



Sunday, 7 May 2017

## Jack's Babe

Do you have a salt shaker? Take a grain from inside and apply it to the story below.

Anyone who is familiar with the radio version of the Jack Benny show knows there were endless jokes about Mary Livingstone's sister Babe, generally making her out to be manly, boorish or unattractive. Mary really did have a sister Babe, and Babe appeared as herself on several episodes of the show.

However, the tale that *Movie Mirror* magazine attempts to tell is a little far-fetched. For one thing, it keeps referring to "Mrs. Marks" and that Babe had a "Mr. Marks." Marks was her maiden name; she was married to Al Bernovici in the 1920s. Secondly, Mary and Babe didn't sound alike; Babe sounded more like Bea Arthur than anyone. And while Jack and Mary had an unusual courtship and fairly sudden wedding (yes, she was engaged to someone else), the details mentioned below are unique to this particular gossip magazine.

However, the story is correct in that Jack was close to Babe and the rest of the Marks family (brother-in-law Hilliard was his producer, for one thing). And daughter Joan felt she could talk to Babe much easier than her own mother.

This was sent to me by Kathy Fuller Seeley from a scan she made of the Benny archives. She didn't provide a date, but as the Benny home on Roxbury Drive was under construction in 1938, the story would be around that time. The photos accompanied the story.

### The Merry Mary Mix-Up In Jack Benny's Life

By CAROLINE SOMERS HOYT

*Jack has a lot of fun,  
Though he leads a double life  
With Mary Livingstone  
And Babe, his stand-in wife!*

A LOT of novelties are to be found in this uniquely crazy town of Hollywood, but one of the most extraordinary and amusing situations which has ever existed here is the strange case of Jack Benny and his stand-in wife. As everyone knows, Jack is married to Mary Livingstone, but what few people know is that Mary has a sister who is practically her double. Not only do they resemble each other, but since they share the same taste in clothes, they are often dressed alike, and so it frequently happens that they are mistaken for each other, not only by admiring throngs, but even by news cameramen who make it their business not to be fooled by look-alikes. The Bennys do not purposely make use of this similarity, quite the contrary. It is even more of a nuisance and a strain to them than it is to the photographers who occasionally smash one of their own flash-bulbs in plain ordinary annoyance when they discover that the picture they have taken is of Mrs. Babe Marks, instead of the desired one of Mary Livingstone.

Jack Benny himself came near to smashing a pink and white rattle which he was holding one day several years ago, as he and Mary and Mrs. Marks crowded around the cradle which contained the most prized Benny possession, young adopted Joan Benny, aged at that time only a few months. The baby was cooing and grinning and looking up at them with bright sparkling eyes. "She's trying to say something," said Jack, eagerly and proudly. "What do you want to be she says 'Daddy' first?"

"Oh, go on. She'll say 'Mama' first," said Mary. "Say 'Mama,' darling. Say 'Mama!'"

And Joan did say "Mama," but it was not to Mary that she reached out her chubby fingers. It was toward Mrs. Marks that she turned her baby stare; it was to her that she reached her arms; to her that she pouted the first words which she had ever spoken in all her small life. "Mama, Mama!"

It was then that the pink and white rattle came down near to being broken. "Well, not, if that isn't a pretty howdydo!" shouted Jack. "That's right, Babe—you'd better run for the door!"

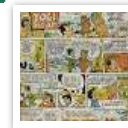
Pretending great fear and hiding behind the door draperies, Mrs. Marks peeked out: "Never mind," she said,

## About Me



[View my complete profile](#)

## Blogs to See



[Yogi and Flintstones Comics](#) - Some time ago, reader Richard Holliss

graciously offered to send scans of the Yogi Bear and Flintstones weekend newspaper comics he had collected over the ...

1 hour ago



[Cartoon Research](#)

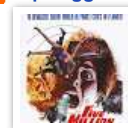
[Bugz' Livez: Antz \(pt. 2\)](#) -

We continue along last-week's trail, following closely behind the protruding abdomen of a marching ant, as his column descends into the depths of a subter...

7 hours ago



[Rip Jagger's Dojo](#)



[Five Million Years To Earth!](#) - It's felt like five million years

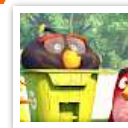
sometimes.

I've yearned to have "Five Million Years to Earth" \*or as it's otherwise know\* Quatermass and the Pit i'n my ...

10 hours ago



[Movies with Michael](#)



[Movie Review: The Angry Birds Movie 2](#) - Michael's Movie

Grade: B+ To be honest I didn't care for the first "Angry Birds Movie". I simply just did not find that film enjoyable. That is what made ...

