

Judge Dennis Davis and Professor David Peimer | The Marx Brothers, Part 2

- [Wendy] Let me just say, welcome everybody. I'm sorry, I was just talking to my daughter and my granddaughter. A very, very warm welcome to 2021, and I just wish everybody peace, happiness, prosperity, and blessings. So, welcome David, and welcome Dennis. Welcome all of you. It's a very special day today because one of our participants, Rose, is turning a hundred today. So on that special note, should we all sing Happy Birthday to Rose. Rose, we want to wish you a very, very, very happy birthday, Mazal Tov. So.

♪ Happy birthday to you ♪ ♪ Happy birthday to you ♪ ♪ Happy birthday dear Rose ♪ ♪ Happy birthday to you ♪ ♪ And many more ♪ Right! Okay! And so over to Dennis and David, and Mazal Tov Rose, we hope that you have a wonderful day. Know that we are thinking of you, evening, I think, now in South Africa. I hope you've had a special day. Thanks everyone.

- [Dennis] Thank you. Thank you Wendy. And may you live to a hundred and twenty. So here we are, the Marx Brothers, part two, following on from our previous presentation. And we are going to start tonight by, or this afternoon, or whenever it is, with their film in 1946 called "A Night at Casablanca." And it's very important that I explain just briefly to the extent that it's possible, the plot, reason being, you will see that there are significances here with regard to the very famous Ingrid Bergman, Humphrey Bogart "Casablanca", which came out in 1942. Now, the Marx Brothers produced "A Night in Casablanca" in '46. And most definitely, it sort of spoofs to some considerable extent the content of "Casablanca" because what the plot was about, it was set in Casablanca. It's now after World War II, after all the film was made in May '46.

And the plot to the extent that there is one concerns an escape, Nazi war criminal Heinrich Stuebel. And he has murdered three managers of the hotel Casablanca. And the reason for that is he's desperately trying to reclaim stolen art treasures, which he had secreted out of Germany and hidden in the hotel. And the newest manager of the hotel Casablanca is the former motel, a small time proprietor who's called Ronald Kornblow, and of course is Groucho Marx. And he doesn't really know very much about hoteling. He's certainly very inept, but he does realise that he's got some problems. And so his brothers then in a sense almost become spies and bodyguards to him. And the scene that we're going to show you now is Groucho as Ronald Kornblow in his managerial office with these two spystroke bodyguards being Chico and Harpo.

Video clip plays.

- [Harpo] Hey, boss, wait! Don't touch it! Don't, don't. The boss! I had to be scared. You know, three managers before you died from eating poisoned food?

- This food doesn't look any more poisoned than any other hotel food. Come here.

- Oh, no boss. Look, you got to have somebody to test the food. What do you need is a guinea pig.

- You eat a guinea pig. I'll stick to this. Gimme my steak.
- I don't mean a real guinea pig, I mean a human guinea pig.
- I don't want to eat any kind of a guinea pig. I want my meal.
- Now, there's a human Guinea pig.
- [Groucho] He looks like a pig, but he doesn't look human.
- That food doesn't seem to be poisoned.
- [Harpo] Yeah, you can't tell. It hasn't reached his stomach yet.
- That's the seal of good housekeeping. Hey, what is this, a steak race? Now see here, you guys, gimme back my lunch.
- Oh no, you'll make a mistake.
- That's a mistake and I want it. Come on.
- [Harpo] Hey. Hey Rashid. You want to give him a little something?
- No thanks. They gimme a heartburn.
- [Groucho] I just want to take a little shot. That's all.
- Hey, you cheap crook. That bottle's empty.
- That's dry champagne.
- [Harpo] Oh no, you don't. You want to get poisoned?
- [Groucho] Well, I'm not sure that I'd mind anymore. Who's he talking to?
- [Harpo] Salt Lake City.
- Couldn't spare just a little sip of that, huh? Well, if the coffee doesn't keep him awake the cup and saucer will.
- David, I mean, anarchic is not the word for that, but over to you.

- Exactly. Thanks so much. And Judy, thank you. Also, if I can just say happy birthday to Rose and just, you know, from Dennis and I, just a complete hope that this year goes well and healthy for everybody.

- Absolutely.

- And thanks for sharing with us over, you know, many of these sessions together. What's really interesting for me is that it's one of the scenes where we see the three of them together working like clockwork, the team. And you know, Groucho is sort of the boss, but as Dennis was saying, knows nothing really about running a hotel or anything. They've got a whole separate agenda and it's, they're really aiming to spoof, as Dennis was saying as well. They're really aiming to satirise the great classics, "Casablanca." And in those days, I don't think it was quite so easy to satirise fellow filmmakers, especially of the star stature of, you know, of Bergman and Bogart. So it's, we have to see that in the context.

This is only a couple of years after, you know, the great, you know, love story classic, the great war movie of all time, "Casablanca", where you have two or three gunshots and that's it. Basically, it's a love story in a war setting. So, you know, but it had become so iconic. So for them to take that and you know, literally kick it off its pedestal, that's number one. To see the three of them, and they really come to the fore. But there's never a real sense of maliciousness. And I think that's key to the Marx brothers' humour. There isn't malicious or malevolence. So there may be, there is insult, there's provocation, there's absolute, they go more for anarchy and absurdity than the classic insult and malevolence. Obviously Groucho's got his brilliant one-liners all the time, but he says it with a smile and a sort of gentleness. He doesn't say it with an anger and a viciousness.

So it's almost like he's commenting on the person he's insulting, but also, you know, his own ability to give a comment on the situation, commenting on the social situation, you know, which is the social power of it, the play of power, their role against, you know, big powers. So I think what's really interesting for me is how the three of them show, and again, there's no malice really, no real malevolence amongst them, but they're accusing each other of being guinea pigs, and poison, and, you know, mocking each other of food, and who's the boss who isn't. One could imagine far less comic comics, you know, going for the easy option, which would be some raging insult in attack, which would work, but not as well. And I think therefore they go for an anarchy.

But it's a subtle anarchy, you know, and it's an absurdity and it goes all the way. And I think that's what's so in-, that's what so lost, you know, over a hundred years, almost 80 years, whatever, you know, since they made it, is because of the way they play the anarchy and the absurdity and don't go for the obvious vicious in the obvious way. And then we have, Harpo's pretty central here. He doesn't miss a beat. When you watch his acting, it's brilliant. The way he looks at Groucho. Then he looks at Chico, he's in the centre, you know, he's the one that throw the bit of food to one of the phone, one of the cup at the end. He doesn't miss a beat with his

facial expression, everything. He, for me, pulls the scene together.

