

Tex Avery Cartoons

ANIMATED FILMS

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OSHIP

12-22-75

DEAR CHUCK

SORRY I MESSSED UP YOUR
BEAUTIFUL LETTER WITH MY SCRIBBLINGS

ALSO SORRY ABOUT BEING SO
FACETIOUS — BUT COULDN'T HELP IT!

YOU WERE ALWAYS SO CLEVER WITH
WORDS — ITS GREAT!

IF YOU APPROVE MY 'FOOTNOTES' I
WOULD LIKE TO SEND COPIES TO ALL THE
UNIVERSITIES — ORGANIZATIONS — ETC. THAT
HAVE WRITTEN ME IN THE PAST

WISHING YOU CONTINUED SUCCESS
IN YOUR FINE FILMS

*MY FAVORITE —
"THE WHITE SEAL"

LOVE TO YOU AND YOURS

TEX.

Chuck Jones

December 11, 1975

Dear Tex,

*ANERY
COMMENTS

Here are a few random thoughts in the night.

Recently I've taken to waking up in a frenzy wondering if I have a ruptured memory, wondering if all those things Bob Clampett is saying are really true, wondering if defunct FUNNY WORLD'S funny Mike Barrier is correct when he says "I am going to operate on the assumption that his (Clampett's) version of the events at the Warner Cartoon Studio is substantially correct." ~~A~~ I RECEIVED SAME COMMENTS FROM BARRIER

In order to check my memory here are some Clampett quotes from said interview. Clampett - discussing the year 1931: "I thought up a stream of 'wabbit jokes' hunting jokes, some of which reached the screen seven years later in the first Bugs Bunny cartoon", (carefully dated and signed drawing "Bob Clampett - 1931" - for some reason none of the rest of the other drawings are dated - Clampett was either 15 or barely 16 at the time. Precocious kid.)

UNADULTERATE
NOGASHA

"I thought of the name "Porky and Beans", (he substantiated this with a model sheet drawn by Friz Freleng of Oliver Owl, Porky, and others - this bears a Clampett signature but not a Freleng signature).

FRIZ -
"HAVEN'T GOT
A HAT"

"Then we (Tex and Clampett) thought of Daffy Dean - and thus Daffy Duck was named" - (not according to Tex - but who cares what the originator of the character says?)

NO WAY
SICKEN
LIES-L
LIE

In 1938 - "I had found the character I was looking for. This was the birth of Bugs Bunny." (The world was looking for it too) "My first sketches were simple but they were very close to what you saw finally in A WILD HARE." (I'm)

"I decided to stay close to all future storyboard development" - (difficult, since the Clampett/Katz unit was housed some three hundred yards from the building where the rest of us worked - and Bugs Bunny was born.)

AT KICK
WITH A
FLASHING
MAY

CK JONES

"and worked with Tex in order to get Bugs back on the track of what I had envisioned..." (Clampett getting Tex on the track is comparable to Sam Peckinpah getting Charles Chaplin on the track.)

OH BROTHER!!

"Leon okayed my using whoever I needed to work out a final model sheet...." (substantiation: a model sheet drawn by Bob McKimson for Tex Avery but here labelled "Bob Clampett's" Rabbit Model.)

COULD THIS BE FORGERY?

CHECK THE JET BLACK SIGNATURE ON THE OLD FADED STAT.

"I designed the backgrounds ("Porky in Wackyland") in the manner of a surrealistic Picasso-like modern art." (Picasso surrealistic? Dali is now joining the Clampett fan club.)

"I helped him on the story of "The Isle of Pingo-Pongo." (From way up there in the Ray Katz unit? Tex says no.)

HE'S A LITTLE DINGO-DONGO ON THIS

"I gave Bugs Bunny his first carrot..." (Funny, I could have sworn it showed up before Clampett started directing Bugs Bunnys)

CHECK A WILD HARE 1940

*BOB: "I GOT THE IDEA FROM GABLE EATING A CARROT IN 'IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT'?" (I've written over a thousand songs... (one a week for forty years?) HIS TOP HIT — "I'LL TELL IT MY WAY" DJ

"Tex and I went to bat for Chuck, and he got the job." (I really prefer you as an enemy, Bob.) (DITTO)

CHUCK SWUNG HIS OWN BAT — BOB.

"I hit upon the name 'Sniffles'. I sketched him as a little mouse....I gave him (Chuck) 'Sniffles' as a gift." (Not the way Dave Monohan and Rich Hogan remember it - but who are they? - the writers on the Sniffles series, that's who. Proof: a drawing of Sniffles by Bobe Cannon.)

CHUCK — YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE THROWN YOUR DISCARD SKETCHES IN YOUR WASTE BASKET

"So I pencilled in the mustache, etc. and this revised Red Hot Ryder which became known worldwide by his new name - Yosemite Sam." (Supported by an uncredited drawing of Sam by Friz Freleng - who originated the character of Yosemite Sam.)

"I have the true, original sketch of that gag, Rabbit Kissing Dog, in my Warner cartoon collection." (Well, that kind of proof ought to settle the matter, but again Hogan and Monohan point out that the gag referred to appeared in "Presto- Change-o" directed by Charles M. Jones, whoever he is.)

HE'S IN THE WASTE BASKET AGAIN — C.

"As I recall, Friz was away when we made the first three or more Bugs Bunnys." (It was Clampett who was away - Friz directed two or more Bugs Bunnys before Clampett directed his first -- well, Clampett's memory is only human - except to Mike Barrier.)

"Tweetie Pie"- I started the cartoon and then I left - Mike and Tedd and Friz's unit (not Friz - "Friz's unit") later made 'Tweetie Pie' and it won the Oscar -- and I'm mighty proud of my little guy." (By little guy, I presume you must mean Friz - who directed "Tweetie Pie.")

