



Sunday, 24 April 2022

Benny vs Benny



Fans of old radio know all about the Benny-Allen feud. But what about the Benny-Benny feud?

There really wasn't such a thing. A writer at a New York newspaper tried to concoct one out of nothing.

Jack Benny and Benny Rubin were friends for many years; there are stories that Rubin suggested Ben K. Benny change his name to "Jack" after orchestra leader Ben Bernie complained ("Jack" was military slang for a sailor, and Jack had been one in World War One).

Here's a bit more about Rubin from Gene Handsaker's column of October 14, 1946. I believe he was working for the Newspaper Enterprise Association at this point; he also worked for the Associated Press.

HOLLYWOOD — Benny Rubin has sad, baggy, brown eyes; a swarthy skin; handsome, graying hair; a big beak, and little chin. He is, in short, "a man who looks like a mouse."

"But let's say 'a nice mouse,' " Benny added; "not a rat."

Benny's been in show business 30 years. He has trouped on Mississippi and Ohio river show boats; told gags and hoofed in vaudeville; emceed nightclub and stage shows; had comedy roles in about 100 movies. Once he even directed the 100-piece Hollywood Bowl orchestra in Tschalkowsky's Fifth Symphony. That was a gag, however; Benny merely followed the semi-circle of sawing cellos. The applause was terrific.

...

Benjamin Rubin was born in Boston, 47 years ago, a door from the Old North Church "where Paul Revere did his stuff." In the neighborhood were Jewish, Italian, and Irish dialects; Benny picked 'em all up and, in time, many more.

Now, a fast talker, he switches easily from Negro to Scotch to Arabian to Hindu, if necessary, to tell his gags. Funny thing, though; he can't do any of the Scandinavian accents.

His many years at a dialectician have fitted him for his present job of movie dialogue director. He even coached Kenny Delmar's "Senator Claghorn" accent for "It's a Joke, Son!"

He has known all the greats and near-greats in the fabulous field called show business. Some years ago, down on his showman's luck, he was majordomo in Hollywood's Victor Hugo restaurant. A customer with a beard asked Benny if he wouldn't like to get back into showdom. Benny said sure. The man was Orson Welles.

...

From then on Benny literally ran between radio studios, doing dialects for Welles' Mercury Theater, Fibber and Molly, Jack Benny, and many others. Once Benny played two characters at once, one of whom choked the other to death. Just before that scene, Welles handed him a glass of pineapple juice to ease his overworked throat. "That shows you the heart of the guy," Benny said.

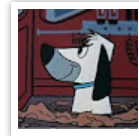
Benny's had a hand in several "discoveries." The only time he ever paid his way into a nightclub, in San Francisco, he was impressed by a girl dancer's beauty and talent, and wired a Hollywood producer.

Moviegoers know her now at Ann Miller.

Benny, a happy man, would live his life all over again—in show business.



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Rubin appeared on Jack's radio show off and on through most of its existence, and then on television, generally in small parts. Rubin once wrote about how upset and angry he was about the Benny TV show's cancellation by NBC in 1965. Rubin had been a vaudeville headliner; he hosted an amateur hour radio show in the mid-'30s and had two half-hour shows on TV (NBC/WPIX) in spring 1949 but never got close to Jack Benny's fame (or money) in broadcasting.

With that, here's the manufactured feud from the *Brooklyn Standard-Union* of October 11, 1929. I have no doubt the quotes are accurate but I suspect the two Bennys were laughing about it, not angry.

Jack Benny Gets Benny Rubin's Bills

By FRANC N. DILLON

Staff Correspondent.

Hollywood, Oct. 11

A feud as bitter and endless as that reported to be in existence between Alice White and Clara Bow, is impending between Jack Benny and Benny Rubin, both of whom are now making pictures for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

"I don't see how people could confuse us," Benny Rubin says. "We don't look alike and we don't act alike, but I get his mail; I get his telephone calls and I even get his laundry."

"That's nothing," complained Jack Benny, "I get his bills!"

"TAKE IT BIG"

Jack Benny, by the way, says that he has his first part in a picture. Instead of being a master of ceremonies, he has a real part, that of a stage manager, in "Road Show."

Benny Rubin says that he never has a part either. The director always says, "Go on Benny and do something funny." And Benny does, and steals the scene, if not the picture.

"I'm never written in the script," he wails, "I just go on and do something." That is what he is doing now in "Take It Big" with Bessie Love and Van and Schenk.