And the other two are smart enough to step back as actors and let him really drive the scene. He doesn't say a word. The other whole thing of actually having this idea that one of the trio is never going to say a word. The other one, Chico is going to appear to be the buddy and the fall guy and the half, semi half wit, but actually is often very smart. The real smart one, Groucho often appears to be in charge and running things, but everything comes to trip him up. So every character has his double, every character has their shadow almost. In other words, they're playing a double, they appear to be clever but are not actually. Groucho appears to be in charge, running it, organising, but isn't actually.

Chico appears to be a half-wit, but often he's the one with the most common sense. Harpo appears to be this bumbling clown silent idiot, but actually isn't. He's so attuned and such to all the dynamics going on that his silence, metaphorically, speaks much louder than we can imagine. So, and it's a brilliant way of playing comedy where each character is the opposite as well as what we see.

- I agree with that.

- And that's, it's a never ending sense of power in the performance of comedy that these three with totally different characters in this way that I'm mentioning of anarchy and absurdity pushed to the extremes, a simple meal. And what do they do with it? They turn it into something so ridiculous and witty.

- And I think it's interesting because the question that we got last time about the parallel to comedia de la art, and in a sense you could say that Harpo, you know, and Charlie Chaplin, who partic-, and Buster Keating, all are within that tradition, and he's a magnificent exponent of that in every single way. And the other thing when you were talking, particularly with the wisecracks, there's this great debate about how much of it was spontaneous and how much of it was actually there in the script.

And depending on which bar you read, and I will perhaps before the end, give people a couple that I found quite helpful. One doesn't really know, but there's a famous line, just because of these lines in "The Night at Casablanca", a famous line by George Kaufman, who wrote many of the scripts, and he wrote the script of "The Coconuts", and he was quoted as saying when he watched the film, he said, "I thought I just heard one of my lines." You know,

- If he was lucky.

- Yeah, he wasn't sure, yeah.

- [David] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

- Because I wanted to foreshadow something utterly remarkable that occurred. And which is why I think, in part from the genius of the scene we've just shown you, we were both very keen to do something on "The Night at Casablanca" because we've spoken already about "Casablanca" and it turned out that there was, as it were, there's always been the myth that there was going to be litigation between Warner Brothers who basically produced or did produce "Casablanca", and the Marx brothers, who of course produced "A Night at Casablanca." The true story is the following: that the Warner Brothers legal team got wind of the fact that the Marx brothers were going to be producing "A Night at Casablanca".

And indeed, that in fact Groucho Marks wasn't going to be playing a figure called Ronald Kornblow, but rather a figure called Humphrey Bogus. This then raised their attention and they wrote a letter of query to the Marx Brothers. Groucho, who was absolutely brilliant at understanding the medium of publicity, then produced what we were about to show and read you, which is perhaps the most famous, or certainly one of the most famous letters, that Groucho ever penned. And I will want to say, a letter that we still, to some extent, show our students when we teach intellectual property. Because the way Groucho pitches his letter, and David and I will read it to you now, is effectively that, "Who the hell are you, the Marx brothers, to claim any intellectual property over the term 'Casablanca'."

And so here it is. "Apparently," he says to Jack Warner, "there is more than one way of conquering a city and holding it as your own. For example, up to the time that we contemplated making this picture, I'd had no idea that the city of Casablanca belonged exclusively Warner Brothers. However, it was only a few days after our announcement appeared that we received your long ominous legal document warning us not to use the name Casablanca." Which as I've indicated was not entirely true. "It seems that in 1471, Ferdinand Balboa Warner, your great-great-grandfather, while looking for a shortcut to the city of Burbank," which is where the Warner Brothers Studios were, by the way, "had stumbled on the shores of Africa, and raising his alpenstock, , named it Casablanca. I just don't understand your attitude.

Even if you plan on releasing your picture, I'm sure that the average movie fan could learn in time to distinguish between Ingrid Bergman and Harpo." And that has to be one of the great classic lines. "I don't whether I could, but I certainly would like to try. You claim that you own Casablanca and that no one else can use that name without permission. What about Warner Brothers? Do you own that too? You probably have the right to use the name Warner, but what about the name "brothers"? Professionally, we were brothers long before you were, we were touring the sticks as the Marx brothers when Vitaphone was still a glimmer in the inventor's eye. And even before there, there had been other brothers, the Smith brothers, the brothers Karamazov, Dan Brothers, an outfielder with Detroit, and "Brother, can you spare me a dime?" This was originally "brothers can you spare a dime?"

But this was spreading a dime pretty thin. So they threw out one brother, gave all the money to the other one and whittled it down to "Brother, can you spare a dime." Now Jack, how about you? Do you maintain that yours is the original name? Well, it's not. It was used long before you

were born. Offhand, I can think of two Jacks, Jack of "Jack and the Beanstalk" and Jack the Ripper, who cracked quite a figure in his day. As for you Harry, you probably sign your check sure in the belief that you are the first Harry of all time and that all other Harrys are imposters. I can think of two Harrys that preceded you. There was Lighthouse Harry of revolutionary fame and a happy Harry Applebaum who lived on the corner of 93rd Street and Lexington Avenue. Unfortunately Applebaum wasn't too well known. The last I heard of him, he was selling neckties at Weiber and Halbroner." You carry on, David. Too funny to keep reading this. David, you want to continue?

- Okay, yeah, sure. "Now about the Burbank Studio. I believe this is what your brothers call your place. Well, old man Burbank is gone. Perhaps you remember him. He was a great man in a garden. His wife often said Luther had ten green thumbs. What a witty woman she must have been. Burbank was the wizard who crossed all those fruits and vegetables until he had the poor plants in such confused and jittery condition that they could never decide whether to enter the dining room or the meat platter or the dessert dish. This is pure conjecture of course, but who knows? Burbank survivors aren't too happy with the fact that a plant that grinds out pictures on a quota settled on their town appropriated Burbank's name and uses it as a front for their films. It's even possible that the Burbank family is prouder of the potato produced by the old man than they are the fact that your studio emerged "Casablanca", or even gold diggers of 1931!

This all seems to add up to a pretty bitter tirade. But I assure you that it's not meant to. I love Warners, some of my best friends are Warner Brothers. It is even possible that I'm doing an injustice and that you yourselves know nothing about this dog in a wanger attitude. It wouldn't surprise me at all to discover that the heads of your legal department are unaware of this absurd dispute, for I am acquainted with many of them, and they are fine fellows with curly black hair, double breasted suits, and a love of their fellow man that out-Saroyans Saroy. And I have a hunch that his attempt to prevent us from using the title is the brainchild of some ferret-faced shyster, serving a brief apprenticeship in your legal department.

