



Sunday, 8 January 2012

## Jack Benny, 1966

It seems reporters and columnists had a check-list of things they had to mention in any of their stories about Jack Benny in the 1960s. They all seemed to

- Juxtapose "39" with his real age.
- Reveal he isn't really a cheapskate.
- Mention how he laughs at everyone else's jokes.
- Opine that he really isn't a horrible violin player.

And maybe it's my imagination, but a lot of the interviews seem to have been conducted in Jack's hotel room with some incident occurring in the room before, during, or after the interview mentioned in the story.

This one is from 1966 from the Associated Press' New York-based TV-radio writer (an obsolete title in 1966; the beat was strictly television by then), written for newspapers to use in weekend editions. Of course, it also plugged Jack's coming special. which was the reason for the column in the first place. There's a factual error I'll mention after you read it.

### Show Biz's Busiest 'Youngster'

by Cynthia Lowry

NEW YORK, Nov. 26 (AP)—Jack Benny opened the door of his hotel suite, then quickly retreated into another room and reappeared in a dressing gown:

"Forgive me, forgive me," he apologized. "It's this time difference from California.

His manager, Irving Fein, who accompanies him on all professional journeys, appeared from an adjoining room, and everybody sat down to breakfast.

Benny, whose manner and mien belie his years, eyed two glasses of orange juice and one slice of Persian melon.

"Who gets the melon?" he demanded, in that petulant, ready-to-get-my-feelings-hurt voice he has developed over 35 years of radio and television. Then he laughed, and said he'd rather have orange juice anyway.

Benny, in spite of the fact that his official biography states that he was "born 39 years ago in Chicago," will be 73 in February. And, although in semiretirement from television for two seasons, he manages to be about the busiest senior citizen in show business.

A professional errand of mercy jetted him to New York this time—to be a guest star on CBS' "Garry Moore Show," part of a desperate effort to save the show from sagging ratings.

Benny had just finished making his annual special, and was also using his time to plug it. A spoof on beauty pageants and loaded with former contest winners, it will be broadcast next Thursday on NBC.

Benny is not the funniest man in the world off-camera. In fact, he is a bland, somewhat understated fellow who is rated by his colleagues as the greatest audience for humor in the world.

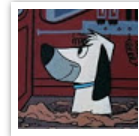
Steve Allen, in his book "The Funny Men," says that Benny is "to humor what Arthur Rubinstein is to music: 'a performer of genius.' He calls Benny 'the world's greatest reactor' to jokes and situations, which usually are on him — "straight man for the whole world."

Over years of show business Benny has honed his professional character: a conceited tightwad of easily punctured dignity. Years of limelight have also developed what is widely believed to be his real character — a generous, outgoing and modest man who is an inordinately big tipper and a lavish appreciator of other people's humor.

In an interview, Benny will have pleasant words about all his colleagues. He will discuss his recent move from his Beverly Hills home to an apartment close to his favorite golf course. He speaks of enjoying freedom to spend more time in his Palm Springs home —although he has not done so yet — and the pleasures of doing charity concerts all over the country with top orchestras.

Benny practices on his violin at least two hours a day. He is a much better violinist than he appears to be; it

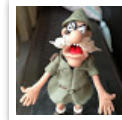
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Spencer Jordan's amazing work... we are hoping artists like Ian

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5 hours ago

### Fernando Liera Blog Cartoons



Vehicle Verification Centers of Mexico City will reopen in August with COVID

[safety measures.](#) - ©2020 fernandollercartoons.com

6 hours ago

### Movies with Michael

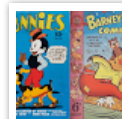


Cowboy Church #67 - Hello my friends and welcome back for another

service of cowboy church. Today's musical selection begins with Gene Autry singing "Dear Hearts and Gentle Pe...

9 hours ago

### Termite Terrace headlines



Question for All You Cartoon Collectors! - OK so I've been doing some

looking around. Bosko apparently had a comic book and I'm wondering if any of you know of

takes considerable skill play delicately off-key. He goes to his office daily. He performs on a lot of stages. "It is a good life," he says. "I enjoy playing a few weeks a year in Nevada — once I get accustomed to the turnaround in hours. And I like to be able to work on a concert or a show for a few concentrated weeks and then take time off."

Over the years, Benny shows have been real innovators. The old radio show and the newest special, however, are built from the same brick and mortar. There will be the stingy jokes and several samples of his fantastic timing.

