

OCTOBER 12, 2018

WE FAW DOWN - Filmed August 23 through 31, September 7, 1928. Retakes filmed on September 13, 1928. Released December 29, 1928.

In England, this film title was released as *We Slip Up*.

Directed by **Leo McCarey** who would go on to direct classic films such as *Going My Way*, *The Awful Truth* and *The Bells Of St. Mary's*.

The cinematographer was **George Stevens** who would also make his mark as a director of such memorable films such as *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, *The Diary Of Anne Frank*, *Giant* and *Shane*.

The basic idea for this film was later developed into Stan and Ollie's 1933 feature film *Sons Of The Desert*.

- This idea was also the main subject of the John Bunny - Flora Finch comedy *A Cure For Pokeritis* in 1912 by Vitagraph. John Bunny tells his wife he has been selected for membership to the Sons Of The Morning and must attend all meetings to avoid a ten dollar fine. The truth is John is playing poker with his pals and eventually gets caught in his lie.

The title for this film may have been influenced by a popular expression and song of the late 1920's: *I Faw Down And Go*

Boom. This song was written by James Brockman and Leonard Stevens and was popularized by Eddie Cantor, Annette Hanshaw along with bandleaders George Olsen and Harry Reser.

One of the proposed ideas for this film, had Laurel & Hardy getting their pants mixed up with each other. Although this routine was left out of this comedy, it did show up the following year in their skyscraper thrill comedy, *Liberty*.

Vivien Oakland - Plays Mrs. Hardy in this film. She made her Broadway debut in 1917 in the musical revue, *Over The Top*. She remained on Broadway until 1922. By 1924, she had settled in Hollywood and began working at the Hal Roach Studios in 1925.

Bess Flowers - Plays Mrs. Laurel. She appeared in over 900 films from 1923 to 1964 as the most well known extra in Hollywood. This earned the title "Queen Of The Extras". The films in which she appeared included 25 Best Picture nominees; 5 of them were Best Picture winners: *It Happened One Night* (1934), *You Can't Take It with You* (1938), *All About Eve* (1950), *The Greatest Show on Earth* (1952) and *Around the World in 80 Days* (1956). She also played a society lady in several Three Stooges comedies. Flowers is on record as saying Frank Capra, Joseph L. Mankiewicz, and Gregory La Cava are the directors she admired most.

Kay Deslys - she played Mrs Hardy two times in *Should Married Men Go Home?* (1928) and *Perfect Day* (1929). One of her earliest film appearances was in Charlie Chaplin's *The Gold Rush*. She also worked in comedies of the Marx Brothers and W. C. Fields.

Vera White - born Harriet Vera White in 1893 in Australia performed with her husband, Joseph T. Everett. Their act was called Joe and Vera White - The Vaudeville Chop Suey. About two months after the filming of this comedy, Vera was in an automobile accident and retired from movie work. She did, however, return as an extra in Laurel & Hardy's 1938 feature film, *Swiss Miss*.

George Kotsonaros - One Round Kelly, the jealous boyfriend/boxer was actually a professional wrestler in real life with 55 wins and 26 losses from 1923 until 1933. Born in Greece in 1892, he fought the Turks during the Balkan War in 1912. He is best remembered as Battling Rolf in William Wyler's *The Shakedown*.

The hat mix-up routine is in this film.

From: Laurel & Hardy - The Magic Behind The Movies
By Randy Skretvedt:

Director **Leo McCarey** recounted this story in 1968: There must have been 5000 people gathered around to watch us shoot. And as you know, Laurel and Hardy ran between these two apartment houses away from the camera. The wives followed a considerable distance back and fired at them. When they fired, men jumped out of the windows of these apartments, putting their trousers on and what-not. Before I shot the scene, I didn't want anybody to get hurt and we had stunt men jumping from the second floor. Through a megaphone, I explained to everybody we had to get it right the first time. There would be only one take on account of the danger of injury. Everybody listened attentively and I said, "When you jump out of the windows in various states of undress, you run AWAY from the camera and disappear in the alley in

back". Everybody said they understood. So came the big moment. I started the camera and called Stan and Babe. They came running in, the wives followed 15 or 20 paces back and as they were going down between the buildings, the wives fired at them, and the men all jumped out of the window, everything's going great and one foul-up jumped out of the window, pulling on his pants, came running TOWARD the camera and disappeared on the street side right next to the camera. And I bawled him out. I said, "What the hell do you mean by spoiling this scene? Didn't you hear what I said?" The fellow said, "Hell no, I'm not in this picture!"

BLOCK-HEADS - Filmed June 1 through July 1, 1938. Added scenes were filmed July 27-28, 1938. Released August 19, 1938. Working titles for the film were "*Meet the Missus*" and "*Just a Jiffy*".

This film is regarded as one of Laurel & Hardy's best comedies, but behind the scenes it was a different story.

The role of Mrs. Hardy was referred to as Mae in the original script meaning that possibly this role was intended for actress Mae Busch.

Most of the battle scenes at the beginning of the film were clips taken from *The Big Parade* (1925), *Wings* (1927), and *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930).

This film was also the first of four Laurel & Hardy features co-written by Harry Langdon, a comic superstar of the silent era who

had fallen on hard times. The premise of "Block-Heads" - with Stan as a WWI veteran in France was adapted from Langdon's 1926 film *Soldier Man*. Stan Laurel admired Langdon and used him as a gag writer for *The Flying Deuces* (1939), *A Chump at Oxford* (1939), and *Saps at Sea* (1940). The caricatures in the opening credits cards were also drawn by Harry Langdon.

Director **John G. Blystone** died of a heart attack on August 6, 1938, at the age of 45. He had just finished supervising the final edited version of "Block-Heads", which was released within two weeks after his death.

Ollie is pushing Stan in the wheelchair when Stan says that he's thirsty. Ollie picks up a hose, gives it to Stan and goes to turn it on. Stan had the end of the hose pointing at Ollie resulting in him getting soaked. He turns the water off, returns to Stan and he's dry.

Block-Heads was actually announced as Laurel and Hardy's last film. It turned out not to be, but it was the last one they and Hal Roach Studios made for release by MGM. The comedy duo would go on to make two more pictures for Hal Roach outside of MGM, *A Chump at Oxford* and *Saps at Sea* (1940) despite a legal conflict between Stan Laurel and Hal Roach. After principal production of **Block-Heads** wrapped, Laurel went on vacation and the film's ending had to be re-shot with doubles. An annoyed Roach terminated Laurel's contract, and Laurel sued Roach, calling the termination unlawful. They settled out of court several months later. Roach had worked with Laurel with Hardy for a long time and he still recognized them as geniuses, saying of Laurel years later, "except for Chaplin, there was no better gagman in the

business than Stan Laurel. He could always get the most out of every single gag."

Minna Gombell - Started her movie career in 1929 under the name Nancy Gardner. She had a reputation as a fast learner, capable of reading and comprehending a script in a matter of hours. This ability served her well as an understudy early in her career. Was in four Academy Award Best Picture nominees *Bad Girl* (1931), *The Thin Man* (1934), *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946) and *The Snake Pit* (1948) with *The Best Years of Our Lives* winning Best Picture of 1946.

Patricia Ellis - described herself as "Queen Of The B Pictures" working with stars such as James Cagney, Adolphe Menjou, and Joe E. Brown. After her film career, she went to the stage in New York and appeared in Irving Berlin's *Louisiana Purchase* at the Imperial Theater. It was there she met Missouri businessman George T. O'Malley the future president of Protection Securities Systems in Kansas City. They were married in 1941. She moved to Kansas City where she remained for the rest of her life.