I know the type well, dropped out of law school, hungry for success, and too ambitious to follow the Natural Laws of Promotion. This bar sinister, probably needled your attorneys, most of whom are fine fellows with curly black hair, double breasted suits, et cetera, into attempting to enjoin us. Well he won't get away with it, we'll fight him to the highest court. No pasty-faced legal adventurer is going to cause bad blood between the Warners and the Marxes. We're all brothers under the skin and will remain friends till the last reel of "A Night in Casablanca" goes tumbling over the spool. Sincerely, Groucho Marx."

- It's absolutely an extraordinary letter. And I think David-

- It's a letter that I think everybody would dream of writing themselves.

- [Dennis] Yeah.

- To any legal fraternity or any bureaucratic, or, you know, whatever establishment institution they're having a hassle with. Sorry, Dennis.

- Also because it takes, it takes the mickey out of pompous, I mean, it's exactly the whole background of the Marx Brothers we spoke about last week, the last time. The idea that these people came from the wrong side of the tracks. Who the hell are the Warners Brothers to tell us what it do. Real assailing of authority which thinks it's authority simply for the sake of it. Even though I have to, as I say, concede that in this particular case, I'm sure Jack Warner had absolutely no idea about this 'cause it was the legal department that put out a fairly timid query. I should tell you that any thought of litigation thereafter just went by the boards. There was no way they were going to, and the public apparently came very fiercely to the defence of the Marx Brothers. It's a remarkable letter.

- It's an amazing piece. And also what strikes me is, as you're saying, they come from the so-called wrong side of the tracks, but also they're never going to put power on a pedestal.

- [Dennis] Yeah.

- And the whole point of satire, and so much comedy, power goes up on a pedestal in Shakespeare's line dressed in a little bit of authority. And so the whole idea here of the satire is to pull the pedestal from under their legs. And you put them up and you push them down, put them up. And so much of brilliant comedy is about de-pedestalizing power, if you like. And Groucho often spoke about, you know, their disdain for people who, you know, pump themselves up as you were using the word pompous earlier, in pompous ways and pump themselves up and actually believe in their public image and the power, which is of course, you know, and ultimately everybody's human and everybody's going to, you know, similar things happening in life. So this idea of debunking, which goes way back to Aristophanes and many of the comedies all the way through all the great comic characters is precisely that, to take the pedestal away from anybody who tries to stand on it and show them as they are! Just ordinary human schmucks like everybody else.

- And I-

- [David] The other thing I want to say about this letter.

- Sorry, carry on, carry on.

- Sorry, just one other thing to add. If one reads, there's a collection of Spike Milligan's letters, which are extraordinary. And the more I read this letter, I think, although you never really, I haven't found evidence of Spike Milligan and the Marx Brothers, but Milligan is, a whole collection of his letters, and there's a whole section where he's trying to write to the council of his area in London to get a lamp moved because the lamp and the shadow and the light is going into his office, into his room. And he goes on for about 50 letters. And of course, the council

responds with the most bureaucratic jargonistic nonsense. And so he actually, he goes absurd in the anarchic, in a very similar way to the Marx brothers. There's a whole trajectory there. Instead of the rage and anger being overt, it's covert, and the anarchian absurdity is overt. Over to you Dennis.

- I'm with you. And I mean, you know, I just want to just reinforce the point you make. I wonder if there's anybody listening to this who has ever received a letter from a lawyer who wouldn't have wished to say to them, who wouldn't have wished to reply in this particular fashion. For me, my best line is, "Even if you plan a releasing your picture, I'm sure that the average movie fan could learn in time to distinguish between Ingrid Bergman and Harpo." I mean, it is truly absolutely brilliant. And so yeah, you're right. It really does take people down a peg. And I have to say, one of the reasons why we teach this or show this to students when we do intellectual property is to show it's sometimes problematic to assert your rights in circumstances where you have no justification for it. So this letter has lived long after it was compiled. And for those of you interested, it will be found in that book called Groucho Marks, The Letters of Groucho Marks, which is an absolutely fabulous collection of letters. So if we now move on.

- Can I just add one thing also?

- Oh, sorry! Of course, of course!

- What you were saying last week about the high brow and so-called low brow and art and how Groucho's playing with both, and therefore I think able to, he speaks to both audiences if they exist as separate entities. I'm not sure they do. But anyway, with the obsession of categorising this highbrow and lowbrow, et cetera, but "Brothers Karamazov". His link, "Brother, can you spare me a dime," to Bergman, Harpo, all the time, he's mocking, in anarchic way, and pushing. He's not hesitant to push it to the extreme, high brow, low brow. The very language is couched in a kind of polite, in a masquerade of politeness, and a masquerade of edified educational language, but it's a masquerade. And under every sentence,

- And I-

- [David] Mocking the next one.

- And the person who actually read the letter, somebody, curly, is well-read, I mean, obviously knows about The Brothers Karamazov, knows the fact that the Warner Brothers produced Gold Diggers in '31. You know, it's a wonderful, as you say, interpolation of both the, as it were, you know, the stuff that comes, which is learned, and the stuff which is, I mean, you know, the idea that, "Brother, can you spare me a diamond" was "Brothers, can you spare me dime?" But pretty, you know, it combines absolutely everything. It's, I mean, one could spend a whole time on this. It's, it's just .

- [David] Yeah.

- Alright, so now I want, we want to move on. We had spoken a little bit about "Duck Soup" in our last lecture, because many people regard that as the finest of the Marx Brothers' films. If you remember, just to recap for one second, the "Duck Soup" essentially comes out in 1933, and by then, of course, Mussolini is in power. Hitler's just got to power, and the sniff of dictatorship is in the air. And here we have this extraordinary form, which is all about the state of Fredonia. And the state of Fredonia had a leader who wants to cut taxes, but he's dependent on the richest person in Fredonia to give him the money. She's played by Mrs. Dumont, who's always there, Margaret Dumont, who's always there. She refuses to do so, but because she says he has to be replaced by a new brave, fearless leader. And that is Rufus T. Firefly, who's played by Groucho Marx. And the scene is very early on in the film where Groucho, they're all waiting to greet the new great leader of Fredonia, Rufus T. Firefly. And here's the clip.

Video clip plays.

- You expecting somebody?

- Yes.

- Oh, your excellency, We've been expecting you. As chairwoman of the reception committee, I extend the good wishes of every man, woman, and child of Fredonia.

- Never mind that. Stop. Take a card card.

- Care? What do I do with the card?

- You can keep it. I've got 51 left. Now, what were you saying? As chairwoman of the reception committee, I welcome you with open arms.

- Is that so? How late do you stay open?

- I've sponsored your appointment because I feel you are the most able statesman in all Fredonia.