14 hours ago

"you'll be glad about it all right, sometime when you want to stay with Joan and keep her amused. It can work both ways you know!" And eventually, they were to find that Mrs. Marks was right. Today's it's pretty difficult to drag Mary away from the baby, and of course now that little Joan is three and a half years old she certainly knows the difference between her mother and her aunt, but still when Mary does have things to attend to elsewhere—there's the weekly broadcast and recently she made a picture at Paramount, called "This Way, Please"—Joan most agreeably accept Mrs. Marks as a substitute. And when Mrs. Marks takes Joan walking through Beverly Hills, the neighbours in their windows shake their heads and marvel that a career woman such as Mary Livingstone Benny should still find so much time to attend to her young progeny.

If the neighbors can be easily fooled you can imagine what happens when Jack steps out with Mrs. Marks in public, anywhere where autograph fiends may be hanging around. This doesn't happen very often, as Mary usually accompanies her husband, but it does happen occasionally that she can't go, or that she must come along later, and since Jack likes to go nowhere alone, Mrs. Marks stands in on such occasions. This was the situation not long ago when Jack was invited to be guest of honour at one of the annual shindigs of the Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce. Honor-guesting meant that he had promised to converse, cut up and quip with them, and otherwise wave and flick his cigar from the speakers' platform. The evening was to start with dinner, and being one who never misses a meal, no matter how long and drawn out it may threaten to be, Mr. Benny determined to be there on time. But Mary had other things to do, notably bedtime prayers and rituals with Joan, so she said she would follow him a little later. He and her sister Babe could go on alone.

Thus it was that as these two entered they were greeted effusively on all sides as Mr. and Mrs. Benny. Several of the women, the Commerce wives, got hold of Babe and hustled her off to dispose of her wraps somewhere. "Oh, Mrs. Benny, it was so sweet of you to come. We've looked forward to meeting you for so long. And we're so glad you could come with your husband tonight."

"But I'm not Mrs. Benny," said Babe a bit wearily, since she had been going through this in one form or another all her sister's married life, and was by now a bit worn by it. "I'm Mrs. Marks. Mrs. Benny is coming a little later."

But they were too kind to allow her to explain even. "Please don't apologize, Mrs. Benny. We understand *perfectly!*"

Then, swept along by this perfect understanding and also a few crowding elbows, Mrs. Marks suddenly found herself returned to the outer hall where Jack was waiting for her. She managed somehow to get close to him. "Jack, listen! What am I going to do? They're at it again. Oh, good heavens, see what's happening now!" And before he could advise her, he saw. The front door had been burst open by a large group of young autograph hounds who had apparently eluded the doorman. They crowded around, shouting and screaming and proffering autograph books. "Oh, Mr. Benny! Miss Livingstone! Give us a break, won't you? We heard you were going to be here!"

Jack turned her way, saw the situation and grinned. With a wave of his cigar and in that peculiar voice of his which is almost beyond description, he drawled over to her, "Aw, go ahead and *be* Mary this once!"

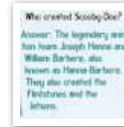


At this particular time you could have had your few minutes with him at the Los Angeles Orpheum, where he was headlining. Jack hadn't been in California very often or very long, but there were several of his vaudeville cronies whom had had known in New York who were out here and among them was a Mr. Marks and his wife, Babe. In the evenings after the performance he usually met them somewhere, and the three of them went out



**mc News From ME**  
**Recommended Reading -**  
 This piece by Ed Kilgore may bring comfort to some of my friends who think that if Donald Trump wins a second term, he won't get a third because there will...  
 16 hours ago

#### **Termite Terrace headlines**



**Screwing the Name Up: HB edition -** A while ago I wrote about the spelling

Walt Disney. Today, I'll be talking about Hanna and Barbera. We all know that William Hanna and Joseph Barbera defi...  
 2 days ago

#### **Fernando Llera Blog Cartoons**



Trump is high on gun reform chances despite NRA resistance.

