

Sunday, 9 February 2014

## Lolly on Jack

Louella Parsons appeared on Jack Benny's radio show on April 2, 1944, December 16, 1945 and October 26, 1952. The premise of the first and last shows was the same and even the scripts are pretty similar. Louella got a chance to plug her various print and broadcasting ventures. And she, in return, wrote about Jack in her columns. Of course, it wasn't all about him. The Parsons ego always forced her to include herself in the story.

This one is from April 20, 1940.

### Jack Benny a Hit in New Film Comedy

By Louella Parsons

HOLLYWOOD, April 20—What has happened to Jack Benny almost over night? All of a sudden he has become as great a movie star as he is a radio favorite. I'll tell you what I think happened to him. Everyone knows Jack Benny, his gags and his faculty for making fun of himself and letting others ridicule him. When he plays a fictional character he is just too well established as himself to make a dent as anyone else.

In "Buck Benny Rides Again" Jack is surrounded by all his familiar characters: Rochester, the delightful Negro comic, Phil Harris, Carmichael, the polar bear, Don Wilson, and although Mary Livingston isn't actually seen, we hear her voice coming over the ether as part of the Benny setup.

I spoke to Jack after I had seen "Buck Benny Bides Again" to tell him how thoroughly I enjoyed this comedy. Benny is pictured in his radio skit as always driving a defunct car that is just about to fall to pieces. One of the funniest incidents in "Buck Benny Rides Again" is the old car, just three jumps ahead of the junk-heap, to make it even funnier, Rochester, who plays a Jack's valet his cook, his chauffeur and meld to Carmichael, drives a sporty, expensive roadster.

You might think Benny would have a few pangs of jealousy over Rochester's enormous popularity and the big part he plays in his picture. But not Benny—he is too glad to have an actor of Eddie Anderson's ability (Rochester's real name).

"Why," said Jack, "that boy is so popular that they are planning big doings for him in Harlem. I don't believe any Negro who has ever visited Harlem caused more excitement, with the exception of Joe Louis, of course."

My talk with Jack took place just before he and his troupe left for the East.

"I will be in New York," he told me, "for a personal appearance for "Buck Benny Rides Again" and, of course, Mary is excited. Like all women, she plans to buy clothes, have herself some fun and we will enjoy seeing all the new shows. I am planning now," he continued, "to see if I cannot do my last two broadcasts on this season's program in Honolulu in order to give us a longer vacation there. You see, I go to work at Paramount in June with Fred Allen."



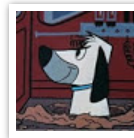
And here's Lolly gushing again, and rightfully so, over Jack's performance in "To Be or Not to Be" ("That was the good one," Ronald Colman once quipped in character on a Benny broadcast). This is from February 28, 1942.

### Hollywood News: Ernst Lubitsch Launches Benny On New Career

*"To Be or Not to Be" Presents Comedian As Romantic Hero*

By LOUELLA O. PARSONS

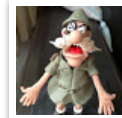
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## Blogs to See

### 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...  
2 hours ago

### Fernando Liera Blog Cartoons



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

safety measures. - ©2020 fernandollera.com  
3 hours ago

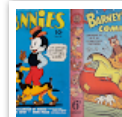
### Movies with Michael



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..."  
6 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

Hollywood, Feb. 28 (INS)— Curious that “To Be or Not To Be,” the comedy that was born in tears, should be the one to perhaps change Jack Benny's whole career. The same Benny is synonymous with clowning horseplay and riotous slapstick. Who would ever have thought that Jack Benny, super comedian, clown and funny man, would turn out a romantic hero. Yet Ernst Lubitsch, by a simple twist of the wrist, converts Jack into a leading man with the appeal of a Tyrone Power.

Mary Livingstone has always kidded Jack about his thinning hair, his age and even his waistline, although he is not the least bit on the portly side. They have gotten some of their biggest laughs from the way she has ribbed him, pretending to fall for a young hero and ridiculing Benny in their hilariously funny skits.

I went to call on the Bennys at their home in Beverly Hills just as Jack was getting ready to go to San Francisco to do a radio show at the Presidio. Jack and Mary had been playing gin rummy and Joan, their little daughter, done up in a little pink nightie, had come to say goodnight.

Before I had a chance to even sit down Mary said, “Wasn't he handsome? I fell in love with him all over again.” She had gone to the preview because Jack had not felt up to it. Carol Lombard's tragic death a few days after they finished the picture had been such a blow he wanted to see the picture in the theater or in the privacy of a quiet projection room.

“I feel differently now,” he said, “After Mary said the picture was so good and the reviews so satisfactory. I know how happy it would have made Carole and she would have wanted everyone to see our movie. I am more glad for her sake that most people like it than I am for my own account.”

“Wait until Fred Allen and Bob Hope see you,” I said. “Won't they burn? You have given Errol Flynn and our other dashing heroes competition.”

“When Ernst Lubitsch asked me to play the Shakespearian actor I was afraid,” Jack said. “You need a young, handsome leading man—a hero who will give the girls a thrill.”

“Ernst said he had written ‘To Be or Not To Be’ with me in mind and naturally I was flattered to do a picture with Lubitsch and Carole. If Lubitsch asks me to make another movie,” said Jack, “I won't even read the script. I'll say ‘yes’ before he can say his own name.

“I hadn't worked with Ernst two days before I knew what he told me to do was right. I had complete confidence in his judgment. In the scene where I make Robert Stack walk through the door first—we had shot it the other way first—with me in the lead. ‘Try following Stack,’ he said, and that scene is one of the biggest laugh sequences in the entire movie.

“Comedy, Lubitsch believes, must never be pushed. You must never force a laugh. Why I throw away my most important laughs and did nothing to call attention to the dialogue we hoped would be funny. The results showed that Lubitsch knows all the answers and the way to put over subtle humor.”

“‘To Be or Not to Be’ could very easily be a serious picture,” added Mary, “and a good one. It is so exciting and filled with such great suspense.”

“Ah, but the comedy,” said Jack, “is what makes the drama all the more potent and Lubitsch knew that so well.”

As I was leaving Mary and Jack walked to the door with me and waved good-by. Just then a dilapidated car with a man and woman and some children drove by. They drove to the curb and the man asked “Is that Jack Benny?”

I said yes. He said, “Well, I'm from Boston and Benny is the one person we came all the way to California to see.”

Guess that man and thousands like him all over the world are glad that “To Be or not to Be” is good for Jack is loved, not only by those who know him, but by Mr. and Mrs. Public all over the United States.

Posted by Yowp at 07:29



Labels: Jack Benny

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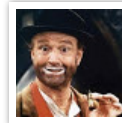
Preview

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additional covers you could share! ...

15 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

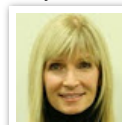
### Cartoon Research

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

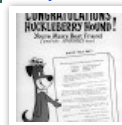
### The World of Knight



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

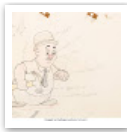
Wabbit Twouble: A Small Addendum to An Outstanding Podcast -

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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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