

Sunday, 11 August 2013

Yermo For Jack

When you think of Las Vegas comics, you think of loud, brash guys like Buddy Hackett and Don Rickles or Rat Packers like Joey Bishop. You don't think of someone like Jack Benny. But Jack played Vegas, and that was only after his wife Mary Livingston convinced him that if a sophisticated humourist like Noel Coward could be a smash in Sin City, so could he.

Syndicated Broadway columnist Earl Wilson caught Benny's Vegas show in 1958 and couldn't resist the idea of talking to TV's best-known cheapskate about being in a city where people willingly throw their money away in hope of landing The Big Jackpot. And he also wrote a bit about Jack's act, some of which was incorporated into sketches on his TV show. Fans didn't care if they heard and saw it all before. They wanted to see it live. And that's why Jack was a Vegas smash.

This column was published in papers beginning July 19, 1958.



On Broadway

Gaming Tables Won't Get Jack Benny's Bucks

By EARL WILSON

LAS VEGAS, July 19 - Jack Benny, on vacation here from television, gave me an exclusive explanation of his secret system of not losing at the dice table. (He doesn't play.)

Actually, he doesn't play much. He'd been sitting in the Flamingo coffee shop with George Burns about 5 p.m. when he yawned and George said, "What are you going to do? Take a nap?"

"I think I might go lose \$20, he said.

And so one of the richest men in show business, in shorts and sports shirt, was seen leaning over a hot dice table a few minutes later, risking a few silver dollars—while next to him several nonentities with much lesser fortunes were betting \$50 chips.

"I limit myself to \$100 a day," Jack told me earlier. "And if the \$100 is gone by noon, that's still my limit. If I didn't—being here a whole month—I could get killed."

In his Flamingo night club act—a big sellout—he tells it somewhat differently.

"We all get about the same salary here but I take mine home," he says. "Oh, I may risk a few dollars. But by that time, the house has bought me four cigars and six drinks, and I'm ahead. I may become an alcoholic but never a gambler."

Jack's fascinated by the high-rollers. We discussed a well-known figure who won \$1,000,000 in a card game.

"That guy can't sit down to lunch without making a bet—such as how many seeds there are in his slice of watermelon," George Burns said. "Or whether the waitress will serve you or me first," Jack said, "Those guys know how to gamble. I don't."

Jack's playing it safe, too, by starring here in a cafe show. "I was such a big hit the first time they brought me right back only 11 months later," he says.

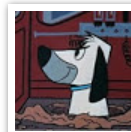
JACK WORKS with fellow fiddler Gisele MacKenzie—and has something fresh and novel for cafe crowds: The Jack Benny fan club from Yermo, Nev., a small town near here. The Jack Benny fan club turns out to be, Jack says, "dames all about 80 years old."

Actually, some are only 60.

"I tried to get them to work nude," Jack tells his audience.

When the fan club is invited up on stage, one fan titters "I haven't been so excited since I danced with

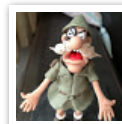
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Knox...and families of these comic artists can see these gems... - made with fimo clay I had ago and its not very easy to do...
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Fernando Liera Blog Cartoons



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

President Buchanan."

They invite Jack to the convention of the Jack Benny fan clubs which, they say, is to be held in Minnesota.

"Why Minnesota?" asks Jack.

"Well we've tried other places," one of the "girls" says, "but we seem to do better the nearer we are to the Mayo Clinic."

Jack also tells his audiences that he conducted a poll to find out whether people preferred his TV show live or on film.

"I was surprised," he says, "by how many didn't like me at all."

The truth is that Jack's looking forward to another big year on TV. "There's no way of changing my format because I have no format," he said.

He felt one of his best shows last year was his takeoff on Jackie Gleason and "The Honeymooners."

"I'd like to repeat that in New York!" he said. "And get Gleason to come on at the end. I'll have tell Gleason to stay fat so I can do it."

"Jackie's slim again," I said.

"That would be better!" he decided. He thought Audrey Meadows was great on that show.

If they want an exciting new star on Broadway, they should get Audrey Meadows," he said. I think she's sensational."

JACK'S WIFE Mary came over at this point to say she'd been on the phone all day. "Do you know what all those calls were for?" she said. "Reservations, what can I do about them, Jack?"

"You can't do a damn thing," Jack said. The room where he performs has a sign over it saying, "Jack Benny's Vault." The lettering is in pennies. The club even removed chairs from Jack's dressing room so more customers could be accommodated.

Jack asked me how I liked "The Music Man" and I told him about a man in it who drops a valise with a loud crash. When asked what he does, he says, "I'm an anvil salesman."

"Isn't that an old vaudeville bit?" I asked Jack and George Burns.

"I never saw it," both said.

"But I think it's very funny," Jack said. "If it were given to me, I'd do it."

George Burns sucked his cigar. "I'm going to do it!" he announced. "Not only that, I'm going to wire them and tell them to take it out of the show because I originated it and it's mine."

Jack laughed for two minutes.

That's why they say he's the world's best audience and one of show business' nicest people.

Just a note about Jack Benny, Jackie Gleason and the publicity photo above. Shortly before the Benny TV show finished its long run, Jack did a parody of the Gleason show, featuring a sketch with Benny as Gleason as Joe the Bartender and Dennis Day as Frank Fontaine as Crazy Guggenheim. Benny was responsible for giving a huge boost to Fontaine's career in the radio days. Fontaine developed the Crazy character, known as John L.C. Sivoney at the time, in his nightclub act. Benny got him to do it on several broadcasts and was barely able to control his laughter over Fontaine's routine. So it was that Benny worked with the real Fontaine and a fake one.

Posted by Yowp at 06:19



Labels: Jack Benny

3 comments:



Chuck 11 August 2013 at 13:12

I have never seen this Benny episode. Dennis Day was an excellent mimic, so his take on "Crazy Guggenheim" would be worth seeing...

[Reply](#)



Yowp 12 August 2013 at 05:22

I don't recall seeing it either (it was almost 50 years ago, after all), but I've recently seen the clip of Jack with Audrey Meadows at the Honeymooners and it's pretty funny. Dennis would probably do a good job as ol' Craze.

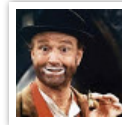
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additional covers you could share! ...

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

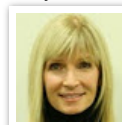
Cartoon Research

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

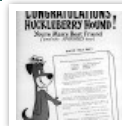
The World of Knight



TONIGHT, 11:54 PM. - 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 -

Anonymous 30 September 2013 at 03:33

Most bizarre take-off of Gleason was Peter Lorre as Ralph Kramden on a Red Skelton show (Red was Norton)

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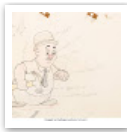
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Original animation drawing from Wabbit Twouble with color notations

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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