

# It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Sherlock, The Comedic World of Holmes

by

Howard Ostrom

Part I

*"Of all the problems which have been submitted to my friend Mr. Sherlock Holmes for solution during the years of our intimacy, there were only two which I was the means of introducing to his notice, that of Mr. Hatherley's thumb and that of Howard Ostrom's **madness**." ENGI*

*"I don't think you need alarm yourself," said I. "I have usually found that there was method in his **madness**."*

*"Some folk might say there was **madness** in his method," muttered the inspector. "But he's all on fire to start, Colonel, so we had best go out, if you are ready." REIG*

Sherlock Holmes through out history has been one of the most lampooned, satirized, parodied, caricatured , and burlesqued characters of literature. A 'caricature' grossly exaggerates a distinctive or striking feature with intent to ridicule: 'He drew a caricature of Sherlock Holmes'. 'Burlesque', which usually denotes a dramatic work, suggests outlandish mimicry and broad comedy to provoke laughter: 'a burlesque about Sherlock Holmes is playing at the theater'. 'Parody', 'travesty', and 'satire' generally apply to written works. 'Parody' employs the manner and style of a well-known work or writer for a ludicrous effect: 'wrote a parody of the Sherlock Holmes novel'. A 'travesty' is a harshly distorted imitation: 'a travesty of Arthur Conan Doyle's writings'. 'Satire' usually involves ridiculing follies and vices: 'His Holmes based short stories employ satire in their writings'. A 'lampoon' is a malicious but broadly humorous satire: 'a lampoon authored by a standup comic'. This essay will mainly concentrate on many of the comedians who have lampooned Sherlock Holmes since shortly after he first graced the pages of "Beeton's Christmas Annual" in 1887. It will also include parody, burlesque, satire, and caricature mentions of him also. So let us have some fun taking a look at some of the funny men who have made the master detective fun. As an added feature we will throw in a few plots from some really funny silent movies, that I also feel you will enjoy reading. I seriously doubt I can

achieve completeness, the border is rather blurred. It MAY be a case that my MAIN essay ends up a selection of the best, maddest illustrative of the variety of comic approaches.

**Charles Hallam Elton Brookfield (1857 – 1913)** played Sherlock Holmes, with **Seymour Hicks (1871 - 1949)** as Dr. Watson, on the London stage in the musical satire “Under the Clock” (1893), which makes them the first ever Sherlock Holmes in any medium to play Holmes and Watson.



**Charles H.E. Brookfield**

“November 1893, the month before Sherlock Holmes supposedly fell to his death at the end of the adventure ‘The Final Problem’, saw the character make his debut on the stage. ‘Under the Clock’, a one-act musical satire, opened on the twenty-fifth of November at the Royal Court Theatre, London, forming part of a triple bill.



**Seymour Hicks**

The play was written by Charles Brookfield and Seymour Hicks, who would also portray Holmes and Watson respectively (albeit with a strange choice of wardrobe – Holmes wore black tights and sported a full beard, while Watson’s apparel included a monocle and a pirate’s cap). The play and its satirical tone, which was merely used as a front to throw mocking asides at certain members of the acting establishment, was given short shrift by the reviewers as well as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle himself. Despite this, the play achieved seventy-eight performances before the curtain fell for the final time on the twenty-fifth January, 1894.”<sup>1</sup>

**Bert A. Williams (1875 - 1922)**, born in Nassau, Bahamas, played a character named Shylock Homestead, called “Shy” by his friends, in the African-American stage musical “In Dahomey” (1903). Bert A. Williams was a key figure in the development of African-American entertainment, and the first black superstar. In an age when racial inequality and stereotyping were commonplace, he became the first black American to take a lead role on the Broadway stage, and did much to push back racial barriers during his career. Fellow vaudevillian W. C. Fields, who appeared in productions with Williams, described him as “the funniest man I ever saw – and the saddest man I ever knew.”<sup>2</sup> Williams had a partner named **George W. Walker (1872 -1911)**. In “In Dahomey”, Walker portrayed slippery Rareback Pinkerton, opposite Williams’ Shylock “Shy” Homestead. Jas Obrecht adds, “Among my papers, I have an original program that was handed out during the opening week of In Dahomey. Beneath the cast listing, it describes ‘The Story of ‘In Dahomey’” as follows: ‘An old Southern negro, ‘Lightfoot’ by name, president of the Dahomey Colonization Society, loses a silver casket, which, to use his language, has a cat scratched on the back. He sends to Boston for detectives to search for the missing treasure. Shylock Homestead and Rareback Pinkerton (Williams and Walker), the detectives on the case, failing to find the casket in Gatorville, Florida, ‘Lightfoot’s’ home, accompany the colonists to Dahomey.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://paulstuarthayes.blogspot.com/2013/11/charles-brookfield-firstsherlock-holmes.html>

<sup>2</sup> Wintz, Cary D. *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance*, Routledge (2004), page 1210

<sup>3</sup> <http://jasobrecht.com/bert-williams-george-walker-african-american-superstars/>



**Shylock Homestead & Rareback Pinkerton  
Bert A. Williams & George W. Walker**

**W. C. Fields (William Claude Dukenfield) (1880 - 1946)** - A little known fact is that this author's all-time favorite comedian, performed as Sherlock Baffles in "The Ham Tree" during his early vaudevillian days. "For two years (1904-06), Fields played in the musical 'Ham Tree', as an amusing detective who juggled anything in sight."<sup>4</sup>



**Program from "The Ham Tree" W. C. Fields as Sherlock Baffles**<sup>5</sup>

In the W. C. Fields film "You Can't Cheat an Honest Man" (1939), W. C. Fields and Edgar Bergen's dummy Charlie McCarthy exchange insults in the classic manner established in Bergen's radio program. Behind the scenes, Fields found

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.juggling.org/fame/fields/chamberlin.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://digital.chipublib.org/cdm/ref/collection/CPB01/id/4182>

himself being annoyed by a mysterious prankster. He wouldn't come right out and accuse Charlie McCarthy, but he put on a Sherlock Holmes hat and with pipe in hand went searching for clues, promising that when he found the culprit, "I'll bore him full of holes and let the termites out."



### W.C. Fields

In the silent film "Two Flaming Youths" (1927) W.C. Fields (1880 - 1946) stars along side of Chester Conklin (1886 - 1971), a sheriff who thinks Sherlock Holmes was an amateur compared with him. "Circus owner Gabby Gilfoil finds himself at odds with the county sheriff, Ben Holden, because of bad debts, and the sheriff is deluded into thinking the good-hearted carney to be one and the same as the notorious Slippery Sawtelle, whose mug is gracing \$1,500 "wanted" posters all over the county. Gilfoil could use a like amount to help pretty Miss Malarkey out of a financial debt to Simeon Trott, but he must elude the persistent sheriff. Holden finally nails the real Sawtelle."<sup>6</sup>



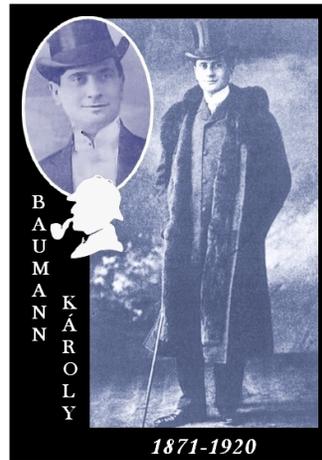
### Chester Conklin and W.C. Fields

"Conklin as the country sheriff who thinks Sherlock Holmes was an amateur compared with him."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> [TCM.com](http://TCM.com)

<sup>7</sup> "The Film Daily" (Volume 39--42) Jul - Dec 1927 Pg. 3

**Károly Baumann (1871-1920)** (originally Károly Grünberg) played Sherlock Holmes in “Sherlock Hochmes, The King of Detectives” (Hungary) (1908) .



