 2D characters, was a huge box office bomb, and after that, The Jetsons's vision of the future is only really remembered today as a punchline.

I mean, does anyone remember George Jetson's famous catchphrase?

"Jane! Stop this crazy thing!"

Except it's not "Jane, stop this crazy thing". It's "Hooba Dooba."

I guess after Scooby Dooby Doo and Yabba Dabba Doo, they really thought this would be just as timeless and memorable.

An unfair but easy explanation of The Jetsons is just The Flintstones but set in the future instead of the past. But The Flintstones was ironically a lot more inventive.

If The Flintstones wanted to clean the floor, they'd use a mammoth's trunk like a vacuum cleaner.

Whereas in The Jetsons, it's just robot hands doing the same thing.

In this case, The Flintstones were just a lot more creative and imaginative in how they reinterpret modern things in a stone age setting. Look, animal abuse is funnier than robot hands, that's just how it is.

Eddache

But by your own admission, The Jetsons did correctly imagine some actual inventions! And also flying cars!

Well yes, with a little stretch, they did predict some stuff. But in other ways, it was pretty obvious. Take the video call for example. While Zoom meetings and Discord video calls are normal for us, it didn't exist in the 1960s, ergo, a correct prediction. Except the idea of the video call has existed for almost as long as the telephone call.

Here's a video call in Metropolis from 1927 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_4no842TX8 1:51:49

Here's an illustration from 1910 showing a video call.

https://the-public-domain-review.imgix.net/collections/the-telephonoscope-1879/22935017801_ecf14fd494_o.jpg?fit=max&w=2400

And here's one from 1900.

https://the-public-domain-review.imgix.net/collections/a-19th-century-vision-of-the-year-2000/En_lan_2000_00014.jpg?fit=max&w=2400

And here's one from 1879.

https://the-public-domain-review.imgix.net/collections/the-telephonoscope-1879/22922848315_df8612cdd1_o.jpg?fit=max&w=1200&h=850

<https://publicdomainreview.org/collection/the-telephonoscope-1879/>

Alexander Graham Bell was still alive here.

So by the time the 1960s rolled around, the idea of a video call wasn't a new one, but the naturally assumed "next step" in evolution after the telephone and the television.

However, despite this, there's one small moment that actually kind of shocked me with its brilliance. A fleeting and deeply insightful moment and it's to do with Flying Cars.

Eddache

Hm, flying cars? Wassat?

In one scene, on the ground level, a bird walks along and says:

"With all the traffic in the sky these days, the only safe place for us birds is on the ground"

This surprised me because, intentional or not, it shows a very real consequence to the so-called utopian future of technology. If cars could fly, then the birds would not.

If we look at this 2015 report for instances of birds hitting planes, about 70% of bird strikes occur when the plane was less than 500 feet in the air, but at 3500 feet in the air, those collisions go up to 90%.

<https://www.audubon.org/news/everything-you-need-know-about-birds-and-planes>

So if we suddenly crowded the skies with flying cars they would be crashing into birds all the time, and the ones that survive may retreat from our skies forever. Technology is evolving too fast for nature to keep up with it and it can be dangerous. The Jetsons have done some

soft-handed environmental messages but this one line is the smartest social commentary the show has ever made and I don't think they meant to do that.

Eddache

Ok fine, you've made your point. But I have two more questions. One, do we have more friends in the future?

Future Eddache

Oh yes, our friend circle has completely doubled! We now have *two* friends.

Eddache

That sounds exhausting.

Future Eddache

Mm.

Eddache

And two - why now? If you want to stop The Jetsons from happening, why not go back to when it aired in the 60s?

Future Eddache

The TV show was just a warning. We have to stop the *REAL* George Jetson from ever being born.

In 2021, there were some viral posts about how George Jetson was going to be born in 2022. These posts include a date of birth being July 31st but there's zero mention of that in the show. Likewise there's no mention of what the "current" year is for the Jetsons. The closest we get are hints that it has been 100 years:

Official promotional material do state the year is set in 2062, which is exactly 100 years from the show's original airing in 1962. This is confirmed in the first issue of the official Jetson's comic book.

So if we presume that is the case, and if George is 40, then he would be born in the year 2022 and all those viral posts and articles would be absolutely correct.

Future Eddache

God, imagine if they were all wrong. Imagine that all it took was for someone to just watch the episodes to find out the actual age of George Jetson.

"I took a youth serum, I'm really an adult. See I'm really 38"

He's 38. George Jetson is not 40 years old. He's 38 years old. He wasn't born in 2022. He's going to be born in 2024. THIS year.

Eddache

Whoa. So the real George Jetson could slippy-slidey out a vagidey right now?!

Future Eddache

I want to throw you down the stairs.

This could be another attempted retcon, to close the age gap between him and Jane a tiny bit. And as for what he said during the daredevil thing, he doesn't explicitly state his age and was probably just rounding up a bit.

Future Eddache

That's why I came back to this year! To stop George Jetson's birth from happening. I've come to take - your balls.

Eddache

Me?!

Future Eddache

Yes, we go on to become the father of George Jetson and the terrible future that comes with him. We have to stop this now.

Eddache

Can't I just have a vasectomy?

Future Eddache

We can't take any risks. But don't worry, I've brought a hammer.

Eddache

But what about the 2017 Jetsons movie?

Future Eddache

The what?

In 2017 there was a new Jetson's movie guest starring WWE Wrestlers and I don't know why.

"Everybody listen, Big Show's been frozen in ice for a hundred years"

Given that the "present day" of the Wrestlers appear to late 2015, based on this being the only time Sheamus was a WWE heavyweight champion, [1] this means, 100 years later, the future of The Jetsons, is actually set in 2115, and George won't be born for another 51 years.

Future Eddache

Since when did you know anything about wrestling?

Eddache

What's wrestling?

Yes, it's possible that The Jetsons are always in an ever shifting future. Like a mirage, always the same distance away no matter how close we get to it.

OR that wrestling movie isn't canon at all.

"Except I've never actually made anything time travel"

YES YOU DID ELROY THAT'S HOW YOU MET THE FLINTSTONES!!

Future Eddache

Come on Eddie. Put your balls on this cinder block and let's get this over with.

Eddache

But maybe, just maybe, we should stop living in the past or the future, and just live in the now. What do you say?

Future Eddache

If you do this, I'll give you a flying car.

Eddache

...

[Cut to Eddache (wearing a terrible hat) rideing in a flying car, happy but barely holding back tears.]