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Edgar Kennedy - Kennedy was born in Monterey County, California in 1890. In his youth, Edgar was a professional light-heavyweight boxer. The stories that tell how Edgar went 14 rounds one time with Jack Dempsey are not true. What actually happened was that Edgar, with his boxing experience, was acting in a film titled *The Adventures Of Daredevil Jack*. The star, of course, was Jack Dempsey. There are publicity photos of Dempsey and Kennedy in this staged fight for the film.

By 1911, he was in Los Angeles beginning his film career with Selig. The following year, Edgar was at the Mack Sennett Studios working in comedy films until 1919. Over the next several years, he was working freelance at Fox, RKO and Universal as an actor and director. He arrived at the Hal Roach Studios in 1928. When he left the Roach lot in 1931, Edgar went on to work with the Marx Brothers in *Duck Soup*, with Dick Powell in *Hollywood Hotel*, *A Star Is Born* with Janet Gaynor and *Unfaithfully Yours* directed by Preston Sturges.

In the 1943 release *Air Raid Wardens*, Edgar Kennedy made his final film appearance with Laurel & Hardy. They teamed up one more time for radio in a sketch titled "The Wedding" which aired on November 25, 1943 for the Armed Forces Radio Series - Mail Call. Kennedy and Laurel & Hardy were very dear friends. Stan Laurel's daughter Lois remembers Edgar coming over to their house for social occasions while Edgar's daughter, Coleen recalls Stan living only two blocks away and was over all of the time. Amazingly, the two daughters never met each other until later in life.

During this period he was also starring in his own RKO "average man" short comedy series, which was kind of a precursor to today's situation comedies. In total, Edgar Kennedy appeared in over 440 films in a career that spanned 37 years. Those who worked with Edgar Kennedy at the Hal Roach Studios said despite his on screen gruff character, he was a real pro and very well liked. Edgar Kennedy died on November 9, 1948, the day before a testimonial dinner was to be held in his honor at the Lakeside Golf Country Club in Toluca Lake, California.

LEAVE 'EM LAUGHING - Script written mid-to-late October 1927. Filmed November 3 through 11, 1927. Retakes were filmed on November 12 and 17, 1927. Released on January 28, 1928.

Original Title: *A Little Laughing Gas*

This idea for this film came from Hal Roach.

The opening scene to this film had some unanticipated difficulties. In a 1954 interview, Stan Laurel said "We went on the lot the first day, got up on the bed and started laughing. We laughed so much we couldn't stop. So, we weren't able to shoot anything that day. Next day, we went back, got up on the bed and the same thing happened again. So, we weren't able to shoot anything that day either."

This same out of control laughing activity occurred when they were filming on the streets of Culver City. Shooting had to be called off for the day to give their stomach muscles a rest.

The exterior location of this comedy is in front of the Culver Hotel, named after Harry Culver, which still stands today. It can be seen in many Laurel & Hardy films along with several other Hal

Roach silent and sound comedies of that era. The traffic scenes are right across the street from the hotel on Main Street.

Several "firsts" occurred in this comedy: This film marked the debut of Laurel & Hardy's usual mode of transportation - the Model T; the first time we see one of their out of control laughing routines. Edgar Kennedy made his first of eleven appearances with Laurel & Hardy in this silent comedy. He also directed them in two other silent short films.

In 1997, a plaque dedication took place on the site of this comedy's 70th anniversary of filming. Stan Laurel's daughter, Lois Laurel Hawes was there to perform the unveiling.

The plaque reads: ON THIS SITE IN OCTOBER OF 1927, STAN LAUREL AND OLIVER HARDY FILMED SCENES FROM THEIR COMEDY CLASSIC, "LEAVE 'EM LAUGHING"

Charlie Hall - left school in 1914 to assist his father as a carpenter and began supplementing his wages by doing comedy sketches in vaudeville around music halls and clubs in the Midlands. He was eventually signed up by Fred Karno when he was 16. He met Stan Laurel when they were both members of the Fred Karno company which toured Britain. Hall left England in 1920 to go to America intending to get work as a carpenter. While at the Hal Roach Studios, Charlie Hall made appearances in 171 films including 47 with Laurel & Hardy.

Viola Richard - is best remembered as James Finlayson's wife in Laurel & Hardy's *Do Detectives Think?* and an unexpected car passenger Charley Chase's *Limousine Love*. She also appeared on Broadway in the 1934 play *Geraniums In My Window* in the role of Rosabelle. Film historian William K. Everson has suggested that her physical similarity to Clara Bow may have prevented her from achieving star status.

Otto Fries - started his career as a stage comic, entering films in the 1910s with Keystone and played in films with Bronco Billy Anderson and Stan Laurel. Later, he went to work for the Hal Roach Studios in supporting roles for Laurel & Hardy, Charley Chase and James Finlayson. When sound pictures began, Fries played in a number of German-language films as well as playing numerous bit parts in A-list films.

Dorothy Coburn - appeared in silent comedy shorts for the Hal Roach Studios usually as a flapper, society lady or nurse. With her feisty personality, she was ideally cast as a perennial foil for Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy. A genuine trooper, Dorothy cheerfully took every indignity inflicted upon her in her stride, whether it was falling into a pit of whitewash in *The Finishing Touch* (1928), being pied in *The Battle of the Century* (1927), or covered in mud in *Should Married Men Go Home?* (1928). As an accomplished rider and a fit athlete, she would occasionally work as a stunt performer in westerns. After the advent of sound, she was sometimes engaged as a stand-in for Ginger Rogers at RKO. After leaving the movie business in 1936, she found employment as a receptionist for an insurance agency.

