

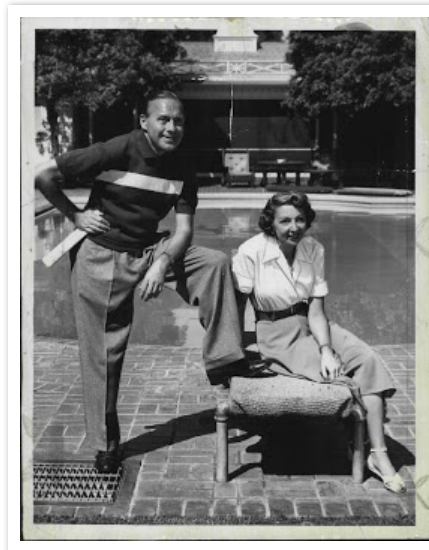


Sunday, 4 January 2015

That Ol' Man Benny

You may have heard a tale that top syndicated radio columnist John Crosby once asked for a copy of an extremely funny Jack Benny script and was aghast to find it contained nothing funny, just "Hmmm," and "Well!"

That isn't quite the way it went and, as proof, I give to you the Crosby column in question that appeared in newspapers in early 1947. He was reviewing the broadcast of December 29, 1946. It's yet another show where, in the second half, Jack gets jealous and petulant at someone else's fame. The first half features a running gag about Rochester mixing up an alcoholic eggnog brew with a reputation for potency. Benny's writers set up the gag in their usual great fashion. Nobody wants to touch the stuff, finding comic reasons not to do so. Finally we come to Phil Harris who, after a brief pause, enthusiastically demands to be led to the stuff (the gag is topped by Harris complaining about the egg mixed in with the bourbon).



Crosby doesn't include the whole gag in his column. He seems to be in a bit of a conundrum. He isn't all that crazy about the script, but loves the Benny show so much he can't be moved to stamp it with the dismissive criticism he pasted on other radio shows.

RADIO IN REVIEW

The Jack Benny Mystery

By JOHN CROSBY

NEW YORK, Jan. 6.—One of the most mysterious things in the world, at least to me, is the strange quality of genius that separates a good comedy script from a bad one. A couple of Sundays ago, Jack Benny offered his fans a program which to my mind was as hilarious as radio can ever get. Out of curiosity I sent to the West Coast for the script to determine, if I could, just what curious essence Mr. Benny had blown into this script to make it that funny. After reading the Benny script, I'm as much at sea as ever. Even allowing for Benny's great gift for pacing, inflection and timing, I still don't see why the darn thing should have made me laugh like that. In order that you may, if you like, share my bewilderment I append below an abbreviated version of the Benny script. You'll just have to take my word for it that the broadcast version was very, very comic.

• • •

Rochester: Dat ol' man River,
Dat ol' man River,

He must know sumpin', but don't say nuthin',
He Just keeps rollin', he keeps on rollin' Along.

Ol' man Benny, dat ol' man Benny,
He won't waste nuthin', and don't spend nuthin',
He just keeps rollin', he keeps on rollin' along.

You should see him sweat and strain,
When he spends a nickel, he's wracked with pain,

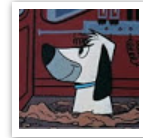
Benny: (Off) Rochester!

Rochester: Tote dat barge, lift dat bale.

Benny: Rochester!

Rochester: Git a little drunk an' you lan' in jail.

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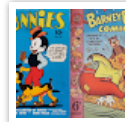


Cowboy Church #67
- Hello my friends and welcome back for another

service of cowboy church. Today's musical selection begins with Gene Autry singing "Dear Hearts and Gentle Pe..."

1 hour ago

Termite Terrace headlines

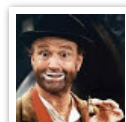


Question for All You Cartoon Collectors! - OK so I've been doing some

looking around. Bosko apparently had a comic book and I'm wondering if any of you know of additional covers you could share! ...

10 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

(f...

1 day ago

Fernando Llera Blog Cartoons



'Cozy Bear' Group Tied to Hacks on Covid Vaccine Research. - ©2020

fernandollera.com

1 day ago

Benny: Rochester, I've been calling you.

Rochester: Sorry, boss, I was carried away with my own voice.

Benny: Oh, fine.

