

# Kenneth Casey

Titles: 30      Sources: 1      Stills: 1

Born: New York; January 10<sup>th</sup> 1899  
Died: New York; August 10<sup>th</sup> 1965



*"The sweetest thing we've ever seen..." – Kenneth strikes a decidedly epicene figure – even by the different aesthetics of c.1910*

*Source: The Moving Picture Boy*

### The Moving Picture Boy entry:

“Around 1912 there were two “Vitagraph boys”: Paul Kelly was strong, silent and modestly plucky, while Kenneth Casey was the prankster, with dark bobbed hair and an ambiguous expression. He was often teamed in impish comedies with Vitagraph’s little girl star, Adele de Garde, and had considerable musical gifts, being adept on the piano, violin and cornet to name but three. He also composed songs, including an immodest tribute to himself called “The Moving Picture Boy”, which he sang in vaudeville:

Just because I am  
the Moving Picture Boy,  
That is why I’m everybody’s  
love and joy.  
Every time my face is flashed  
upon the screen  
They say: “Oh he’s the sweetest  
thing we’ve ever seen“ ...

In 1913 Casey and Vitagraph parted company; he had been with them for nearly five years. His ambition now was to appear in vaudeville, but current US law classed him as too young for this, so he crossed the Atlantic and successfully toured British and South African music halls instead. At the end of 1914 he returned to the States, and the following February, having reached the required age of 16, made his American stage debut as “the Vitagraph boy” at Hammerstein’s Victoria Theater, offering an act that besides its many instrumental delights was enriched by “Scotch jokes, and an English coster song”.

Kenneth Casey’s screen appearances henceforth were scant, but he was seen, for instance, in “**THE MODEL**” (15) and “**THE ADVENTURE**” (20). The composing and song-writing blossomed, though, and he even had a hand in the well-loved “Sweet Georgia Brown”. He had his own publishing firm, and at one time his own orchestra, with whom he played on vaudeville and radio and in the recording studio. (He had by now added the trumpet to his personal armoury.)

Another child actor of the same name was in circulation, though not noticeably in movies, in the 1930s: it may have been Kenneth Casey Junior. But Kenneth I stuck with popular music, and in due course proclaimed his

Republican allegiance with a “President Eisenhower March“.”

## FILMOGRAPHY

| Year | Age | Title                                   | Role            |
|------|-----|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 10   | 11  | CHEW CHEW LAND                          |                 |
| 10   |     | RANSOMED                                |                 |
| 11   | 12  | THE CLOWN'S BEST PERFORMANCE            |                 |
| 11   |     | CONSUMING LOVE                          |                 |
| 11   |     | DADDY'S BOY AND MAMMY                   | in title role ? |
| 11   |     | THE DERELICT REPORTER                   |                 |
| 11   |     | JEAN GOES FISHING                       |                 |
| 11   |     | A LITTLE LAD IN DIXIE                   | in title role ? |
| 11   |     | THE LITTLE SPY                          |                 |
| 11   |     | THE MISSES FINCH AND THEIR NEPHEW BILLY | as Billy ?      |
| 11   |     | A TALE OF TWO CITIES                    |                 |
| 11   |     | WIG-WAG                                 |                 |
| 12   | 13  | THE BLACK WALL                          |                 |
| 12   |     | BUMPS                                   |                 |
| 12   |     | THE EAVESDROPPERS                       |                 |
| 12   |     | FATE'S AWFUL JEST                       |                 |
| 12   |     | THE HIGHER MERCY                        |                 |
| 12   |     | HOW TOMMY SAVED HIS FATHER              | in title role ? |
| 12   |     | INGENUITY                               |                 |
| 12   |     | AN INNOCENT THEFT                       |                 |
| 12   |     | A JUVENILE LOVE AFFAIR                  |                 |
|      |     | <i>with Paul Kelly</i>                  |                 |
| 12   |     | THE MAN UNDER THE BED                   |                 |
| 12   |     | THE OLD SILVER WATCH                    |                 |
| 12   |     | TOM TILLING'S BABY                      |                 |
| 12   |     | VULTURES AND DOVES                      |                 |
| 12   |     | XENOPHON, A STORY OF THE CIRCUS         |                 |
| 13   | 14  | HEARTSEASE                              |                 |
|      |     | <i>with Paul Kelly</i>                  |                 |
| 13   |     | IN THE SHADOW                           |                 |
|      |     | <i>with Junior Carnahan</i>             |                 |
| 13   |     | WHEN BOBBY FORGOT                       | as Bobby ?      |
| 15   | 16  | THE MODEL                               |                 |
| 20   | 21  | THE ADVENTURE                           |                 |