Note: Clampett now contends that he left in 1948 - "Tweetie Pie" was released in the 1945-46 season - so Clampett left before July 1945 according to his own statement. (Hey, a new first - a Clampett statement you can trust.)

"Bugs Bunny and his ^{NON-} creator, Bob Clampett" heading on a reproduced article.

A WOLF IN RABBITS CLOTHING!

Picture of Bugs Bunny, signed "Bob Clampett", however not drawn by Bob Clampett, but probably by Rod Scribner, plus an "Easter Greeting" unquestionably drawn by Bob McKimson.

BACK TO THE WASTE BASKET

Drawing of Porky Pig - artist unknown but not Clampett - all cartoonists have easily recognized graphic signatures. And all the drawings in this article with possibly the exception of one - are drawn by others.

Now if a false statement is stated over and over again - particularly in public forums such as TV, radio and the press and because such false statements (or lies) as we are concerned with here convince people like Mike Barrier and Larry Jackson that Bob Clampett is more reliable than the truth of the matter, and because I have become somewhat doubtful about my own memories, I would like to refresh a few more of those memories by stating things as I remember them to be, starting at Termite Terrace in 1935:

THE IMPOSSIBLE IMPOSTER

1. When Tex Avery was hired as a director by Leon Schlesinger he brought Virgil Ross and Sid Sutherland with him as animators. And Bob Clampett and I were assigned to his unit as animators as well, and only as animators.

2. Clampett's status was in no way different from the rest of us. He was not Avery's "collaborator" on story or direction. If he had an agreement with Schlesinger neither Tex nor any of the rest of us knew anything about it. Therefore that "agreement" could not have had any bearing at all on what happened in Tex's films during those years. We all threw in gags and ideas when we had them because there was a new esprit d' corps under Tex's leadership.

THESE ARE NICE WORDS CHUCK - I APPRECIATE IT -

3. Clampett's contribution to the birth of Daffy Duck, the growth of Porky Pig and the so-called wacky humor of Termite Terrace was not more significant than any of the rest of us who worked for Tex. The difference between the other animators and Clampett was, and is, that we do not pretend to claim credit for the work of other directors - particularly when we owe them the loyalty of once being on their staff.

4. Note: It is axiomatic in animation that directors are given the credit - and the blame - for the pictures that bear their names as director. Clampett always insisted on this when he became a director - in his pictures he credits not one idea, gag or piece of animation to anyone but himself. But his claims for "creation" of Bugs, Daffy and Porky are all on films he did not direct - he even admits that himself.

RIGHT ON!
THE GIST OF THIS ENTIRE LETTER

5. Clampett directed his first Bugs Bunny two years after A WILD HARE - his was the 7th of the true Bugs Bunnys; creating something two years after the fact is no mean feat, even for a boy magician.

6. Clampett "created" Porky Pig as a director 4 years and 15 or 20 Porky Pigs after the first Porky - directed by Friz Freleng and called HAVEN'T GOT A HAT."

7. Bob was in attendance at the birth of Daffy Duck in the same sense that a hospital attendant is there at the birth of a baby - years later the attendant - if he is Clampett - becomes not only the obstetrician but the mother and father too. Bob Clampett was a good director and made some fine, funny pictures - why must he besmirch his own record as well as that of all the rest of us in this reckless need to garner all the credit?

I AGREE!

Finally this: Jackson may have acted in innocence though Barrier insists on the Clampett version even in the face of protests from Tex, Friz and me. Well, innocence and stubbornness are equal thieves in the night when they steal the good names of good men, particularly Tex Avery and Friz Freleng who together forged the style and character of Warner Bros. animated films until some of the rest of us grew up and realized how fortunate we were to find ourselves in such an environment. And now today - 30 years after Clampett left Warners - not under his own power as he would have it - we must struggle against the most blindly stubborn Barriers to preserve the truth of our own history.

THE
GREATEST
CON JOB
OF ALL
TIME!

ONLY THE
GUILTY
NEED BE
AFRAID!

Today we are constantly reminded of the immortality of our characters and the joy they have brought to the world - must we now have to explain to our own grandchildren the truth of our beginnings in the face of the cheap claims of such immoral or amoral opportunism?

Dear Tex, please comment.

Love,



Postscript: The errors identified here are only a few of those contained in the original Clampett interview in FUNNYWORLD endorsed by Mike Barrier and leading to the more slyly subtle distortions in CAMERA THREE, the grossly unfair misrepresentations of BUGS BUNNY SUPER STAR, and compounded by Clampett's claims in his other appearances on TV and college campuses.

DEAR CHUCK — FOR THIRTY YEARS I HAVE BEEN SICKENED BY 'SUPER' CLAMPETT'S FALSE CLAIMS TO CHARACTERS AND CARTOONS THAT YOU, FRIZ AND MYSELF CREATED. YOUR TRUTH EXPOSURE OF THE FACTS IS VERY GRATIFYING AND COMFORTING TO ME — NOW I CAN REST IN PEACE! I SALUTE YOU FOR PRODUCING, PRESERVING, AND UP HOLDING THE TRUE ART OF ANIMATION IN YOUR SUPERLATIVE FILMS — YOUNG STUDENTS OF ANIMATION IN YEARS TO COME CAN STUDY THEM AND LEARN MUCH FROM A REAL PRO. TODAY YOU STAND ALONE — THE LAST OF THE OLD GUARD OF THE GOLDEN YEARS OF ANIMATION. I AM PROUD TO HAVE WORKED WITH YOU WHEN WE WERE 'KIDS'.

LOVE TO AN OLD FRIEND — TEX 6