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[rense_e-news] Jeff Rense Weekly E-News 7-16-99

From: jocelyn@dewittec.net
Date: Fri, 16 Jul 1999 18:52:18 -0700
Fwd Date: Sat, 17 Jul 1999 08:54:16 -0400
Subject: [rense_e-news] Jeff Rense Weekly E-News 7-16-99

Jeff Rense Weekly E-News

The Week Ahead
7-18-99 thru 7-23-99

Guests, Announcements, Week's Top Stories
From sightings.com

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* From Jeff's Desk *

The first time I realized popular American 'humour' was under assault by the manipulators was back in the early 70's in college. I recall watching a sitcom, couldn't tell you which one, and noticing that something wasn't quite right. It was the laughter... which sounded rather odd at various times during the program.

Listening closely, it became apparent the live studio audience hadn't laughed as much as the producers wanted during taping, so their modest chuckles and tittering had been 'enhanced' with previously recorded laughter. This was, of course, an early use of that staple of mind-conditioning magic called the 'laugh track.' Presto: no more 'bad audiences' to worry producers and actors into ulcers and gray hair. No more risk...humour could now be certified and guaranteed...it was hi-tech 'product.'

It was obvious even back then that not only were we about to be told exactly *what* was 'funny.' Furthermore, we were even going to be conditioned to know precisely *how* funny a gag line or situation was supposed to be...according to the volume of canned laughter.

What's so funny?

Sit through most any contemporary film 'comedy' in a theater and observe how much of the audience laughs on cue, and how loudly, at some of the allegedly humorous lines and situations. Ask yourself: 'Was that really funny?' This can be a very sobering experience.

It is true, of course, that comedy is subjective and is often linked to misfortune...certainly, slapstick was doing that back in the silent film era. And there certainly ARE genuinely funny films around today. However, for the most part, today's pop culture 'humour' has sunk to an alarmingly primitive, desultory, scatological, and often cruel state. People laugh at death, laugh

at filthy language, laugh at pain, laugh at belittlement, laugh at bodily functions, laugh at meanness, laugh at...nothing. And they do so, on cue, with great vigor and gusto.

Mass America has been *told* what is funny. And mass America is laughing on command. To wit, here is an article which further illustrates the often unhumorous state of what much of America considers 'funny'...

The Joke of the Butt
By Rip Rense
WorldNetDaily.com
7-14-99

It's not every day that someone just comes out and announces, "I am an ignorant, unsophisticated, crass, arrogant buffoon."

Yet that, in effect, is what "writer" A.J. Jacobs did recently in an issue of Entertainment Weekly. For reasons known only to the EW editor, Jacobs was given a couple of pages to tell the world about his taste in comedy. Why anyone should be interested in his taste in comedy was not clear. Give the editor the benefit of the doubt and chalk it up to being provocative.

In an article bearing the '90s-banale-speak headline, "Everything Old Blows," A.J. begins by proclaiming that all black-and-white comedy films are not funny. Color, he avers, is a requisite for laughter.

The drooling idiocy of this statement should require no elucidation.

Further, A.J. declares that Chaplin wasn't funny ("I just think he sucks," he so eloquently offers.) Neither was W.C. Fields (boring), Jackie Gleason (too loud), The Marx Brothers (too much music), Lucy and Desi, Jack Benny, Abbott and Costello, Sid Caesar, Phil Silvers, Gracie Allen. ...

A.J. didn't bother to mention Laurel and Hardy, presumably because they are so dull as to be beneath contempt.

All right, you say, let's give this guy a break. Everyone, after all, has his or her own taste. I never really liked Abbott and Costello, for instance. But sympathy for A.J. fades quickly as one encounters the crux of the Jacobs Theory of Comedy: "There's nothing funnier," he writes, "than a well-placed, well-timed, well-earned use of the word ass."

What's more: "In my opinion, too many butts are better than no butts at all. Butts, after all, are a part of life. ... Did Steamboat Willie ever emit a flaming fart?"

Disregarding the fact that "Steamboat Willie" is a sound-pioneering Disney cartoon, not a comedy, A.J.'s point is clear. The essence of witticism, the epitome of amusement, the very fundament of all things funny (so to speak) in the world of A.J. Jacobs is. ...

The human hindquarters.

Yes, one "butt" or "fart" joke and old A.J. is on the floor, busting a gut, lips peeled back, tears streaming. Hee-hawwww! Hee-hawwww!

Now, notwithstanding the rich history of scatology in humor (from Chaucer to the tokus-infused routines of the Catskills), I must insist that there is more to eliciting merriment and mirth in the human psyche than speaking the word, "butt."

Yes, it is true that horse-laughing hordes in Las Vegas hotels and HBO comedy specials go berserk at the faintest suggestion of the cloven configuration resting atop the legs. But then, these folks aren't exactly in the market for subtlety. They're like the groundlings of Shakespeare's day, whom the Bard always remembered with token references to things derriere. No doubt A.J. would pronounce this slight aspect (no pun intended) of Shakespearean comedy to be its very pinnacle.

