

## November 8, 2021

**Our Miss Brooks** - Episode title The Big Jump - aired on Friday at 9:30PM on May 27, 1955 on CBS.

A reference is made to Jeff Chandler, who played the original Mr. Boyton on the radio version of *Our Miss Brooks*. Mr. Faylen says "I couldn't look over Jeff Chandler's shoulder without getting the bends" while explaining to Connie that he is afraid of heights.

This episode was written and directed by Al Lewis, who is NOT the same Al Lewis as the actor from *Car 54 Where Are You?* or *The Munsters*.

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**Eve Arden** - was born Eunice Mary Quedens in Mill Valley, California. She changed her name to Eve Arden, which she adopted while looking over some cosmetics and spotting the names "Evening in Paris" and "Elizabeth Arden".

In 1948, CBS Radio premiered *Our Miss Brooks*. CBS took the popular radio show to television in 1952. The television series *Our Miss Brooks* (1952) ran through 1956 and led to the movie *Our Miss Brooks* in 1956. Arden was the only cast member to appear in all 130 episodes of *Our Miss Brooks*.

Her salary for *Our Miss Brooks* was \$200,000 a year.

When the show ended, Arden tried another television series, *The Eve Arden Show* in 1957, but it was canceled after one season. She also starred in *The Mothers-in-Law* in 1967. This show, co-starring Kaye Ballard ran for two seasons.

**Gale Gordon** - was born Charles Thomas Aldrich Jr. He took his mother's maiden name as his professional last name. He was Lucille Ball's original choice to play Fred Mertz on *I Love Lucy*. Due to his commitment to *Our Miss Brooks*, he had to decline this role.

Gordon had numerous roles on radio, including *Our Miss Brooks*, *The Dennis Day Show*, *My Favorite Husband* and *The Great Gildersleeve*. He had created the role of Mayor LaTrivia on radio's *Fibber McGee and Molly* in the 1940s.

He also appeared in feature films, often as a stuffy military officer. They included *Rally 'Round the Flag, Boys*, *All in A Night's Work*, *Don't Give Up the Ship*, *Visit to a Small Planet* and *All Hands on Deck*.

In addition to his many appearances in comedy television programs with Lucille Ball, Gordon was also Mr. Wilson in the *Dennis The Menace* series from 1962 to 1963.

Gordon and his wife, Virginia were married for almost 58 years.

**Robert Rockwell** - replaced Jeff Chandler in the role of Mr. Phillip Boynton in the *Our Miss Brooks* radio series. He continued the role on the television version of that sitcom. Rockwell was so identified with the role that other dramatic roles were often denied to him. Still, after beginning his career as a contract player for Republic Studios he appeared in over 350 television shows during the next fifty years.

Appeared in more than 200 commercials and voiceovers, most notably as the grandfather treating his grandson to a piece of candy in the *Werthers Original Candy*" spot.

Rockwell and his wife, Elizabeth were married for over 60 years.

**Richard Crenna** - was cast as Walter Denton in the *Our Miss Brooks* radio show and stayed in the part when the show moved from radio to television in 1952.

He was one of the first adult actors over 21 years of age that played a high school teenager on television. He was 25 years-old when he started playing high school student Walter Denton on *Our Miss Brooks*.

As a tip of the hat to his old character Walter Denton in *Our Miss Brooks*, Crenna's character in *Hot Shots! Part Deux* from 1993, is named Colonel Denton Walters.

Crenna had a memorable role in an episode of *I Love Lucy* as young Arthur Morton.

He also starred in another early television series, *The Real McCoys* beginning in 1957. His role as the dedicated state legislator in the short-lived series *Slattery's People* from 1964 finally established him both as a dramatic actor and a leading man.

Additionally, Crenna had a recurring role on the television drama *Judging Amy* as Jared Duff, the fiancé of Maxine Gray, Tyne Daly's character.

**Gloria McMillan** - is best known for her role as Harriet Conklin on *Our Miss Brooks*. She also appeared in five of the twelve episodes of the mini-series, *Centennial* in 1978-1979.

When she got married on November 23, 1954, the wedding had *Our Miss Brooks* connections as Gale Gordon gave the bride away, Richard Crenna was an usher and Eve Arden's daughter was a junior bridesmaid. The marriage ended in 1974. McMillan remarried in 1987. After she left acting she and her husband, Ron Cocking operated The Looking Glass Studio of Performing Arts in San Bernardino, California. She retired from teaching in 2018.

