Sunday, 6 March 2016

Quitting Radio

Nobody really believed it, not even when it he said it. And he said every few years.

Jack Benny said he'd quit radio.

Of course, he did quit in 1955—not altogether on his own accord—but he talked about it off and on well before that

Jack confided his goals in *New York Post* columnist Earl Wilson in 1946, and one of them was leaving radio in 1950. That didn't happen. He wanted to do more movies. It didn't happen (other than some cameo appearances). He wanted to do a comedy play. That didn't happen, either. About the only thing he did that he promised to do was produce motion pictures. He produced one, *The Lucky Stiff* (1949), that performed so badly at the box office, *Variety* reported Benny would have to reimburse CBS for the loss under the deal that saw the network buy his company, Amusement Enterprises.

Anyway, here's Wilson's column from May 26, 1946. The picture below, by the way, is Wilson, not Benny.

Benny's Greatest Worries—Jack Wants to Be a Producer By Earl Wilson

Jack Benny will quit radio! "I'm not stage struck any more," he confessed to me. Yes, he'll quit—oh, in about three or four years.

He had me by the arm as we walked along 57th St., which flattered the hell out of me, because everybody recognized him.

"I'd like to do radio a couple or three more years, about three more pictures, and one good comedy play for Lindsay and Crouse in New York."

"Then you'll retire?" I said.

"No, no! I'll go into the executive side of show business. Produce my own pictures. I'd never want to retire. If I'm going into the executive side, there is no sense waiting till you get real old. Gee," he said, "I wish I were 40. Oh, well, I can wait."

Jack, who's 52, added as we walked along that he'll probably stick around on NBC for four more years because of contracts and options.

"Lately it's been like a vacation," he said, "because I have such wonderful boys writing for me. I play golf six days a week.

"I know they're so good that the show isn't going to stink, and if it isn't what we want, we can always fix it up. I brought my golf clubs along to New York. I hope I can get one game in. Golf is all I have to worry about now. Golf and cigars. If I'd quit smoking cigars, I'd be the healthiest guy in the world." As an employee for a cigarette company, or an employer of a struggling cigaret company—it is hard to get this straight—Jack puzzles everybody by his cigar-smoking. He even smokes cigars while broadcasting, stopping to remark in an offhand way that this cigar he's smoking is so round, so firm, so fully packed. "I could get fired for this, you know," he



Jack's current person-to-person battle with Fred Allen's hilarious. Introducing Fred to the studio audience, Jack said, "We seldom have a great guest star on our program and we haven't got one

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my friends and welcome back for another selection of classic cartoons. Today's selection begins with one of the great Mickey, Donald and Goofy car...

6 hours ago

Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog



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commences

with the Guzzler's Gin routine (from Zieg... 7 hours ago

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



20 hours 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

tonight-I want you to meet him, Fred Allen."

"He said I'm no guest," replied Fred. "I'm getting the same salary no guest would get." There was a brief silence, and Fred said, "If you think this is a lull, wait'll you hear his program."

"I thought we'd have Bing Crosby as guest star tonight," Jack said, "but he's busy hearing confessions."

And so on, with Phil Harris finally referring to Jack as "The Spendthrift." Columnist Irv Kupcinet recently reported that when somebody gave Mary Livingston a new fountain pen she said, "Oh good, now I won't have to buy one from Jack!"

Actually, Jack paid for my lunch. (Being a little fearful, I just had salad.) He had a big lunch, dessert, gave the waiter a fat tip, and bought himself an expensive smoke afterward—a cigar, of course.

Jack'll return to Chicago after his next broadcast, loaf around there with his father for a week or so, then drive his own car leisurely back to Hollywood. It's been almost 15 years since he went on the air the first time and said, "This is Jack Benny talking. There will be a moment of silence while you say 'Who cares?' "

A quite a lot of folks evidently do care now.

This column appeared in print on the same day as Benny's final show of the 1945-46 season. The last two broadcasts originated from New York City, Jack's original base of radio operations. It was also the same night as Jack's famous *King For a Day* broadcast on the Fred Allen Show. You can hear it below. And if one of the secondary actors sounds like Fred Flintstone, it's because it is. Alan Reed appeared with Allen off and on for a number of years.

FRED ALLEN SHOW, May 26, 1946

Posted by Yowp at 07:06



Labels: Earl Wilson, Jack Benny

2 comments:



Will Byron 6 March 2016 at 17:48

Excellent as usual, Sir. I can remember either hearing an audio recording or reading a transcript of Jack being interviewed in the early 70s' and seeming somewhat dismissive of the radio era- the interviewer (was it Chuck Schaden (sp?) perhaps?)begins speaking about it and Jack cuts him off by talking about how he showed people things on his TV show that he couldn't show them on radio. I'm paraphrasing, but it was close to this. Then another interview in retrospect- it could be Shearer, I really can't recall- said that when he and another writer went to talk to Jack in the same era, they brought up radio and Jack said something along the lines of "radio! radio! that's all they ever talk about" and went into a bit of a tangent. I think it's fair to say that Jack believed, understandably, that he was largely known for his radio show and wanted to branch out more, and felt a bit restricted at times. As his body of work is still available and nearly complete I think it's to all of our benefit that he stuck it out as long as he did. But I also think that his lack of sentiment for said radio show is why he didn't have a big official send-off, merely making a transition to T.V. as smoothly as possible.

Reply



bgrauman 6 March 2016 at 18:55

But Jack also claimed, "There were a lot of things you could do on radio, that you couldn't do on television".

Reply

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

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. -COPYRIGH T 2020 BY MILTON KNIGHT

3 days ago





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

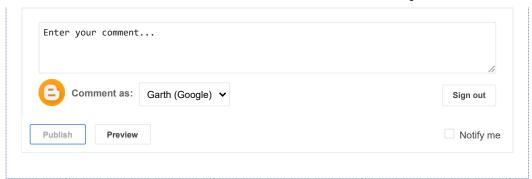
Mark Kausler's CatBlog

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

Parmite Terrace headlines

Porky's Hot Dog Intake -Western Publishing definitely isn't free of 7/18/2020 Tralfaz: Quitting Radio



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cannibalism when it comes to comics featuring Porky Pig. These are

just some of the covers in which Porky is ei... 4 weeks ago

Peter Gray's Comics and



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to link and ebay.. -

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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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