



Sunday, 31 March 2013

Laughs and Mistakes

It's hard to think of Jack Benny with any other announcer but Don Wilson. And it's hard to think of Don Wilson being anything but a jolly, overweight commercial pitch-man. But neither was originally the case.

The Benny show went through several announcers (and sponsors) in the first few years. When Chevrolet dumped Benny after the April 1, 1934 programme, he started work six days later for General Tire, and that's when Jack connected with Don Wilson for the first time, leaving behind Alois Havrilla. Wilson had announced several shows before this but had built his career as a football announcer, having the distinction of calling the Rose Bowl game for several years before deciding his career would be better advanced in New York (the Benny show moved to California in 1935 and brought Wilson along).

Wilson once explained to the *Windsor Star* that Chevrolet cancelled after 26 weeks because the company's advertising manager "felt they had such a high-class product that they shouldn't be represented by a comedian but by a symphony." Evidently, the Chevy people felt they were making Packards or Cadillacs.

Here's Wilson talking in 1956 about his time with Jack.



Benny Announcer Got Job Because He Laughed Hard

EDITOR'S NOTE: Aline Mosby is on vacation. Don Wilson writes today about his job as announcer on the Jack Benny television and radio show.)

By **DON WILSON**

Written for the United Press

HOLLYWOOD, Aug. 14 (UP) — Twenty-three years ago I laughed and got a job — I've been with Jack Benny ever since.

I was working in the East as a sportscaster and had the good fortune to be included in a general audition for the Jack Benny program. Jack, as part of the audition, kidded the boxtop craze by inviting his listeners to tear the tops from their automobiles and mail them in. I was convulsed and my voice, trained to project over the roars of football crowds, carried to the microphones. I've been laughing with and at Jack from that time 'til now.

Benny Likes "Boo-Boos"

I'm fortunate to have been associated with a star with a real sense of humor who appreciates the "fluff" or "boo-boo" because I've contributed more than my share. Jack and his writers have been wise enough to turn mistakes on the show to advantage.

For example, who can forget Mary Livingstone's "chiss sweez sandwich" or her car which was at the filling station on the "grass reek."

Once I signed off one of the CBS-TV shows with a distortion of the sponsor's pet slogan. It came out "Be Lucky. Go Happy." Jack promptly assigned my wife, Lois, the announcing chores for the following three weeks — to my distress and Lois' delight.

Jack is not only a great comedian but a brave man. He didn't even flinch when he asked me on the show where I obtained a certain bit of information and I replied, not according to the script: "I read it in Drear Poosin's column."

Contrary to many shows, the equipment on the Benny TV show is located behind the stage with only the

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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...

3 hours ago

Fernando Liera Blog Cartoons



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

safety measures. - ©2020 fernandollercartoons.com

4 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..."

7 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

microphone booms on the stage.

This is done so the audience can have a clear view of the players. Three cameras are used. One on the left is for long shots, one on the right for medium shots and one in the middle for close-ups.

This camera in the middle is a favorite of Jack's. We have a joke that it's one of a kind and CBS uses it only on the Benny show. It has a special device that "makes a 62-year-old man look 39."

Wilson had a reputation—one I don't think was deserved—of constantly making mistakes on the air. Maybe they were just more noticeable than other people's. Mel Blanc's autobiography revealed Bea Benaderet used to run a pool on which line in the script Wilson was going to blow first that week.

One of the puzzling things involves running gags based on screw-ups. Jack got mileage for several weeks from Mary's "chiss sweeze" and "grass reek." But through the 1940s, he did two live versions of his show, one for the East Coast and one for the West. Many West Coast cities also broadcast the East Coast version three hours earlier. But if a mistake was made on a West Coast broadcast, how could it be turned into a running gag the following week? Easterners wouldn't have heard it. The best explanation I can come up with is, at least in some cases, Jack explained the screw-up on the next broadcast, presumably so the audience wouldn't feel left out.

Wilson's final show with Jack Benny was on a 1970 special, 34 years after he won the audition to be his announcer. Alois Havrilla, dead for 18 years by then, was long forgotten.

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:21](#)



Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

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Born on July 18, 1913 - [Red Skelton](#) - *Today's post commences

with the Guzzler's Gin routine ...

1 day ago

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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

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[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

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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...
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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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