



Sunday, 13 February 2022

## Anyone Can Be 39

Why did Jack Benny lie about his age?

He did it for you.

Well, he did it to help others have fun and get laughs by pretending to be 39. It must have worked. Years after Jack's death in 1974, newspapers reported on people joking about being "Jack Benny's age." It happens occasionally today, among the older generation, granted, but the joke is still alive.

Here's Jack talking with the New York Herald Tribune News Service about it in 1961, two days after his actual birthday (Valentine's Day).

### Jack Benny, 39 More Years

By Joe Hyams

*New York Herald Tribune Special Dispatch.*

HOLLYWOOD, Feb. 16—Tuesday was a big day for Jack Benny. He celebrated his thirty-ninth birthday for the twenty-seventh time.

"I'm 67 years old," he said. "That's my real age. In three more years I'll be 70 and how old can you get? But I feel I can't complain.

Benny said he doesn't plan to ever turn 40 publicly even when he reaches seventy. "If I actually looked my right then doing the 39 gag wouldn't be funny," he said, "but just the fact that everybody says I don't look 67 gives me the license to cheat. A woman cheats on her age a little bit and it's okay. Instead of cheating a little I cheat a lot.

"I THINK THE gag started when I was about 40 and said I was 36. I stayed 36 a few years, 37 a few years and 38 and 39 for a few. Then one year I turned 40. You'd be amazed at the newspaper editorials and letters I got complaining about it.

"Everyone said it was a mistake for me to turn 40. That as long as I called myself 39 a lot of other people were calling themselves 39 too, and having fun at it. Thirty-nine is a funny age—like you don't want to get over the hump. A lot of kids think you're old at 40 so the next year I went back being 39 and that's the age I'll keep.

MAYBE BEING 39 perpetually has helped keep me young. I remember years ago George Washington Hill used to say if you plug anything long pretty soon you begin to believe it. I guess I've been taken in by my own gag. To some extent I think young and I still work hard.

Benny's plans for the future and his enthusiasm for the present are undimmed by the passage of time. He plans to continue doing a weekly CBS-TV show and spending his spare time raising money at benefit violin concerts. Since 1956 he's given 22 concerts, "saved" half a dozen symphony orchestras by money he's raised to wipe out their deficits and has been responsible for contributions of more than two and a half million dollars to musicians' funds.

"THIS LAST SEASON on television (1960-61) was probably the best I ever had," Benny said. "I've never done so many shows where everybody said the last show was the best. As long as it's this much fun I'll never quit. We already have titles for our next season shows. We know next season will be better but while we never try to have a great show, we try not to have a lousy one. This thinking works all the time.

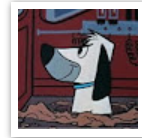
As a parting question I asked Benny how he'd suggest other people be like him—a perpetual 39.

"Stop counting," he said.



Jack Benny

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Mexico City's Ambulance Certification Process is due next week and still 100 ambulances remain to comply. - ©2022 fernandolleracartoons.com  
3 hours ago

**Yowp**  
Flintstones Daily Comics, Dec. 1961, Pt. 1 - There's a site which has posted the Monday-through-Saturday newspaper comic strips of The Flintstones. I wasn't going to post my copies because of that, bu...  
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ASK me: The Ranks of the M.M.M.S. - The other question put to me by Adam J. Elkhadem concerned Marvel's official, company-run fan club in the sixties, the Merry Marvel Marching Society... I was...  
14 hours ago

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The Golden Age Of Radio Cartoons - "Pondering the links between animated cartoons and the...  
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December 1945 - Santa Claus wasn't able to do it.  
Anyone expecting Jolly Old St. Nick to bring them a nice, shiny, post-war television for Christmas in 1945 would be dis...  
22 hours ago

Posted by [Yowp](#) at 07:14



Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

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**M. Mitchell Marmel** 13 February 2022 at 10:28

I tell folks I'm 39 like Jack Benny. Then I hafta explain Jack to the youngsters... :)

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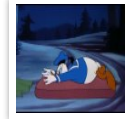
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### **Movies with Michael**



Some  
Cartoons  
for  
Saturday  
Morning  
#189 - Hello

my friends and happy Saturday morning. Once again it is time for some classic cartoons. Today's cartoon selection begins with a delightful Donald...

*1 day ago*



### **Cartoon Research**

[The Problem with Pooh](#) - Suspended Animation #385  
Oh bother! The bear with very little brain through no fault of his own certainly seems to be a troublesome bruin and for many yea...

*2 days ago*



### **Pegbar Profiles**

[Pegbar Profile: Emery Hawkins \(Part 3\)](#) - \*Muriel Cigars spot, produced by Shamus Culhane's studio in New York.\* Upon his arrival out East, Hawkins found work in film and television ad production...

*6 days ago*

### **AFRTS Archive**

[File download](#) - So the good news is that I did receive a refund from our file host. Still no replies. I'll have to start over. So, do you know a file storage provider w...

*2 weeks ago*



### **Inbetweens: The Cult Classics of Animation**

[Throwing the Bull: Heckle and Jeckle in The Intruders](#) - Until the mid 40s, Fox had many issues with the Terrytoons Studio, and over the years complaints were regularly sent. Particularly, the lack of true s...

*2 weeks ago*

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### **Dr. Grob's Animation Review**

[Thou Shalt Not Covet Thy Neighbours Wife](#) - 'Thou Shalt Not Covet Thy Neighbours Wife' is the tenth and last of Phil Mulloy's Ten Commandment films. This installment is the longest of the ten, clocki...

*2 days ago*

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