

## The Rook (2009)

Houston Hodges, for Writer's Corner, WLRH Radio Huntsville, AL USA

I had an incredible, and incredibly rare, experience Sunday afternoon, by virtue of the miracle of electronics. I got to listen to a rookie DJ doing her second on-air gig - live - from Nacogdoches, Texas, on my computer in Huntsville. Mapquest tells me it's 640 miles between those two places, but her control room communicated with my computer as if it were next door, and I got to hear her spin "classics from the 60's, 70's, and 80's," and do the little juke-and-jive interstices that DJ's do, feigning intimate information about composers, lyricists, bands, and rock concerts that sounded like you were raised right next door to Linda Ronstadt.

"Classics from the 60's, 70's, and 80's?" Yes... and part of the incredible is that all of that was written before she was born. This was the introductory weekend stint of the sure-to-be-famous music spinner called Rachel H - better known to me as my 19-year-old granddaughter. Second year in college, and she's taking something called "Communication Practicum," which means two segments a week on the campus radio station... and by the wonk-work called "streaming audio," I can listen to it over the internet, right here from my easy chair.

Such fun! I did have a few quibbles with the production, and am considering writing to the station manager's mother to make my suggestions, which mostly involve purging the program of the news segments, the recorded public service announcements (no commercials, as such), the station promos, and... while I'm at it, that music, most of which (except for the aforementioned Ms. Ronstadt and Ann Murray) hits my eardrums like colliding garbage cans. You talk "classics," we're talkin' FORTIES, dude! "Red Sails in the Sunset!" "Now is the Hour..." oh, yes! "Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen!" How about "Hut-sut Ralston on the Rillerah!" for music that makes SENSE!!

But that DJ... now that's special. I predict we'll hear more from Rachel H. You

heard it here! Maybe it'll be under that broadcast name... or the next one she adopts at the next-up station... or from Broadway, because she's still considering that possibility. Or maybe from the laboratory where she does science, or the classroom where she teaches third-graders, or the kitchen where she's queen, or the garage where she mends diesel engines. Where she's doing her best. So if you want to share this experience, and brag to future fans that you heard "Rachel H" when she was just beginning, try it some Friday, 10 am 'til noon, or Sunday from noon to 2 in the afternoon. On my other favorite station as an alternate to WLRH in Huntsville: KSAU in Nacogdoches, Texas!

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Houston Hodges is Parish Associate at the Big Cove Presbyterian Church in Hampton Cove; he has five grandchildren,so be prepared for more stories.