PERFECT DAY - Filmed June 3 through 8, 1929. Released August 10, 1929.

Working Title: *Step On It*

This was the fourth Laurel & Hardy sound comedy. They had also made a guest appearance in MGM's *Hollywood Revue Of 1929*.

The filming location is in front of the house at 3120 Vera Avenue in Culver City and was built in 1925. At the time, the owner of this home was a Hal Roach Studios electrician name Bailey H. Boone who lived here with his wife and son. The elderly couple who lived in this house during the 1980's were getting regular visitors at their front door asking if Laurel & Hardy still lived there. The house next door where Baldwin Cooke played the neighbor, was really owned by John C. Kruegel, who was a gardener at the Hal Roach Studios.

The story credit for this comedy is given to Hal Roach and Leo McCarey. Roy Seawright, who was the head of the special effects department, remembers that Stan Laurel was actually the one who came up with this scenario who got the idea from some of his neighbors.

Since this is one of Laurel & Hardy's early sound films, special attention was given to prevent any unwanted background noises. To do this, a squad of Culver City's mounted police were brought in to keep spectators and onlookers away from the microphones. Additionally, filming was stopped at 3:00PM before school let out with children being loud children as they exited.

Just under 13 minutes into this film, Edgar Kennedy says a very naughty word off camera.

James Finlayson was originally intended to play the part of the uncle. However, the part went to Edgar Kennedy.

Isabel Keith - began her career in silent films with uncredited appearances in films such as *The Four Horsemen Of The Apocalypse* with Rudolph Valentino and Cecil B. DeMille's *King Of Kings*. In addition to her role and Mrs. Laurel in *Perfect Day*, she also played Mrs. Hardy in *Be Big* from 1931.

Kay Deslys - was born Kathleen M. Herbert in London in 1899. Before entering films in 1923, she performed in vaudeville. *Perfect Day* was her fourth film with Laurel & Hardy. Kay would play small parts in two more of their comedies. She also worked with Charley Chase, Max Davidson and James Finlayson during her stay at the Hal Roach Studios.

Baldwin Cooke - and his wife Alice were performing in St. Thomas, Ontario when they met a young comedian named Stan Jefferson who was imitating Charlie Chaplin in an act called The Keystone Trio. By 1916, the Cookes and Stan Jefferson had teamed up as The Stan Jefferson Trio. Although the act split up in 1918, Stan always remembered the Cookes. As a result, Baldy (as he was called) appeared in 30 comedies with Laurel & Hardy from 1928 through 1938.

Buddy the dog - was a popular performer at the Hal Roach Studios appearing many times with Charley Chase along with Laurel & Hardy in *Perfect Day* and *From Soup To Nuts*. He also starred in his own short comedy *Toddles* in 1927.

In the final scene where the car sinks into a mudhole, this was actually filmed at 3349 Helms Avenue in Culver City and not on the backlot. A mudhole was excavated with dimensions of 8 feet deep, 20 feet long and 12 feet wide and then filled with water. Next, it was fitted with pulleys so that the automobile could be lowered to the bottom without any serious concerns. Just in case of an accident, day players Isabel Keith and Kay Deslys were insured for \$110 and \$50 respectively. Since Laurel & Hardy and Edgar Kennedy were contract players, they were already insured against injury.

NIGHT OWLS - Filmed October 30 through November 12, 1929.
Released January 4, 1930.

Filming began the day after Black Tuesday, October 29, 1929 when the stock market crashed. Stan Laurel lost about \$30,000 as a result, but eventually recovered about \$6,000 of it and invested it in annuities which kept him financially solvent during his retirement years.

The idea for this film came from Stan Laurel's 1914 British vaudeville sketch titled *The Nutty Burglars*. The same idea was used by Stan once again when his troupe performing became *The Keystone Trio*. When Laurel & Hardy were traveling overseas in 1952, this story was the basis for their stage sketch *A Spot Of Trouble*.

While the English version of this film was being made, the Spanish version of this same film was shot simultaneously. A scene would be filmed in English, then re-filmed in Spanish right after.

There is very little dialogue in this film as the majority is made of of gags by would-be burglars.

This film marked the first time audiences heard what would be Laurel & Hardy's signature theme titled Ku-Ku. The tune was written by T. Marvin Hatley. At the time, Marvin and his Happy-Go-Lucky trio were performing at the Hal Roach Studios radio station KFVD. This tune was played every hour on the hour as a time signal, kind of a radio cuckoo clock. According to Stan Laurel, "We heard it one morning in a restaurant and thought it was funny-sounding music that would be good to start our pictures off with. So, somewhat as a gag, we had a copy of it made and had it recorded for our next picture. The preview

audience laughed at it, everyone thought it seemed to fit and we decided to continue using it.”

This was also Edgar Kennedy’s final short film with Laurel & Hardy.

Anders Randolph - was born in Denmark in 1870. When Anders arrived in the United States, he lived in Denver, Colorado, then moved to Chicago and entered the army. He became an officer and taught fencing. By 1912 he had moved to New York and started working for Vitagraph. In addition to *Night Owls*, Anders only other appearance with Laurel & Hardy was an uncredited role in *Wrong Again*.

James Finlayson - began his film career in 1916 and wound up at the Mack Sennett Studios in 1919. By 1922, he was a mainstay at the Hal Roach Studios appearing in 33 comedies with Laurel & Hardy plus many others with Charley Chase, Our Gang and starred in several comedies of his own. Fin had over 250 film credits to his name during his career.

REFERENCES

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Internet Movie Database