- Well, that covers a lot of ground. Say you cover a lot of ground yourself, you better beat it. I hear they're going to tear you down and put up an office building where you're standing. You can leave in a taxi. If you can't get a taxi, you can leave in a huff. If that's too soon, you can leave in a minute and a huff. You know, you haven't stopped talking since I came here? You must have been vaccinated with a phonograph needle,

- The future of Fredonia rests on you. Promise me you'll follow in the footsteps of my husband.

- How do you like that? I haven't been on the job five minutes and already she's making

advances to me. Not that I care, but where is your husband?

- Why he's dead.

- I'll bet he's just using that as an excuse.

- I was with him 'til the very end.

- Hmm. No wonder he passed away.

- I held him in my arms and kissed him.

- Oh, I see. Then it was murder. Will you marry me? Did he leave you any money? Answer the second question first.

- He left me his entire fortune.

- Is that so? Can't you see what I'm trying to tell you? I love you.

- Oh, Your Excellency.

- You're not so bad yourself.

- I think.

- Yeah. I think, yeah, what. Sorry, Dennis, you go for it.

- No, yeah, please. Over to you.

- But I just think that some of the things that it's, so, I think this scene has often been underrated just for how innovative it really was. Because as you were saying, Dennis, this is, you know, the early thirties, Hitler is in power. Mussolini's been in, you know, he is been hanging around the old Ducha and all that gig for quite a long time. And the others, of course, there's, you know, in Spain it's happening, Franco, and elsewhere, and it's dangerously emerging. What could come? And these guys, before the others, before any of the other comedians or satirists, these guys, I think had a, such a strong sense, an instinct of what's coming. So what does he do? He sets himself up, coming down a fire, you know, these things in the, you know, fire engine, jumping out of bed. There's this, there's a symbol at the back, which is evocative now that we have the, you know, I don't want to overdo it and over-project, but obviously not only swastika, but you know, any symbol of a new leader, which is being mocked at the back.

Then he comes down and this image of the guy coming down the stairs, which Mel Brooks picks up in "The Producers". And whether it's conscious, or even unconscious, doesn't really matter,

but the first image we see in "Springtime for Hitler" when they're showing the play on the stage is Hitler coming down, and then we see, you know, and he's turned into a whole kitsch camp, kitsch camp version of Nazi fascism. But it's using the same theatrical image on stage. And then he comes down, he's this ordinary guy, looks like a waiter or something, Groucho, and I know he didn't see it in the clip, but he pulls the tassels of the soldier next to him. The soldier next to him, nobody recognises who this guy is, nobody knows, nobody recognises, nobody cares. He pulls and says, "What's going on?" He said, he doesn't even know what's going on with all these around. And then down comes Margaret Dumont, you know in this wonderfully exaggerated comic acting of hers. And I think she's corpsing sometimes here, when she's laughing at Groucho, and every one of his lines is a comedy line! It's extraordinary.

He doesn't stop. And he's looking at us, he's looking at her, he's looking at the others. It's the ability of the comedian to comment on the situation, to engage immediately in the situation, to almost step back, comment with us as narrator on himself in the situation. I mean he's playing at three or four different levels, just with the witty lines and with his classic walk. So I think it's an amazing scene and very underestimated of the influence and innovative quality of so much of the satires to come, you know, always the leader going up the stairs, coming down the stairs, ascending, descending, all the rest of it, you know? Anyhow, we have this kind of nerdy waiter-looking guy. Over to you.

- What's interesting about it, David, is that when you listen to the text of what they're singing, it just reflects that. I mean, it just, "Hail, hail, Fredonia, land of the brave and free," you know, they're not talking about America, and they're talking about parroting the kind of dictatorships where this entire sort of artefact of the leader coming through a fashionable sort of very stylized set piece, a ceremony takes place. And the fact that he's mocking it in that way, and the fact that they perceived it in that way, and they see Fredonia in that way is utter and completely remarkable to me. What is interesting about "Duck Soup" is that when it came out in 1933, it was not regarded as one of their best.

Now if you read the analyses and critiques of the Marx Brothers, most critics would regard as the finest of all of the Marx Brothers film. And indeed, in many ways it is! It doesn't necessarily have a great plot, but that's not relevant. It does exactly what you're suggesting. It foreshadows in a comic way the kind of absurdities of the dictatorships that were to, were arising already at the time that they wrote it in '33, and the fact that they did it in 33, so remarkable. It's very prescient in that, in that sense. I mean, there's some

- [David] Absolutely. very, good lines. I mean, there's the line where, at some particular point in the, in the film, I should have found the clip, but I couldn't, there's a line where they decide, they go to war, Fredonia, and then there's some discussion about peace. And Groucho as Rufus T. Firefly is told, "No, no, no, we can get a peace plan." And he says, "It's too late. I've already paid a month's rent on the battlefield."

- You know, it's the absurdity that they reflect in that extraordinary way. And I'm interested, as

well, if I can make one final comment about it before we move on. I'm interested and I think your parallel to "The Producers" is fabulous because indeed it's exactly in that same style that Mel Brooks conceived, whether he was sufficiently inspired by the Marx Brothers I have no idea, but it is interesting. And on New Year's Eve, Claudette and I decided the only way we were going to get through this miserable year was to watch some comedy at home, since in South Africa, and those of you other parts of the world may not know we are locked down from nine o'clock at night, and there's no way you could have a New Year's Eve party of any kind. And so we decided that the best way to do this was to, is show ourselves some comedy. And we found our collection of the Pink Panther series. By the way, I think that Peter Sellers himself deserves a whole lecture. He, you know, he's such a genius and interesting and of course if you take an orthodoxy, he was a Jew because his mother was Jewish, but be that as it may.

But in "The Pink Panther", the first of the films, both David Nevin and Robert Wagner, both in the film dress up as gorillas and they meet at a safe where they're trying to steal the jewel. And the scene of the two gorillas actually on other sides of the wall, parallels to extraordinary degrees. the famous scene that we showed last time in "Duck Soup", and again, one wonders, you know, people like that would've seen that, and they probably would've been inspired by that kind of humour, which is why the Marx Brothers was such I think as we said right throughout the series, so cutting edge and so remarkably inspirational for comedians who came thereafter. And so it's not surprising to me that so many comedians actually pay tribute to the Marx Brothers precisely because of that. But, but there we are.

- [David] Yeah. And also, if I could just add in one story, and I don't know if this is true or not, but Groucho wrote about it, but whether he's been tongue and cheek, I don't know. But he said that when, when Rudolph Hess flew into Germany, flew into Britain, and Churchill heard about it.

- [Dennis] Oh yeah.

