Sunday, 23 June 2013

Fred vs Jack

Jack Benny had so many running gags and occasional characters he was able to mix and match them all with ease and make his show found fresh but familiar at the same time. Of course, it helped that his radio show was on the air from 1932 to 1955; it gave him time to add things gradually and then evolve them

One of them was the feud with Fred Allen which supposedly culminated in an on-air fight on the Benny show on March 14, 1937. But both Allen and Benny knew there was life left in it and the feud carried on until Benny left radio in 1955 (Allen died the following March).

It began with a crack by Allen on his broadcast of December 30, 1936 when ten-year-old violinist Stuart Canin gave an impressive performance of Schubert's "The Bee" (he was paid \$55). You can hear the full East Coast broadcast below. Canin appears at the 49:35 mark and Allen only makes one Benny



joke at the end of the violin solo. The conversation between Allen and Canin below wasn't on this broadcast. I presume it is from February 3, 1937, the date of the Allen show before the Sunday Benny broadcast where he promised to play "The Bee" (Canin got another \$55 from Allen, then \$100 for appearing on Benny's show on March 7th).

Radio Mirror had a lengthy article on the feud in its July 1938 edition, generously quoting from radio scripts. You can see not all of it is sterling comedy. The March 7 climax broadcast is actually quite painful at times, with both comedians hurling insults that are more childish than witty and not really in character for either of them. When the "official" part of the feud died, Allen and Benny's writers had the luxury of bringing it back when they had good, solid zingers that warranted it. That's the "feud" dialogue radio listeners likely remember, including the brilliant "King For a Day" sketch that ran overtime on Allen's show to close the 1945-46 season.

With that overlong introduction, here's the unbylined piece from *Radio Mirror*, with NBC photos by William Haussler that accompanied the article.

THE MIGHTY BENNY-ALLEN FEUD

THE famous radio feud between Fred (Hatfield) Allen and Jack (McCoy) Benny that has been rocking America's airminded listeners with laughter for more than a year, has now passed into history. But anything as funny as that feud shouldn't be allowed to do anything of the kind—which is why we've re-created it in print. Here's the whole furious fight, from beginning to end, ready for the first time for you to read. How did it start? Well, it actually began when a gent named Schubert wrote a harmless composition called "The Bee". For years Jack Benny had been hankering to play "The Bee" on his program as a violin solo, and for

About Me



View my complete profile

Blogs to See

Peter Gray's Comics and Art



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

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... 2 hours ago

E Fernando Llera Blog Cartoons



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

safety measures. - ©2020 fernandolleracartoons.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

E 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 Tralfaz: Fred vs Jack

years he had been discouraged, sometimes by sheer force. But one night he came out flatfooted with the announcement that, come what might, he would play "The Bee" by request-his own. Presumably Fred Allen listened in that night, because the following Wednesday we find him firing the opening shot in the feud: Fred: Ladies and gentlemen, Sunday last an itinerant vendor of desserts who has a sideline called by some, a radio program, announced to an apprehensive world that he would murder a Bee. This dire news has seeped into every nook and cranny of the country, and I understand citizens are fleeing these shores by the thousands rather than submit to such torture. The effect this solo will have on contemporary American life is reflected in these telegrams I have received. Fritz Kreisler wires:-

IF JACK BENNY PLAYS THE BEE NEXT SUNDAY IT WILL SET THE VIOLIN BACK TWO HUNDRED YEARS

Mr. Lemuel Randypone, southern planter, wires:

IF BENNY PLAYS VIOLIN NEXT SUNDAY THE COTTON CROP IS SAVED STOP THE SOUTH WILL BE ALL EARS AND THE EARS WILL BE STUFFED WITH COTTON

These are but a few of the opinions voiced during the week. We look forward to next Sunday with apprehension. Tonight, in order to stunt Mr. Benny's growth, we have brought to the microphone Master Stewart Canin, violinist extraordinary.

How old are you tonight, Stewart?

Stewart: Ten years old, Mr. Allen.

Fred: Do you know Jack Benny?

Stewart: No.

Fred: Did you ever hear him play the violin?

Stewart: Yes, sir.

Fred: How did his playing sound to you?

Stewart: Terrible.