**Jane Morgan** - was born in England in 1880 and came to the United States the following year. In 1930, she began working on radio plays and series where she became a stock performer on the *Lux Radio Theater* and was remembered for her work as part of the cast of *Point Sublime*, and on such radio plays as *House Undivided* as Mother Adams, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down* (with Keenan Wynn), and *The Horn Blows at Midnight* (with Jack Benny). She made regular appearances on the Jack Benny and Bob Hope radio shows and played Harold Peary's mother on *The Harold Peary Show*. She was best-known as Mrs. Davis, Eve Arden's motherly landlady on the radio and television versions of *Our Miss Brooks*.

She has often been confused with the singer of the same name.

**Jerry Hausner** - was in the very first episode of *I Love Lucy* playing Ricky's agent in the supporting cast. Hausner left the show after an argument with Desi Arnaz. One night, during filming, an on-stage telephone hookup between the two men failed, just as Hausner had warned Arnaz it would. "He became enraged," Hausner recalls. "He screamed at me and called me names in front of the audience."

On radio, he was a regular on *Blondie*, *The Jim Backus Show*, *The Judy Canova Show*, *Too Many Cooks* and *Young Love*.

Hausner also appeared regularly on *I Married Joan* and *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, and as voice director for the animated series *Mr. Magoo* and *Dick Tracy*.

Hausner supplied comic voices to several Spike Jones records, receiving label credit as Terry Housner.

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**Date With The Angels** - Episode title *The Gorilla* - aired on Friday at 10:30PM on September 13, 1957 on ABC.

Filmed at Desilu Studios - 9336 W. Washington Blvd., Culver City, California.

**Betty White** - began her entertainment career on radio in 1930 at the age of 8 playing an adopted orphan on the soap opera *Empire Builders*. White began her television career in 1939, three months after her high school graduation, when she and a classmate sang songs from *The Merry Widow* on an experimental television show.

White was a member of the American Women's Voluntary Services (where she drove a PX truck) during World War II and worked as a disc jockey at radio station KLAC.

In 1949, she began appearing as co-host with Al Jarvis on his daily "live television" variety show *Hollywood On Television*, originally called Al Jarvis' Make Believe Ballroom on KFWB and on KCOP-TV in Los Angeles. She began hosting the show by herself in 1952 after Jarvis's departure.

NBC offered her an anchor job on their show *Today*. She turned the offer down because she didn't want to move to New York permanently. The job eventually went to Barbara Walters.

She is best known as Sue Ann Nivens on the sitcom *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and the ditzy Rose Nylund on *The Golden Girls* with Bea Arthur, Estelle Getty and Rue McClanahan. Most recently from 2010 to 2015, she played the role of the hilariously outspoken Elka Ostrovsky in *Hot in Cleveland* for 124 episodes with Jane Leeves, Valerie Bertinelli and Wendy Malick.

*Hot in Cleveland's* episode titled "Love Is All Around" aired on September 4, 2013. It featured a reunion of the ladies from the *Mary Tyler Moore Show* with Cloris Leachman, Mary Tyler Moore, Valerie Harper, Betty White and Georgia Engel.

Betty White will be 100 years old on January 17, 2022.

**Bill Williams** - was born Herman August Wilhelm Katt. He had a walk-on role as a theater usher in 1933's *King Kong*. From 1951 to 1955, Williams appeared in the lead role of television's *The Adventures of Kit Carson*, which ran for 105 episodes. He turned down the lead in *Sea Hunt* in 1958, believing that an underwater show would not work on television. Lloyd Bridges accepted the part and turned it into a hit.

He also appeared in guest assignments in such popular TV shows as *Rawhide*, *77 Sunset Strip* and *Hawaiian Eye*, plus multiple episodes of his wife Barbara Hale's series *Perry Mason*, in which she co-starred as girl Friday Della Street.

Williams and Barbara Hale, are the parents of actor William Katt.

**John Litel** - was one of the "Warner Bros. Stock Company" in the 1930' with such character actors as Ward Bond, Frank McHugh, Joan Blondell, George Tobias, Henry O'Neill and Alan Hale.

In the years from 1952 to 1953, he played Robert Cummings' boss, Mr. Thackery in the NBC-TV situation comedy *My Hero*.