- ©2019  
 fernandolleracartoons.com  
 3 days ago

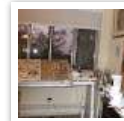
#### **Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog**



Sunday String Swing - \*Continuing the thread from last Sunday's

post, as the following caricature of Django ...  
 3 days ago

#### **The World of Knight**



**LAST NIGHT -** The sky was a beautiful color last night.

1 week ago

#### **Mark Kausler's CatBlog**

**Racketty Ann's Mystery Flight!** - Here are pages 5 through eight of "Racketty Ann and the Lost World". There's delightful fantasy here as Racketty Ann and Bla Bla take a ride on the back o...  
 3 weeks ago

#### **Peter Gray's Comics and Art**



New blog on my Art work...Original art...prints for sale petergrayart

ist@gmail.com for prices etc... -  
<https://petergrayart.blogspot>



together. This threesome had its handicap, however, as all of the dancing was concentrated on Babe's feet, and so to give her a break for once at least, they planned to make it a foursome for one evening at the Montmartre. Jack was to bring along Nora Bayes who was also on the same bill. But at the last minute Nora backed out, and so Jack called Babe to tell her that she'd still have to put up with two dancing partners unless she could dig up somebody else for him.

But Jack didn't get Babe on the phone. He thought he had Babe, but it was Mary who answered; however, the voice seemed to be Babe's, and he wasted no time in explaining the situation. "Well look, Jack," Mary said, after he had finished. "I've got a younger sister, Mary. You've never met her, but how about my bringing her alone? She's a pretty cute girl!"

"Yeah, I can imagine," said Jack. "Well, don't bother. If there's anything I don't get along with it's kid sisters. If one girl in a family has any brains—and I've always claimed you have—then the other is sure to be minus on something. Never mind, we'll have some fun, just the three of us."

That, as you can imagine, was a challenge, and Mary accepted it at once. When Jack exited at the same door that evening there were two girls in the taxi instead of one. Jack found himself seated beside the strange one. "I hear you don't like kid sisters," she said.

"Did you tell her that, Babe?" Jack asked. "I never said such a thing in my life."

"You said it to me," Mary replied calmly, "just about an hour ago."

"Oh!" And this oh began their friendship.

AFTER that they saw each other frequently and had a marvelous time together. They began going out alone, but that soon offered complications, because several of Jack's men friends around the theatre began to ask questions. "What's happened between Babe and her husband? You seem to be cutting him out—is that right, Jack?"

"It's not Babe you've seen me with," Jack would explain patiently. "It's her sister." But always the friends smirked and smiles and said that they had heard that gag before, so they reverted to the foursome.

Then Jack had to go back East, and apparently the two quite forgot about each other. Months passed, but it never occurred to either of them to write. Came Christmas time, however, and Jack was wandering down Fifth Avenue in New York, when it suddenly dawned on him that he hadn't bought any Christmas presents and that there certainly ought to be someone to whom he should send a gift. He paused before a jeweler's window. A wrist watch; yes, that would be a nice present, and he went in and asked to look at them. Without the slightest idea of whom he would send it to, he picked one out and asked that it be packaged for Christmas. When the salesman handed him a card to be inscribed and enclosed, Jack dawdled a few minutes longer, then on a sudden inspiration quickly wrote:

"To Mary, with best wishes, from Jack." His only hope was that she'd at least remember who Jack was. Then he decided that perhaps he'd better make sure of it. He asked the salesman to give him the card again, and this time he added a plainly written "Benny."

Crazy? That's what the salesman thought, but then, as we have said, the whole thing was that way.

More months passed and Jack was playing in a musical show in Chicago, when suddenly Mr. and Mrs. Marks appeared again—they were there on business, they said. One look at Babe and the vision of Mary was before him. "How is Mary, anyway?" Jack asked.

"Why didn't you know? She's engaged to be married," Babe told him.

And that—that was where the serious thinking began. "That's crazy," he said quickly. "How can she do that?" Doesn't she know she oughtn't to marry anybody but me?" He was joking, but underneath the joking he was really considering it. As Jack has admitted since, it was a situation where he didn't particularly care about getting married himself, but he didn't want her to marry anyone else, either.

"Well then, why don't you write her and tell her that?" Mrs. Marks suggested.

GUESS I will," and a few hours later, he did. It was a kidding, humorous letter, but in it he suggested that if she did have her heart set on getting married why didn't she come to Chicago first anyway, as a kind of last vacation, and see the sights of the big city. Two weeks later he was greeting her at the station. Two days after that, he was proposing to her, and three days after that they were married.

"I guess I had the nerve," he says now, looking back on it, "because she was really engaged, and I mean engaged, with a ring and the wedding date set and everything. And she was engaged to a man who had money and a steady business, and here was I, without a nickel saved, and never knowing when the she would close, or what town I'd hit next. But Mary had the same kind of daring herself. I remember I proposed to her on Tuesday as we decided that we'd get married on Sunday. But about Thursday Mary began to get a little nervous; she was worried about telling the family, and breaking the news to the boy back home, and she was thinking that maybe she wouldn't fit into show business after all, and naturally I had the same fears. So we both looked at each other and decided that we'd better get it over in a hurry, or we'd never get married at all.