- And the story was, which may be urban myth or not, but he claimed, but Groucho claimed that he heard it from Churchill's daughter. And that the daughter, and anyway, people came to church and he said, "Listen, Rudolph Hess has arrived in England, God knows what's going on, et cetera, et cetera, he's flown here, what's happening?" And Churchill looked around and says, "Listen, I'm watching 'Duck Soup'. Hess can wait! I'll come after I finish watching the movie."

- Yeah, he apparently said, I think it was something like, "Hold him until 'Duck Soup' is over, then we'll deal with him.

- [David] Yeah.

- I don't know if it's true, but you're right, it's such a delightful story.

- And one can imagine Churchill enjoying it and loving it and wait and telling his, "Listen, listen buddy, you know, you can wait with your Nazi and your ."

- And given the content of "Duck Soup" and given the context, absolutely. Absolutely.

- [David] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

- And I think that's a great segue to our next clip, which, or next, which is a whole range of these extraordinary quotes, particularly from Groucho. Well, they're all from Groucho, which are just, just wonderful and we wanted to share some of them with you. Okay, David, I'll do some of them.

- [David] Sure. So we'll just share as we go through.

- [Dennis] Yeah, sure.

- [David] Some of the great lines of Groucho's, which will come up.

- [Dennis] putting words together in language, that's what I love. "Out of a dog, it's too dark too read!"

- When you're in jail, a good friend will be trying to bail you out. A best friend will be in the cell next to you saying, "Damn, that was fun." From the moment I picked up your book until I put it down, I was convulsed with laughter. Someday I intend reading it. It's always a punchline, comes after the setup. Learn from the mistakes of others. You can never live long enough to make them all yourself. That's a great motto.

- And this one too, I never forget a face, but-

- [David] I never forget a face!

- I'll be glad to make an exception here!

- But in your case, I'll be glad to make an exception. He sets it up, and then he deposes. Humour is reason gone mad. Beautiful.

- Reason gone mad, yeah. That's wonderful.

- That's Shakespearean, in "brevity is the soul of wit, humour is reason gone mad."

- [Dennis] The Secret of life is.

- The secret of life is honesty and fair dealing. Over to you, Dennis.

- Oh, "politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing incorrectly, and

applying the wrong remedies." How true that is! I've had a perfectly wonderful evening, but this wasn't it. I mean, how many times have we thought about that ourselves? These are my principles. And if you don't like them, well, I have others. Interesting. How many people have used that afterwards? Harold Wilson was a particularly good exponent of that. One I shot an elephant in my pyjamas. How he got in my pyjamas I'll never know. `I mean, how do you like that for absurdity? If you're not having fun, you're doing something wrong. Maybe we should have that for our motto for the year.

- Yeah.

- I'm not crazy about reality, but it's still the only place to get a decent meal. Do you want to take the last couple, David, it's a pleasure.

- Blessed are the cracked, for they shall let in the light. It speaks for itself.

- I think that's it. Is it?

- Yeah. Thanks Judy. We wanted to play you a clip from an extraordinary EV event in which Groucho

- Which really comes from vaudeville with the language, oh yes, it comes from vaudeville, this idea of which, which feeds into the next clip actually, that we're going to show where the comedian and the actor takes from what the other one is given and uses the language, but just turns it, there's a pivot almost. And you know, like, "I woke up and," what is it, "I shot the, I was in my pyjamas when I shot an elephant. I got into", you know, so in other words, using the language against itself almost. And it's a classic technique of ancient comedy going all the way back and also vaudeville. Where, and you get it with Morecambe and Wise, you get it with many of the other British and international where the phrase comes out and then how the phrase, the wood, the pun.

- [Wendy] Sorry David, am I playing the clip because I lost you for a second.

- [Dennis] Yes, so did I.

- [David] Oh, okay. I dunno where we cut, but over to Dennis to introduce the next clip.

- Okay. This is a great interview with Groucho. It's self-explanatory. We'll explain it afterwards. So let's just get to it and we'll expand it afterwards.

Video clip plays.

- Jason, to add that Mrs. Marciano is the mother of the former heavyweight champion of the world, Rocky Marciano. So here they are.

- Welcome, welcome.
- [Groucho And Mrs. Marciano] Bonjour.
- Bonjour. Mrs. Marciano, you're a fine looking girl.
- [Mrs. Marciano] Thank you.
- Is Rocky with you tonight?
- No.
- [Groucho] Where does he spend most of his time now that he's quit fighting?
- In Florida.
- In Florida, huh?
- [Mrs. Marciano] Yes.
- Did you ever hear anybody say he fought a lot of stumble bums on his way to the top.
- Grouch, now, you make a big mistake! My son, he fought all the good fights.
- [Groucho] Those rumours were untrue, in other words.
- A professional man, good man.
- [Groucho] He didn't fight a lot of.
- [Mrs. Marciano] cat fights.
- He didn't fight a lot of stumble bums, huh? On the way up, I mean. He waited until he was champion and then he fought a lot of pushovers. And you sure he is not hanging around here any place?
- [Mrs. Marciano] No, not what I know.
- [Groucho] I can't take any chances at my age, you know. Now your name is Dr. James Whittcomb Riley, is that right?
- No, it's Dr. James Whittcomb Brouger.

- [Groucho] Brougher?
- Yes, it rhymes with B-R-O-W-E-R.
- Why do you have that G-H in there? To make it difficult for Quizmasters?
- Yes.
- Is that what you intended to do here tonight?
- Yes.
- Now how many times did you fight Marciano?
- I'm sorry to say I never even met him.
- What do you, where do you come from?
- I'm old Verne, Jennings County, Indiana. I'm a Hoosier.
- You're a Hoosier?
- Yes.
- [Groucho] Did you go to college in Indiana?
- No, I went to college in California. My parents moved there when I was 12 years of age and I lived there 'til I was 21 and graduated from college and married my first wife, the daughter of the president.
- The president of the college?
- [James] Yes.
- Oh, that's a good way of getting good marks, isn't it? [Groucho] When did you graduate?
- In 1891. You graduated in 1891?
- Yes sir.
- Oh boy. How old were you when you graduated, three?

- [James] Make a guess.
- Well, let's see now, 1891. That was 70 years ago. 70 years, how old are you now?
- Well, guess at that!
- [Groucho] I'd say 72.
- Thank you, thank you.
- Nobody ever graduated at the age he did from Congress. How old, 53? Am I close?
- No, I went to the seminary after that at Rochester, New York, before I began my ordained ministerial life.
- Oh, oh, you're a minister, huh?
- [James] Yes.
- I thought you were a doctor.
- [James] Yes, I am.
- Well, how old are you, doc? I mean, Reverend.
- [James] Well- Or rabbi or whatever it is, I- Padre.
- It's quite evident, Groucho, that you are not acquainted with preachers.
- Well, it depends on the denomination, then. How old are you, did you say you were, doc?
- [James] I was 90 on January the seventh. Congratulations. I want to shake hands with a man who's even older than I am. How about the ladies, doc? Are you a gay bachelor, or are you in the trap?
- Well, I'm in the trap.
- [Groucho] How old is Mrs. Brougher?
- Well, Mrs. Brougher is 69. She's 21 years younger than I.
- You're a cradle snatcher, aren't you? You married a kid 20 years younger than you are.