**Károly Baumann**

“Sherlock Hochmes” was a parody comedy film considered to be similar to Michael Caine’s performance in "Without a Clue"(1988) The film caricatured the fact that Holmes knew everything. The real significance of the comedy was that Baumann, when performing the part on stage, spoke and sang Hungarian in an age when German was the official language. You can learn more about Károly Baumann at the Hungarian Sherlock Holmes Society’s website:

<http://www.sherlockian-sherlock.com/karoly-baumann-hungarian-actor.php>

Unfortunately in the comedy silent film “**A Squeedunk Sherlock Holmes**” (1909) the Sherlock Holmes **actor** is **unknown**. "A Squeedunk Sherlock Holmes" is "A laughable film, showing how a country constable, with the instincts of a true Sherlock Holmes, followed up an imaginary crime. A realistic travesty on the ambitions of the typical country constable."<sup>8</sup> "The Edison people have given a good burlesque of the average detective story in a film which has the photographic quality of their recent work. It is unquestionably a good a comedy as they have turned out in a long time, and the audience shows its appreciation in hearty laughter. The acting is quite in keeping with the subject and it is has smooth and even as the Edison actors usually are. As a welcome break from the far too frequent monotony of gloom and death this film is a decided success. It deserves a long run."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 5 Jul. - Dec. 1909 pg.60

<sup>9</sup> "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 5 Jul. - Dec. 1909 pg.89

The year 1909 saw the beginning of the Sheerluck Finch series of comedies parodying Sherlock Holmes, seven films in all, which would run through 1912. Sheerluck Finch was forever tracking down Three Fingered Kate.<sup>10</sup> **Charles Calvert** played Sheerluck Finch.



**Ivy Martinek**  
**Sheerluck Finch nemesis Three Fingered Kate**

Here is a fun plot from "**Hemlock Hoax, The Detective**" (1910), **Actors unknown**. "Hemlock Hoax thinks he can "put it all over" Sherlock Holmes, and his sleuthing is somewhat of a joke in the little tropical town where he lives. Two boys plan some fun at his expense and bring him the news of a terrible murder. Holmes is led to the scene of the crime and with measuring tape and magnifying glass proceeds to search for clues and material for deductions in the most approved detective fashion. He discovers a shred of cloth on a projecting branch and declares the murderer to be as good as found. Like the human hound that he is, he starts hot upon the scent and finds a tramp wearing the garment from which the cloth was torn. The surprised tramp develops a burst of speed that is astonishing and Hoax makes a good second. Others aid the pursuit and they are led on a merry cross country chase that ends in the capture of the tramp by Hoax and a policeman they have picked up. The trembling tramp is led back to the scene of his atrocious crime and confronted with the body of the victim. Then, for the first time, Hoax discovers that the body is merely a dummy stuffed with leaves, and the poor boys are properly punished, though not until the crowd has enjoyed a good laugh at the expense of the crestfallen Hoax.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Kelley, Gordon E., "Sherlock Holmes Screen and Sound Guide", 1994 pg. 4

<sup>11</sup> "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 6 Jan. - June 1910 pg. 613

In "**A Jar of Cranberry Sauce**" (1911), **actors unknown**. Here we see an amateur Sherlock Holmes run amuck most amusingly. The comedy is well managed, and arouses much hearty laughter.<sup>12</sup> Ray Wilcockson says, "My prize for best Sherlockian film title – A Jar of Cranberry Sauce – rivals the parsley in the butter!"

**Mack Sennett (1880 - 1960)**, was a director and actor and was known as the innovator of slapstick comedy in film, and **Fred Mace (1878 -1917)** a former dentist, was at one time the lead comedic actor for Sennett's Keystone Studios. Sennett & Mace appeared in a series of Sherlock Holmes parody-comedies as the "Biograph Sleuths" (or later with Keystone Studios as "The Two Sleuths"). The films featured both men in full Sherlockian garb.



**Fred Mace and Mack Sennett**

In 1911 the films were "The \$500 Reward", "Trailing The Counterfeiter", "Their First Divorce Case", and "Caught With The Goods". In 1912 the films were, "Their First Kidnapping Case", "At It Again", and "A Bear Escape". In 1913 the films were "The Stolen Purse", "The Sleuths' Last Stand", and "The Sleuths at the Floral Parade". After the Fred Mace departure to Majestic Studios, Sennett would still make one more Holmes parody without Mace. Mace would also make a Sherlock

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<sup>12</sup> "The Nickelodeon" Page 200 - Oct. 1, 1910

Holmes parody for his new studio. In 1913 “Their First Execution”, Mack Sennett without Fred Mace for Keystone Films, and “The Tongue Mark”, had Fred Mace, as Surelock Holmes, without Mack Sennett, for Majestic Motion Picture Co.

"At It Again", "this picture revives the travesty on Sherlock Holmes, in which Max Sennett and Fred Mace won unbounded popularity. A woman receives an anonymous letter advising her that her husband is flirting, and engages the detectives. They track the wrong man and spy on him, arresting him in his own home making love to his own wife. It develops that the man is a police captain, and the 'sleuths' are punished for their error"<sup>13</sup>

In “The Tongue Mark”, “Surelock Homes (Fred Mace) is called to detect a burglar. He looks for finger prints and discovers a "tongue mark" made by a dog, although he does not know this. He rushes through the street, examining tongues with various amusing results and finally arrests the dog. Proudly he brings his captive before the fair victim of the burglary, but in the meantime the real culprit has been arrested by a policeman and the valuables discovered. So Surelock Homes gets nothing for all his trouble, not even a kind word.”<sup>14</sup>

**Hayward Seaton Mack (1882 - 1921)**, better known as **H. S. ‘Red’ Mack**, starred in three comedies in 1912 as Mr. Sherlocko, with **J. W. Cumpson (1866 - 1913)** as Ruben Wilson for Imp Films. The three films were, “The Flag of Distress”, “The Kid and The Sleuth”, and “The Right Clue”.



**H. S. ‘Red’ Mack**

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<sup>13</sup> "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 14 Oct. - Dec. 1912 pg. 421

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0175247/mediaindex>

**John E. Brennan (1865 - 1940)**, a jolly, over-weight, bald, comedian, later to appear as Chief of Police Ivorytop in 1914's "Sherlock Bonehead", was one of the most well-known silent comedy stars of the early 1910's.



**John E. Brennan**

In the "The Rube Detective" - "Rube (John E. Brennan) , learning through a newspaper advertisement that anyone can be taught to be a detective for \$25.00, sends in his money and receives instruction. In following the directions of the detective school, Rube is arrested for being a general nuisance. That night burglars enter and rob the village post office. The town constable is at his wits' end to find the perpetrators of the crime and in despair at his helplessness, he decides to liberate Rube for the purpose of trailing the crooks. Rube is taken to the scene of the robbery and quickly finds valuable clues, namely a piece of cheese and a broken package of fly paper. The amateur detective proceeds to emulate the example of Sherlock Holmes, and thanks to his private instructions, he eventually succeeds in capturing the burglars. He marches them back to the village store where he is proclaimed the 'hero of the hour' and receives a handsome reward."<sup>15</sup>

**Flora Finch (1867 - 1940)** played the female Sherlock Holmes in "Diamond Cut Diamond" "John Bunny and Flora Finch as man and wife. .... is a comedy .... After being frustrated numerous times, the old boy's wife decides to do some Sherlock Holmes work on her own account. She disguise herself as an Englishman and presents a letter of introduction to her husband at his

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<sup>15</sup> "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 12 Apr. - Jun. 1912 pg. 1056

office. ...."<sup>16</sup> Flora Finch also played a female Sherlock Holmes, know as Serena Slim - the slender sleuth, in "Heavy Villains" (1915).