Fred: Well, Mr. Benny is in a spot, Stewart. He is supposed to play "The Bee" next Sunday and I thought if we wanted to be fair about the whole thing you and I could explain to Mr. Benny how to

manage it. You know ... we can tell him how to hold the violin and everything. I know he is listening in to see how a good comedian operates, and we can tell him how to hold the violin. Now, you show me and I'll tell Mr. Benny. (Stewart obliges). Are you listening, Jack? The violin is held in the left hand, the little finger resting lightly on the first string. The round end of the violin sets back into the neck, a little over to your left, with just a dash of adam's apple peeking around the corner. The bow, or crop, as you cowboys call it, Mr. Buck Benny, is held in the right hand. Now, to play the violin, what do you do, Stewart? (Stewart scrapes out a few notes). I see, you scratch the bow across the strings. Fine. And now that Mr. Benny knows how to hold the violin, little ten-year-old Stewart Canin will show little thirty-five-year-old Mr. Benny how to play "The Bee". Go ahead, Stewart.

(Little Stewart plays "The Bee" beautifully, as Jack never, of course, will ever be able to.) Fred: Thank you, Stewart. That was "The Bee," Mr. Benny, played by a ten-year-old boy. Aren't you too

ashamed of yourself now to go through with your threat? Why, Mr. Benny, at ten you couldn't even play on the linoleum. Next Sunday, ladies and gentlemen, the world will realize that Aesop spoke two thousand years too soon when he said, "Nero fiddled and Rome burned." For if Jack Benny insists on fiddling, America will burn. I rest my case.

(It is not Stewart's beautiful rendition but a common cold that keeps Jack from playing "The Bee" on the following Sunday as threatened. Jack explains he doesn't want to give the cold to his violin. But he doesn't fail to blast away at poor Fred Allen. "What," he wants to know, "does a reformed juggler know about music?" Fred gathers himself into a ball of fury and has back at Jack.)

FRED: Recently a gentleman . . . and the word gentleman is used loosely here . . . cad might better be the word ... has seen fit to remove some pointed shafts from his verbal quiver and ping them at me from the West coast. I won't stoop to mention his name but he is a picture star. His initials are J. B. . . . and I don't mean John Benny. Last Sunday J. B., referring to my profile, said that there was a limit to what the makeup man could do for me when I come to Hollywood to make a picture this summer. All right, I'll admit I am no middle Ritz brother. I know the stork flew backwards so he wouldn't have to confront me in case the bundle flew open, but if Mr. J. B. wants to get personal, all right. I quote from a Hollywood gossip column . . . "What radio and movie star was seen trying to get into a grapefruit skin so that he could go to a masquerade as a little

Harry Von Zell (Interrupting): The character J. B. is entirely fictional, folks, and any incident that might be construed as having reference to any living person . . . or Jack Benny ... is entirely coincidental . . . signed . . . the management.



additional covers you could share! ..

16 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... 1 day 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. COPYRIGH T 2020 BY MII TON **KNIGHT**

4 days ago





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 -

Fred: I only said that when J. B. was ten years old he couldn't play "The Bee" on his violin.

(Next week the startling news comes through that Jack had had to postpone playing "The Bee" because some well-wisher of the radio millions has stolen Jack's violin. Meanwhile, to fill in, Jack has hurled several classic insults at Fred, among which he has accused Fred of being such a sissy he has to take ether while having a manicure. Fred can't wait to get back at him.)

Fred: Portland, did you hear the Benny program last Sunday?

Portland: I'll say, it was a wow, wasn't it?

Fred: Oh, it was pretty lively for a guy who's got anemia.

Portland: Jack isn't anemic.

Fred: Listen, I followed him around at the dog show last year and when he passed by the bloodhounds they didn't even open their eyes. He was born anemic. I heard he was so white when he was born people thought he was delivering the stork.

Portland: Just the same, this is the cheesiest feud I have ever seen. You two have been fighting four weeks and still no bloodshed!

Fred: How can there be bloodshed when a guy ain't got no blood?

Portland: Oh, Jack Benny's twice as healthy as you are.

Fred: He could be three times as healthy as I am and still be half dead.

Portland: You'd better be careful. Jack is liable to get mad.

Fred: Get mad? Why, I'll pull those three hairs he's got down over that peachstone fob he has hanging out of his vest and play "The Bee" on them. I'll hit him so hard when he comes out he'll think he's in prison. He'll be looking through his ribs.

Portland: Oh, yes. But what will Jack be doing?

Fred: Snoring, probably.

Portland: You mean he's drowsy?

Fred: Drowsy rhymes with a word I'd like to use if radio was broadminded.