- Yes. I'd rather smell perfume than liniment.
- I would too, unless I had arthritis. You sound like you're a pretty active fellow, doc. Does your wife keep up at this fast pace that you set?
- Yes, she goes visiting, apple pie, men's clubs, I-
- [Groucho] She goes to the men's clubs with you?
- Men's clubs, yes, I'm so homely, she'd rather go along than kiss me goodbye.
- Doc, I want to ask you a question. Have you ever had a transfusion from Milton Burle? What kind of a minister are you, a Methodist?
- I've been preaching the Gospel of Christ for 70 years and I'm a Baptist preacher and the past president of the American Baptist Convention.
- [Groucho] Oh!
- The largest honour that any Baptist preachers can get in this country.
- Oh, that's wonderful. What made you decide to become a Baptist minister when you could have been an old renegade like me?
- I was going to tell you, my father knew-
- I'm no good, you know, no good at all.
- My father and mother were very religious and they wanted me to be a preacher. Friends wanted me to be a comedian. And perhaps if I had, I'd have preceded you.
- Nobody has preceded me. Look, if you'd like, I'll switch spots with you.
- And nobody would succeed you.
- Well, I'm not sure of that.
- But anyhow, I decided-
- With the salary they pay you ministers, you better have a good sense of humour.
- No, I, that's the truth.

- [Groucho] And a rich wife, huh?

- I went to cash a check-

- Did you marry for money, doctor?

- I went to cash a check the other day

- [Groucho] And it bounced?

- And the banker gave me out some old money and he said, "Are you afraid of germs?" I said, "No, no germ could live on the salary I did."

- You know, I never knew that they cracked jokes like that in the Baptist church. No, I thought it was all hellfire and brimstone. Really I did! I thought they were very serious in the Baptist church.

- If it depends, if they need that, why we give it to them.

- Yeah. Well I imagine you're a very interesting minister to listen to. And are you still preaching?

- Yes, preaching twice-

- I'd like to come to hear you sometime.

- Preaching twice every Sunday and delivered 147 addresses between Sundays last year.

- Oh, well could you deliver one to my address? Where do you do that? You're not preaching here in LA at all.

- Not right here. The old Temple Philharmonic Auditorium was my former church. I was there 16 years and that's why I got swell acquainted with all the movie people. I married Doug Fairbanks and Mary Pickford 40 years ago.

- [Groucho] Oh.

- And I'm sorry to say, but I buried Rogers when he was killed. He and I used to have humorous debates for the civil charity.

- He was an old friend of mine, too

- [James] He was a great-

- I taught him how to play the guitar, you know! Yes, I did, really.
- [James] And, uh-
- Did you utilise your sense of humour in your preaching?
- Yes, yes I do.
- In what way?
- Well, any...
- Do you start off with like saying a funny thing happened to me on my way to the church?
- No, I would to that to Frenson's, I went up to San Francisco to a banquet and I was getting dressed in my room when a knock came on the door and I said, "Come in." And a man walked in all dressed his tuxedo and he said, "I want to introduce you, doctor, and I want to know something about you and I also will take you to the bounty room." Well I said "fine and dandy," I said, "I'm just tying my bow tie." I said, "Can you tie one of these bow ties that he'll stand straight?" He said, "You bet I can." He came over and put his arm around me, laid me down on the bed and tied it. I got up. I said, "Well that's fine and dandy, but why'd you make me lie down?" Well he said, "That's the only way I can do it. I'm an undertaker."
- Well that's saved me a holier than thou attitude. You got any more jokes up your sleeve, rev?
- Yes, gracious now. You know-
- You don't care if I call you rev instead of reverend.
- Groucho, you know, people enjoy jokes toward on yourself.
- Yeah, that's right.
- They're getting so sensitive, I can't tell a joke on the Jews. I can't tell a joke on the coloured people. I can't hardly tell a joke on an Irishman.
- This is true. You know, if you tell jokes about Italians, a Frenchmen, every group now, it goes even further than that. If you tell a joke about a dentist or a plumber or a carpenter or anybody at all, everybody is-
- So I tell them on myself.
- Yeah, that's good! You said, "Well I can't tell a joke about an Irish when I'm myself."

- Anyhow, I was, one night after I'd heard-

- Funny thing happened to me on my way to the synagogue this morning.

- About midnight from New Brown. And I jumped in the car and started when I saw a friend of mine on the sidewalk that had made the mistake of taking something into his stomach that made him see double and think hay. And I said to him, "Brown, we better take you home." So I drove up at the sidewalk, got out and took him to the arm and he said, "Well, hello doctor, what are you doing here?" I said, "To take you home, come on." Got him in the car, away we went, got out in front of his house and I got him out and got him up the steps and rang the bell. And I said, "Now, Bill, I've got you home, I'll go." But he grabbed me and he said, "No, no, no. Don't you go yet. You wait 'til my wife comes to the door. I want her to see who I've been out with tonight."

- The Baptist church is going to get a lot of converts here tonight. Going to be a lot of water spilled around there. Like we ought to go into business together. You give the jokes and sermons and I'll take up the collection. And we split 50-50. I'll keep the cash and give you the buttons.

- Let me tell you one more though.

- I wish you would.

- An old man who had heart trouble was home and he bought a Irish sweepstakes ticket and he won \$50,000, but his wife and daughter were afraid to tell him, afraid he'd dropped dead. So they caught up the Episcopal clergyman to come, an old man, flam to come and tell him. So he came, and they talked a few moments pleasantly and finally he said, "John, didn't you buy a ticket for the sweepstakes?" He said, "Yes I did." He said, "Now supposedly you should win \$50,000. What would you do with it?" And the old man said, "I'd tell you if I win \$50,000, I'll give half of it to you." And the preacher dropped dead. Groucho-

- You know, he looks a little like Will Ryan!

- You know Dr. Brougher, I've heard of you before and I know you're one of America's best known ministers and it's a real honour having you up here. And I'd appreciate it if you could put in a good word for me now and then, you know, with the right crowd. Lena, let's get back, I got to talk to Lena here! You know, we've been ignoring her. You want a chair?

- What?

- You tired?