**John Bunny and Flora Finch**

**Fraunie Fraunholz (1876 - 1938)**, was a Canadian comedian who played Burstup Holmes in a number of 1913 silent film shorts. The director Alice Guy (1873-1968), of the "Burstup Holmes" series, was the film industry's first ever female director.



**Fraunie Fraunholz**

Fraunie Fraunholz played his burlesque Sherlock Holmes in the parody films "Burstup Holmes, Detective", "The Case of the Missing Girl", "The Mystery of the Lost Cat", and "Burstup Holmes' Murder Case". You can view "Burstup Homes' Murder Case" at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gFm9glpURdE>

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<sup>16</sup> "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 12 Apr. - Jun. 1912 pg. 539

**Maja Rajah** - plays Sherlock Jackson Holmes in the first all-black Sherlock Holmes film, a comedy called "The Tale of a Chicken" (1914), a burlesque of "Sherlock Holmes". The part of Sherlock Jackson Holmes is credited to Maja Raja (probably a name used by an actor who didn't want his real name associated with the particular production). In "The Tale of a Chicken", Sam Johnson & Raskus Hudson are suitors for the hand of Mandy Jones, but Mandy's intentions are strong towards Sam. When Mandy gives Raskus the 'cold shoulder' his negro blood is aroused. Raskus loses no time in telling his troubles to his gang. They decide to cook up a scheme whereby they steal a chicken and hide it in Sam's house. They also put some feathers in Sam's pocket. They then inform the owner of the chicken. He gets a policeman and has Sam arrested. The chicken is produced in the courtroom and the feathers are found in Sam's pocket. Sam is thrown into jail, much to the delight of Raskus and his gang. But Mandy, knowing Sam's innocence, presses into service the great detective of international fame, Sherlock Jackson Holmes. Sherlock finds a trail of chicken feathers and in the course of a couple of hours he traps the gang in their den. He marches them to the court, where they are thrown into a dungeon and Sam is then released. Sherlock receives his reward a smile from Mandy."<sup>17</sup>

**Lloyd V. Hamilton (1891 - 1935)** plays Sherlock Bonehead, in the film "Sherlock Bonehead", a Ruth Roland - Marshal Neilan Comedy. "The effort of this comedy detective to catch a smuggler is a scream. The chase across brings this to a rip-roaring finish."<sup>18</sup> Director Marshal Neilan, began his career as a juvenile actor in William Gillette's stage play "Sherlock Holmes."<sup>19</sup> In "Sherlock Bonehead", "Chief of Police Ivorytop, and Chief of Detectives Sherlock Bonehead, of Rottenport, fall in love with Helen, a girl from the city. Ivorytop and Bonehead receive a visit from Bert Smith, Secret Service Agent, who informs them that \$1,000 is offered for the capture of Captain Kidd, a smuggler. Determined to secure the reward, Ivorytop and Bonehead go on the trail. The two work independently. seeing a suspicious character sneaking up the mountainside, Bonehead and Ivorytop follow. Neither suspects that their quarry is Bert in disguise. The chief and the sleuth get into a fight, during which Bert disappears. Accompanied by the entire police force, the two take up the trail again the following day. They see Bert, still in disguise, chasing another man. This individual leaps into a rowboat containing Helen and compels the girl to row the boat to the other side of the stream.

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<sup>17</sup> "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 20 Apr. - Jun. 1914 pg. 568/570

<sup>18</sup> "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 21 Jul. - Sep. 1914 pg. 806

<sup>19</sup> "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 20 Apr. - Jun. 1914 pg. 1118



### **Lloyd V. Hamilton**

Leaping into another boat, Ivorytop, Bonehead and the police force take up pursuit. Mere landlubbers, they experienced fifty-seven varieties of trouble, finally upsetting the craft. After floundering about in the stream, the officers swim to shore and get another boat. Helen rows her captor to the shore. When the man turns his back for a moment the girl strikes him on the head with the oar, rendering him unconscious. At this moment Bert runs up. Ivorytop and Bonehead arrive upon the scene in time to see Bert, who removes his disguise, snap the bracelets on the unconscious man's wrists. The rivals learn with dismay that Bert is Helen's sweetheart. But their anguish is deepened when they learn that the handcuffed individual is none other than Captain Kidd, and that the reward goes to Helen and the government detective."<sup>20</sup>

**Lloyd V. Hamilton (1891 - 1935)** plays Ham, the modern Sherlock, and **Bud Duncan (1883 - 1960)** as Bud, a pocket edition Watson, in Kalem Films' "Ham, The Detective" (1915) a Sherlock Holmes burlesque which ends up with Ham & Bud and the criminals all ending up arrested."<sup>21</sup> They repeat their roles in the film "The Great Detective" (1916).

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<sup>20</sup> "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 21 Jul. - Sep. 1914 pg. 998

<sup>21</sup> The Photo-Play Review Page 11/13 May 11, 1915



### **Ham and Bud**

In "Ham, The Detective", "If one swallow does not make a summer, neither does one pair of false whiskers make a detective. This is proved conclusively, in the present 'Ham' comedy. Other secrets of Sherlock Holmes' profession are amusingly unmasked while Ham and Bud attempt to run down a gang of Black Hands."<sup>22</sup> In "The Great Detective", "Ham makes a vigilant Sherlock and Bud the Watson who takes care of his 999 disguises."<sup>23</sup>



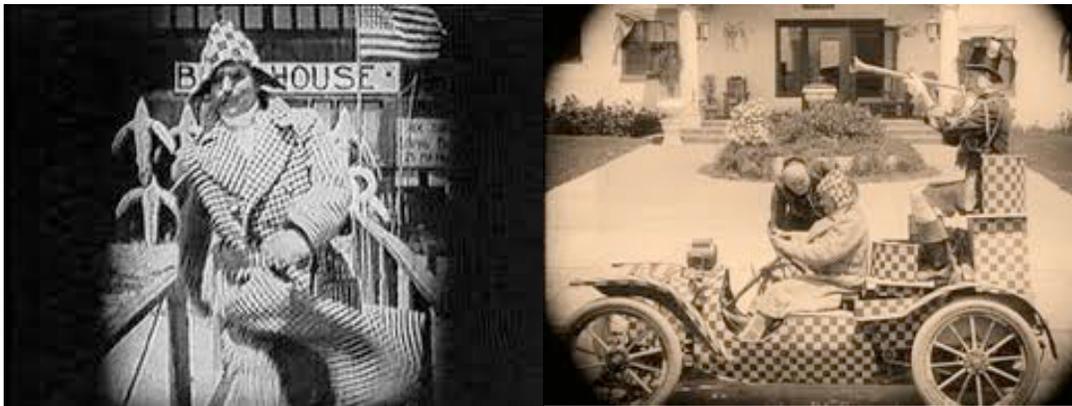
**Lloyd V. Hamilton**

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<sup>22</sup> "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 24 Apr. - Jun. 1915 pg. 1776

<sup>23</sup> "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 29 Jul. - Sep. 1916 pg. n727

**Douglas Fairbanks Sr. (1883 - 1939)** plays Coke Ennyday/Sherlock Holmes in “The Mystery of the Leaping Fish” (1916) a short film starring Douglas Fairbanks and Bessie Love. In this unusually broad comedy for Fairbanks, the acrobatic leading man plays ‘Coke Ennyday,’ a cocaine-shooting detective parody of Sherlock Holmes given to injecting himself with cocaine from a bandolier of syringes worn across his chest and liberally helping himself to the contents of a hatbox-sized round container of white powder labeled ‘COCAINE’ on his desk. The movie, written by D.W. Griffith, Tod Browning, and Anita Loos, displays a surreally lighthearted attitude toward cocaine and opium. Fairbanks otherwise lampoons Sherlock Holmes with checkered detective hat, coat, and even car, along with the aforementioned propensity for injecting cocaine whenever he feels momentarily down, then laughing with delight. In addition to observing visitors at his door on what appears to be a closed-circuit television referred to in the title cards as his "scientific periscope," a clock-like sign on the wall reminds him to choose between ‘EATS, DRINKS, SLEEPS, and DOPE.’<sup>24</sup>



**Douglas Fairbanks Sr.**

“Fairbanks hated the film and reportedly wanted to have it withdrawn from circulation.”<sup>25</sup>

You MUST watch “The Mystery of the Leaping Fish” at:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fprVONwmYnc>

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<sup>24</sup> Ivan Smirnov <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fprVONwmYnc>

<sup>25</sup> Vance, Jeffrey (2008). Cushman, Robert, ed. “Douglas Fairbanks”. U of Ca. Press. p. 36.

