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Chester Cheetah

Chester Cheetah is a fictional character and the official mascot for Frito-Lay's Cheetos brand snacks and Chester's Puffcorn.

Contents

History

- 1986–2003: Traditional animation
- 2003–08: Jump to CGI
- 2008–present: OrangeUnderground redesign

Creation

Merchandise

See also

References

History

1986–2003: Traditional animation

Cheetos' original mascot was the Cheetos Mouse,^[1] who debuted in 1971 and disappeared around 1979. In 1986, Chester Cheetah was created by Brad Morgan, who art directed the commercials and designed the character, and Stephen Kane who wrote the original scripts for television commercials. The original 24-frame animation was done by Richard Williams. After Chester's introduction, the sly, smooth voiced cheetah began starring in more commercials and eventually became Cheetos' official mascot. He used the slogans "It ain't easy bein' cheesy" and "The cheese that goes crunch!" from 1986 to 1997, until it became "Dangerously cheesy!" from 1997 onward.^[2]

From the mid-1980s to early 2000s, television adverts often featured Chester's desperate attempts to eat other people's Cheetos. The self-described "hip kitty" was often seen sneaking up on an unsuspecting stranger at a beach or public park. The result would always involve cartoon violence in the vein of *Looney Tunes*, such as Chester riding a motorcycle off a bridge, getting thrown to the top of a coliseum, or plunging miles through the air to unwittingly grab a hang gliding bodacious babe, only to cast her aside in favor of Cheetos. These spots were first directed by Keith Van Allen, and later by *Cow and Chicken* creator David Feiss.

Chester Cheetah

First appearance	1986
Voiced by	Joel Murray (1986–97) Pete Stacker (1997–2008) Johnny Michaels (5 spots; early 2000s) Christopher Murney (200?) Adam Leadbeater (2008–present)
Information	
Species	Cheetah
Gender	Male
Occupation	Mascot of Cheetos

In 1992, Chester's own television program called *Yo! It's the Chester Cheetah Show!* was under development for the Fox Kids Saturday morning fall lineup; however, an ethics debate erupted over Chester's status as an advertising character, and likely due to the protests of Action for Children's Television, the show was prevented from airing. Their petition marked the first time that the organization protested something before it actually became a program.

Chester's character underwent slight revamping in 1997. With the introduction of the "Dangerously cheesy!" slogan and Pete Stacker replacing Joel Murray as his voice actor, Chester began appearing in live-action/animated hybrid advertisements that saw him entering the real world. During this time, the ads began portraying him in a less antagonistic manner; his personality went from being bumbling to being suaver and cooler, as well as him actually managing to eat Cheetos unlike in the older commercials.

2003–08: Jump to CGI

In 2003, Chester became rendered as a computer generated character in the United States, while he continues to appear in his old animation style in other countries.

One particular commercial series in 2006 had Chester defeating rival Chef Pierre, in a baking contest to create Baked Cheetos. This led to an advertising campaign titled *Chester Goes Undercover*, in which Pierre, disguised in silhouette, steals the Baked Cheetos recipe, and Chester gives chase by finding clues that lead him to Pierre's minions: Twisty McGee, Flamin' Hot Fiona, and The Cruncher. Upon confrontation with Chef Pierre, Chester signaled his agents to appear and apprehend Pierre and his minions, recovering the stolen recipe. These commercials were linked to an interactive online campaign.

2008–present: OrangeUnderground redesign

As of 2008, Cheetos has taken aim at an adult demographic with a recent series of ads featuring the mascot in promotion of OrangeUnderground.com.^[3] In this incarnation, Chester (originally a puppet) is computer generated like his previous incarnation (but now with photorealistic textures/detail), and speaks with a mid-Atlantic accent and encourages people to use their Cheetos in acts of revenge or to solve problems (e.g. plug the nostrils of a snoring man or dirty the cubicle of a neat freak), sometimes referring to himself as "Papa Chester". In this incarnation, Chester is voiced by Adam Leadbeater.^[4]

Creation

According to an article in *The New York Times*, DDB Needham Worldwide was responsible for the creation of Chester;^[5] however, an episode of *Unwrapped* claims that the mascot was created by Hawley Pratt, the same man behind the Pink Panther.

Merchandise

Chester starred in two video games produced by Kaneko for the Sega Genesis and Super NES video game platforms: *Chester Cheetah: Too Cool to Fool* in 1992 and *Chester Cheetah: Wild Wild Quest* in 1993. Chester Cheetah makes a cameo appearance in Archie Comics' *Sonic the Hedgehog* series. A promotional plush doll was produced, featuring dark sunglasses and lace-up shoes. It was 18" tall. A 10" doll is still available today.

See also

- Frito Bandito

References

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3. The delightfully creepy new Cheetos ads. - By Seth Stevenson - Slate Magazine (<http://www.slate.com/id/2186601/>)
4. www.AdamLeadbeater.com (<http://www.adamleadbeater.com/>)
5. THE MEDIA BUSINESS: ADVERTISING; Commercial Cartoon Furor Grows - New York Times (<https://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9E0CEEDA173FF936A35750C0A964958260&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=all>)

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