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SILENT VENT ACT

by Phil D' Rey (New Orleans, La.)

Phil, one of the greatest vents in the world in our opinion, has been quite ill for some little time, which necessitated being off his feet. He wrote this act while in bed, and when he couldn't manage the typewriter he turned to his pen. Phil has furnished original material to many an act and we are fortunate to have this section from him.

The very title seems ludicrous. Whoever heard of a silent vent act? That's just the point. It is the unexpected and unorthodox which proves revolutionary. Anything original and different - if presented right - is worthy of acclaim. For years I have been kicking around ideas in my dubious brain for a plan to do a silent vent act. I now have it and believe it can be hilarious. It is a vent act in pantomime. (D' Rey is a fine pantomimist.)

I had to reflect back, way back, for the bones of the idea. Anyone who ever saw the late W.C. Fields do his golf act with the exasperating caddy with the squeaky shoes will instantly recognize the ideas for comedy in this presentation. Only it is reversed - the vent has the squeaky shoes. You will have to figure out yourself how to make your shoes squeak, unless you own a pair. Any comedy prop manufacturer can figure out the modus operandi. Get a pair of sport shoes and hand them to the prop man for the squeaks.

Vent walks on stage wearing a checkered cap, sport shirt, plus four pants and the squeaky shoes. The caddy is a life sized dummy, a walking dummy, which when left alone can stand under his own power and stand still. Dress this dummy any way you wish. The more grotesque the better for laughs. Over his shoulder he has slung a golf club bag. In the main opening of the golf club bag is secreted the Large Golf Ball (This is an Abbott item, made to hold the four golf balls obtained after doing the Ireland Golf Ball routine.

Around the sides of the main opening are recesses to hold the trick clubs. There are five trick clubs. Three of these you can make up yourself. One is the telescopic club, another is the break-away club, third is the bending club, fourth is the exploding club, fifth is the club where golf ball or half golf ball disappears into the head of the club. Go to any second hand store or white elephant shop and pick up a set of old discarded golf clubs (or maybe YOU gave up golf years ago and the set is rusting in the attic?)

For the first club, the telescopic, attach a reaching rod as used by spirit mediums to the head of club. For the second, fix the head of the club to a shaft broken into sections and threaded on twine or rope like the breakaway wand. For the third, run a length of coat hanger wire thru a piece of rubber tubing and attach to the head of club. The fourth can be fixed like an exploding wand, or just rigged up with a bingo shooter. The fifth one Russ Walsh can fix up for you or if you have a workshop, you can do it yourself. By means of a lever, the ball or half ball (shell) goes in and out of the head of the club.

Vent has in his pocket the three Ireland golf balls and shell. Also one of those SOFT cotton

golf balls sold at any sport store for indoor practice. Soft golf ball is in shirt pocket, one Ireland golf ball is in left pants pocket, another with shell is in right pants pocket. Third one is in rear pants pocket.

Vent walks on stage propelling walking dummy. Gets to center of stage and says to dummy NOTHING. Merely points to way out ahead and moves his own mouth like he is discussing with dummy the ideal location. Dummy replies but says NOTHING, as his mouth moves too, as he nods approval. Vent leaves dummy standing and walks away to left and surveys the field. Reaches into shirt pocket and brings out soft cotton golf ball which he places on tee. Reaches into golf bag and brings out number one telescopic club. Walks around ball with shoes squeaking. Then takes stance, and as he leans on club, it being telescopic, it collapses. Vent looks at club disgustedly, then looks at dummy and frowns. Puts club back in bag and brings out club number two. Walks around ball, shoes squeaking, takes stance and goes to swing, but club breaks up like breakway wand. Vent looks at club, then at dummy as if he hates him. Places club back in golf bag and says to dummy NOTHING. Merely moves his own mouth and looks angry and dummy moves HIS mouth and says NOTHING.

Reaches into golf bag and takes out club number three. Walks around ball and then for the first time appears to notice that his shoes are squeaking. Stops... listens... walks around ball again and stops and listens. Then, reaches into dummy's pocket and pulls out an oil can, with which he oils shoes. Places oil can back in dummy's pocket, then takes stance.

Leans on club, which bends. Club will bend into half circle which vent holds up and looks at, then looks at dummy with fire in his eye as if dummy were the cause of it. Smacks dummy in belly with club. Dummy just stands there as if it never bothered him. Places club in golf bag and goes into long harangue with the dummy. Both mouths are moving yet nothing is ever said audibly.

Vent reaches into golf bag and brings out club number four. Walks around ball, then around dummy as if suspecting something. (Vent must now have a desperate look on his face). Takes stance. Looks at dummy as if to dare him to cause any more trouble. Takes stance, club explodes with a bang. Vent throws club down and goes into long argument with dummy shaking his fist in dummy's face and both moves moving yet no sound is heard by audience until dummy finally spits in vent's face. Vent walks away from dummy wiping face with handkerchief.

Reaches into golf bag and pulls out club number five. Swings and hits cotton golf ball into audience. Naturally audience duck. Vent reaches into left pants pocket and brings out Ireland golf ball. Appears to put it on head of club, but really palms it, and presses lever which brings out ball (or half ball). Swings, then stares. Ball is not there. Discovers ball on head of golf club again (having pressed lever to bring it back. This action of the ball appearing and disappearing can be repeated, with the vent and dummy arguing silently till vent thrusts club number five into bag. Now he goes into the Multiplying golf balls, as when he puts away the club, he still has one ball in the left hand. Balls can be produced one at a time, as they are arranged for production. After disappearance of ball No. 1, produce number 2 with shell from dummy's nose.

Do your own moves and flourishes then end with four. Drop them one at a time into the main opening of the golf bag, then reach in and produce the large ball, (the balls and shells are inside it). With large ball sitting on left hand, and right hand controlling dummy, walk off.