**William Franey (1889 - 1940)** plays Sherlock Holmes, in two comedy films "The Wart on the Wire" (1917) and "Water on the Brain"(1917). "The Wart on the Wire" is a comic number, by Tom Gibson & C.B. Hoadley, featuring Gale Henry, William Franey, and Milburne Moranti. Gale appears as Polly Piffle, who has invented a wart-less pickle, and Franey as Sherlock Holmes detective. The action is laughable and nonsensical. This will amuse the average audience immensely."<sup>26</sup> "Water on the Brain" "A very funny murder, by Tom Gibson, featuring William Franey, Lillian Peacock, and Milburne Moranti. The former appears as a burlesque Sherlock Holmes and uses the "Smellograph" and other new inventions for detecting crime. This is extremely laughable and one of the best detective travesties yet shown."<sup>27</sup>.



**William Franey**

**Walter Stevens (1889 - 1940)** played Sherlock Holmes in "Torpedo Pirates" (1918), which had probably the zaniest plot of any Holmes film. Mr. P. Nutt invented a rather wonderful flying torpedo, which was worth millions when it flew, but his happiness was marred by his daughter's crush on his helping hand. The president of The Midnight Thieves' Association craved the torpedo, so he sent Vampa, a well set-up young women, to find a man who looked like Sherlock Holmes. They found him in a trash-can pulling a Hoover out of the garbage. When the inventor learned the eyes of the spies were upon him, he hastened to the detective agency and besought the trash-can dweller to take the case. Father returned - they always do - delighted at his date with Vampa. She arrived with a copyrighted scheme of her own to make the old duffer jealous. She winked her pretty eyes at the helping hand, who could not withstand the temptation. The scheme worked fine, the inventor became crazy jealous. 'You tub

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<sup>26</sup> "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 34 Oct. - Dec. 1917 pg. 253

<sup>27</sup> "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 34 Oct. - Dec. 1917 pg. 1342

of lard - I could kill you - here!', shouted the frenzied P. Nutt, slapping him on the wrist. His rough words had an awful effect on Fatty, who resorted to tears. Suddenly a tremendous noise was heard, a storm came up - big ocean waves resounded their morbid chantings - the family was eating soup. Camouflaged by his tempestuous ordeal, the gang was making away with the torpedo, when Detective Snitch smelt trouble and dashing up into the private chamber he kicked the crooks in the hallway and flew out on the marvelous torpedo. He was nearing France and the gas was giving way, when he was rescued by the inventor and the family."<sup>28</sup> Now this is a movie that needs a remake or sequel!

**Mack "Ambrose" Swain (1876 - 1935)** plays Sherlock Ambrose, in Universal Films, "Sherlock Ambrose" (1918), a comedy detective story, with slapstick trimmings, and the first of the Ambrose pictures' series of comedies directed by W.S. Fredericks.<sup>29</sup> "Sherlock Ambrose" is about a hobo who is mistaken for a detective, by the president of a school for girls, and plays the part even to the recovery of a stolen ring through no fault of his own."<sup>30</sup>



**Mack "Ambrose" Swain**

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<sup>28</sup> "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 35 Jan. - Mar. 1918 pg. 418

<sup>29</sup> "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 35 Jan. - Mar. 1918 Pg. 539

<sup>30</sup> "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 35 Jan. - Mar. 1918 Pg. 1846

**Rasmus Christiansen (1885 - 1964)** (as Nokke the private detective), in Nordisk Films' (Denmark) "Den firbenede Sherlock Holmes" or, "Ras og Lux som Detektiver" or, "The Four-Legged Sherlock Holmes" or, "Ras and Lux as Detectives" (1918).



**Rasmus Christiansen**

**Sam Robinson**, was the brother of Bill " Mr. Bojangles" Robinson. He played Knick Carter (your black Sherlock Holmes), in the film "A Black Sherlock Holmes" (1918), a burlesque on the Sherlock Holmes stories, the first production of the newly reorganized Ebony Film Corporation.



**Sam Robinson**

(Sam Robinson photo from silent film "Spying the Spy")

The plot focuses on Knick Carter (your black Sherlock Holmes), portrayed by Sam Robinson, who believes he is a great detective. He and his assistant Reuma

Tism (your Dr. Watson), portrayed by **Rudolph Tatum**, attempt to save a kidnapped young woman, Sheeza Sneeze, portrayed by Yvonne Junior, and the daughter of inventor, I Wanta Sneeze, played by George Lewis . Knick eventually saves Sheeza, who is able to marry her true love. The film was directed by R. G. Phillips and runs for twelve minutes.<sup>31</sup> The film exists, and is a part of the Sherlock Holmes Collection at the University of Minnesota's Anderson Library.

**Ben Turpin (1869 - 1940)** plays Hide, with **Charles Lynn (Heinie Conklin) (1886 - 1969)** as Seek in Mack Sennett Comedy's "Hide and Seek Detectives" (1918).



**Ben Turpin**

"Hide and Seek Detectives" as the title implies, there is much of the Sherlock Holmes travesty in this two-reeler, with Ben Turpin and Charles Lynn playing the title characters and Marie Prevost in another important role."<sup>32</sup>



**Ben Turpin, Charles Lynn (Heinie Conklin) and Marie Prevost**

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.lib.umn.edu/pdf/holmes/v7n1SixOh.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> "The Moving Picture World" magazine Vol. 37/38 Jul. - Dec. 1918 pg. 1050

**Bert Lytell (1885 - 1954)** played William Sherlock Brown in, the Metro Films' Holmes parody, "Sherlock Brown" (1921), a film which had an impressive year and a half run.



**Bert Lytell**

In "Sherlock Brown", the secret formula for the world's most powerful explosive has been stolen from the U.S. government. William Brown (Lytell), a clerk who aspires to be a detective, has just received his badge from some anonymous Midwestern agency (he paid all of 25 dollars for it), and manages to get himself embroiled in the intrigue. And he doesn't do too badly -- he actually gets his hands on the missing envelope, but then he's tricked by the thieves into giving it back to them. Instead of receiving his reward, he is ridiculed and his tin badge is soundly crushed. But all is not lost -- he remembers that the woman in possession of the envelope was wearing sandalwood perfume. He puts his olfactory senses to work, and after he's smelled just about everything he can find, he recovers the document again, gets a real detective badge, and wins his girl (Ora Carew)."<sup>33</sup> "Sherlock Brown" must have been one funny film to have that long of a run. We see that this was one Sherlock who had a NOSE for detection and actually SMELLED his way to success.

**Lawrence Chenault (1877 - 19??)**, a well known Afro-American vaudeville performer and silent film actor, is the man in the Sherlockian garb, in Reol's two-reel comedy "The Jazz Hounds" (1922). "Both censorship records and lobby cards for the film suggest that Reol's two-reel comedy 'The Jazz Hounds' borrowed liberally from the Ebony Film Corporation's popular (1918) Black Sherlock

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<sup>33</sup> Janiss Garza, Rovi



### Lawrence Chenault

Holmes character. The Chicago Board of Censors' synopsis describes the plot of 'The Jazz Hounds' as 'fake detective's episodes'. One lobby card depicts a lighter-skinned Black man in a deerstalker cap and matching cape interrogating two 'zip coon' characters, who consume fried chicken with gusto in another still.”<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, as is often the case with silent films, no known copy exists.

