



Wednesday, 15 December 2021

Mel Recovers

Mel Blanc made probably the most remarkable physical comeback of anyone associated with the radio or cartoon industries.

He was involved in a [horrific car wreck](#) on January 24, 1961. It almost killed him. He was comatose. Bones were broken everywhere. Slowly, he healed. Even more amazing—he resumed working. A home studio was set up so he could read a scratch track for Warner Bros. cartoons. Eventually, he was voicing *Flintstones* episodes from his bed.

Mel had been occupied on camera, but only rarely. He worked for years on radio with Jack Benny; the last several seasons he was on almost every show. That carried over into television. When the accident happened . . . well, why don't we let Mel tell you? Here's a *Boston Globe* story from Sunday, December 24, 1961.



"Thank God For Little Children," Says Mel Blanc

By Elizabeth L. Sullivan

Of all the people who will be enjoying this joyful Christmas season, perhaps the most grateful is TV's Mel Blanc. He will be seen on the Jack Benny Show tonight (Sunday) in a wheel chair and leg cast—his first appearance on TV since an almost fatal automobile accident last January.

"I've taken off the cast," said Mel when he called from the West Coast the other day. "It feels wonderful to see my bare leg after a year's absence. I'll be wearing a brace on the leg for some weeks but as long as I can walk, that's all I ask.

"I don't remember a thing about the accident. I was taken to the hospital and remained unconscious for 10 days. My wife and son were called in. The doctors told my wife, Estelle, that I was going to die. Every bone was broken.

"My son, Noel, age 21, a sturdy lad, who served as a lieutenant in the Army, fainted dead away. He was shocked, but my wife said over and over again: 'He's not going to die. He'll be all right.'

"The day after the accident letters and telegrams arrived from entertainers and people in all walks of life.

"And thank God for little children. Of the 15,000 letters to come to the hospital a large portion were from the children. They sent nickels and pennies, along with chewing gum. They wanted to express their sorrow and love. This is the way they selected to do so.

"Jack Benny was wonderful. I'll never forget him. He visited me at least once every 10 days. If he were going to be out of town, he'd call to let me know. And no matter where his destination, he'd always telephone—New York, Chicago, Florida, anywhere!

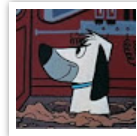
"George Burns, Red Skelton, Jerry Lewis and scores of others either visited me, sent letters or telegrams. Mayor Sam Yorty, of Los Angeles, with whom I was supposed to parade last July 4, was most solicitous.

"It was an enjoyable three months I spent in the hospital, although I was in considerable pain. I kept my mouth shut and endured it. The doctors and nurses said I was the best patient ever.

"I'll be glad to be rid of braces and crutches so as to devote full time to my new business—Mel Blanc Associates. I formed the organization shortly before my accident. My son carried on the business all year and he has done an excellent job. He's a graduate of UCLA where he majored in theater arts. He's my production manager.

"We record radio commercials and tape TV ones and I might add, 'collect residuals.' The latter came in handy for my long illness. Anyone can use money at a time like this!" For a long time, Mel hid behind the anonymity of his 300 voices. He started as a voice specialist for Warner Brothers' cartoons in 1937. He was heard by millions but never seen by them. This he liked.

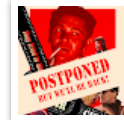
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Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog



Noir City 19
Postponed (thanks A LOT, Omicron) -
*The hope

for 2022 was that screenings, festivals and events would finally return at least semi-permanently, but, alas, COVID-19 has the las...

23 minutes ago

Cartoon Research

In His Own Words: Willis Pyle - Pyle worked at Disney and UPA and later enjoyed a long career as a freelance animator on such projects as Richard Williams' Raggedy Ann and Andy.

7 hours ago

News From ME

Orlando Busino, R.I.P. - Veteran gag cartoonist Orlando Busino has left us at the age of 95. I don't write these about a lot of magazine cartoonists but Mr. Busino did exceptional

10 hours ago

Movies with Michael



Way Out West (1937) - If *Sons of the Desert* (1933) is

Laurel and Hardy's most popular feature than *Way Out West* is a close second. Its popularity is well founded as t...

23 hours ago

Fernando Liera Blog Cartoons

When he joined the Jack Benny radio show in 1940, he preferred to remain anonymous. But when Benny took to TV, Mel became a favorite with viewers. Let him travel and his eager followers stop him to hear his repertoire of voices and characters.

Incidentally, Mel's first appearance with Benny was as "Carmichael, the Bear." He was also the sound of the old Maxwell.

The road to fame wasn't smoothly paved for Blanc. He started as a musician, moved into the Orpheum Theater in Portland, Ore., as music director, but then decided that the field of dialects was for him. He pounded the pavements and eventually won a job at Warner's. He played a drunken bull with hiccups in a cartoon feature. After signing with the Warner Studio, the road to radio opened to him.

Mel has helped win five Oscars, has invented the voices of Bugs Bunny, Speedy Gonzalez, Daffy Duck, Porky Pig, Yosemite Sam, Barney of the Flintstones and many others.

He loses thousands of dollars a year due to plagiarism. In the United States there is no legislation for the protection of original voices and characters. Hundreds of creations have been stolen from him. He hopes that laws will soon be enacted for such protection.

After the first of the year, viewers will see more of Mel. He's glad to be back in the swing of things. And as he finished his phone conversation, he again remarked on the thoughtfulness of the children. "God Bless them all . . . and the adults, too, for their prayers," he said humbly.

By the way, you've likely heard Blanc talk about his doctor talking to him when he was unconscious, getting no response, then talking to him as if he were Bugs Bunny and Mel, as Bugs, answered back. It's in Blanc's autobiography. In Harold Heffernan's Hollywood column of December 23, 1961 for the North American Newspaper Alliance, Mel is quoted:

"There's a story that when I came to I said 'What's up, Doc?' in my best Bugs Bunny voice," Blanc smiled, "but it's not true."

Mel told a bunch of tall tales in his life. We'll let you decide if this is one of them.

Posted by [Yowp](#) at 07:12



Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

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JACK BENNY and MEL BLANC
... on "The Jack Benny Program," Channel 10, Sunday



The price of milk is now higher than gasoline! - ©2022 fernandoller acartoons.c

om
2 days ago

Inbetweens: The Cult Classics of Animation



A Itchin' to Fly: Howard Post's The Itch - It's amusing to me,

compared to last week's cartoon of pick, this week I'm going to be giving some thoughts of something the complete opposite! Think about...

3 days ago

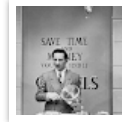
AFRTS Archive



Wolfman Jack on AFN 1976 - It's howlingly delicious.

More Wolfman Jack
4 days ago

Old TV History



November and December 1943 - NBC shut down its

television cameras in 1942 when the FCC cut the minimal hours of broadcasting to four a week. The sole NBC station, WNBT in New York, sto...

5 days ago

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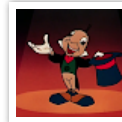


Flintstones Daily Strips, October 1961 - Over the years, the Yowp

blog has posted the Sunday (Saturday in Canada) colour comics starring Yogi Bear and The Flintstones syndicated by McNaught. There...

1 week ago

Prydain on Film



Merry Christmas -

2 weeks ago

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Dr. Grob's Animation Review

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Sarusuberi (Miss Hokusai) -
Based on a manga from the
mid-1980s by Hinako
Sugiura 'Miss Hokusai' is
one of those rare animation
films unquestionably
directed to an adult
audience. The...
4 days ago

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