With over 200 credits to his name, Litel's other appearances on television include *Zorro*, *Stagecoach West*, ~~77~~ *Sunset Strip* and *The Virginian*.

**George Neise** - played foils in some of The Three Stooges full-length features during the 1960's.

His other credits include roles on *The Untouchables*, *Perry Mason*, *Zorro*, *Mr. Ed*, *The Red Skelton Hour* and *Death Valley Days*.

**Roy Engel** - started his entertainment career on ABC Radio's *Sky King*. Engel made his first film appearance in the 1949 noir classic *D.O.A.* He also made well over 200 appearances in films and television that include several on *Bonanza*, *Death Valley Days*, *The Virginian*, *Gunsmoke* and *Have Gun Will Travel*.

**Richard Reeves** - Although he specialized in playing henchmen, gangsters and street thugs, he came from a well-off family. His father was a bank executive and grew up in an upscale section of Queens, New York.

Reeves' height, heavy build and "tough guy" appearance led to his being frequently cast as bullies, robbers and mob enforcers in modern crime dramas, as well as in many Westerns and sitcoms in the early 1950's.

*Mr. Ed, Wagon Train, Perry Mason, The Untouchables and Cheyenne* we're among his 200 plus television appearances during the 1950's through 1960's.

**George Barrows** - was one of Hollywood's leading "gorilla performers." Unlike other "gorilla performers," he did a lot of performances without the gorilla suit doing stunt work and bit parts in numerous feature films and television episodes.

*The Lucy Show, The Beverly Hillbillies, The Red Skelton Hour* and *The Incredible Hulk* were just some of his other television "gorilla" appearances.

**Wally Cassell** - was born as Oswaldo Silvestri Trippilini Rolando Vincenza Castellano. Mickey Rooney is credited with suggesting he change his name to Wally Cassell. Rooney also helped Cassell gain a screen test and a contract with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Cassell also guest-starred in several television series, including *The Loretta Young Show, Gunsmoke, The Untouchables, Rawhide* and *The Beverly Hillbillies*.

Wally Cassell lived to be 103 years old.

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**I Love Lucy** - Episode title Harpo Marx - aired on Monday at 9:00PM on May 9, 1955 on CBS.

Writers Bob Carroll Jr., Madelyn Pugh Davis and Jess Oppenheimer who wrote for *My Favorite Husband* on radio all agreed to continue on television with *I Love Lucy*.

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**Lucille Ball** - entered a dramatic school in New York City, but was sent home because she was shy. Her classmate, Bette Davis, was getting many rave reviews. While under contract to RKO Radio Pictures, she appeared in films such as *Top Hat* with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, *Stage Door* with Katharine Hepburn and *The Big Street* with William Bendix.

She met her future husband, Desi Arnaz while filming *Too Many Girls* in 1940.

Lucy worked with many great comedians including Joe Penner, Laurel & Hardy, Abbott and Costello, The Marx Brothers and The Three Stooges.

In 1948, she starred in the radio comedy *My Favorite Husband*, where she played the scatterbrained wife of a Midwestern banker played by Richard Denning.

Lucille Ball was the first woman to own her own studio as the head of Desilu Productions.

### **Quotes from Lucy:**

"The secret of staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly and lie about your age."

"A man who correctly guesses a woman's age may be smart, but he's not very bright."

(Re: Desi Arnaz) "If you don't believe he's a great producer, I got two little Arnaz's at home to prove it."

**Desi Arnaz** - After seeing Arnaz perform, Xavier Cugat hired him for his touring orchestra, playing the conga drum and singing. Once he became a star attraction, Cugat encouraged him to start his own band, the Desi Arnaz Orchestra.

For the 1946-1947 season, Arnaz was the bandleader, conducting his Desi Arnaz Orchestra, on Bob Hope's radio show, *The Pepsodent Show* on NBC.

Television executives had been pursuing Lucille Ball to adapt her very popular radio series *My Favorite Husband* for television. Ball insisted on Arnaz playing her on-air spouse so the two would be able to spend more time together. CBS wanted Ball's husband co-star Richard Denning.

The name Ricky Ricardo was inspired by Henry Richard, a family friend and the brother of P.C. Richard of P.C. Richard & Son. This name translates to Enrique Ricardo. Ricky often appeared at the Tropicana Club which under his ownership he renamed it Club Babalu.