Benny's first radio broadcast was a 1932 Ed Sullivan show, and his opening lines were: "This is Jack Benny. There will be a slight pause while everyone says, 'who cares?'" Today, Benny can produce laughter merely by exploding "Cut that out!" or just by facing the audience thoughtfully and droning, "hmmmm." Over 35 years, the audience has come to know the character and is conditioned to laugh,

Benny's timing is peerless. Don Wilson once told a magazine writer that when Benny turns to the audience for his famed long "reaction," other actors are not allowed to continue with their lines. The signal to resume comes when he again faces his fellow performers.

Benny jumped off the Sullivan Show into his own NBC series in 1932 and was one of the network's big stars until, the famous "Paley's Raid" of 1949 when CBS wooed away big names like Benny, Bergen and Skelton. He continued the radio show until 1955, but in 1950 started his television series. These continued, in one form or another on CBS until 1964, after which he returned to NBC for one season of specials.

When the weekly show was discontinued for low ratings, Benny was not exactly happy, but obviously he has adjusted to the idea of one special a year, plus as many guest shots as he wants to take on.

"Listen," he confided, in mock exasperation, "I am an awfully easy fella to get along with. I like everything I do and I'm happy with everything I do. I like to work and I like to practice. I even like to walk down Fifth Avenue and have people say hello to me."

And, for his amour-propre, he'd also like is very much if his "Jack Benny Hour" Thursday landed him on top of the Nielsen ratings.

Oh, yes, and he did, after all, eat the melon.

Now the factual error:

Just about everyone today seems to cite a 1932 appearance on Ed Sullivan's interview show as Benny's debut on radio. When this became part of the Benny legend isn't clear but it's not true. Benny celebrated his tenth anniversary on the air in a show broadcast in 1941, and that was quite correct. Jack appeared on the radio for the first time in 1931 and it was not with Ed Sullivan. We'll have that story next week.



Posted by Yowp at 05:56

Labels: Cynthia Lowry, Jack Benny

# 1 comment:



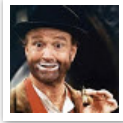
Tim Lones 8 January 2012 at 07:58

A minor nitpick here, too. The article said that Benny did his show on CBS till 1964, and that he returned to NBC "for one season of specials" when in fact, the NBC show was a full season of the regular half hour show..The "specials" began the following season (1965-66)

Reply

additional covers you could share! ...  
18 hours ago

## Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog



Born on July 18, 1913 - Red Skelton - \*Today's post commences

with the Guzzler's Gin routine ...  
1 day ago

## News From ME

Sorry... - As far as I know, I do not have any diseases. I just have too much to deal with right now so I won't be blogging much if at all. I'm postponing all the web...  
2 days ago

## Cartoon Research

In His Own Words: H.T. Kalmus on Disney in Technicolor - Suspended Animation #276 Many references may be found regarding two-strip Technicolor. I have been guilty of discussing Walter Lantz's King of Jazz (1930)...  
2 days ago

## AFRTS Archive

Mary Turner 1985 - Mary Turner today Mary Turner really rocked the house.



Normally when any of the jocks got a reaction, it'd be split. The ones that were really liked wou...

4 days ago

## The World of Knight



TONIGHT, 11:54 PM. - COPYRIGHT T 2020 BY MILTON KNIGHT

4 days ago

## Yowp




Hanna-Barbera Birthday Did-You-Knows - 63 years ago today, some

forms were signed by George Sidney, Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera creating what eventually became the biggest TV cartoon operation i...  
1 week ago

## Supervised By Fred

Avery: Tex Avery's Warner Brothers Cartoons Wabbit Twouble: A Small Addendum to An Outstanding Podcast -

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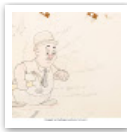
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Original animation drawing from Wabbit Twouble with color notations

for the ink and paint department. Release date: 12/20/41 Availability: Looney Tunes Gol... 3 weeks ago

**Mark Kausler's CatBlog**  
**The Lady and the Tiger** - From the Cathy Hill Archive of Unpublished Comics comes "The Lady and the Tiger". This story was drawn before Cathy started the "Mad Raccoons" series. U... 4 weeks ago

**What About Thad?**  
**Cartoon Logic Podcast** - And yet another distraction from this brick and mortar blog... I've entered the world of podcasting with renowned animation director and historian Bob Jaques... 10 months ago

 **Likely Looney, Mostly Merrie**  
**That's all, folks!** - My posts have gotten thinner over the years. I'm aware of that. I've been hopeful for a long time, that I can remain active with blogging and sharing furth... 1 year ago

 **Dr. Grob's Animation Review**  
**The Flying Man** - 'The Flying Man' is a very short absurdist film in which a man drops his coat to take a swim in mid air. Another man with a dog drops by, tries the same th... 2 days ago

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