**1923 - Eman Fiala (1899 - 1970)** appeared as Sherlock Holmes II in “The Kidnapping of Fux Banker” (Únos bankéře Fuxe) (1923) a Czech comedy. “The banker Fux and his creditor Tom Darey want to get married. The banker's daughter Daisy in her father's name, put an advertisement in a paper. She wants father to meet her friend Maud. She, herself, makes the acquaintance of Darey who has her followed by detective Sherlock Holmes II. The latter finds her and tries to kidnap her but he takes her father instead. After a number of intrigues, all ends well. Holmes is let off the hook and Tom and the banker win their girls. ”<sup>35</sup> This film could best be described as a Czech version of the Keystone Kops.

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<sup>34</sup> Petersen, Christina -Film History | July 1, 2008 | “The 'Reol' story: race authorship and consciousness in Robert Levy's Reol Productions, 1921-1926”

<sup>35</sup> Lamač, Ondra, ‘Karel Lamač - Únos bankéře Fuxe 2’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnljziMsgYg&list=PL500C217Fo42A037E&index=2>



**Eman Fiala**

Eman Fiala would also appear in the 1932 Czech film “Lelicek in the Services of Sherlock Holmes”, but with the more famous Martin Fric playing Sherlock Holmes role.

**Buster Keaton (1895 - 1966)**, was a genius comedian and arguably, the greatest actor-director in the history of the movies. One of the most popular films in 1924 was “Sherlock Jr.” starring Buster Keaton.



**Buster Keaton**

In “Sherlock Jr.” (1924) - “A projectionist is studying to be a detective and is in love with a young lady. When he proposes her, his rival steals the chain watch of her father and incriminates him. The disappointed young projectionist returns to his job and while projecting the film, he dreams on being the detective of the story. Meanwhile, the girl finds the truth and acquits the guilty of the projectionist to her father.”<sup>36</sup>



### Buster Keaton

"It is not generally known that Fatty Arbuckle directed Buster Keaton's 'Sherlock Jr.' His name on the screen as director appears as Will B. Good! Thus adding a comedy touch - if you get it."<sup>37</sup>

Watch Buster Keaton in “Sherlock Jr.” at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwL1y1uITwg>

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0015324/>

<sup>37</sup> Photoplay Magazine Jul-Dec 1924. Vol 26-27 pg. 73

**Mickey Daniels (1914 - 1970)** plays Sherlock Hawkshaw, with **Joe Cobb (1916 - 2002)** as Watson, in Our Gang's "The Mysterious Mystery!" (1924), from the Hal Roach Studios.



### **Joe Cobb and Mickey Daniels**

"The Mysterious Mystery!" - Our Gang has Mickey Daniels doing an impersonation of Sherlock Holmes and Joe Cobb being Watson as the two try to discover the whereabouts of a young rich kid who has gone missing. While trying to find the kid the gang must also try and avoid a dumb detective also working the case."<sup>38</sup>

Watch "The Mysterious Mystery!" at: <https://archive.org/details/TheMysteriousMystery>

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<sup>38</sup> <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0235610/>

**Arthur Stone (1883 - 1940)** plays Cyril Fromage, Sherlock Holmes as house detective, in Hal Roach Studios' "Sherlock Sleuth" (1925).



**Arthur Stone**

In "Sherlock Sleuth", "Arthur Stone, all but forgotten today, stars as Cyril Fromage, the house detective of the Hotel Omigosh. The lovely Martha Sleeper (Pass The Gravy) is his sweetheart, the hotel switchboard operator with Noah Young on board as the house manager. It seems a dastardly thief, "The Weasel" is on the loose in the hotel, assisted by a sultry vamp. The action that follows, and there is plenty of it, concerns Cyril's efforts to catch the thief. Plenty of hilarious gags along the way; a favorite involved Miss Sleeper taking a call from an irate lodger, so hot that it makes the switchboard steam. Taking advantage of the situation, she pulls out the offending plug and uses it to curl her bangs. The MGM lion even puts in a guest appearance."<sup>39</sup>

**Stan Laurel (1890 - 1965)** played Webster Dingle, in Joe Rock Comedies' "The Sleuth" (1925).



**Stan Laurel**

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<sup>39</sup> Paxson, Jenny [http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0415270/plotsummary?ref=tt\\_ov\\_pl](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0415270/plotsummary?ref=tt_ov_pl)

In the "The Sleuth", Webster Dingle (Stan Laurel) is a detective who essentially relies on an assortment of different costumes to successfully complete his investigations.

**Jack Cooper (1890 - 1970)** played Sherlock Bones in Samuel Bischoff Productions' "Spooky Spooks" (1925).



**Jack Cooper and John J. Richardson**

In "Spooky Spooks", two villains have Jimmy the messenger boy deliver a threatening letter to an Englishman in a spooky house. Jimmy falls for the Englishman's daughter, and sends for the famous detective Sherlock Bones. When the villains arrive things go wild with skeletons, spooks, men in armored suits and everything you expect to see in a haunted house.<sup>40</sup>

**Marionettes** as Herlock Sholmes and Anna Went Wrong, in this unusual Sherlock Holmes parody made with puppets, "The Lime Juice Mystery", or "Who Spat in Grandfather's Porridge" (1930), by Joseph Seidon Productions.



**Marionette as Herlock Sholmes**

Watch "The Lime Juice Mystery" at: <https://archive.org/details/TheLimejuiceMysteryOrWhoSpatInGrandfathersPorridge>

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<sup>40</sup> "The Film Daily" (Volume 31--34) Jan - Dec 1925 Page 9 - October 4, 1925

**Charles Eaton (1910 - 2004)** was a child star of stage and (silent) screen before making the jump to talkies; 'The Times' notes that he played a comically inept Sherlock Holmes imitator in "The Ghost Talks" (1929), only the second sound feature made by Fox. "The Ghost Talks' isn't a horror movie: it's a comedy, but it isn't even a spooky old-house comedy, as there's no whiff of the supernatural. This movie became slightly weirder in hindsight, due to the presence of Stepin Fetchit. He gives his usual 'yassuh' performance here, but this time round his character is named Christopher Lee ... inevitably reminding modern viewers of the horror-film actor."<sup>41</sup>



**Charles Eaton and Helen Twelevetrees**

"The Return of Sherlock Holmes" (1929), with Clive Brook as Sherlock Holmes and H. Reeves-Smith as Dr. Watson, is credited as the first Sherlock Holmes film to be produced with sound. Yet even though Charles Eaton's character name in "The Ghost Talks" was Franklyn Green, he was a Sherlock Holmes imitator in the comedy film. Since "The Ghost Talks" was released in February 1929, and "The Return of Sherlock Holmes" wasn't released until October of that same year, one could claim Charles Eaton, and not Clive Brook, was the first talking Holmes of films.

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<sup>41</sup> [F Gwynplaine MacIntyre http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0019923/](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0019923/)

**Sigmund Gottfried Spaeth (1885 - 1965)** - was an American musicologist who traced the sources and origins of popular songs to their folk and classical roots. Presenting his findings through books, lectures, liner notes, newspapers, radio and television, he became known as The Tune Detective on radio (1931 -1933).



**Sigmund Spaeth**

**Lew Lehr (1895 - 1950)** - was a comedian, writer and editor known for his humorous contributions to Fox Movietone News (1932), his radio appearances and his popular catchphrases, "Monkeys is the cwaziest peoples" and "Stop me if you heard this."