.com/ Will update it like I do on facebook.  
5 weeks ago

### Supervised By Fred Avery: Tex Avery's Warner Brothers Cartoons



Coming Soon To This Blog...

2 months ago

### What About Thad?

Chris Reccardi Interviewed

- I don't want to start a practice of publishing an interview every time someone from Ren & Stimpy dies, but Chris Reccardi (1964-2019) was too important a f...

2 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 forth...

6 months ago

### Kids, Eh?

#1288: Bird Call - #1288: Bird Call

10 months ago

### Cartoons, Model Sheets, & Stuff



Pete Hothead Model Sheets - Here are a few model sheets from

the first Pete Hothead short. Released in 1952 and directed former Tom & Jerry animator Pete Burness. Ted Parmelee was the...

1 year ago

### Dr. Grob's Animation Review

Paranoja (Paranoia) - 'Paranoja' is a short film (lasting only four minutes) about a young man who thinks he's followed on the street.

2 days ago

## Blog Archive

- 2019 (234)
- 2018 (379)
- ▼ 2017 (380)
  - December (33)
  - November (32)
  - October (32)

Mary was very frank about it. She said 'Yes, I'm afraid if we wait till Sunday I'll feel different entirely.' So that was Thursday and we got married the next morning. Of course there isn't a marriage in a thousand years, started off like that, that ever takes. But we were lucky. It's been eleven years now. There's one thing, though, that I've never been able to find out, and that was whether Babe came to Chicago specially to tell me about Mary's engagement. I have a hunch—only she's never been willing to admit it. Anyway I give her credit that she did—that she knew my preference and Mary's, even before we knew it ourselves. And that's one of the reasons she's always welcome around our place."

Some men have their hands full with one woman in their life, but even with two who are so much alike, it's plain to see that Jack is not only not annoyed, but that he enjoys it. But perhaps it's because these women are not the usual fussy, meddling kind. He minds his business and they mind theirs, which most recently has chiefly been the construction and decoration of a new home.

Regarding the plans for this new home, a funny thing happened last summer before the house had been started and while Jack and Mary were in Europe. Mrs. Marks had remained in Hollywood and it was to her that the architect delivered some blue prints of the Benny house. She forwarded them at once to Jack and Mary. Shortly after receiving the plans they started out on a motor trip which was to take them into Yugoslavia, but at the border, patrolmen, examining their luggage, held them for questioning. They were suspicious that Jack was carrying secret military drawings. Even when Jack explained that these drawings were only blue prints of a house the officials said they could see that, but just what was that inferno-looking thing drawn and indicated there at the side? Jack said he'd be darned if he knew, but anyway he could prove who he was and they'd have to let him through. Eventually, to their satisfaction, he identified himself as a harmless comedian, and they went on. But not Jack was even more puzzled than the officials had been. What *was* that extra drawing that did look like some kind of dangerous machine? Unable to figure it out for himself, he dispatched a cable to Mrs. Marks. The answer came back in four words.

"Garbage incinerator, you dope."



But Jack didn't think it was so funny, being almost imprisoned in his own garbage can, and it's one small item which he is not likely to let Babe Marks forget. Traveling in a foreign country isn't as simple as it used to be, and when one has drawings of trick incinerators, they should be labeled as such.

Now before this recountal can be completed there is one more female finger to be noted in the Jack Benny pie. Not only is his life pretty well wound around and mixed up and salted to taste by Mary and Mary's sister, but there is now little Joan to have her say as to what he shall do, and how he shall behave, and more pertinent to this episode, how he shall dress. Some time ago Jack make the mistake of asking Joan to pick out for him, from his tie rack, the tie she liked best, saying that he would wear it. Joan, partial to red, finally found one violent enough to suit her taste. But it was an old one, badly worn, and at first Papa Benny demurred.

"But you said you'd wear it," Joan pouted, "and you've got to. You've got to wear it every day."

This was several months ago, and even to this day Mister Benny is still wearing the red tie. That is, he leaves it when he leaves his house in the morning, and not until he gets several blocks away does he exchange it for the other more preferable one which he carries in his pocket. Usually one career fills all a man's life, but such is the Benny capacity that he moves from radio to screen to personal appearances and back again with perfect facility, sometimes managing all of them at once. In the same way neither are three women too much for him. Such are his heart and his humor and his patience that he has enough for all!