Portland: Gee! I hope you blows!

Fred: Blows? Benny's so shortwinded he can't gasp out a match. He has to drool on it.

Portland: Just the same, I think you ought to drop this feud, Mr. Allen.

Fred: Not until he plays "The Bee." No sir!

Portland: But Jack can't play it if his violin is stolen, can he?

Fred: He can get the violin back, can't he? But did you hear him offer a reward for it? No! He's so tight he wears garters on his spats so he won't have to buy socks. I'll get his violin back.

Portland: How?

Fred: I am offering a fifty-dollar reward and no questions asked to the party finding the stolen violin and returning it to Jack Benny. Portland: Wait a minute, Fred, here's a telegram for you. I'll open it. "WILL OFFER SEVENTY-FIVE DOLLAR REWARD TO PARTY WHO FINDS MY VIOLIN AND KEEPS HIS MOUTH SHUT." SIGNED JACK BENNY.

Fred: Ladies and Gentlemen, I am offering one hundred dollars to the finder of Jack Benny's violin. Where are you going, Portland?

Portland: I am going out to look for it, Fred.

(Unfortunately for the world Jack Benny's violin turns up. It has been hidden in the whiskers of his sponsor. Fred is licked and the evening of March third finds him pretty downcast. Despite everything Fred has been able to do, Jack plays "The Bee," not exactly a honey of a rendition.) Fred: Harry, did you hear Mr. Benny play "The Bee" last Sunday?

Von Zell: Fred, did I! Listen, I was just able to get out of bed this morning.

Fred: Do you know, that solo did more for the aspirin industry than the last Flu epidemic. I have never heard such wailing and squalling since the time two ghosts got their toes caught in my ouija board. Of all the foul collections of discord foisted on a radio loving public under the guise of music, that herd of cat calls took the cake.

Von Zell: Listen, Fred, don't get excited.

Fred: I haven't recovered yet. Benny doesn't play by ear or he certainly would have run away from himself the other night. Harry, last Sunday when Mr. Benny gave his palsied rendition of "The Bee" on his wail box he cried to the world in a sort of luke warm hysteria. If the radio audience liked that, I'm going to quit. But before I quit I'm going to do something desperate.

(The whole world trembled at these terrible words. What would happen? So far the feudists have been fighting at a 3,000 mile range—from opposite sides of the continent—but now Jack Benny comes East. Would the feud burst into open warfare with all its attendant horrors? Would the body of Jack Benny be found in some swamp horribly mutilated? Sunday rolled around and as usual the Jello program went on the air—in an atmosphere of suspense. Everybody was nervous and Jack had warned them that the name of Allen was to be changed to Boo Allen. Two-thirds of the program has gone by, Jack has rashly started to sing a chorus of "You're driving me Nuts" when there is an ominous knock on the door. The music comes to a crashing stop—Jack's song freezes in his throat:)

Mary Livingstone: Come in. (*The door opens and it's Fred Allen without a machine gun.*) Fred: Hey, what's going on here? Whoever's blowing that fog horn has got to cut it out. All: Why, it's Fred Allen.



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 Ladv 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

Blog Archive

- **2020** (216)
- **2019** (376)
- **2018** (379)
- **2017** (380)
- **2016** (396)
- 2015 (389)2014 (390)
- **2013** (388)
 - ► December (31)
 - November (31)
 - October (34)
 - ► September (31)
 - August (33)

Jack: Well, as I live and regret there are no locks on studio doors, if it isn't Boo Allen. Now listen Allen, what's the idea of breaking in here in the middle of my singing?

Fred: Singing? Well, I didn't mind when you scraped that bow over my suit case and called it "The Bee," but when you set that croup to music and call it singing... Benny, you've gone too far.

Jack: Now, look here, Allen, I don't care what you say about my violin playing on your own program but when you come up here, be careful. After all, I've got listeners.

Fred: Keep your family out of this.

Jack: Well, my family likes my singing and my violin playing too.

Fred: Your violin playing? Why, I just heard that a horse committed suicide when he found your violin bow was made from his tail.

Jack: Hm. Well, listen to me, you Wednesday night hawk, another crack like that and Town Hall will be looking for a new janitor. How did you get in here without a pass?

Fred: I made one at the doorman and you're next.

Jack: Oh I am, eh?

Fred: Listen, cowboy, why didn't you stay out in Hollywood where you don't belong?

Jack: Because I heard you were coming out there to make a picture, that's why.

