



Sunday, 21 January 2018

Should He, Goody?

We don't discuss local, national and world affairs on this blog. You don't come here to read a rant about that sort of thing. You come to look at frames from old cartoons and maybe find out some things about them, or read about radio and TV actors of a different time. That's what we do here. You can read about the state of affairs in your town or country in countless other places. We do something else.

Jack Benny had the same attitude. And that didn't sit well with one of his long-time friends.

Goodman Ace (right) was a top comedy writer in print, on radio and TV. For a while, he and his wife had a radio show of their own and did comedy shorts. I recall their show being full of misspoken words a la Gracie Allen; I don't recall it being full of social activism. But that didn't stop Goody from being angry that Jack didn't include social activism in his comedy; presumably espousing a viewpoint that coincided with Goody's.

Jack's attitude seems to have been he spent years and years building a character, his audience loved it and that's what they wanted to see. If they wanted social activist comedy, they could see someone else make pungent observations on L.B.J. and the American scene.



Evidently this enraged Goody so much, he made it the subject of it in his column in the *Saturday Review* of October 5, 1968. I'll avoid further comment other than to say you will not read my opinion here about Lyndon Baines Johnson (if I have one).

Shoulda Said

TAXI CAB HINDSIGHT reflections consist of the clever, diabolical points you suddenly think of as you drive away, still steaming, from a luncheon where you found yourself the minority dissident in a two-party argument on the state of the world and other trivia.

"What did you say, Mac?" the driver asks, staring at me, appropriately enough, through his rear-vision mirror.

"I didn't say anything. It's what I *should* have said," I reply angrily.

Actually it's myself I'm angry with. After years of watching politicians and civilians being interviewed on TV, I have developed this divine gift of being able to think of tricky questions no newsman ever asked that would leave the hapless interviewee sitting there, a quivering bloody pulp. In living color.

I was overwhelmed with this *esprit de Vescahier* the other evening while watching Jack Benny being questioned on the NET network. The interviewer asked Mr. Benny if he ever did any political humor on his TV shows.

Mr. Benny had an easy copout. He could have said he didn't do political humor because his show is taped weeks in advance and the material would be dated. But he didn't.

"No," replied Mr. Benny. "I don't think it's right to do jokes about our President."

He admitted it was all right for Bob Hope because "you can see he doesn't mean it," he said.

"Who can see Bob Hope doesn't mean it?" I shouted at my TV set.

Which was more than the interviewer did. He segued, very kindly I thought, to commenting that Mr. Benny used "character" humor.

"Yes," said Mr. Benny quietly, and, I thought, breathing a sigh of relief, "our material deals with human frailties."

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Today's Video Links - I'm having a great deal of trouble not thinking about the recent shootings. Here are James Corden and Trevor Noah on the topic. In the days of Steve Allen,...

5 hours ago

Cartoon Research

Bugz' Livez: Antz (Pt. 1) - No, this article's not all about Dreamworks or Pixar. It's summer - so I figured we need something appropriate for the season. Summer means picnics. And p...

8 hours ago

Rip Jagger's Dojo

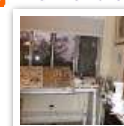


At The Earth's Core! - *At The Earth's Core* is a delightful romp of

pure science fantasy. The classic tale by Edgar Rice Burroughs is well told in this John Dark produced and ...

10 hours ago

The World of Knight



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

1 day ago

Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog



Happy Birthday to 20th Century jazz great Lenny Breau! -

**Lenny Breau was the best guitarist to ever shit

I was on my feet again. "Jack, are you inferring," I screamed, "that our President has no frailties? Or are you implying the other alternative?"

This *esprit* of avoiding even a suggestion of *lèse majesté* is prevalent among most TV stars who have made themselves beloved of their fans by sealing themselves in a vacuity of neutrality. Any utterance that might estrange even one out of the millions of their devoted followers strikes terror in their hearts. Every line their writers contribute is suspect and is gone over with a finetooth magnifying glass.

