



Sunday, 9 December 2012

## Regurgitated Benny

There's an irony in John Crosby's syndicated newspaper column of October 12, 1952. It's about how Jack Benny thrives using the same old routines. Crosby felt he couldn't make his point using the same old writing. He came up with a new gimmick.

The 1952-53 season was Jack's third. In a way. His first year on television, he appeared only four times, then six the following season. He expanded to eight in 1952-53. It's a far cry from 39 weeks of radio every year. Once a month, he spelled off Clinton Fadiman's panel *This is Show Business* and then Ann Sothern's *Private Secretary*. Fadiman's show suffered irreparable damage after panelist George S. Kaufman had the audacity on the December 21st broadcast to criticise the ubiquitousness of Christmas music.

The Benny broadcast discussed in the column aired October 5th.

### Jack Benny, Second-Hand

By JOHN CROSBY

I've been a devotee of Jack Benny and a scholar of his methods for so many years that I don't really have to see him on television. As a matter of fact, I didn't see the first Benny show. I was wrestling with a writer at the time trying to find an adjective to fit another comedian, a man who strenuously resists description. So I called Operative A I, explained that I was delayed at the office and couldn't get to a set and asked her if she'd look in and report. She did. It is a mark of Benny's genius that his first show was hilariously funny even second-hand.

Of course, I'm a pushover for Benny, anyhow. A I explained "It was the same old stuff, but it was awfully funny. He started out talking about his trip to England, and right away he got into that tight routine. They wouldn't let him take the money out, he said, so he buried it in Westminster Abbey. He figured there'd always be an England."

"Then there was this sketch with Bob Crosby. Crosby wanted to be paid \$500 a week and Benny wanted to get him for \$50. So Benny and Rochester pulled an old trick on him which had succeeded in holding down the salaries of Phil Harris, Dennis Day and even Rochester. They put old ragged curtains on the windows, pulled the springs out of the sofa and made the place look wormeaten. The funniest sight gag of all was a portrait of Benny. One side of the portrait showed a prosperous looking Benny. They it over. On the back was another painting of Benny, his coat collar turned up, a harassed look in his face looking like a refugee from a Bowery park bench."

"Crosby was quite impressed by evidences of poverty. But he had his own. After negotiations had gone on for awhile, the door opened and in walked one of Crosby's five children. He was in rags. 'When do we eat, Daddy?' he asked. Well, that pushed Crosby's salary up another \$50. Then two more Crosby boys came in. They were even more ragged than the first one. The salary jumped some more. When the last Crosby boy in tatters came in, Benny looked at him and said: 'Where's your other shoe?'"

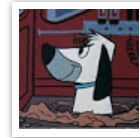
"I ate it," said the boy.

"So Crosby got his asking price. The sketch ended with Mrs. Crosby coming in to collect the kids. She was covered with mink and loaded down with diamonds."

Well, it's a switch on a gag that has been going on for 20 years or so on the Benny show. The triumphant thing about it is that after all these years it is still funny—even in a reprint, which is how I got it. I can just see



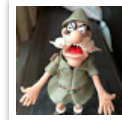
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## Blogs to See

### Peter Gray's Comics and Art



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

Knox...and families of these comic artists can see these gems... - made with fimo clay I had ago and its not very easy to do...  
4 hours ago

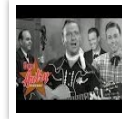
### Fernando Liera Blog Cartoons



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

safety measures. - ©2020 fernandollercartoons.com  
5 hours ago

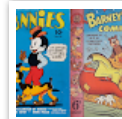
### Movies with Michael



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..."  
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

Benny's expression when the first boy came in. I can hear his voice when he asked the boy where his other shoe was.

Benny is like everyone's Aunt Minnie. You just start to talk about Aunt Minnie's eccentricities and the family shouts with laughter before you finish the sentence. That's Benny. He's everyone's Aunt Minnie, his nephews and nieces stretching from coast to coast through thousands of hamlets and towns. He grasps a dollar with magnificent tenacity and (and somehow gets parted from it, anyhow).

He's sort of prissy in his habits. At the start of the show, for instance, he came in and announced that television certainly took it out of him. He needed a drink. So he poured out a jigger of Coca Cola and dashed it down like a real he-man. Everyone bullies him. He tries to bully other people and—apart from Dennis Day—never succeeds.

His charm surpasseth understanding. One of the wonders of the world is his acceptance abroad. This summer, one reviewer in Manchester declared: "There's no doubt that as a great clown, Mr. Benny, like Charles Chaplin. speaks volumes with the shrug of a shoulder, a whimsical bored smile or his petulant biting of the lips!"

Another one wrote: "The trouble, Mr Benny, is that you are too perfect a comedian. Your timing is worked out to the last decimal of a second. You remained inhumanly brilliant all through." Said another breathless with admiration: "No audience the world over could miss a single laugh."


Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:46](#) 

Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

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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  
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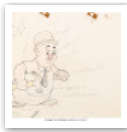
 **Yowp**



[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](#) -




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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