



Sunday, 24 January 2016

Questions to Benny

When Jack Benny signed off on May 22, 1955, he didn't realise his radio series was finally coming to an end. A columnist in *Variety* reported on March 31st that Benny had a deal with American Tobacco for another radio season featuring more repeat shows. But something happened. When Jack returned in April from a meeting with company president Paul Hahn in New York, sponsoring the Benny radio show had been dropped in favour of pumping money into spot ads. *Sponsor* magazine also reported on May 1st that another sponsor had an option on the Benny show for the 1955-56.

It was not to be. *Variety* reported on August 19th that Jack was giving up radio, and:

It had been planned to use the old Benny tapes with occasional live leads and integrations, but Benny's unwillingness to continue on radio together with the lack of sponsor interest caused CBS to abandon the program.

But a deal was eventually worked out and Benny returned to CBS on Sunday nights at 7 in the East and 6:30 in the West starting October 28, 1956. But they were all reruns. There were no new Benny radio shows.

It would appear Benny's management came up with a news release that was sent to papers to publish as a story. This unbylined piece appeared in the *Buffalo Courier-Express* of March 24, 1957.



Benny Herewith Answers 5 Most Asked Questions

There are five questions most frequently asked by newspaper and magazine writers, says Jack Benny.

Benny says the most frequent question is "Why did you decide to go back into radio?" With some pleasure, he answers, "When I left CBS Radio for television in 1954, I thought I'd never be I missed. But not so. Everywhere I went, people kept telling me that they missed the Sunday night spot. CBS executives heard the same thing. They called me for a little talk, and here I am back on the air each week. And believe me, it's a pleasure."

Another staple in the interviewer's kit is the question: "When was your first radio appearance?" Benny has the facts handy. "It was with Ed Sullivan in 1932. I'd known Ed for a long time, and as I was doing a vaudeville show in New York, he asked me to be a guest on his radio show. An agency heard me and signed me forthwith for 39 weeks."

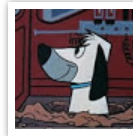
Benny's habit of integrating commercials into his show is a frequent question subject. He answers that he was the first to do so, doing a light satire on the product. "At first the sponsor didn't like it," he says, "but then he got a flood of mail approving the stunt, and we stayed right with it."

"What is your approach to humor and the thing you try hardest for on your program?" is a frequently asked question. "We concentrate on building up characters that people like," Benny answers. "The audience wants to feel friendly toward you, and to be able to know the traits of the people in the show. You don't have to knock yourself out every week trying to come up with a blockbuster show. If people like you, they will stick with you, because they recognize the people in the show as friends."

Editing Most Important

Finally, the inevitable question, says Benny, is "What's the most important element in producing

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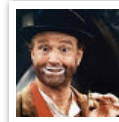


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[Sorry...](#) - As far as I know, I do not have any diseases. I just have too much to deal with right now so I won't be blogging much if at all. I'm postponing all the web...

1 day ago

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your show?" His answer is ready. "It's editing. This is the most important thing in show business, as well as in politics. In making a speech, or in any communications project. We go over our script and lines and keep changing and improving them right up to show time. And then if something good occurs to us during the program, we'll edit right on the spot."

Benny's radio show can be heard at 7 tonight on WBEN. His TV show will be carried at 7:30 tonight on Ch. 4

The recorded Jack Benny took the summer off in 1957, replaced on July 14th by the Henry Morgan quiz show *Sez Who!* (and not by Stan Freberg as is commonly thought). He returned on September 29th and bade farewell to radio again on June 29, 1958. John Dehner in *Frontier Gentleman* was moved into his slot. Benny was about to open at the Flamingo in Las Vegas, was performing benefit concerts and was still busy with television (and looking for a new director as Ralph Levy had quit). Whether Jack mourned the loss of his radio show is doubtful, considering he told interviewers a number of years later he was tired of being asked about it.

Despite that, the Benny radio show is still loved today. It's not just the echoing voice of nostalgia that's responsible. A whole new audience, albeit in smaller numbers, who didn't grow up with the show, have heard it on the internet or "old time radio" shows broadcast by their local stations. They appreciate the humour and the characters, just as people did in the Benny heyday. CBS radio may have cancelled the show but, in one way or another, it's never really left us.

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:30](#)

Labels: [Jack Benny](#)


3 comments:

RobEB 24 January 2016 at 12:27

LOVE the Benny radio program. For me the show was at it's peak from (roughly) 1945-1952, give or take. And as much as I liked the TV show, Benny's radio show was FAR funnier. So his final, original radio show was from May 22, 1955? I was a little confused by the article...

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 **Yowp** 25 January 2016 at 01:55


That's right, Rob. He gave up his show in 1955. After a year off, CBS began to rerun his old radio shows.

RobEB 30 January 2016 at 11:58

Thanks!

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Animation #276 Many references may be found regarding two-strip Technicolor. I have been guilty of discussing Walter Lantz's King of Jazz (1930)...
1 day ago


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3 days ago

 **The World of Knight**

 **TONIGHT, 11:54 PM. - COPYRIGHT 2020 BY MILTON KNIGHT**
3 days ago

 **Yowp**

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1 week ago

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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

 **Termite Terrace headlines**

Porky's Hot Dog Intake - Western Publishing definitely isn't free of



cannibalism
when it
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comics
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These are

just some of the covers in
which Porky is ei...

4 weeks ago

Peter Gray's Comics and Art



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Stringer go

to link and ebay.. -

<http://lewstringercomics.blogspot.com/2020/02/original-art-for-sale.html>

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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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