**Lew Lehr**

**Tommy Handley (1892 - 1949)** - was a British comedian, mainly known for the BBC radio programme "Its That Man Again". He is known to have dressed and acted like Holmes in some radio sketches.



**Tommy Handley**

**Martin Frič (1902 - 1968)** stars in the Czech comedy, “Lelíček ve službách Sherlocka Holmese”, or “Lelicek in the Service of Sherlock Holmes” (1932). Sherlock Holmes is again a difficult task. He has to find a body double for King Fernando XXIII., That would be like him as two peas, and who would represent him especially when performing in public, which is threatened attacks by anarchists. In Czech newspaper accidentally discovers a photo of a man who seemed to Fernando spitting image. Is he a man František Lelíček, in debt up to their necks and hunted creditors at every step. King Fernando cant wait for his double. It's unfortunate, timid creature who wears chainmail and sleep in a safe place in bed. Therefore Lelíčka greeted with great joy, he has it all royal duties including young queens and leave abroad. A Lelíček will rule the course on their own.



**Martin Frič**

See Matrín Frič at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfZfM51dau8>

**Olaf Hytten (1888 - 1955)** a great character from Glasgow, Scotland, actually played the role of Sherluck Jones with Charles McNaughton as Dr. Hotson in the (1933) parody of Sherlock Holmes & Dr. Watson "Lost in Limehouse". Some of you may recognize Hytten as Norris, Sir George Fenwick's (Paul Cavanaugh) Butler in "The Woman in Green" (1945), which starred Basil Rathbone & Nigel Bruce. I bet you didn't know that he also played the Hotel Day Desk Clerk in my favorite Sherlock Holmes film of all-time, "The Scarlet Claw" (1944). A third role in a Rathbone Holmes' movie he played was Captain MacIntosh in "Sherlock Holmes Faces Death" (1943). A fourth Rathbone Sherlock Holmes' film he was in was "Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror" (1942) in which he played Fabian Prentiss. The fifth & final Rathbone Holmes' film he made an appearance in was "Pursuit to Algiers" (1945) where he appeared briefly as Stinson the Gunsmith. Now for a surprising fact I bet you didn't know, Olaf Hytten also once appeared in an Eille Norwood Sherlock Holmes's film "The Stockbroker's Clerk" (1922) in which he played Hall Pycroft! Another Sherlock Holmes' film Olaf Hytten appeared in was "A Study in Scarlet" (1933) with Reginald Owen as Holmes & Warburton Gamble as Watson. Hytten once again appeared in the film as a Butler, this time for Merrydew (Alan Dinehart). He was often cast as a butler in movies and 50's TV.



**Olaf Hytten & Charles McNaughton**

You can view "Lost in Limehouse" aka "Lady Esmerelda's Predicament" (1933), "A slapstick burlesque of 19th Century Victorian melodrama featuring a parody of Holmes and Watson who rescue a heroine held by a mustache-twirling villain in a den of caricatured Chinese gangsters,"<sup>42</sup> at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AIN3e6kGXXKo>

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<sup>42</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AIN3e6kGXXKo>

**Charles Judels (1882 - 1969)** played "Philo Holmes" in the 1934 musical comedy short "My Grandfather's Clock", with **Franklin Pangborn (1889 - 1958)** who portrayed "Dr. Watkins". Oddly, I have also come across two photos of Franklin Pangborn as Sherlock Holmes, but have yet to find any film he has played Holmes in?



**Charles Judels and Franklin Pangborn**

Watch an outrageous scene from 1934 "My Grandfather's Clock" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wUvC1KVK3Bg>

**Harpo Marx (1888 - 1964)** appears in "Duck Soup" (1935) Marx Brothers movie in Sherlockian outfit in an early scene.



**Harpo Marx**

"The Incredible Jewel Robbery", a 30 minute TV special broadcast by CBS on 8 March 1959, was the last television appearance together of the three Marx Brothers. Chico and Harpo break into shops stealing the equipment to disguise an automobile as a police car. Outside a jeweller's shop selected from a stolen telephone directory, Harpo dons a disguise which includes a Sherlock Holmes cap. With his back to camera he also put on a one-piece pair of glasses with attached eyebrows, a fake moustache and a cigar - and becomes Groucho!



**Harpo and Chico Marx**

**Lester “Smiley” Burnette (1911 - 1967)** as Frog Millhouse wears Sherlockian garb and supplies the comedy relief, while singing a song about a Defective Detective from Brooklyn, in Republic Pictures’ “Public Cowboy No. 1” (1937). “Smiley” Burnette, Gene Autry’s longtime sidekick also played Holmes in “Phantom Valley” (1948).



**“Smiley” Burnette and Gene Autry**

**Hans Albers (1881 - 1960)** plays Morris Flint/ Sherlock Holmes with **Heinz Rühmann (1902 - 1994)** as Mackay McPherson / Dr. Watson in “Der Mann, der Sherlock Holmes war”, or “The Man who was Sherlock Holmes” (1937), a

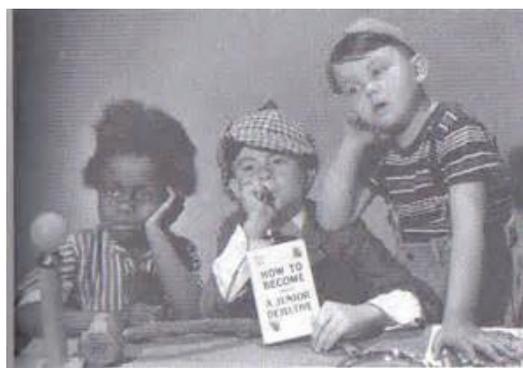
German mystery comedy directed by Karl Hartl. Hans Albers and Heinz Rühmann play two confidence tricksters. They manage to stop a night train for nefarious purposes, and impersonate Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson.



**Hans Albers and Heinz Rühmann**

I recommend that you watch “The Man who was Sherlock Holmes” at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3RBJRgFZ6c>

**Carl "Alfalfa" Switzer (1927 - 1959)** - in the MGM 'Our Gang' film “Hide and Shriek” (1938), while opening his own detective agency, dons a deerstalker cap and rechristens himself "X-10, Sooper Sleuth." His first assignment: to find out who stole a box of candy from Darla Hood.



**Carl "Alfalfa" Switzer**

**Richard Bates** played Junior Lingley in Sherlockian garb, in George Randol Productions’ “Midnight Shadow” (1939). The long-lost black-cast whodunit

"Midnight Shadow", was discovered in a vault in Tyler, TX, and preserved by the Southwest Film & Video Archive of Dallas. A showman known as Prince Alihabad the Great (John Criner) suddenly shows up in a quiet, all-black Oklahoma community and is welcomed by Dan Wilson (Clinton Rosemond), who readily



### **Buck Woods (Lightfoot) & Richard Bates (Junior Langley)**

accepts that the obvious charlatan begins courting his pretty daughter, Margaret (Frances Redd). But when Dan is found murdered after brandishing the deed to an oil field, Margaret takes matters into her own hands and hires aspiring private eye Junior Langley (Richard Bates) and his jive-talking sidekick, Lightfoot (Buck Woods), to solve the case. The trail leads to Shreveport, LA, where the murderer is caught despite the bungling of the case by "Sherlock" Langley and his inefficient "Dr." Lightfoot. "Midnight Shadow" is available on DVD, and as seen in the color lobby card card, Bates appears at a desk in deerstalker cap, matching



### **Richard Bates**

cape and with magnifying glass. A slow paced short feature fascinating more for its historical significance than its story, "Midnight Shadow" is more competently

done than a lot of independent black productions of the era. The producer and director was George Randol. To learn more about him and the film check out the website: [/www.weirdwildrealm.com/f-midnightshadow.html](http://www.weirdwildrealm.com/f-midnightshadow.html)

**Moe Howard** (Moses Harry Horwitz) (1897 – 1975), **Larry Fine** (Louis Feinberg) (1902 – 1975), and **Curly Howard** (Jerome Lester Horwitz) (1903 – 1952), the **Three Stooges**, appeared with deerstalkers and pipes in Columbia Pictures' "We Want our Mummy" (1939).