- No!
- [Groucho] You look great. You look like a fellow 50 years old. I never saw it.
- Thank you, so what do you want me to do?
- [Groucho] I mean, a young-looking 50 year old!
- Take you out for lunch and pay for it?
- Don't just pay it, I'll-
- Listen, now you wrote a book.
- You bet I did. Wait a minute! You get \$50 for saying the secret word.
- We want to give you good money, here, take it.
- [Lena] You won!
- What was the name? Did you read the book?
- I went to buy it and they were all sold out.
- They were, well that's suggests a good book.
- And I'll tell you what I'll do. I published a book called "Life and Laughter".
- [Groucho] Yeah.
- Nine of my popular lectures. And every series paragraph in the book has illustrated a funny story. I'll give you a book autographed if you would give me one of yours autographed.
- I'll do it if you'll mention the name of my book.
- Well how do I, "Me and Groucho"?
- No, it's "Groucho and Me".
- Oh, yes.
- Lena, let's get back to you now. By the way, how much do you weigh when you weigh?

- Well, I usually weigh 190.
- Mhm. Is that why they call you Lena?
- Yes.
- Well, tell us about Rocky in the early days. What was he like as a baby? Was he a big child?
- Well he was a big child, yes, he was probably-
- What did he weigh at the ringside?
- 11 pounds.
- 11 pounds ringside then.
- Yes.
- [Groucho] That's a big baby, huh?
- Big baby.
- When he was born he probably slapped the doctor, didn't he? Well, was he a good boy? Did he behave? Was he mind you, when he was a baby?
- He was good, but it was time when he
- [Groucho] Threw his way out.
- Didn't mind me. There was time when he didn't mind me and I spank him.
- [Groucho] Yeah, you slug him?
- Sure. Spanked Rocky Marciano, the champion of the world, huh? I'm sure you're very proud of Rocky, Lena.
- Yes, very proud.
- I've been teasing you about him, but I'm aware of the fact that he has records.
- I love records, I know.
- Not only as a fighter, but as a nice guy too.

- [Lena] Yes.

- Now, were all his fights fixed?

- No, not a one fixed.

- [Groucho] No?

- He's just a good fight.

- Well, it's a tough fight, mom. But you won and when you see that broken down sonny, give him my regards, huh?

- I will.

- And tell him he's lucky his path has never crossed mine! Let's play "You bet your life." Mr. Fanaman, would you bring out the question box please?

- [James] Uh, Groucho, hi.

- [Lena] Oh my God!

- Is that your son?

- I didn't know he was coming!

- [James] How are you doing.

- You wouldn't hit a man with a cloth, would you, huh?

- [Groucho] What are you doing here? I thought you were in Florida or out of town.

- I came up to pick up my mom.

- You haven't, you haven't heard this conversation with your mother, have you?

- I just heard one thing, something about a stumble bum.

- You know, I'm always kidding around like this. To meet you with the immortal, the great fighter of our time. I always said when you were in your prime, you could elect any lightweight in America.

- [Mr. Fanaman] Groucho, I think we better get on with the quiz.

- [Groucho] Yeah, we better get on with it.

- [Mr. Fanaman] We're going to run out of time here.

- [James] Groucho, go on and get me a baseball bat, will ya?

- [Groucho] How long, pardon me, how long you going to be in town, Rocky?

- [David] Should we hold it here?

- [Groucho] Come back here next week, and.

- [David] Should we hold it here?

- [Dennis] Yeah.

- So just to background, David, 'cause I just wanted, I mean, Groucho Marks ran, this is part of a television series he did from 1947 through to '61, which on my calculations meant he was about 71 when he finished in '61. It must have been roundabout then that he was doing this 'cause Marciano I suspect was the world champion in the late fifties, early sixties. And the programme was called "You Bet Your Life". And there were 13 series of it. And we've just shown one, which I mean for me, David, if I can just end on my comment since I see we're at the time, the generosity of actually interviewing somebody, you know, I do a lot of TV interviewing over many years, I still do. And I have to tell you, the generosity of actually putting yourself on the side and allowing the priest, as it were to shine, that's the serious gift. And it says quite something about the person, which I just thought was quite remarkable. But over to you.

- No, I think exactly that, Dennis, the reason I love this clip, I mean, Groucho, he's still got his jokes and his quips and his humour, but in his body language and in his jokes, he's absolutely allowing the priest, you know, this elderly guy in his late eighties who's gone through so much in life, et cetera, he's allowing him his moment you know, on the stage, under the star, under the spotlight. And he's able to step aside, even though he is the great Groucho. And then with Mrs. Marciano and with Rocky Marciano, all he does is he plays the small guy trying to get away in case he's made a bad comment and he's going to be the next guy to be beaten up by Rocky's.

But, you know, to combine the priest himself, Mrs. Marciano, and then one of the greatest heavyweight champions in the history of boxing, extraordinary, Rocky. And the story of Rocky Marciano itself is so incredible, with his mama talking about spanking him as a little kid and all that. And again, Rocky and the mama are able to become centre and Groucho's able to detach himself and let them, their stories reveal themselves. You know, and he just adds in quips and is guiding the show, but he's not coming. It's, as you say, the word is generosity and the word is for

me, gentle.

- And I'll tell you something, when you do interview, simply in sort of these things, with live audiences and there's a sort of pressure on you to sort of, you know, do your job. And often what that means is you feel you have to be the centre of attraction. And actually that's not the job of an interviewer. And this is absolutely brilliant because here it's more difficult, you know, it's one thing when you're interviewing a famous politician or something where in fact the audience do expect you to grill them. Here, he's the funny guy and he's giving space to somebody else, who's a priest, to be the funny guy. That's a remarkable phenomenon. And that's why I thought would be a very appropriate way to conclude our series of this. Cause it shows, I think, more luminously than almost anything else we could do just the character of the man and perhaps the reason why he's such an extraordinary comedian in his own right.

- And I think one thing, if I can add at the end, is that, as you're saying, this shows Groucho more as himself. You know, obviously there's the persona and the performance. But we're coming to Groucho the man, after the Marx Brothers movies and all the global celebrity, and I mean the level of stardom is absolutely huge. But able to tap in to a priest who comes from somewhere, to Mrs. Marciano, to Rocky, to the great celebrities, a great sportsman, you know, to a priest, whoever, that he's able to quickly adjust and adapt, put himself off, you know, backstage and let the others be in the foreground. And he does the same with Chico and Harpo. And they do the same for him. And the each of the three, when you watch how, it's so choreographed their movies, they are so aware of, they're not competitive, you know, in the ridiculous egotistical way, There's competition, but not nearly so much. And I think it's one of the reasons why the three brothers lasted together so long and they had such respect and healthy competition, if you like. And I think this spirit, this energy, speaks through all their work and it does make for such a generosity and such a humanity, ultimately.