Billy Gilbert - Best remembered as the voice of "Sneezy" in Walt Disney's *Snow White And The Seven Dwarfs* was born in a dressing room at the Hopkins Opera House in Louisville, Kentucky. In the introduction to Leonard Maltin's *Movie Comedy Teams*, Billy Gilbert wrote "a young man was a ticket-taker in a theater I played in. When my straight man didn't show up one day, I remembered that bright kid out front and sent for him to replace my missing straight man. He was so good, I kept him in the show. I was twenty-two years old and he was nineteen." The name of that kid was Bud Abbott. Billy was also the irate professor in Laurel & Hardy's Academy Award winning comedy

The Music Box along with numerous other parts in Laurel & Hardy and Hal Roach comedies.

Karl Kosiczky (aka Karl Slover) - is not a child actor in this photo. He's almost 20 years old here. His voice over was done by Billy Bletcher and Chill Wills. He adopted the name of "Slover" from that of his manager in 1942. His greatest fame came the year after *Block-Heads* when he was one of the 123 Munchkins in the 1939 classic *The Wizard Of Oz*. "Standing four feet four inches tall, I was the smallest Munchkin," recalls Karl. "I couldn't even reach the doorknob." He is best known for being the first trumpeter in the film, but he also was one of the singers who led Dorothy down the yellow brick road. Living to be 93 years old, his advice to having a long life was: "Just do the best you can. Enjoy what you have. Enjoy where you live. Most of all, remember what Judy Garland said in the movie, *There's no place like home.*"

Olin Francis - made numerous uncredited appearances films such as the 1935 version of *Les Misérables* along with *Swing Time*, *Stagecoach* and *Citizen Kane*.

Patsy Moran - was Stan Laurel's bride-to-be in *The Wedding Night*, a radio sketch in 1943 episode of *Mail Call* hosted by Lucille Ball. She also co-starred as a laundry worker in the 1954 episode of "I Love Lucy" titled *Bonus Bucks*. Patsy had earlier appeared with Lucille Ball in an uncredited role in 1944's *Meet the People* at RKO, the same studio Lucy later bought in 1957.

Tommy Bond - is best remembered as Butch from Our Gang who was always ready to give Alfalfa a hard time. In addition to his days with Our Gang, he also was young reporter Jimmy Olsen in two Superman serials. When his acting career ended, Tommy prepared for his future by attending Los Angeles City College and earning a degree in theater arts from Cal State Los Angeles in 1951. He worked over two decades as a stage manager and head of props for KTTV-TV in Los Angeles and another two years as stage manager and assistant director at KFSN-TV in Fresno before finally retiring.

Harry Woods - During his long career film and television career, Harry Woods appeared in mostly westerns. Although his imposing size, perpetual scowl, snarling voice and all-around evil demeanor made him one of the meanest of screen villains, before he became an actor, Woods made a living selling ladies' hats. He was married to his wife, Helen, for 57 years.

Harry Strang - had over 500 film and television roles (mostly uncredited) in *King Kong*, *Gone With The Wind* and *The Grapes Of Wrath*.

James Finlayson - Stan and Ollie's regular nemesis makes a brief appearance in this film.

The closing scene of Laurel & Hardy running away from Billy Gilbert's stunt double (Ben Heidelman) were actually stunt doubles Ham Kinsey (Stan) and Charlie Phillips (Ollie). Stan's double is taller than Ollie.

The movie ends with big-game hunter Billy Gilbert chasing and shooting at Stan and Ollie. The original ending Stan Laurel requested, but nixed by producer Hal Roach, was to show wild

game hunter Billy Gilbert's den with his animal heads (deer, elk, bear, etc.) mounted on the wall. Next to them would be Stan and Ollie's stuffed heads mounted on plaques, with Stan's face in a frozen grimace and Ollie's face looking at Stan with his traditional exasperation. Another source wrote that Ollie's head would look at Stan's head and say "Well, here's another nice mess you've gotten me into!"

REFERENCES:

Laurel & Hardy: The Magic Behind The Movies
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Internet Movie Database