Yes, according to A.J., if Laurel and Hardy had just broken wind a lot, they would be funny (provided their films were colorized, of course). W.C. Fields? Should have just said "butt" every minute or two. (To his "credit," he does address a woman as "Mrs. Broadbottom" in one film, and in another remarks, "Isn't it

wonderful how everything always rounds itself out nicely in the end?") Gleason? If he'd changed "To the moooooon, Alice!" to "I'm gonna moooooon you, Alice," A.J. would have been happy. This is a guy, after all, who complains of the great Buster Keaton -- as innovative and clever a comedic filmmaker as ever to get behind a camera -- he "never talked out of his buttocks, now did he?"

Furthermore, "I need the joke-a-second pace of South Park or Friends," A.J. writes, thus confessing to being the victim of a psychotically fractured attention span, like much of the TV-mainlining public. Yes, A.J. is haplessly primed for kneejerk yucks in response to jokes, jokes, jokes -- by his own admission -- as long as they come fast and furious. "Call me an MTV-bred Philistine," he writes.

OK.

And here is the most dreadful part of A.J.'s "argument": "All the actors are dead. Lucy? Dead. Desi? Dead. That guy who hangs from the clock? Dead. I'm sorry, but I don't want to be reminded of my mortality. ..."

This is where Jacobs' appropriated Paul Reiser/Howard Stern bitchiness becomes asinine (again, no pun intended) to the point of, well, hilarity. This guy is actually dismissing the worth of artists because they are dead! Take that, John Belushi, Gilda Radner, and Phil Hartman! I wonder if this prejudice extends to other professions, such as science or music, for instance. Perhaps A.J. would not have much use for Einstein, Beethoven, Salk. ...

What this puerile glib-meister has forgotten, or tragically seems never to have learned -- like so many people today -- are things called irony, satire, subtlety, social commentary, incisiveness, comedy that aims a little higher than the belt -- say, somewhere around the head.

Oh, and then there's a little item called context. Listen, A.J., you might never find Fields or Chaplin as funny as "The Buttmans" from In Living Color, but does it occur to you that the world was very different in the pre-A.J. period of human history? Perhaps if you could understand something of the time of Fields, Chaplin, et al., you might be embarrassed by the pomposity of your currently held opinions. But probably not. I think you would sneer at Edison for not owning a cell phone.

The real tragedy of Jacobs' article is not the point of view per se, but the fact that he was given a platform in a national magazine to present it. Why not just invite some twelve-year-old kid off the street to rant and rave? (To be fair, the always-thoughtful Ken Tucker was allowed to, pardon the expression, rebut -- in less space.) A.J.'s piece was devoid of perspective and evidenced no understanding of anything other than that which pleased A.J. What criteria exist at this magazine (and the media in general) for allowing people to spout off? Traditionally, writers have had to claim some sort of expertise in a subject in order to hold forth about it. A.J. has all the credentials of kids in the "Cultural Revolution" of China. Given absolute power, those tykes and teens promptly dismissed as irrelevant and evil anything they couldn't understand. As with A.J., everything "old" was bad.

"Butts," writes A.J. Jacobs, "after all, are a part of life."

Yes, and so are brains. And they're really a lot more interesting. Try using yours sometime, A.J. When you're not too busy chortling at somebody saying "buttcrack" on Friends or South Park.

And in the spirit of generosity, let me close by giving you just what you asked for, a well-placed, well-timed, well-earned use of the word:

Ass.

You can read Rip's weekly commentaries on Joe Farah's WorldNetDaily.com each Wednesday. Use the WND search engine to pull up a list. You can also read a large number of them under 'Rip Files' at Sightings.com

Rip Rense is writer and columnist whose work has appeared in many newspapers and magazines, including the Philadelphia Inquirer, Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune, Emmy Magazine, TV Guide, and China Review.

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In case you missed the website of July 13th guest, Howard Martin, you can now find it under Guest Links on sightings.com or at <http://www.immunotex.com/rense/> under Guest webpages.

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* TOP STORIES *

Just a few of last week's most intriguing!
<http://www.jeffrense.com>

Have You Reloaded This Page? You May Be Missing An Update!!