**Larry Fine, Moe Howard, & Curly Howard**

A Three Stooges short movie, "Shivering Sherlocks" (1948), would have little to do with Sherlock Holmes beyond the title.



**Curly Howard, Larry Fine, & Moe Howard**

**Edgar Bergen (1903 - 1978)** voices Charlie McCarthy in Universal Pictures' "Charlie McCarthy, Detective" (1939). Edgar Bergen's first ever main starring role was also in 1939 in the film "Charlie McCarthy, Detective", a mystery/comedy that had Charlie McCarthy acting as a detective who helps (or hinders) Bergen from solving the murder of a magazine publisher. Charlie had his own Sherlock Holmes outfit in the film.



**Mortimer Snerd, Edgar Bergen, & Charlie McCarthy**

**Gracie Allen (1895 - 1964)** stars in a comedy which is a Philo Vance movie, "The Gracie Allen Murder Case" (1939), yet Gracie wears a Sherlockian outfit, at least on the lobby card and a publicity photo.



**Warren William and Gracie Allen**

William Alexander "**Bud**" **Abbott (1897 – 1974)** and **Lou Costello** (Louis Francis Cristillo) **(1906 – 1959)**, the comedy team of Abbott & Costello, appear in Sherlockian outfits in Universal Pictures' "Who Done It?" (1942).



**"Bud" Abbott and Lou Costello**

Then once again Lou dons a deerstalker in the film "Abbott and Costello Meet the Invisible Man" (1951). Abbott and Costello are two bumbling private eyes help a man wrongly accused of murder who has become invisible to help clear his name.



**Abbott and Costello Meet the Invisible Man**

**John Sigvard "Ole" Olsen (1892 - 1963)** and **Harold Ogden "Chic" Johnson (1891 - 1962)**, best known as Olsen & Johnson, were zany American comedians of vaudeville, radio, the Broadway stage, motion pictures and television. In their film Crazy House (1943), they had a cameo of Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce as Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson.



### **"Chic" Johnson and "Ole" Olsen**

See Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce, in the Olsen & Johnson film "Crazy House" at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9EG9XwuiDQ>

**Stan Laurel (1890 - 1965)** and **Oliver Hardy (1892 - 1957)** the legendary comedy duo of Laurel and Hardy, appeared in deerstalkers and Laurel had a calabash pipe, in Twentieth Century's "The Big Noise" (1944). During World War II Stan and Ollie find themselves as improbable bodyguards to an eccentric inventor and his strategically important new bomb. Kind ironic they were guarding a bomb, as this movie was a bomb!



### **Oliver Hardy and Stan Laurel**

**Dayton Allen (1919 – 2004)** (Dayton Allen Bolke) the great comedian and voice actor (famous as the man in the street on "The Steve Allen Show"), voiced John J. Fadoodle, who was also modeled after Dayton Allen, on the NBC kiddie show "The Howdy Doody Show" (1947 - 1960). Dayton Allen (1947-49) Allen Swift (1949-54).



**John J. Fadoodle**



**Dayton Allen**

**Bob Hope (1903 - 2003)** in the film “My Favorite Brunette” (1947), as Ronnie Jackson, dons the deerstalker. In “My Favorite Brunette”, “Baby photographer Ronnie Jackson, on death row in San Quentin, tells reporters how he got there: taking care of his private-eye neighbor's office, Ronnie is asked by the irresistible Baroness Montay to find the missing Baron. There follow confusing but sinister doings in a gloomy mansion and a private sanatorium, with every plot twist a parody of thriller cliches. What are the villains really after? Can Ronnie beat a framed murder rap?”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> [Rod Crawford <puffinus@u.washington.edu>](mailto:puffinus@u.washington.edu)



## **Dorothy Lamour and Bob Hope**

In the film "The Iron Petticoat" (1956), as Major Charles 'Chuck' Lockwood, Bob Hope appears in a Sherlock Holmes outfit. In "The Iron Petticoat", Captain Vinka Kovelenco (Katherine Hepburn) defects from Russia, but not for political reasons. She defects because she feels discriminated against as a woman. Major Chuck Lockwood (Bob Hope) gets the order to show her the bright side of capitalism, while she tries to convince him of the superiority of communism. Naturally, they fall in love, but there's still the KGB, which doesn't like the idea of having a defected Russian officer running around in London.



**Bob Hope**

**Milton Berle (1908 - 2002)** and **Victor Moore (1876 - 1962)** early TV featured an hour-long parody, "Sherlock Holmes in the Mystery of the Sen Sen Murder", on the 5 April 1949 episode of NBC's "Texaco Star Theatre".



**Milton Berle**

The satire featured Milton Berle and Victor Moore as Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, plus guest appearance by Basil Rathbone as Rathbone of Scotland Yard.



**Victor Moore**

**Huntz Hall (1920 - 1999)** - as Horace Debussy 'Sach' Jones, a member of 'The Bowery Boys', dons a deerstalker and puffs on a pipe, in the film "Private Eyes" (1953). After being punched in the nose, Sach finds out that he has the ability to read minds. Terrance Aloysius 'Slip' Mahoney (Leo Gorcey) and the gang start up a detective agency try to cash in on Sach's new powers.



**Huntz Hall and Leo Gorcey**

**Paul Frees (1920 - 1986)** and **Daws Butler (1916 - 1988)**, in 1953 for United Television, the legendary voice actors voiced chimpanzees dressed in Holmes and Watson outfits in a series of 13 five minute sketches.



**Paul Frees**

It was called "Professor Lightfoot and Dr. Twiddle", with Frees voicing Professor Lightfoot and Butler voicing Dr. Twiddle. The "Case of Hypnosis" episode of "Professor Lightfoot and Dr. Twiddle" is available on a DVD.



**Daws Butler**

**Jack Benny (1894 - 1974)** - besides listening to Jack Benny on radio in the thirties with Sherlock Holmes in some episodes, Holmes also was played by Benny in a sketch on his TV show in the fifties, "The Jack Benny Show".



**Jack Benny**

Hear Jack Benny as Holmes on radio at: [http://www.dumb.com/oldtimeradio/listen/4908/Comedy/Jack\\_Benny/33\\_06\\_02\\_Sherlock\\_Holmes\\_an.html](http://www.dumb.com/oldtimeradio/listen/4908/Comedy/Jack_Benny/33_06_02_Sherlock_Holmes_an.html)

**Jerry Lewis (1926 - )** plays detective Sherlock Fink at Dean Martin's Wedding, on the NBC "Colgate Comedy Hour" (1952).



**Jerry Lewis and Dean Martin**

Watch Sherlock fink in action at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qcsy8dIQNl4>

In the parody "It's Only Money" (1962) Lewis was dressed in Sherlockian garb on Italian movie posters. In "Family Jewels" (1965) Jerry is called Uncle Shylock and Sebastain Cabot is Dr. Matson.



**Jerry Lewis**

**Dagmar (Virginia Ruth Egnor) (1921 - 2001) and Basil Rathbone (1892 - 1967)** hooked up for some Sherlockian fun on the “Milton Berle Buick Comedy Hour” (1954).



**Dagmar and Basil Rathbone**

With Milton Berle, Basil Rathbone, Mickey Spillane, and Dagmar. The search is on for a new 1954 Buick that has disappeared from the stage.



**Dagmar and Basil Rathbone**

**Jack (Winfield B.) Mercer (1910 - 1984)**, was the voice of the iconic sailor "Popeye". In the animated "Private Eye Popeye" (1954), Sherlock Popeye does his sleuthing in a Sherlock hat and with a corn cob pipe!