Here's an example of Rubin working with Jack, though not on the Lucky Strike Program. It's from the *Long Island Star-Journal* of November 17, 1954.

Big Spender Benny Needs the Money

By JOHN LESTER

Jack Benny has been doing a great deal of television lately, either because he has been suddenly seized by an inordinate affection for the medium, or because he can use the money, even as you and I.

The latter is probably the case since the Waukeegan [sic] wit, contrary to the stingy character devised for him for public appearance purposes, is one of the most generous of men and, in addition, his wife. Mary Livingston, is well known to be America's No. 1 shopper.

Her charge accounts and assorted expenditures even throw those of Fulton Lewis Jr., (\$1,600 a day for hotel accommodations! So says Boot Herndon in "Praised and Dawned," the latest Lewis story) into the shade.

...

WHATEVER the reason for Benny's increased activity in TV, it's his business and the public isn't suffering. Most of his extra shows have been good and last Sunday's. CBS-TV, 7:30 to 8 P.M., on which he did "The Giant Mutiny," a take-off on "The Caino Mutiny," might have been exceptional but for the ending which fritted away to nothingness when it should have contained a climactic yell or, at least, an unusual twist of some kind.

Leo Durocher, manager of the world champion New York Giants, was the special guest along with a half-dozen or so ether ball players, and the plot centered around Benny's decision—he portrayed Alvin Dark—to take over the Giant team during a crucial moment in the world series. Durocher charged this constituted mutiny. Durocher's "acting" was both unusual and unusually good under the circumstances and the entire half-hour was loaded with clever lines and situations, until, that is, the end when Durocher, who was found guilty in a sudden reversal of favor, merely walked from the stage and through the audience.

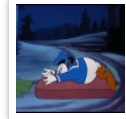
THE SHOW on which "The Giant Mutiny" took place was which he has exactly doubled this season, going from one out of every four Sundays last year to two out of four this year, alternating with Ann Sothern's "Private Secretary."

He's planning quite a few guest appearances for himself, too, in addition to a "spectacular," on which he will star and be supported by nearly everyone in Hollywood and New York.

The master comic and wit will undertake one of his more elaborate guesting Sunday coming at 9 P.M. over CBS-TV when he stars in "The Face is Unfamiliar" on the General Electric Theatre.

This is a filmed program and it certainly looked like a smash to me, but one never knows in show business.

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

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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...

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Dr. Grob's Animation Review

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2 days ago

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IN IT, Benny appears as one "Tom Jones," a very undistinguished waiter whose manner and appearance are so routine that he is seldom recognized by anyone, typical of millions who go through life cloaked in anonymity. But this pronounced talent is recognized by a gangster boss is planning. Benny, as the nondescript waiter, is duped into robbing the bank—no point in revealing the details—and does, but not without first running into the normal hazards of millions who patronize banks daily: such as waiting in line behind a vending machine man (Benny Rubin, a life-time friend of Jack Benny) about to deposit a large sack of uncounted pennies!

And, finally, a little squib from Hank Grant's syndicated column, December 2, 1961.

ON THE JACK BENNY show a couple of weeks ago, comedian Benny Rubin played a panhandler who asked Jack for a dime so's he could get a cup of tea. Jack gave him a tea bag, saying: "I don't think you'll have any trouble finding a cup of hot water." Well, to date, viewers have sent Rubin a total of 487 tea bags! "Next time," says Rubin, "I'm going to panhandle for champagne!"

When Rubin wasn't acting, he was writing. He put together a memoir of his experiences in vaudeville; some say he stretched the truth a bit. He provided the voice of Joe Jitsu in the abysmal Dick Tracy TV cartoons of 1960. A heart attack claimed him in 1986, seven years after he retired.

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [06:59](#)



Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

2 comments:



Dave K 24 April 2022 at 09:34

Benny Rubin! Along with Charlie Cantor, just about my favorite.

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Errol 26 April 2022 at 10:53

Beside his appearances with Jack Benny and The Stooges, I loved him as " Mr. Tom Fong " in the " Herman's Raise " episode of " The Munsters ". Herman is applying for a job at a Japanese laundry. Fong: I advertised for boy.....you "sure" number one big boy alright!! Herman: Mr. Tom Fong, where are you going? Fong: I'm going out to lunch. gonna grab an enchilada Herman: But, what do I do if a customer comes in? Fong:(Looks through his bottle thick glasses up and down at Herman) HIDE!! A part he wouldn't be allowed to play today. Rubin could really be a chameleon.

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