Fred: Well, I saw your last picture and maybe you didn't start bank night but you certainly kept it going.

Jack: Oh yeah? Well, three states are waiting for your picture to be released. They are going to use it instead of capital punishment. Wow! Where are you going to live in Hollywood, Mr. Allen? At the ostrich farm?

Fred: I may.

Mary: (Starts to laugh loudly)

Jack: What are you laughing at Mary?

Mary: He'll show those birds how to lay eggs.

Jack: Mary, that was marvelous. I am going to kiss you for that.

Mary: Then I take it back.

Jack: Oh you do!

Fred: She'd rather kiss an ostrich and so would I.

Jack: Well, Allen, that's going a little too far. When you make that kind of remark it means fight where I came from

Fred: You mean your blood would boil if you had any?

Jack: Yes, and I've got just enough to resent that. If you'll step out in the hallway I am ready to settle this affair, man to man. Fred: All right, I'll knock you flatter than the part of this program I wasn't on.

Mary: Hold on there, Allen, who touches a hair on Jack's gray head has to find it first.

Jack: Never mind that. Come on, Allen, let us away. (*Muttering.*) Hm, I'm sorry now I sold my rowing machine. (*The two stamp out. There is a tense moment of suspense.*)

(Then we hear heavy footsteps approaching, very heavy footsteps. The door opens and Jack and Fred enter laughing to beat the band.)

Jack: Ha, Ha, Ha! Gosh, Freddie, those were the days, weren't they?

Fred: Yes, sir! Remember that time in Toledo when you walked in the magician's dressing room and stole his pigeons?

Jack: Do I? They tasted pretty good, didn't they, Freddie?

Fred: You said it, Jack.

Jack: We didn't make much money in those days, Freddie, but we did get a lot of laughs.

Fred: We certainly did until we walked on the stage. (They both laugh again.)

Mary: Jack, what happened to the fight?

Jack: What fight? Say, Freddie, remember that time in South Bend, Indiana?

Phil Harris: No kidding, fellows, what happened to that fight?

Jack: Why, Phil, we were never serious about that.

Mary: Then how'd you get that black eye?

Jack: Oh this? Well, I was just writing a letter.

Fred: And I dotted his eye.

Jack: Now wait a minute, Freddie. I slapped you more than you did me. Look at your wrists. They're all red.

Fred: Well, I made you say Uncle when I pulled your hair.

Jack: Uncle isn't the word, but let it go.

Mary: Well, I'll be darned! After what you guys said about each other!

Fred: Listen, Jack's the whitest guy I know.

Don Wilson: But you said he was anemic.

Fred: Listen! Don't let anyone tell you Jackie Benny's anemic. He stays white on purpose just so everybody else will look healthy. Don't you, Jackie boy?

Jack: I sure do, Freddie.

Phil: But you said he had so little hair he sprinkled popcorn on his shoulders for false dandruff. You even said he was stingy.

Fred: Jackie Benny stingy? Why his heart is so big you can put a stethoscope on him any place and get action.

Don: Say, Fred, here's a package you dropped on your way out to the hall. $\label{eq:control}$

Fred: Oh yes, that's a box of candy I was going to give Jack.

▶ July (33)

▼ June (34)

Newcomer Jack Benny

Who Was the Real Betty Boop?

All Toes Accounted For

Snafu's Sally Lou

Inanities of Old Radio

The Jungle of Nairobi

Don't Lose Your Head

Fred vs Jack

Tales of Terry, Ted and Leon, 1932

Buzzard Swirls

Hey, Taxi

The One, The Only, You Bet Your Life

The Helpful Help

Questions about Book Revue

The Non-Menace Dennis

The Cat and Mouse of Bill and Joe

Not Quite A Pussywillow

Popeye Shakes the Diner

Krazy Kat and Ben Harrison

You Can Marry Robert Q. Lewis

The Circles of Abou Ben Boogie

QTTV and the Irvin Jay Story

Dover Boy Harris

Marilyn and the Power of Television

Cartoons of 1931, Part

Dog Bites Buzzard

Just Givin' My Bosses a Plug

Spike and Mike

Bluto Answered an Ad

Fake Mickey Sighting

Alley in Manhattan

Mr. Harris, Your Contract is Up

Gee, Her Old LaSalle Ran Great

I'm Winfield the Sailor Man

May (33)

► April (30)

► March (36)

► February (29)

Mary: Candy! Can I have a piece?

