

A man, alone in a recording studio.

Man

My name is John Billings. This is the Laugh Parade comic archive on audio tape. If you're listening to this at some point in the distant future, Laugh Parade was a group of black and white gag cartoons written by Bunny Hoest and drawn by John Reiner that ran in Parade, a Sunday newspaper magazine supplement founded in 1941, and still running as of this recording on September 27, 2014.

Man goes to a very large safe. He runs the combination and opens it. He pulls out a banker's box and opens it, removing a single issue of Parade Magazine, polybagged.

Man puts on a pair of white gloves, the type they wear on Antiques Roadshow. Removes the issue of Parade and sets it on a archive quality table. He carefully opens the issue.

Man

This tape will address the Laugh Parade that is found in Parade Magazine issue number 2,445, aka Volume 44, Issue 42. October 15th, 1983. Cover story: Christie Brinkley and Billy Joel. America's lovebirds share their passion, their troubles and their secrets for great Halloween costumes for your young ones.

Ok. In this issue, Laugh Parade was found on page 37, as usual. The three cartoons therein are arranged, as usual, vertically. Each is one panel. A drawing and then a caption at the bottom. I will archive them in the implied order of reading, that is to say top to bottom.

The top panel has an grey box overlay in the top left corner that reads "Laugh Parade" in white text, with "by Bunny Hoest and John Reiner" underneath in bold black.

Under that we see three mice. All three are standing on their hind legs and wearing human clothing, but sized properly for mice. From left to right, they are a male mouse. He wears a suit, with no pants, and holds a clipboard. The paper on the clipboard reads "REALTOR". His expression is blank, professional.

He stands at a slight remove from the other two mice, a female/male couple. The female is wearing a dress and holding the male's arm. The male is leaning forward, wearing a sweater, and no pants. All three have tails that trail to the floor, all three are seen in profile, looking to the viewer's right, their left. They are regarding a stylized mouse hole, an entryway in a baseboard, presumably, though it is not clear from the rest of the drawing, in a home or, possibly a warehouse. The man is clearly meant to be talking, as his is the only mouth that is open.

The caption reads, "It looks like just another hole in the wall to me."

On to the next cartoon.

There are seven things in this panel, no more no less. They are all clustered in the center of an otherwise blank space. In the background, a small end table, a pictureframe on the endtable. The picture therein appears to be of a small flower, but that is difficult to be certain of. To the viewer's right of the endtable, a couch. Above the couch, a large frame. There appears to be nothing in this frame. In the foreground, from viewer's left to right: A broken vase, filled with flowers. There was no water in the vase, as there is no water under the vase. There are several small shards of pottery, scattered near the vase. At a slight remove from the vase, a small boy.

He wears a striped shirt and dark slacks. His expression is one of pleading. It is his mouth that is open. Looming over him is a grown woman wearing a conservative blouse, knee length dark skirt and heels. Her expression is anger, her hands are on her hips. She glares at the child. Both she and the child are seen in profile, though on a slight angle, with the child's back partially to us, the mother (one assumes) slightly faced to us.

The caption reads "It wasn't me (ellipsis) It's was El Nino." El Nino is italicised.

Babies born vomiting a thick black oil.

The final panel, as usual for the early 80s is Howard Huge, featuring a suburban family's large dog. Interestingly, in this panel, Howard is present in his absence. In the background: A three door cabinet, on the wall at head height. Under it, a low counter, with two containers of the type that hold sugar or flour atop it. We are likely, though not certainly, in a kitchen. In the foreground is a man. He wears dark slacks and a sweater over a collared shirt. He is three quarters to us, his left hand in his pocket, his right hand holds a newspaper. He may have a moustache. A shadow may be falling from his nose. It is difficult to say. His expression is that of concern and he looks at the floor.

On the floor are ten foot prints. They are large, canine. The path they describe moves from the viewers left to right. To the man's left, the viewer's right is a woman. She wears sensible slacks, a loose but form revealing blouse and heels. Her body faces us, her head faces the man. It is her mouth that is open. She holds a door ajar. There are scant details, but we can make out a porch, and some trees.

The caption reads "Round up the usual suspects?". It ends in a question mark.

This has been the Laugh Parade found in Parade Magazine issue number 2,445, aka Volume 44, Issue 42. October 15th, 1983. Thank you and bless you.

Broadcast to humanity.