



Sunday, 5 August 2012

Jack Benny's Musical Obscurities

Pop cultural references fade in the distance as time marches on. Newer fans of old cartoons and radio shows may be puzzled about the jokes or references in them, but they'll eventually pick up on some of them, thanks to learning from older fans (or even the internet). But, occasionally, there are ones that have become so obscure that it takes a bit of research to figure out what the joke is.

Jack Benny had a running gag on his show of October 12, 1947 that has more to it than probably most listeners today know. Jack is talking to Rochester about the insurance policy his sponsor is taking out on him. Eddie Anderson blew the set up in one of the two broadcasts (the show was done live for the East Coast, then again for the West Coast three hours later). Here's how it goes.

Jack: But if I'm killed accidentally, the sponsor collects two million dollars.

Rochester: Two million? Boss, you'd better hope that guy keeps his eye on the red bull's eye.

Jack: Oh, you mean the commercial. Well, I'm not worried about that. You know, they shoot that gun in another studio way over on Sunset and Highland. I don't even pass there on my way home.

Rochester: I know, but for two million dollars, they can make a bullet that waits for you at Pico and Sepulveda.

First, a couple of references. "Keep your eye on the red bull's eye" was, briefly, a motto of Lucky Strike cigarettes, Jack's sponsor. The radio ads featured the slogan, followed by the sound of a gunshot and a bell, like a target (with a bull's eye) being hit at a carnival midway. Sunset and Highland was the home of KECA radio (it was a former Knights of Columbus Hall). Evidently, the Lucky Strike commercials for Jack's show were done live from there in the 1947-48 season.

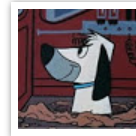
The obscure gag is the reference to Pico and Sepulveda. You might think Jack's writers arbitrarily tossed together some funny sounding names, just like they did when they invented the fictitious rail-line connecting Anaheim, Azusa and Cucamonga. But that's not the case at all. *Billboard* magazine had announced the previous June 21st that coming to record stores soon was the song "Pico and Sepulveda" by the Felix Figueroa Orchestra on the Ambassador label.

Felix didn't really exist. He was really a nom de musique of bandleader Freddy Martin. Novelty songs were still big back then. This one was co-written by Julie Styne and the lyrics, more or less, consisted of names of Los Angeles streets. It was a favourite of Dr. Demento, who played it on his radio show to the delight of warped music fans.

Someone has made a novelty video with it. Watch it below.



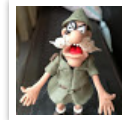
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Fernando Liera Blog Cartoons



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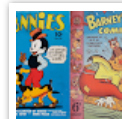
Movies with Michael



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..."
8 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

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Preview

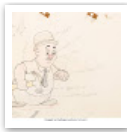
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Original animation drawing from Wabbit Twouble with color notations

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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Pico and Sepulveda



Jack's writers dropped in references to the intersection throughout the broadcast, including a funny one where Benny's doctors (Frank Nelson and Mel Blanc) are watching barium go through his system and the liquid passes Pico and Sepulveda.

The writers tried to keep running with it. The following week, they made a reference to Pico and Sepulveda early in the show. Not a titter. So much for running gags.

The "Pico and Sepulveda" gag isn't the most obscure musical reference in the show. Earlier, when Rochester is sleeping, he blurts out the words "Bloop, Bleep." That's a song, too. It's also mentioned in the June 21, 1947 "coming soon" section of *Billboard*. It was recorded by Jack's buddy Danny Kaye for Decca.

There's one song mentioned in the same edition of *Billboard* that is, surprisingly, not referred to in the Benny show. It's 'Waukegan Concerto' by David Rose on the M-G-M label. Rose was the musical director for Red Skelton for many years and had no association with the Benny show. In fact, his song never appeared on it. But it made its radio debut on May 29, 1946 on the "Holiday For Music" show on CBS, and Jack did give it (and Rose) a plug on his season closer three days earlier.



Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:47](#)



Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

1 comment:



Guppy270 7 August 2012 at 10:16

I really enjoy reading your blog, it's excellent~!

I run a website devoted to Jack Benny in the 1940s:

<https://sites.google.com/site/jackbennyinthe1940s/Home>

Would you mind if I linked to your blog from my website? Your articles on Jack Benny have been informative & interesting, and I think the people that go to my website would also really enjoy your blog.

If you want you can reply here as a comment, or e-mail me at: jackbenny1940s@gmail.com

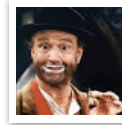
Thanks very much~!
Bill Cairns

[Reply](#)

additional covers you could share! ...

17 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

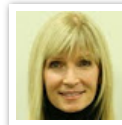
Cartoon Research

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

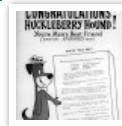
The World of Knight



TONIGHT, 11:54 PM. - COPYRIGHT 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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Watermark theme. Powered by [Blogger](#).