Fred: Sure, but take the square ones, Mary, they're not poison.

 $Jack: Hm, I see. \ By the way, Freddie, when you get home if that box of flowers I sent you is still ticking, just the properties of th$

put it in water.

Fred: I will. Thank's for the tip.

Mary: Gee, this candy is swell. What's it filled with, Fred?

Fred: Ipana.

Jack: Oh well, she was going to brush her teeth anyway.

Fred: For that I am going to brush mine with Jello.

Jack: Why don't you have them put Ipana out in six delicious flavors?

Fred: That's a great idea, but I got to go now.

Jack: O.K. Freddie, thanks for your kind visit and apology.

Fred: What apology?

Jack: Never mind, let's not start that again.

Fred: By the way, Mr. Harris . . .

Phil: Yes, Fred?

Fred: You lay off my pal Jack.

Benny: That's all. Goodbye everybody.

Jack: So long Freddie. (Fred goes.) Play, Harris. And watch your step. You heard what Freddie said!

Phil: Why, you sawed off little punk! I'll take you and tear you limb from limb.

Jack: Oh Freddie-Freddie-Freddie!

(Music averts hostilities at this point.)

Jack: This is the last number of this program in the new Jello series. We will be with you again next Sunday

Mary: Say, Jack, are you really glad you made up with Fred Allen?

Jack: Certainly I am because now I won't have to listen to his program to hear what he is saying about me. Good night, folks!

Posted by Yowp at <u>07:19</u>



Labels: Jack Benny

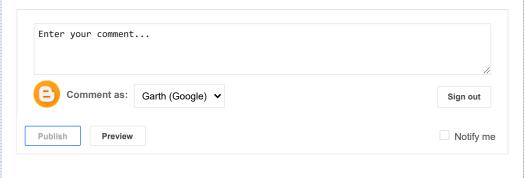
1 comment:



J Lee 23 June 2013 at 07:47

I came at the Benny-Allen feud from the opposite direction, via my uncle's record collection of classic radio I listened to in the late 1960s, which included the "King for A Day" sequence. I think the main difference in the eight-year span is more in the crystallizing of Jack's full-blown radio persona -- Fred's pretty much still Fred, but it's the fullness of Jack's character's ego and greed that makes the later routine such a success. They're not just throwing insults at each other, but now it makes perfect sense that Jack would try to disguise himself to scam money and prizes off a game show (a bit Benny and his writers would rework a decade later for TV with Groucho).

Reply



Newer Post Home Older Post

Subscribe to: Post Comments (Atom)

- ► January (33)
- 2012 (397)
- **2011** (106)

Labels

Labeis
Aline Mosby (17)
Art Davis (33)
Bad Luck Blackie (9)
Bob and Ray (10)
Bob Clampett (82)
Bob McKimson (59)
Bob Thomas (53)
Chuck Jones (142)
Columbia (33)
Counterfeit Cat (8)
Cynthia Lowry (26)
Dick Thomas (14)
Don Patterson (17)
Earl Wilson (6)
Erskine Johnson (37)
Felix the Cat (27)
Floischer (154)
Fleischer (154)
Frank Tashlin (24)
Fred Allen (43)
Fred Brunish (11)
Friz Freleng (137)
Gene Deitch (18)
George Pal (10)
Grant Simmons (4)
Hanna and Barbera unit (99)
Hanna-Barbera (2)
Harman-Ising (61)
Henry Morgan (13)
Irv Spence (8)
Jack Benny (454)
Jay Ward (30)
Jimmy Durante (17)
John Crosby (84)
John Sutherland (28)
Johnny Johnsen (27)
Kenny Baker (6)
King-Size Canary (8)
Laugh-In (11)
Legend of Rockabye Point (6)
Little Rural Riding Hood (7)
Magical Maestro (9)
Maurice Noble (12)
Mel-O-Toons (4)
MGM (553)

Norm McCabe (5)

Pat Matthews (10) Paul Julian (13) Paul Terry (2) Sara Berner (5) Screwy Squirrel (34) Spider-Man (1) Terrytoons (84) Tex Avery (468) Tom and Jerry Human (29) Tralfaz Sunday Theatre (17) Ub Iwerks (80) **UPA** (57) Van Beuren (94) Vernon Scott (42) Virginia MacPherson (14) Walt Disney (145) Walter Lantz (241) Warner Bros. (586) Who Killed Who (10)

Watermark theme. Powered by Blogger.