

Sunday, 1 December 2024

Coffee With Jack

Comedians and critics both praised Jack Benny for his timing. Some pointed to the way he slowly unfolded a story, ignoring any interruptions that happened along the way, which made the ending even funnier. Others pointed to his waits and his expressions, which he held as the laughs built and built.

Jack told interviewers over the years he told stories, not jokes. That wasn't necessarily true. Here's an Associated Press story from 1958.

Jack Benny Is Unperturbed At Losing A Joke

BY CHARLES MERCER

NEW YORK, Oct. 14 (AP) — Jack Benny ordered some hot coffee sent up to his hotel suite the other day during a visit to New York.

"Please," he told room service, "make it so hot that you can't carry it."

Hanging up the telephone, he said to a visitor, "to be honest about it, that line is stolen from George Burns."

"THAT REMINDS me of a story," said a friend of Benny. "There was this kid 3-4 years old who seemed perfectly normal in every way except that he wouldn't talk. His parents were worried sick about it. They did everything possible but the kid wouldn't say a word.

"Finally one morning when they served him his cocoa, he tasted it and yelled, 'Gee, that's too hot!' His parents burst into tears of joy, kissed him and asked, 'Why haven't you ever spoken before, dear?' The kid said, 'there hasn't been anything to complain about before.'"

Benny, laughing, said he could use that joke. The visitor told Benny's friend he could use it too and would try to rush it out before Benny did.

BENNY WAS philosophical about the loss of a new joke. After all, he knows millions of them. Besides, he's a very philosophical guy—extraordinarily calm and unharassed in his 26th year of radio and television. Calmer, really, than Perry Como.

Without belaboring that joke which may be old to everybody but the visitor, you might say that Benny has never sounded off a great deal because he doesn't feel he's had anything to complain about.

Week in and week out his CBS-TV show (Sundays, 7:30 pm) still is the most risible half-hour comedy show on the air. He does not worry about "changing format" problems because the format of the show always is changing from week to week anyway. What are his working habits on the program?

As he tells it, they sound more like playing habits. His staff and writers have been with him for a long time; they know one another thoroughly.

"SOMETIMES YOU have a show in a couple of hours," Benny says. "Sometimes it's a couple of weeks before it's together. It doesn't matter who gets the ideas. We're all working together. I guess I work, but I also have time to play golf and some days I get in a couple of hours' practice with that—" he pointed to his violin on a table.

The first 10 years are the hardest, he feels. He used to work like a dog after he began his radio program in 1932, "scared every week that they'd fire me if it wasn't the best show ever." But after nine years on television he doesn't worry any more.

Why did he start the happy myth that Benny is the most tight-fisted man in the world?

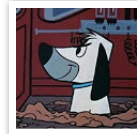
"It began as an accident on radio," he said. "I did a couple of jokes about being tight and it caught on.

Apparently everybody has a skinflint in his family. I went on with it because people demanded it — I had to. It was like being carried along by an avalanche. And now it's a permanent fixture of me as an entertainer."

The waiter brought in coffee. Benny tipped him heavily. The waiter left with a shocked expression.



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Comments on an article will be limited to the first few days after it is posted. While there will be a spurt of posts to Christmas this blog is pretty much retired.

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Old TV History

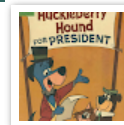


January 1929 - As 1929 began, the Federal Radio

Commission had no idea what to do about television. In less than two weeks after the start of the year, the Commission re...

3 days ago

Yowp



President Huck - How long have animated cartoon characters

been "running" for the U.S. presidency? Well, Popeye and Bluto did. So did Betty Boop (as the crowd chanted her ...

3 weeks ago

Blogs to See

News From ME

Today's Single Feature - If you enjoyed the Caesar's Writers program, you will certainly enjoy a kind of semi-sequel that was done in the same place — the Writer's Guild Theater — ...

2 hours ago

That waiter must have worn gloves to carry the coffee. Benny thought it barely warm enough, but his visitor scalded his tongue.

"Serves you right for stealing jokes," Benny said mildly.

See how Jack waited and waited and when it was the right moment—Wham!!—casually gave the punch line.

Now, *that's* timing.

Posted by Yowp at 07:10

Labels: Jack Benny

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Cartoons



White House defends pardon of Hunter Biden amid

backlash. - ©2024
fernandollercartoons.com
7 hours ago

AFRTS Archive



Roger Carroll 1980 - In 1980, singer Leslie Gore

popped to the Happy Hour with Roger Carroll. She talked about her career, Brother Michael had just done "Fame", Roger ...
11 hours ago

Cartoon Research



"Buzzy Boop at the Concert" (1938) - Unseen for decades, a rare 35mm print of Buzzy Boop at the Concert was found in Russia in 2019. The UCLA Film & Television Archive premiered its restorati...
16 hours ago

Movies with Michael



Cowboy Church #197 - Hello my friends and welcome

back for another service of Cowboy Church. Today's musical selection begins with Roy Rogers' 1940 recording of *Silent Nig...
1 day ago

Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog



And This Blog Loves Dick Shawn -

2 days ago


The Exposure Sheet



The Flintstones Celebrate Thanksgiving - Happy Thanksgiving

g everyone! I don't have anything earth-shattering to share with you today, but I do have a little something. To celebrate the holiday, h...
5 days ago

Mark Kausler's CatBlog
Felix Arrives in the Sunny South - Howdy Readers!
First off we have a color drawing by Cathy Hill, my favorite cartoonist. She's celebrating Halloween night this year and many years past in ...
4 weeks ago

Pegbar Profiles

The Animator, January 1938 - The second issue of
The Animator is missing as of this writing, so here is the third edition from the start of January 1938.
*Snow White *had its Ca...
5 weeks ago

Termite Terrace headlines

A Mistake Only Charlton Could Make - The Jetsons, here mistakenly referred to by their Spanish name, Los Supersonicos, in Charlton's Huckleberry Hound#3.
4 months ago

[Show All](#)

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Blog Archive

- ▼ [2024](#) (175)
 - ▼ [December](#) (4)
 - [Poor Cinderella](#)
 - [The Home of John Pettibone](#)
 - [Trafaz Sunday Theatre: Freedom 2000](#)
 - [Coffee With Jack](#)
 - ▶ [November](#) (34)
 - ▶ [October](#) (32)
 - ▶ [September](#) (30)
 - ▶ [August](#) (33)
 - ▶ [July](#) (19)
 - ▶ [June](#) (14)
 - ▶ [May](#) (1)
 - ▶ [April](#) (2)

- ▶ [February](#) (2)
- ▶ [January](#) (4)
- ▶ [2023](#) (381)
- ▶ [2022](#) (382)
- ▶ [2021](#) (380)
- ▶ [2020](#) (389)
- ▶ [2019](#) (376)
- ▶ [2018](#) (379)
- ▶ [2017](#) (380)
- ▶ [2016](#) (396)
- ▶ [2015](#) (389)
- ▶ [2014](#) (390)
- ▶ [2013](#) (388)
- ▶ [2012](#) (397)
- ▶ [2011](#) (106)

Labels

- [Aline Mosby](#) (20)
- [Art Davis](#) (52)
- [Bad Luck Blackie](#) (12)
- [Bob and Ray](#) (18)
- [Bob Clampett](#) (122)
- [Bob McKimson](#) (87)
- [Bob Thomas](#) (67)
- [Chuck Jones](#) (193)
- [Columbia](#) (78)
- [Counterfeit Cat](#) (10)
- [Cynthia Lowry](#) (39)
- [Dick Thomas](#) (18)
- [Don Patterson](#) (24)
- [Drag-a-Long Droopy](#) (14)
- [Earl Wilson](#) (20)
- [Erskine Johnson](#) (46)
- [Felix the Cat](#) (40)
- [Film Daily](#) (50)
- [Fleischer](#) (223)
- [Frank Tashlin](#) (43)
- [Fred Allen](#) (61)
- [Fred Brunish](#) (13)
- [Friz Freleng](#) (201)
- [Gene Deitch](#) (25)
- [George Pal](#) (12)
- [Grant Simmons](#) (11)
- [Hanna and Barbera unit](#) (140)
- [Hanna-Barbera](#) (14)
- [Hans Conried](#) (5)
- [Hardaway-Dalton unit](#) (7)
- [Harman-Ising](#) (108)
- [Henry Morgan](#) (14)

[Irv Spence](#) (14)

[Jack Benny](#) (655)

[Jay Ward](#) (37)

[Jimmy Durante](#) (22)

[John Crosby](#) (112)

[John Sutherland](#) (47)

[Johnny Johnsen](#) (42)

[Johnny Olson](#) (6)

[June Foray](#) (8)

[Kenny Baker](#) (6)

[King-Size Canary](#) (11)

[Laugh-In](#) (20)

[Legend of Rockabye Point](#) (7)

[Little Rural Riding Hood](#) (8)

[Magical Maestro](#) (10)

[Maurice Noble](#) (12)

[Mel-O-Toons](#) (5)

[MGM](#) (776)

[Norm McCabe](#) (11)

[Pat Matthews](#) (13)

[Paul Julian](#) (17)

[Sara Berner](#) (6)

[Screwy Squirrel](#) (43)

[Snafu](#) (35)

[Spider-Man](#) (3)

[Terrytoons](#) (122)

[Tex Avery](#) (684)

[The Cat That Hated People](#) (10)

[Toby the Pup](#) (5)

[Tom and Jerry Human](#) (48)

[Tralfaz Sunday Theatre](#) (21)

[Ub Iwerks](#) (133)

[UPA](#) (82)

[Van Beuren](#) (152)

[Vernon Scott](#) (53)

[Virginia MacPherson](#) (14)

[Walt Disney](#) (221)

[Walter Lantz](#) (337)

[Warner Bros.](#) (931)

[Who Killed Who](#) (13)