



Sunday, 8 June 2014

He and the Chimp

For reasons known only to him, Jack Benny was hung up on the idea of people thinking he really was cheap. Why he let it bother him, he never explained. But he mentioned it in a whole bunch of interviews during his days on television and that he dealt with it by overspending.

Perhaps he should have been more concerned about why his agent (or whoever) talked him into publicity stunt where he and a chimp played the violin.

Benny had great success in 1959 when the Marquis Chimps appeared on his show. So maybe that's what gave birth to a stunt the following year featuring Kokomo, Jr., whose claim to fame was replacing J. Fred Muggs on NBC's Today Show.

Whatever the circumstances, the stunt worked. Benny got newspaper ink. Here's what UPI reported on November 11, 1960. The stunt took advantage of but, at the same time, contradicted his cheapness. I suspect that's why he went along with it.

Benny Gives Black Tie Party In Automat

By **BRUCE AGNEW**

United Press International

New York — "I haven't come here in 20 years," Jack Benny mused. "I can't. If people saw me, they'd say I'm eating here because I'm stingy." To prove that he was nothing of the sort, Benny last night gave away nickels to more than 400 guests he had invited to a black-tie dinner and dancing party at the automat.

With a brave smile, he sat in the cashiers' booth himself for about 10 minutes, handing over \$2 rolls of nickels to the tuxedoed and be jeweled celebrities, who then bought their own dinners at the slot machine windows or in the cafeteria section.

The giveaway totaled \$840 by the end of the party.

The guest list included Broadway and Hollywood stars, writers and singers, and a monkey named Kokomo Jr. Kokomo played the violin.

So did Benny. He joined the six-piece orchestra on the bandstand to play "Sweet Georgia Brown," but he had some reservations.

"This is a lousy key," he grumbled as he started a solo. "Let's try the key of C."

The accordionist picked up the chorus in C. Benny tucked his violin under his chin and started sawing away again.

"Let's try D-flat," he suggested a couple of notes later.

In front of the bandstand, actress Helen Hayes and Iggy Wolfington, now playing in the "Music Man," danced a jitterbug. The song ended, but Miss Hayes wouldn't let Benny quit.

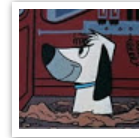
"Get up there and play some Bach for us so we can dance legitimately," she ordered. Benny played his encore.

He then threaded his way through the closely packed cafeteria tables to join Kokomo Jr. for a short, scratchy duet. The knee-high chimpanzee, flashily dressed in a black, spangled suit, sat on the table and warily watched the bow of Benny's violin. The bow came up. Kokomo ducked, and sneered. He didn't seem too interested in the duet.

Kokomo, in his spangled suit, wasn't the only



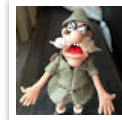
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Fernando Liera Blog Cartoons



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

[safety measures.](#) - ©2020 fernandollercartoons.com
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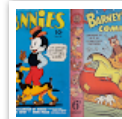
Movies with Michael



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

strikingly dressed guest.

Seated across the room at the same table were Mrs. Cindy Adams, wife of comedian Joey Adams, and Mrs. Charles A. Berns, wife of the owner of the 21 Club, both wearing dresses costing close to \$1,000. Each outfit was a combination dress and jacket. Each was gold brocade, with floral designs appliqued on. Each looked almost exactly like the other.

When Mrs. Adams left several hours later, she was carrying a rumpled paper bag filled with nickels she hadn't spent. She jingled them as she said goodnight to Benny.

"I know," Benny said. "A lot of people made money. A lot of people didn't eat—they just took the nickels."

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [08:46](#)



Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

5 comments:



J Lee 8 June 2014 at 09:20

For whatever reason (most likely because it initially got great ratings), pairing off famous comedians with chimps was a major industry in the late 1950s-to-mid 1960s. Lucille Ball and Jack would both pair up with the Marquis Chimps on their regular shows in the mid 60s, and you could always count on an annual appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show.

(Meanwhile, Cindy Adams is still working for the New York Post as a gossip writer. Not sure if she still has Jack's nickles...)

[Reply](#)



Yowp 8 June 2014 at 16:29

I blame J. Fred Muggs.

[Reply](#)



Pokey 9 June 2014 at 00:40

LOL! I KNEW someone would blame those Marquis Chimps on J.Fred Muggs...whatever HAPPENED to 'em (outside of YouTube appearances like that tea ad---or how the Chimps originated....I was born in the middle of the time frame that J.Lee mentioned, and wonder about the origin ..there's no WIKIPEDIA, no INTERNET MOVIE DATABASE ,nothin', detailing the beginnings or "breakup" of the chimps. Now I got a chimp on my back about this---it needs a banana..SC.aka Pokey, who did NOT work with chimps on Gumby..

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mysticalmartha 30 January 2016 at 02:22

My Father was the owner and trainer of the marquis chimps. After filming Disney movie, Toby Tyler and filming the TV series the hathaways he moved to Las Vegas and did many stage shows. He retired himself and the chimps and lived out his life in Vegas.



Rick 15 March 2016 at 11:06

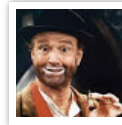
Here's an answer to a...rather old question at this point:
The Marquis Chimps were owned and shown by Gene Detroy.
There's a pretty fair amount of info on him & them via Google.

[Reply](#)

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

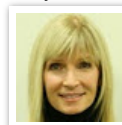
Cartoon Research

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

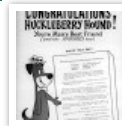
The World of Knight



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

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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...
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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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