**Jack Mercer**

“Private Eye Popeye gets a call from Olive Oyl to guard a precious gem. But no sooner does he get the gem than the butler takes it (and Olive). The rest of the cartoon is spent chasing the crook to Paris, the Swiss Alps, and North Africa; Popeye always gets there first, but fails to make the arrest until he lucks into some spinach, of course.”<sup>44</sup>



**Sherlock Popeye**

Watch “Private Eye Popeye” at: <http://www.liketelevision.com/liketelevision/tuner.php?channel=630&format=tv&theme=guide>

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<sup>44</sup> Reeves, Jon <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0152078/>

**Red Skelton (1913 - 1997)** - did his humorous Sherlock Holmes imitation in a skit with Ginger Rogers on his own show, "The Red Skelton Show" (1954).



**Red Skelton and Ginger Rogers**

**Louis 'Roscoe' Quinn (1915 - 1988)** - played Roscoe on ABC's hit detective series "77 Sunset Strip" from 1958 - 1963. In one episode, Roscoe dresses as Sherlock Holmes to solve a crime in an episode titled "Baker Street Caper", which aired Friday, March 16th, 1962.



**Roscoe and Roger Smith**

**John Astin** (1930 - ), Gomez Addams in the television comedy series *The Addams Family* (1964 - 1966), in the episode "Thing is Missing" (1965), he becomes Sherlock Holmes to find "Thing" (a hand) who has disappeared.



**Carolyn Jones and John Astin**

**Bill Cosby (1937 - )** - the famed 'Cosby Show' star and veteran comedian threw on an inverness cape, deerstalker and pipe for a little Sherlockian Skit with *The Golddigger Dancers* before his main act on the "Dean Martin Variety" show back in 1966.



**Bill Cosby and The Golddiggers**

**Dick Martin (1922 - 2008)** and **Dan Rowan (1922 - 1987)** - the duo played Holmes and Watson in a sketch on TV's "Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In" (1968-73).



**Dick Martin and Dan Rowan**

**Tommy Cooper (1921 - 1984)** the British prop comedian played Sherlock Holmes in a sketch in the TV show "It's Tommy Cooper", Season 1, Episode 6 (14 Mar. 1970). One of Tommy Cooper's lines was, "I say, Watson, this is a most serious case — the window is broken on both sides."



**Tommy Cooper**

**Imperial Oil Esso Commercials** - Sherlock Holmes in “Mini/maxi mix-up” television commercial (1970). "Sherlock Holmes and Mr. Watson are investigating the curious behavior of his lordship's daughter who in some rooms of the house wears a stylish mini dress, but in other rooms wears a maxi dress. Holmes determines that this is caused by outmoded heating. He calls in an Esso Home Comfort expert who advises which of Esso's 28 furnaces are right for the house." Sherlock Holmes in “Kitchen talk” (1971). "Sherlock Holmes is talking to the kitchen staff in a British upper-class house about the Esso 78 gallon hot water heater which can run forever."



**ESSO TV commercial, Actors unknown**

Watch Holmes ESSO TV commercial “Mini/maxi mix-up” at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=816Tm9Dz5aM>

Watch Holmes ESSO TV commercial “Kitchen talk” at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROe4uRycYR4>

**Don Adams (1923 - 2005)** - does a spoof on Sherlock Holmes as host of “The Detectives”, on “Kraft Music Hall” (1970). You just knew Agent 86, Maxwell Smart, had to have a blast portraying Holmes.



**Don Adams**

**Radovan Lukavsky (1919 - 2008)** and **Vaclav Voska (1918 - 1982)** starred as Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson in the Czech crime/comedy film "Touha Sherlocka Holmese" (1971) (The Desire of Sherlock Holmes). We know Holmes enjoyed playing his violin, but what if he preferred it to the art of deduction? This one film explored such a scenario. A film in which the famous detective Sherlock Holmes would like to become a musician, but his path is crowded with criminal cases that must be addressed first.



**Radovan Lukavsky and Vaclav Voska**

Watch a clip of "Touha Sherlocka Holmese" at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPTOdIh23eA>

**Pat Dailey** and Bill Wayne Played Holmes and Watson on "Who Do You Do" TV show (1972).



**Pat Dailey and Bill Wayne**

**Dave Allen (1936 - 2005)** and **Michael Sharvell-Martin (1946 - 2010)**, are comedic actors who portrayed Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson in a sketch entitled "Watsons Poisoned Posterior" as part of "Dave Allen At Large" (1971-1976).



**Dave Allen and Michael Sharvell-Martin**

View "Watsons Poisoned Posterior" at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbgqtvJOJus>

**Erol Günaydın (1933 – 2012)** plays the tubby, Sherlock Holmes attired sidekick Bitik to the hero's Tekin in the battle against Dr. Satan, in the Turkish cult classic “Yılmayan Şeytan” (1972) ("The Deathless Devil").



### **Erol Günaydın**

“Comedian Erol Günaydın (Bitik) does his best Ralph Kramden. This guy was still making movies in 2009. I found the Sherlock Holmes bit to be especially strange, but I did some research and found that he’s a popular character in Turkey!”<sup>45</sup>

**Christopher Knight (1957 - )** - yes, as Peter Brady, of “The Brady Bunch” (1973) is the one person Cindy Brady confides in, who is learning how to be a detective akin to Sherlock Holmes, and who she thinks can help her locate the earrings she lost, without anyone else finding out what they're doing. Can they find the earrings before anyone finds out Cindy lost them?



### **Susan Olsen and Christopher Knight**

You can see “The Great Earring Caper” at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yD8OctovLA>

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<sup>45</sup> <http://monsterminions.wordpress.com/2011/04/21/doctor-satan-lives/>

**John Cleese (1939 - )** and **Willie Rushton (1937 - 1996)** - played Holmes and Watson in “The Strange Case of the Dead Solicitors”, from 'Comedy Playhouse Presents: Elementary, My Dear Watson' (1973).



**John Cleese and Willie Rushton**

Watch “The Strange Case of the Dead Solicitors” at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1\\_BmnaTjVw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1_BmnaTjVw)

**Larry Bilinski** and **Steven Doyle** (yes the well known Sherlockian Steven Doyle) in the mid-seventies with some super 8 film making equipment came up with this next video, titled “Sherlock Holmes vs. The Wolfman”. Larry was Sherlock and Steven was Dr. Watson.



**Steven Doyle and Larry Bilinski**

Watch “Sherlock Holmes vs. The Wolfman” at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oY7cL5hPb70>

**The Firesign Theatre** is an American comedy troupe consisting of Phil Austin, Peter Bergman, David Ossman and Philip Proctor. Their brand of surrealistic humor is best known through their record albums, which acquired an enthusiastic following in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They recorded Sherlock Holmes in “The Tale of the Giant Rat of Sumatra” (1974). **Philip Proctor** plays detective Hemlock Stones and **David Ossman** plays Flotsam.



### **Philip Proctor and David Ossman**

Listen to “The Tale of the Giant Rat of Sumatra” at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXHcSBhfkx8>

**Gene Wilder (1933 - )** played Sigerson Holmes, Sherlock’s smarter brother, with the great **Douglas Wilmer (1920 - )** as Sherlock Holmes, and **Thorley Walters (1913 - 1991)** as Dr. Watson, in “The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes’ Smarter Brother” (1975). Gene Wilder, as the younger brother of the consulting detective tries to steal Sherlock's glory by solving an important case assisted by an eccentric Scotland Yard detective (Marty Feldman) and a lovely but suspicious actress (Madeline Khan).



**Douglas Wilmer**

Watch “The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes’ Smarter Brother” at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cso\\_PAEgUh8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cso_PAEgUh8)

**End Part I**