- * Of Visiting ETs, Wormholes, Sightings, Electricity And Crop Circles
- * Neuro-Technology Revolution - Mind Machines Doing Many Things
- * Grey Whales Dying - Scientists Seeking Answers
- * Y2K - Computer Viruses Said Being Readied To Add To Chaos
- * Y2K - US Banks Making Secret Lists Of Non-Compliant Companies
- * China To Test New Mobile Nuke ICBM Shortly
- * Russians Want Part Of Alaska Back!
- * Increasing Jet Contrail Volume May Change Climate
- * Taiwan Sticks To Sovereignty Declaration - Much To US Chagrin
- * How The Serbs Outfoxed NATO
- * The Dismemberment Of Yugoslavia - Next Step An 'Independent' Montenegro
- * Nostradamus 1999 And The 'King Of Terror' Quatrain
- * Y2K - 10,000 Arkansas National Guard Troops To Be On Duty
- * Y2K - Polish Airline Grounds January 1 Flights
- * Y2K - San Diego Police Told To Prepare For Family Survival
- * Regarding Some Apollo Astronauts Allegedly Seeing UFOs On The Moon....
- * NASA Cancels One Comet Mission - Announces Another For Same Comet
- * Computer Monitor Radiation Blamed For 1/3 Employee Sickness
- * Tinkering With The DNA On Your Dinner Plate
- * Wrong Moves Can Be Deadly With Lightning
- * Some Plants Found To Have Nervous Systems Like Humans
- * Chile Documents Expose Criminal Role Of US Foreign Policy
- * Sahara Desert Born Suddenly Only 4,000 Years Ago
- * UPDATE Robin Hood Preferred 'Merrie Men' To Maid Marian Claims Professor
- * Cell Phone On Your Belt Brings Radiation To Liver And Kidneys
- * Breast Milk Said 'Most Contaminated' Of All Human Foods
- * The Week's UFO Sightings - Crop Circle Eyewitness?
- * 'Unabomber' Ted Kaczynski Was CIA Mind Control Subject!
- * Mystery Flight Attendant Sickness Baffles Air Industry

Read the entire text of these stories and more at
<http://www.sightings.com>

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* EDITOR'S CORNER *

What a response! Over 500 people responded to my question about the polls. Of that, 23 people (fewer than 5%) preferred not to have them but were incredibly generous about it just the same.

So... polls it is. A dash of reality, though - they're are fun but they are not scientific. They can only measure the respondents, they do not a represent a cross section of the population or even this group. So really, they simply measure how many of this (now) 6,200 felt strongly enough about the issue to click and vote.

One of the gentleman who disliked polls raised a very good point. He said he was against them because they artificially shaped opinions. Yes, I must concur - he is right. However, I am ever amazed at the depth of the intelligence and discernment of the people I've been so fortunate as to be in contact with in this group.

So let's just have some fun with them. The first question - tomorrow - will cover what over 50% of the submitted questions have asked about, UFO's.

Keep those questions coming! mailto:jocelyn@dewittec.net?Subject=Poll_Q

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Jocelyn

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What's under the pyramid, really?

Hidden Mysteries of the Pyramids - Not been to this website yet? Go take a look. Bookmark it if you're not ready for it. This book genuinely would be a unique and valuable addition to your knowledge and understanding about this planet we are planted on. <http://www.immunotex.com/pyramid/>

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* THIS WEEK'S GUESTS *
6-27-99 thru 7-02-99

(Please note Jeff's Guest schedule can change due to late breaking stories, etc)

- SUN 7-18-99
Constance Clear: Extraordinary ET Encounters
- MON 7-19-99
Ed Fouche': US Military Flying Triangles
Sherman Skolnick: Attempted Gore Assassination??
- TUE 7-20-99
Val Valerian: Creator of www.trufax.com
- WED 7-21-99
Michael Lindemann: Weekly UFO/ET World Update
Peter Davenport: Latest UFO Eyewitness Recordings
- THU 7-22-99
Mike Adams: www.y2knewswire.com Report
Skip Goebel: Home Steam Electric Generators
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Doc Marquis: Occult Societies

Live Real Audio Broadcasts & Archives: <http://www.jeffrense.com>

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* GUEST QUOTE *

"Since the majority of our life journey seems to involve dealing with the unknown, from whence all comes, the more we address that issue, the less it matters what happens or when. In effect, we are then to a degree prepared for anything, because understanding the unknown, to whatever degree, brings the realization that we are, as spiritual beings exploring life in polaric experience, immortal - that this is just one in a long line of lives in the continuum of our individual and collective existence. Change? Bring it on. It is one of the only constants in the universe. Everything around us in society is synthetic - the computer systems, the money, the calendar .. programmed consensus reality is so far removed from what matters. Y2K, coronal mass ejections, total economic collapse -- none of this really matters except to those thoroughly entangled in the drama of a synthetic life in a dysfunctional paradigm. Ultimately, people are preoccupied and worried about the future to the degree that they have not make the attempt to harmonize with their inner life and become comfortable with the unknown."

Val Valerian, June 1999

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...unless you're prepared for the upheaval of every religious doctrine you've ever been taught. Proceed with caution - you may never be the same.

"The Greatest Story Never Told"
The Key to Unlocking the Mystery of God

"Opening The Seven Seals of Revelation"
The Methodology of Decrypting Hidden Messages in the Bible

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DISCUSSION FORUM
<http://www3.bravenet.com/forum/show.asp?userid=hj135985>

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