Rochester: Well, I'm becoming quite a popular singer. You know they call Bing Crosby, the Groaner?

Benny: Uh huh.

Rochester: And they call Andy Russell the Swooner?

Benny: I know. And what do they call you?

Rochester: The Razor's Edge.

Benny: You sound more like the Yearling. Now, Rochester, my cast should be here soon for rehearsal. This is the holiday season and I'd like to serve them the eggnog I told you to make this morning. You did make it, didn't you?

Rochester: Yes, sir.

Benny: Is it good?

Rochester: Wanna smell my breath?

Benny: No, thanks, I'm on the wagon. But you know, Rochester, that's a strange drink. I wonder why anyone would ever think of mixing eggs and bourbon.

Rochester: It's psychological, boss.

Benny: Psychological?

Rochester: Yeah. The eggs make you think you're getting something very healthful.

Benny: Uh huh.

Rochester: And the bourbon makes that fact unimportant.

Benny: Well, that's logical. By the way, Rochester, how much eggnog did you make?

Rochester: About 250 gallons.

Benny: 250 gallons! For goodness sake, Rochester, I want to drink it not bathe in it.

Rochester: Well, to each his own.

Benny: All right. All right. Make some sandwiches, too.

(Door Opens)

Livingston: Hello, Jack.

Benny: Hello, Mary. Come in. You're the first one here.

Livingston: Jack, how come you called rehearsal so early?

Benny: Well, Mary, to tell you the truth, I have a date tonight.

Livingston: With whom?

Benny: Gladys Zybisco.

Livingston: Gladys Zybisco? Oh, Jack, surely you can do better than that.

Benny: Look, Mary, Gladys is very nice. She may not be the most beautiful girl in the world but she has a nice figure.

Livingston: I know, but does she have to walk that way?

Benny: Mary, that's not her fault. She's near-sighted and she anticipates the curb in the middle of the block. By the way, Mary, would you like a glass of eggnog?

Livingston: Sure, Jack, I'd love it. Wait a minute! Who made the eggnog?

Benny: Rochester.

Livingston: Uh, uh.

Benny: Why, what's the matter?

Livingston: Well, last Christmas I tasted some of Rochester's egg nog and the next thing I knew I was at the Rose Bowl game.

Benny: Oh, you saw the game?

Livingston: Saw it nothing. I was playing left tackle for Alabama.

• • •

That is just a sample of the Benny dialogue. How he manages to wrest so many laughs out of such harmless stuff is his own deep secret.

If you listen to the version of the show that's circulating on-line, it doesn't follow the script above. In 1946, two versions of the programme were still being made, one broadcast for the east coast then a second live show for the west.

The "secret" Crosby talks about wasn't much of a secret. Benny always said not all his shows were great but he hoped people would tune in to hear what the characters were up to. The show had been on the air long enough that even casual listeners recognised individual character traits. They were ready to laugh as soon as those foibles came through the speaker. Combine that with expert delivery. It's something a script will never show you.

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:08](#)



Labels: [Jack Benny](#), [John Crosby](#)

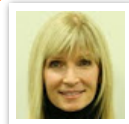
mc News From ME

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...
3 days ago

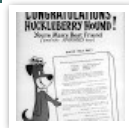
The World of Knight

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 -

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

1 comment:



J Lee 4 January 2015 at 07:48

It's often been true that what reads funny on a page doesn't translate as well to radio or film, while as Crosby lamented what can be hilarious when heard or viewed loses its impact when transcribed. Part of the fun of Benny's show was the fun the cast seemed to be having, especially with the leeway to ad-lib on the fly and bring the audience in on the show. In the scripted world of television, it was harder to get that sort of improvised comedy on the fly

(Sid Cesar's frantic dive through the studio audience from the "This is Your Story" segment on "Your Show of Shows" was probably the best example of freelancing to boost a skit's comedy potential during the TV era -- in most cases the 'ad libs' on TV had to be blocked for the cameras and pre-planned.)

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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



Peter Gray's Comics and Art



An early Tom Thug page for sale and other comic art by Lew Stringer go

to link and ebay.. - <http://lewstringercomics.blogspot.com/2020/02/original-art-for-sale.html> https://www.ebay.co.uk/sch/graphite47/m.html?_nkw=&_armrs=1&_ipg=&_from=

5 months 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...

1 day ago

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