

February 2011

No Laugh-In Matter

“Sock it to me!” That is, in a way, what happened to Richard Havilland. And he never got to utter that phrase on the television show that made it famous, *Rowan & Martin’s Laugh-In*. He did, however, fight back and socked Playboy with a lawsuit. The case provides a fascinating look at not only the entertainment and television industries but how an injury can harm a person’s livelihood.

The saga is found in a civil case at the National Archives at Chicago. Amongst Record Group 21, Records of the U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division, Chicago, Civil Case File 69 C 818 concerns a comedian who sued Playboy Clubs International and Croydon Hotel Company in 1969 for similar reasons: injuries sustained during two separate accidents.

While in Chicago, in December 1968 and June 1969, Havilland had fallen. In the first instance, while performing at the Playboy Club, he had to take the stairwell between the third floor rehearsal area, known as the “Play Room,” back downstairs to his dressing room. The complaint alleges there was only a left-side handrail; the stairs were narrow, slippery, and dangerous; and there were “diverse pieces of furniture and other objects” on the landing below. This area, according to the suit, was in violation of the Municipal Code of Chicago.

For this fall, where Havilland injured his shoulder and leg, he wanted remuneration of \$225,000 to cover not only the medical expenses but also lost future income. What made this accident particularly serious was the performer had only one good leg; his right leg had been amputated at the knee in 1967 after a car accident. So with the new injuries, it was very painful for him to use crutches like he had previously.

Although he lived in Miami, Havilland was staying for a few months at the Croydon Hotel beginning in December 1968. In June 1969, his toe became caught in a hole in the floor. Since he was on crutches, he fell and injured himself. Claiming the hotel was careless and negligent, the plaintiff sued for \$75,000.

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The National Archives at Chicago is located at:

**7358 S. Pulaski Road
Chicago, IL 60629-5898
773-948-9001
chicago.archives@nara.gov**

The research rooms are open to the public Monday through Friday, and the second Saturday of every month, from 8:00 AM to 4:15 PM.

The National Archives at Chicago will be closed in observance of President’s Day, Monday, February 21, 2011.



Right: 1969 letter between comedians Dan Rowan and Richard Havilland included in a 1969 Civil Case File. Additional material from the case will be posted soon on National Archives at Chicago Facebook site

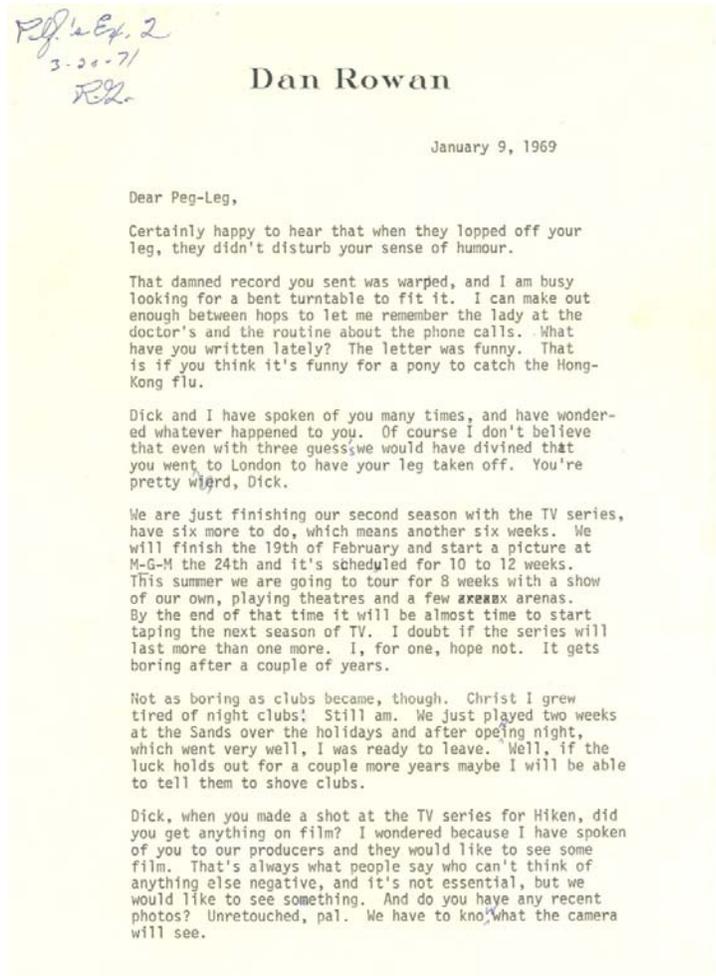
One part of the case that is unique is personal testimony and letters from a television star. Mr. Havilland had claimed that he may have been hired to appear on *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In* prior to his injuries. But after the accidents, he was no longer a viable performer for the job. *Laugh-In* began in early 1968, becoming a big hit for NBC, and aired until 1973.

Dan Rowan's testimony, given at a deposition hearing while in Las Vegas in March 1971, gives insight into his work as a producer and performer. The lawyers on behalf of Playboy objected frequently to the speculative nature of whether Havilland would have been hired and how much money he would have made if he had worked on *Laugh-In*. Rowan provides examples not only of pay scales for performers but also about the hiring of Goldie Hawn and Judy Carne, among others, which illustrate how he and partner Dick Martin found acts and went about obtaining them. Rowan is quite knowledgeable about the entertainment industry.

Rowan tells his skeptical questioner that he remembered Havilland's act well and would most likely have recommended him for *Laugh-In*. Included in the exhibits are two type-written letters Rowan sent to Havilland, and they showcase his comedic sensibilities and his entertainment acumen. However, before the case went to trial, the judge granted the defendants' motion to strike the deposition of Rowan.

