

Sunday, 8 February 2015

Unfunny Benny

Some comedians are on all the time. Jack Benny wasn't one of them.

For proof, a couple of examples can be found in the *New York Sun*, one of the papers which sent a reporter to interview Jack upon his arrival in the Big Apple. The unbylined reporter is a little annoyed by the lack of humour. He has a point. It isn't like the press just happened to be at Grand Central Station. They were told, either by movie studio publicists or Benny's own people, when he would arrive. Jack's on the promotional trail. Since he's working, he should have at least bothered to have a quip or two instead of being indifferent about the whole thing. Perhaps he was just weary from the long train ride. On the other hand, a comedian shouldn't have to be on all the time, and constantly yuck it up with jokes.

This story is from December 12, 1940.

JACK BENNY HERE, SHY ON BON MOTS

Reporters Beg in Vain for Just One Witticism

Jack Benny, the Prince of Funsters, arrived at Grand Central from Hollywood today with all the hilarity of a scene from the Spanish Inquisition.

Here with his wife, Mary Livingstone, for two radio broadcasts and the December 17 premiere at the Paramount of "Love Thy Neighbor," his new picture with Fred Allen. Mr. Benny was met by a group of reporters who were eager for laughter in these troublous times.

Hearing that he would stay at the Sherry-Netherland, they reminded him that last night his radio-foe, Allen, said that once he left that hotel because they refused to launder his Kleenex. Then, hazel eyes aglow in anticipation, they waited for a bon mot, their chubby pink fingers holding pencils over copy-paper. "I'll probably say something about that on my program," he said.

The reporters made a few efforts to get the comedian to say something about Allen, then in desperation recalled that Linda Darnell, also of the movies, arrived yesterday with a lot of allergies.

"What are you allergic to, Mr. Benny?"

"Allen," quipped a witty reporter.

"Ha, ha, yes, Allen," said Mr. Benny. "And food. It makes me fat."

After a few dark moments, Mr. Benny said: "I don't think comedians are funny any time except when they're working. The funny guys on trains and at parties are non-professionals."

Mr. Benny, however, got into form a few minutes later, carrying suitcases for the benefit of photographers. This got a big laugh from some women who came to meet his wife. Then, too, he playfully shoved a girl in the back. More mirth.

Mr. Benny hasn't seen his new picture, but he said he had heard Allen was terrific. He cursed that fact, but added that he and Allen are friends.

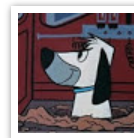
"I find that I'm best at preparing material early in the morning," he said. "I'm fresh then."

Maybe it just wasn't early enough.

Benny returned to New York two years later. The *Sun* had this to say on December 10, 1942:



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Blogs to See

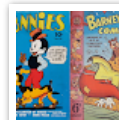
Movies with Michael



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..."

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 IS HERE WITHOUT AD LIB

Comedian Tells Reporter to Think Up Quip.

Jack Benny is one comedian who doesn't believe in squandering his repartee at places such as the gaunt ramp in Grand Central where the Twentieth Century Limited comes in from Hollywood. Arriving there today for a tour of eastern Army camps, he ad-libbed only once, calling his Negro radio-mate Rochester, "Rotch."

Mr. Benny said that he would be in the East for eight or ten weeks, after which he would return to Hollywood and begin his twelve-picture program as an independent producer, working through United Artists. He said that he didn't expect too much difficulty in getting stories and players because of the war.

"I have myself for six of the pictures," he said, "and I shouldn't have any trouble getting girls." His arrival caused the usual miniature bedlam which envelops the arrival of a film star, complete with press agents, newspaper persons, redcaps, rubbernecks and assorted citizens.

Wearing Trench Coat.

One citizen was Miss Florence Allen, secretary for the Rapid Messenger Service, who had been promoted to the post of celebrity-meeting uniformed messenger, to deliver to Mr. Benny a stack of 200 letters from persons who wanted Mr. Benny to visit places where George Washington has slept and perhaps to sleep at them himself. (Mr. Benny's latest picture is "George Washington Slept Here.") Miss Allen said that she had met celebrities before, "behind stage."

Mr. Benny said that he would try to sleep at some places if he had time. He was not told that the messenger's name was Allen, which might have occasioned a quip, because of his radio feud with Fred Allen.

Mr. Benny, in a trench coat, posed with his wife, Mary Livingston, in a mink coat; their adopted daughter, Joanie, and Rochester, also in a trench coat. Asked by a reporter if he would say something funny for his public—an admittedly unfair question at 9:30 A. M.—he said: "Think up something. It'll probably be funnier than anything I can think up."

The reporter couldn't think up anything, either.



Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:28](#)



Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

2 comments:

 [scarecrow33](#) 8 February 2015 at 13:36

That last was actually a pretty good quip. Jack Benny suggesting a reporter could be funnier than him—pretty good humor in that remark!

[Reply](#)

 [bgrauman](#) 8 February 2015 at 18:22

Nothing even came between Jack and his writers.....especially if they weren't there!

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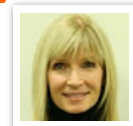
News From ME

[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

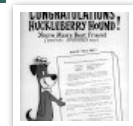
The World of Knight

[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

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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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 **Peter Gray's Comics and Art**
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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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