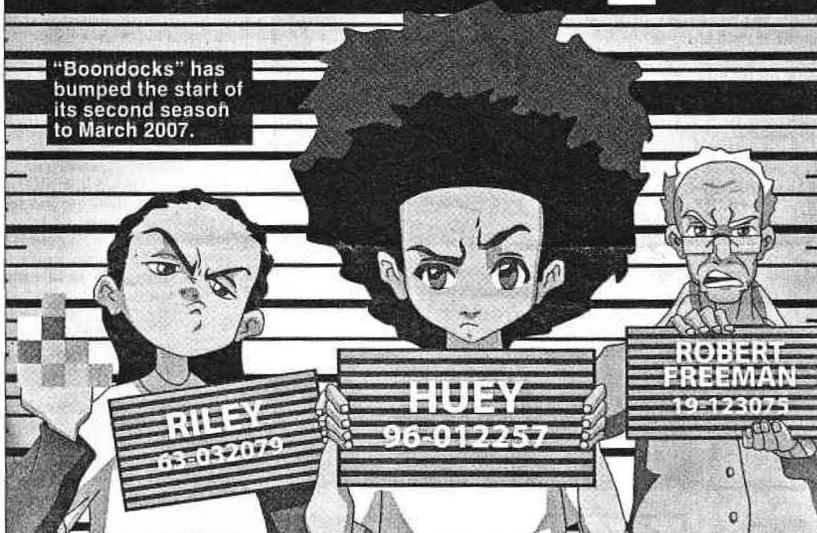


Changing lineup



'Boondocks' new season on hold

By MICHAEL GILTZ

B“BOONDOCKS,” Cartoon Network’s witty, controversial series, won’t return this year as expected, says show creator Aaron McGruder.

The second season of the animated series, based on the “Boondocks” comic strip, was given a late 2006/winter 2007 date to return to Cartoon Network’s late-night block, Adult Swim, after its hugely successful first season (it was the highest-rated series premiere in Cartoon Network history).

Network execs, in fact, bumped the number of “Boondocks” episodes up from 15 to 20 — which seems to have contributed to the delay.

“Our production schedule is really, really long,” says McGruder, who’s publicizing the first-season DVD (Sony; \$49.95).

“We’re halfway through the writing and just getting under way with the animation.”

McGruder now says fans

should look for the series to return in March.

“Boondocks,” which gives “Chappelle’s Show” a run for its money in smartly tackling issues of race and politics, depicts Huey, a 10-year-old revolutionary with a keen sense of leftist politics and history.

He struggles to find purpose living in a white suburb with his cranky granddad and wannabe gangsta little brother, Riley.

The “Boondocks” delays have spurred talk that Sony might be bringing in a new showrunner to replace McGruder, rumors dismissed by a spokesperson.

(Cartoon Network execs were traveling to the TV Critics tour in L.A. and were unavailable for comment.)

But unlike Dave Chappelle, who famously walked away from his Comedy Central series after snaring a \$55 million deal, this clearly isn’t a case of McGruder losing interest or feeling pressure.

It’s more about an artist wanting to do the best work he can.

One episode from last season, for instance, featured an anime-style fight between Huey and Riley.

“That was fun,” says McGruder, 32. “It’s also been our biggest challenge.

“We’re creating a new system on-the-fly to get an authentic anime style but still have it be written with an American comedic sensibility.

“It’s really hard,” he says. “We’re working more and more with artists overseas. We now have a Japanese anime studio named Madhouse to help us out.

“I was happy with a lot of season one, but I thought a lot of it could look better. We’re really passionate artists.

“The people working with me on the show are phenomenal, phenomenal artists and they really care about getting it right.”