- Absolutely. And I just think, you know, if I can make one other comment, 'cause I see we've gone over time, just I was reminded of a question that was put to us, certainly on the track line in the last time. And I went to listen. Unfortunately we could gone for hours David now on this, because one of the things that we exchanged thanks to David was the interview that Groucho had with William Buckley, which is absolutely fascinating, which I think is on YouTube, and I think well worth for people if they got time to listen to. It's about 45 minutes, but it's fabulous for all sorts of reasons. But one of the questions that was put to Groucho or Groucho put to us, which Groucho effectively responded on this interview when he was asked about his Judaism, he said, I'm Jewish, but I'm a comedian. I'm not a Jewish comedian.

And then he went on to say, when he was talking about the fact that he didn't like the idea of white people acting like Black minstrels or people taking jokes about Irishmen and other groups, marginal groups, he said about Jews, he said, "I'll tell you a joke afterwards about Jews, but I'm not prepared to do it on stage," because, and then he made a really interesting point, he said, must have been round about 1967 because he said, "Just a couple of weeks ago, Gamel Abdel Nassar had threatened to exterminate the entire Israel, and annihilate people. He said, "You

don't talk jokes about people who are about to be annihilated." It said quite a lot, it seemed to me, about his reflective personality in this regard. So I just wanted to share that with you. And then one final point from my side, I've been particularly influenced by two books, there are many, but the books that I've looked at is Robert Bader, B-A-D-E-R, "Four of the Three Musketeers", it's called. And then there's a book by Joe Adamson, A-D-A-M-S-O-N, "Groucho, Harpo, Chico, and sometimes Zeppo", both of which are fabulous. If you're interested in knowing more about them. Over to you David, by way of conclusion.

- No, thank you. And I guess the last thing would be, I know we haven't gone into it and, you know, and we had intended to, was the interaction between Groucho and T. S. Elliot.

- Why don't you just make a comment about that before we end, it's worth it.

- And just to say that, that actually T. S. Elliot, who had written, you know, we've looked at some of his poetry, which is clearly antisemitic, you know, Burbank and Bleister and blasting with the cigars. And you know, there's a couple of those poems which are very clear. And T. S. Elliot was in a certain, I suppose in an almost classical, snobby upper class almost semi or pseudo-aristocratic way, antisemitic. And yet was obsessed with seeing Groucho and obsessed with meeting him and sent letters to Groucho. And Groucho replied very aware of his anti-Semitism. And he kept asking, "Please come to London. Please come to London and visit me. Come and have dinner, come, you know, meet me and my wife, et cetera." T. S. Elliot pushed the connection with a Jewish comedian, Groucho, meanwhile practising his anti-Semitism, you know, in his poetry, not only in his life, Elliot. And then eventually after quite a few years of the correspondence going between the two and Groucho arrived in London and he got off the ship.

And so people said, "What're you here? What are you going to do? You're going to performance, whatever?" He said, "No, I've come to have dinner with T. S. Elliot." So, and then and Elliot writes about that suddenly Elliot's own popularity became much bigger, 'cause of course he was a poet. And obviously very elitist at the time, only read by a few small, you know, certain people. Whereas Groucho is this absolutely global phenomenon and the Marx brothers. And he goes for the dinner, and I'm not going to go into the food and the menu, but he writes the letter to his brother, Groucho, and that's where he gets the most, I suppose, honest and revealing expression of what happened at the dinner. And Groucho wants to talk about Shakespeare and King Lear and other things because he feels intimidated, you know, because he never went to university, he never studied all that sort of usual jargon, propaganda, you know, that you have to be so educated and da da da to be able to talk about Shakespeare. Who cares?

But Groucho shows such an insightful understanding of King Lear and the plays and others and, you know, Dostoevsky and others that he wants to discuss, and T. S. Elliot wants to talk about his movies and there's a discord and Groucho tries to frame it in humour. And then about the antisemitism. And Elliot comes out with some of the most cliched phrases with Groucho. You know, it's almost at the level of "Some of my best friends are Jews." It's not quite there, but I

don't want to go into the detail now, bit short of time, but, and Groucho's, he shows that he rises way above Elliot as a human being, as a generosity, an understanding of how comedy, you know, what we've tried to show in these two letters of the comedy and why he doesn't go for certain stereotypes, whether they be of ethnic or religious or nationalistic origin. He goes for social types, you know, the lawyer, the wife, the husband, all of those things, the marriage. And their jokes, not even to be told Jewish jokes. So Groucho's thought through his persona as a performer, as a writer, and as a Jewish comedian who refuses to make jokes about Jews.

Whereas Elliot is still caught in the trap of writing poetry that can slip in, in some of this brilliant poetry, antisemitic, crude, bland, antisemitic poetry not only shows the antisemitism, but the crudeness of it. And he, when you read what's the dinner between them, Elliot shrinks in our estimation. He becomes, you know, almost like Prufrock You know, "I grow old, I wear the bottom of my trousers rolled," et cetera. He becomes almost this, this like little creeping fellow. Sort of bony tears Elliot wandering around the streets of London at those times. Whereas Groucho, who's the small guy, almost rises in our estimation, 'cause he rises above it and he wants humanity, brotherhood, all the stuff that he mocks Warner about because Groucho can see, take people off the pedestal immediately, but in a generous, human, anarchic way. Not in a malicious, angry way.

- It's a very funny thing, just a final , where Groucho in his memoirs talks about the fact that he prepared for that dinner by carefully reading King Lear and he said, T. S. Elliot wasn't interested in King Lear he was interested in talking about animal crackers, you know. There's this factory.

- [David] Exactly.

- And then ended up by speaking to my wife for the whole of the evening and what could I do? I had to speak to his wife and you wanted to speak to her. It's a very funny passage. Anyway.

- Exactly.

- Everbody, David, as always a pleasure doing with you.

- With you as well, Dennis.

- [Dennis] To Judy, for .

- Okay, I love it. And thank you so much.

- For being brilliant at shepherding us through this with all the clips and for all the hard work, Judy, again, shkoyach, thank you so much. And to everybody, may we have a wonderful year.

- [David] Yeah.

- May this be the start of at least a humorous year if we can possibly do that.
- [David] Thank you so much Judy!
- Yes, absolutely. I want to echo that and just say what a wonderful way to usher in the new year. So thank you guys.
- [Dennis] Pleasure.
- [David] Thank you.
- [Wendy] Happy birthday to Rose. Thank you Judy.
- [David] See you soon!
- And thank you everybody for joining us. Yeah, see you soon. Bye-bye, take care.
- Okay, Judy, thanks so much, Wendy. Dennis, thank you.
- [Dennis] Bye, take care.
- Fantastic work with you. Okay, chop.
- Bye-bye!