

### Examples of Hebrew act material used by the American-Jewish comedian, Julian Rose (1868-1935)

1. *Levinsky at the Wedding*, from Harley Erdman, *Staging the Jew; the Performance of an American Ethnicity 1860-1920*, (New Brunswick New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2006 (second printing)), 165-7. *This material may be a composite.*

It was very cold when I started for Abe's wedding last night. I got in the car and found myself sitting next to one of these Irishmen. He wasn't cold. He had a nice blanket around him. "Must be fine to have a fine blanket to sit inside and keep warm," I said to him. "Wish I could have one like that." The he said, "Why don't you take mine?" As I reached over for it, he said, "You do, and I'll give you a wallop in the eye." So unreasonable, those people. If I'd had a pistol I'd have slapped his face. Then he poked his finger in my eye and I got out, because that's not healthy.

Well, I guess Abe's lucky, now he's married. I'd like to do it, too, but every time I fall in love with a girl I find she's got no money, so what can I do? One think I did not like about Abe's wedding [invitation] was right away it said at the top, "your presents is requested." They can't wait to let you know you must help pay the expenses. And down the bottom was "please come in evening dress." Ikey Blatt wore his pajamas.

Mrs. Cone was there with her hair in a luffly physic knot. Her teeth are beautiful – both of them. She had her dress ripped open at the knee – directory. The groom had it a new suit, made for his brother when his brother got married. When Abe sat down in it he stood up. His gift from the bride was a fine watch, Swiss cheese movement.

Three little girls held up the bride's dress, but the groom used a safety pin for his trousers. Then the rabbi told him, "There are three incidents in a man's life: he is born, he is married, he dies. Now all you have to do is die."

Inside that little hot room everybody was crying, except for big fat Mrs. Bloom. She perspired. Mrs. Bauman was dressed to kill, but no wonder, her husband's a butcher. Four little Wolffs were there, and oi, how did they eat! Now I know why it is always said keep the wolfs from the door.

Mrs. Iberg was telling about awful romantic pains in her arm. She said she painted 'em with eiderdown. Always something the matter with that woman. Last Spring she was at the hospital. On account she ate a sick fish. Before that she had hardening of the artillery.

We had so much to eat I was a stuffer. First we had menu, but didn't get any of that. I guess they ran out of that early. Then was tomato surprise. But it was no surprise to me. I ate 'em before lots of times. Irving Blatt emptied a whole bottle of pickled onions in his pockets. He thought they were camphor balls.

The janitor of the apartment, Mickey McCann, calls himself superintendent, and he was there, too. He gets forty-five dollars month wages and neighbours' milk. He got noisy and hit Cone with a bottle. It was a good thing Cone got in the way, or the bottle would have broken a window.

The Milton Bloom started to sing, "Why Did They Sell Killarney?", and that loafer McCann blamed Milton, and started to muss his all up. McCann didn't know it was a song. He thought Killarney was really sold, and jumped on Milton because Milton deals in real estate. They had to open a window and let in some climate.

A cop walking by called Mickey over to the window and asked him what's going on in there. Mickey told him he was cleaning up a Jewish wedding, and the cop shook hands with Mickey and lent him his club.

By the time they arrested Bloom he didn't have a stitch to his back. But they had to take three in his head. I was hit with a cowardly tomato. That's the kind that hits you and runs. Then there were several shoes thrown at me – one with a foot in it.

I had to go outside, on account I couldn't stand any more. I was under a table so long, almost to suffocation. Outdoors I met my old friend Lepinsky. I invited him to take a little drink, and he said sure, so we went across the street, he put in five cents, I put in five cents, and we together we had a good time.

We stepped across the room to the free lunch, and there was a roast chicken just put on the table. Lepinsky grabbed the whole chicken by the neck and brought it to our table. "Lepinsky", I said. "You can't have that chicken all alone to eat." "You're right," he says, "I'll go back to the table and get some potatoes to go with it."

2. *Then I'd Be Satisfied By Life*, composer unknown, recorded New York City 1905, released 1906, Edison Gold Moulded Record 9223. Only the sung element is here transcribed.

When Levi was arrested once for murdering a man  
He thought they would hang him by the neck  
He said I'll give five thousand if they'll only give me life  
(He thought they had caught him in the act)  
To the foreman of the jury Levi gave the money then  
And said to him "How happy I would be  
For the sake of my poor wife  
Don't hang me, give me life  
Please make it murder in the second degree."  
The jury they was only out two hours  
brought in a verdict in the second degree.  
Levi thanked the foreman and then asked him  
"Was you finding it difficult to make it life for me?"  
The foreman said "Now, Levi, you are lucky.  
We had to take a ballot over twice.  
If it hadn't been for me, they would acquit you  
But I knew that you'd be satisfied with life."

3. *Becky the Spanish Dancer*, composer unknown, recorded New York City 1921, released 1922, Edison Diamond Disc 50952. The later part of the song only is transcribed. In the earlier part, Becky, the Jewish Spanish dancer, is jilted by a Gentile toreador.

....to the strains of that Spanish guitar  
One day Beck's mother said to Becky's father  
It's time that our Becky was wed.  
Believe me, dear Nathan,  
If Becky is waitin'  
For someone to ask her  
We'll have to mask her  
Or Becky will wait 'till she's dead.  
Her nose it is hook-ed  
Her eyes they are crooked  
Her *ponim* [face] gives fellows a *shrek* [fright].  
So we must find a people  
A blind man or cripple  
Who'll take her (perhaps with a cheque).  
Oi, when Becky she done her fandango, to the strains of Spanish guitar.....  
They brought her fellow with only one eye  
Eighty-five years old and ready to die  
Becky grabbed him and kissed him  
But one kiss it missed him  
And her nose that stuck out so far  
Like a long water spout  
Stuck his other eye out  
...to the strains of that Spanish guitar!

#Items 2 and 3 transcribed by Daniel Appleby, 2020.