Besides the show business aspect, another interesting element is the number of judges associated with the case. One was Julius J. Hoffman, renowned for the Chicago 7 trial following the 1968 Democratic National Convention. Another judge listed on several memos and docket sheets was Abraham Lincoln Marovitz, who had been appointed to the federal court by President Kennedy in 1963. Marovitz is distinguished for his longevity as well as for overseeing numerous trials. In an odd coincidence, one of his nephews, William Marovitz, married Christie Hefner, former CEO and daughter of Playboy founder Hugh Hefner. The case was ultimately heard in court by the Honorable Frank J. McGarr.

In the plaintiff's long deposition, Havilland is asked about his military service, his medical history, his booking agents, his income tax returns, and, of course, a detailed account of how he fell down the stairs. Havilland's attorney, David Alswang, objected numerous times to the questions asked of his client; it is interesting how testiness can come across in the written word. Other testimonies include one of Havilland's doctors; the general manager of the Playboy Club; a maintenance man for the club who installed a handrail a couple weeks after the accident; and the vice president of the Associated Booking Corporation which had Havilland as a client. The latter's deposition has questions about the record-keeping practices of his company



such as how long contracts are kept and how they are organized, certainly subjects of interest to archivists. The case went to trial in April 1971. In the end, the jury found in favor of the plaintiff on both counts. It awarded Mr. Havilland \$95,000 from Playboy Clubs International and \$5,000 from the Croydon Hotel Company. This was far less than what was requested since Havilland had to pay for his medical expenses and was not able to work for some time because of his injuries.

Although there is no documentation in the case file about what happened to Havilland in subsequent years, it is known that he passed away in Florida in 1987 at age 71. Hopefully his sense of humor remained intact after the trial and he was able to perform again.

National Archives Staff Meet Veteran Mystery Author Brad Meltzer.

On Friday, January 21, 2011 National Archives at Chicago staffers met well-known mystery author Brad Meltzer at Borders Book Store, 150 North State Street in Chicago. Mr. Meltzer was signing copies of his new book, *The Inner Circle*, which features the National Archives. Pictured left to right are Glenn Longacre, Archivist; Katie Dishman, Archives Technician; Brad Meltzer, Author; and Kris Maldre, Education Specialist.



Upcoming Genealogy Workshops

Telling Your Family Story

Saturday, May 14, 2011: 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

As you conduct research and locate documents, have you wondered how to share this information with family members? Staff from the Chicago-based organization History Works, Inc. will discuss ideas for telling your family's tale. From the use of free print-on-demand software to the creation of an engaging, focused storyline, History Works' hints and "tricks of the trade" are sure to inspire and impress your relatives. The cost for this workshop is **\$10.00 per person**, payable at the door.

Using Court Records to Find Local and Family History

Saturday, June 11, 2011: 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Have you considered checking court records in your family history hunt? In this workshop, archivists from the National Archives at Chicago will give an overview of how court records can be used to uncover a wealth of information about people's lives as well as the social, legal, and economic issues that brought them to court. The cost for this workshop is **\$10.00 per person**, payable at the door.

Further Information and to Register for Genealogy Workshops:

All workshops will be held at our facility near Ford City Mall and Midway Airport, **7358 S. Pulaski Road, Chicago**. Reserve your spot today!

To register, send your name, e-mail address, phone number, and mailing address to Kris Maldre, Education Specialist, at kristina.maldre@nara.gov. Upon receipt we will confirm workshop registration via e-mail. If you have further questions, please contact us at 773-948-9001.

Upcoming Teacher Workshops

(for classroom and pre-service teachers)

Activities of the World War II Home Front

Saturday, March 12: 10:00 AM – Noon

Investigate the story of WWII mobilization and production efforts. From files demonstrating closed gated practices and the activities of the Fair Employment Practices Commission to ordnance plant propaganda pieces to celebrity draft cards, this workshop will feature documents that highlight various aspects of the WWII Midwest home front, as well as curricular components.

To Register for Teacher Workshops:

Each workshop offers CPDUs, is free to teachers, and will be held at our facility near Ford City Mall and Midway Airport, 7358 S. Pulaski Road, Chicago. Reserve your spot today!

To register, send your contact information to Kris Maldre, Education Specialist, at kristina.maldre@nara.gov at least one week prior to the workshop. Upon receipt we will confirm workshop registration via e-mail.

The National Archives at Chicago will offer its Primarily Teaching Summer Institute on June 20-25, 2011.

As a week-long summer institute Primarily Teaching provides access to the rich resources of the National Archives for upper elementary and secondary-level educators. Participants will learn how to access historical records at the National Archives and investigate methods to utilize them in their classroom in ways that sharpen students' skills and enthusiasm for history, government, and other humanities through hands-on activities.

There is no charge for Primarily Teaching, but please note participants are responsible for their own meals, lodging, and travel arrangements. Continuing education credits are available. Enrollment is limited to 10 participants.

For an application and further information, including a sample itinerary, please contact Kris Maldre, Education Specialist at the National Archives at Chicago, 773-948-9010 or via e-mail:

kristina.maldre@nara.gov.

THE 14th CIVIL WAR SYMPOSIUM & REENACTMENT

1861: THE WAR BEGINS!

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2011, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

at The Cantigny First Division Foundation First Division Museum, Wheaton, Illinois

Plan to join us for a combination of historical analysis on the first year of the Civil War combined with living history displays and outdoor activities. The speakers and presentations include:

Ray Brown, Manassas National Battlefield Park, on *The First Battle of Manassas*; **Steven J. Ramold**, Eastern Michigan University, on *Discipline in the Union Army*; **James I. Robertson**, Virginia Tech, on *Stonewall Jackson's nickname*; and **Mark A. Snell**, The George Tyler Moore Center for the Study of the Civil War, Shepherd University, on the *1861 Campaign in Western (West) Virginia*.

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