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:18](#)

Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

No comments:


Post a Comment

- [September](#) (32)
- [August](#) (33)
- [July](#) (33)
- [June](#) (31)
- ▼ [May](#) (31)
  - [Kathleen Freeman](#)
  - [You Dropped Something](#)
  - [Done Swallowed a Television](#)
  - [1002 Roxbury Drive](#)
  - [Cartoons in Theatres, 1961](#)
  - [Thanks a Lot, Harry](#)
  - [Silk Worm?](#)
  - [No, It's Not Ted Collins](#)
  - [Fleischer Suburbia](#)
  - [Tom Thumb in Trouble](#)
  - [Mad, Mad Jack](#)
  - [Crusader Rabbit: Waiting For the Whimsy](#)
  - [Drunken Dancing Turtles](#)
  - [Sea Wolf](#)
  - [Shakespeare's Second Banana](#)
  - [Coy Pitcher](#)
  - [Angry Adolf](#)
  - [How To Sign a Guest Star](#)
  - [Mighty Mouse the Money Mouse](#)
  - [A Lantz Cow](#)
  - [Just Order Two Seidels](#)
  - [The Human Joke Machine](#)
  - [Eyes of a Stuttering Pig](#)
  - [Pedestrian of Yesterday](#)
  - [Jack's Babe](#)
  - [Making Bosko](#)
  - [Blow Me Down](#)
  - [Quick Peter Lorre](#)
  - [Another Catastrastroke](#)
  - [Take That, Walt](#)
  - [Rubber Hose Ostrich](#)

- [April](#) (30)
- [March](#) (31)
- [February](#) (29)
- [January](#) (33)

- [2016](#) (396)
- [2015](#) (389)
- [2014](#) (390)
- [2013](#) (388)

Enter your comment...

 Comment as: Garth (Google) ▼

Sign out

Publish

Preview

☐ Notify me

Newer Post

Home

Older Post

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)

- [2012](#) (397)
- [2011](#) (106)

Labels

- [Aline Mosby](#) (16)
- [Art Davis](#) (30)
- [Bad Luck Blackie](#) (9)
- [Bob and Ray](#) (9)
- [Bob Clampett](#) (72)
- [Bob McKimson](#) (51)
- [Bob Thomas](#) (53)
- [Chuck Jones](#) (134)
- [Columbia](#) (25)
- [Cynthia Lowry](#) (24)
- [Dick Thomas](#) (12)
- [Don Patterson](#) (16)
- [Earl Wilson](#) (6)
- [Erskine Johnson](#) (36)
- [Felix the Cat](#) (24)
- [Film Daily](#) (50)
- [Fleischer](#) (137)
- [Frank Tashlin](#) (21)
- [Fred Allen](#) (37)
- [Fred Brunish](#) (9)
- [Friz Freleng](#) (127)
- [Gene Deitch](#) (16)
- [George Pal](#) (9)
- [Grant Simmons](#) (3)
- [Hanna and Barbera unit](#) (91)
- [Hanna-Barbera](#) (2)
- [Harman-Ising](#) (54)
- [Henry Morgan](#) (13)
- [Irv Spence](#) (8)
- [Jack Benny](#) (403)
- [Jay Ward](#) (30)
- [Jimmy Durante](#) (16)
- [John Crosby](#) (79)
- [John Sutherland](#) (23)
- [Johnny Johnsen](#) (25)
- [Kenny Baker](#) (6)
- [King-Size Canary](#) (6)
- [Laugh-In](#) (10)
- [Maurice Noble](#) (12)
- [Mel-O-Toons](#) (4)
- [MGM](#) (501)
- [Norm McCabe](#) (4)
- [Pat Matthews](#) (10)
- [Paul Julian](#) (13)
- [Sara Berner](#) (5)
- [Screwy Squirrel](#) (32)
- [Spider-Man](#) (1)
- [Terrytoons](#) (68)

-----
<a href="#">Tex Avery</a> (415)
-----
<a href="#">Tom and Jerry Human</a> (25)
-----
<a href="#">Tralfaz Sunday Theatre</a> (14)
-----
<a href="#">Ub Iwerks</a> (65)
-----
<a href="#">UPA</a> (51)
-----
<a href="#">Van Beuren</a> (81)
-----
<a href="#">Vernon Scott</a> (40)
-----
<a href="#">Virginia MacPherson</a> (14)
-----
<a href="#">Walt Disney</a> (126)
-----
<a href="#">Walter Lantz</a> (212)
-----
<a href="#">Warner Bros.</a> (523)
-----
<a href="#">Who Killed Who</a> (10)

Watermark theme. Powered by [Blogger](#).