**William Frawley** - Both he and Vivian Vance did not like each other during the run of *I Love Lucy*. This most likely helped their characters and made them work so well. They were given the opportunity to have their own *Fred and Ethel* spin-off once *I Love Lucy* had run its course. Despite his animosity towards her, Frawley liked the idea, but Vance did not, having no interest in ever working with Frawley again. When *I Love Lucy* began, Frawley was 64 years old. Vance was 42 years old.

Frawley was nominated for five consecutive Emmy nominations as best supporting actor for *I Love Lucy* (1951), but never won.

Desi Arnaz agreed to consider Frawley for the part of Fred Mertz, since he could not get his first choice, Gale Gordon. Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball had invested everything they had for the pilot and had concerns about Frawley's alcoholism, which was no secret around Hollywood. Arnaz made it clear to him that if he showed up drunk for work more than once, he would be not only fired from the program but blacklisted throughout the entertainment industry.

From 1960 to 1965, he appeared as widower Steven Douglas' father-in-law, Michael Francis "Bub" O'Casey helping to bring up Douglas' three boys on *My Three Sons* with Fred MacMurray in 165 episodes.

**Vivian Vance** - was born as Vivian Roberta Jones in Cherryvale, Kansas. She started acting after moving to Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1932. Vivian took the last name "Vance" from a dramatics teacher who had been supportive of her acting career.

Early on she was known as a Broadway beauty whose singing roles included being an understudy to Ethel Merman. Vance was well known as a comedic actress who worked with major stars of the day including Jimmy Durante, Bob Hope, Ed Wynn and Gypsy Rose Lee.

Bea Benaderet, who was already playing Blanche Morton on *The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show*, was Lucy and Desi's first choice for the role of Ethel Mertz.

Vance was quoted as once saying, "When I die, there will be people who send Ethel Mertz flowers".

One of Vance's stipulations before signing on for *The Lucy Show* series with Ball was that her character be called "Vivian".

**Harpo Marx** - officially became a mime after a theater critic noted in 1914 that Harpo was brilliant until his character spoke. From then on, Harpo never spoke while in character.

When he taught himself to play the harp, he later learned that he played it the wrong way. However, when he became famous and wealthy, he on occasion throughout his career, took harp lessons from various harpists and music teachers in both New York City and Los Angeles to better increase his skill. However, due to his natural born talent, many musicians and music teachers ended up approaching him to learn his method of harp playing.

Was seldom recognized when out of character because he was almost completely bald.

Harpo was quoted as saying, "I am the most fortunate self-taught harpist and non-speaking actor who has ever lived."

Harpo was quoted regarding his time in vaudeville, "If an audience didn't like us we had no trouble finding it out. We were pelted with sticks, bricks, spitballs, cigar butts, peach pits and chewed-out stalks of sugar cane. We took all this without flinching - until Minnie (his mother) gave us the high-sign that we'd collected our share of the receipts. Then we started throwing stuff back at the audience and run like hell for the railroad station the second the curtain came down.

Groucho was once asked can Harpo really talk? Groucho replied: "You watch him miss a two foot put on the golf course, then you'll hear him talk!"

**Doris Singleton** - During a guest appearance on the radio show *My Favorite Husband* in 1948 she met Lucille Ball and began their long professional relationship. She had a recurring role in *I Love Lucy* playing Carolyn Appleby in ten episodes between 1953 and

1957. The character was named "Lillian Appleby" in her first appearance but "Carolyn Appleby" thereafter.

Singleton was originally supposed to co-star on *Here's Lucy*. Her character was supposed to be Harry Carter's (Gale Gordon) efficient morning secretary, who would stand in contrast to Lucy, his scatterbrained afternoon secretary. Singleton's character was dropped after the first episode because it was decided to show more of Lucy's family life and less of her life on the job.

She also appeared on numerous other television shows including *Richard Diamond, Private Detective*, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, *Pete and Gladys*, *Hazel*, *The Real McCoys*, *The Twilight Zone*, *The Munsters*, *The Fugitive*, *Dynasty*, *Phyllis*, *Family Affair*, *Hogan's Heroes*, *Gomer Pyle: U.S.M.C.*, *State Trooper*, *Gunsmoke*, and *Frontier Doctor*.

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