Example: Two years ago while on assignment to write for a televised variety hour, the writers were asked to devise a script that would feature Canada's Expo 67. For openers, the star of the show wanted to do a short humorous monologue about Canada.

We were hard put. But finally, with the aid of *The World Almanac*—the last book you would hunt; through for jokes—we came up with an opening line:

"Tonight we honor Canada. Did you know that in area Canada is the second largest country in the world? Russia is first, Canada is second. I guess you thought it was Avis."

Well, what can I tell you? All heck broke loose, as they say on TV. The juxtaposition of Canada and Russia was just too much. The line was immediately placed under tire microscope and examined for Communist cells, sabotage, World War III, and even treason.

After an hour's discussion, during which the writers were asked to swear on the Bible (the Nielsen rating book), show their citizenship papers, sing the third stanza of the national anthem, and stand to pledge allegiance to the flag, the line was left in.

The victory was Pyrrhic. On the show the next night the delivery of the line was something less than masterful. The straight lines were spoken impeccably. But poor Avis was lost in a slur of mumbling.

Terror had struck again as the star envisioned countless sets tuned out.

This aberration can be further exemplified in a conversation this writer had recently with the above Mr.

Benny. He was going, he told me, to Atlanta for one of his charity symphony concerts. He asked for a line in a monologue. Any writer worth his laugh-track is eager to contribute to this master of all comedians, knowing it will get the most skillful delivery. I gave him one:

"I've met the mayor of Atlanta, and I found him to be a progressive and courageous man who is not afraid to call a spade, mister."

"No," Benny said, "I can't use that."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because I'm not mad at anybody."

Later in a taxicab I realized what I should have said:

"When will you get mad, Jack? When they have one door marked WHITE, another marked BLACK, and a third door marked COMEDIANS?"

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:04](#)

Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

4 comments:



M. Mitchell Marmel 21 January 2018 at 09:51

And this is why Jack Benny is still well remembered and loved.

And Goodman Ace is forgotten.

[Reply](#)



TV Fan 16 February 2019 at 00:12

Wow. Goody was a great comedy writer in his day but what happened? The spade joke was shockingly tasteless especially by that time. I don't ever recall political commentary on "Easy Aces". Every comedian has their own blueprint. To have Jack do social commentary would have been as inappropriate as Mott Sahl NOT doing it.

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M. Mitchell Marmel 16 February 2019 at 04:33

Indeed! Well puf.



M. Mitchell Marmel 16 February 2019 at 06:05

Er, PUT. ;^_^

between two boots." Jerry Reed* "Lenny was a comet passing through" Chet Atkins* "If you had dropped...

1 day ago



Termite Terrace headlines



Commercial Corner August--Mel Blanc (In Person) - Mel Blanc

had been in several commercials as an actor. All of which he mentions that he is the voice of the Looney Tunes characters. In the American Expre...

2 days ago



Fernando Llera Blog Cartoons



Mexican girl earns college scholarship for Princeton University. -

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[fernandollera.com](#)

2 days ago



Movies with Michael



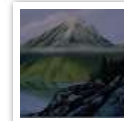
Seeing The Gold Rush (1925) at the Old Town Music Hall - Last night I had

the incredible pleasure of watching Charlie Chaplin's* The Gold Rush* (1925) at the Old Town Music Hall in El Segundo, CA. This is a movi...

3 days ago



Yowp



The House of the Seven Gargoyles - Dick Thomas pulled a

huge workload at the Hanna-Barbera studio. He arrived in 1959 from Walt Disney (after almost two decades at Warner Bros.) to work on t...

4 days 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...

2 weeks ago



Peter Gray's Comics and Art

New blog on my Art work...Original

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on facebook.
4 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 &
Stimpie 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 furth...
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**
Les Contes de la nuit (Tales
of the Night) - Les Contes
de la nuit' (Tales of the
Night) are three fairy tale
films French animation
master Michel Ocelot made
for television, not to be
confused with h...
2 days ago

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