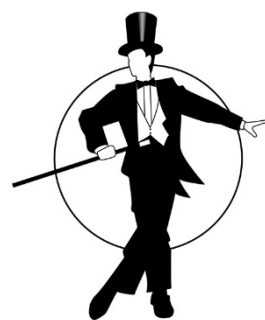


# Which Goldberg?

Michael A. Stang



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WHICH GOLDBERG?

By Michael A. Stang

CAST

IDA: Older woman. Conservative dress, glasses, pocketbook and hat.

ETTA: More or less same as Ida.

RABBI: Male or female. Middle aged or older.

Place

Funeral home or synagogue.

Time

Any time from the 1950's, to the present.

WHICH GOLDBERG?

*Setting: Funeral which has not yet started. There is a podium. There may be a closed coffin with Star of David. Ida and Etta are seated in the audience next to each other. They don't know each other. Ida is looking around uncomfortably.*

IDA: This *is* the Goldberg funeral isn't it?

ETTA: Yes.

IDA: I thought I'd recognize some of the people. Which Goldberg?

ETTA: Jerome.

IDA: The dentist?

ETTA: No, the dry cleaner.

IDA: You mean he's not the dentist?

ETTA: No, he's the dry cleaner.

IDA: Oh.

ETTA: You didn't get a notice?

IDA: What notice?

ETTA: In the bulletin.

IDA: What bulletin?

ETTA: The Sisterhood bulletin.

IDA: I'm in the Sisterhood. I didn't get any bulletin.

ETTA: Maybe you didn't renew your membership.

IDA: I'm chairman of the membership committee.

ETTA: *(looks at Ida)* You don't look familiar to me.

IDA: *(looks at Etta)* You don't look familiar to me either.

ETTA: Which shul do you belong to?

IDA: Beth Jacob.

ETTA: Beth Tefilah.

IDA: Oh.

ETTA: Oh...So how did you find out about Goldberg?

IDA: I saw it in the paper and thought he was the dentist; so I came to pay my respects.

ETTA: If you read the obituary, you would have known he wasn't the dentist.

IDA: I didn't read the whole obituary.

ETTA: Why not?

IDA: They depress me.

ETTA: Was Goldberg your dentist?

IDA: No. My cousin's. He had a lot of plaque.

ETTA: Who? Goldberg?

IDA: No. My cousin, Seymour.

ETTA: Which Seymour?

IDA: Glickstein.

ETTA: I know Applebaum.

IDA: Applebaum the pharmacist?

ETTA: Applebaum the accountant. He's retired now.

IDA: Moved to Boca?

ETTA: That's the one.

IDA: My husband's accountant from work.

ETTA: Short man with a mustache?

IDA: Yep. Wore suspenders?

ETTA: All the time.

IDA: Never saw him with a belt.

ETTA: Always suspenders.

IDA: Liked to smoke those fat cigars?

ETTA: Had a pocket full of them.

IDA: Polo shirts.

ETTA: Must have had every color.

IDA: Every color.

ETTA: Two or three fat cigars stuffed in that little pocket.

IDA: Two or three? At least four.

ETTA: They say Eden Acres is lovely.

IDA: What's Eden Acres?

ETTA: Where Applebaum lives.

IDA: Applebaum the accountant?

ETTA: Of course, Applebaum the accountant. Who do you think we've been talking about all this time? Lives there with his wife, Karen.

IDA: Applebaum the accountant lives in Coral Heights and he's a widower.

ETTA: Oh.

IDA: Oh.

ETTA: Not the same Applebaum.

IDA: Common name.

ETTA: Common name.

IDA: Very common.

ETTA: Not as common as Goldberg.

IDA: Definitely not.

ETTA: Maybe Cohen is more common.

IDA: Or Levy.

ETTA: I counted once.

IDA: Counted what?

ETTA: The number of Cohens and Levys in the phone book.

IDA: Why did you do that?

ETTA: I thought it would be interesting.

IDA: Was it interesting?

ETTA: Very.

IDA: So. What did you find out?



Which Goldberg?

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ETTA: I don't remember.

IDA: But it *was* interesting?

ETTA: Yes. Very.

*(long uneasy pause)*

IDA: This Goldberg.

ETTA: Which Goldberg?

IDA: The one up there. *(points with head)*

ETTA: The dry cleaner.

IDA: Yes. Is he the one who did your dry cleaning?

ETTA: Not anymore.

IDA: Why's that?

ETTA: He ruined my silk evening gown.

IDA: He *himself* ruined it?

ETTA: No. One of his people.

IDA: How did they ruin it?

ETTA: Got chocolate all over it.

IDA: That's terrible. You think his staff was eating chocolate while they were working?

ETTA: I left a Hershey Kiss in the bra part.

IDA: In the bra part?

ETTA: I wanted to save it for later. I guess I forgot about it.

IDA: Why didn't you put it in your purse?

ETTA: Sol was holding it while I went to the buffet.

IDA: Sol. Is your last name Birnbaum?

ETTA: Yes, it is. Do I know you?

IDA: Your husband is the refrigerator magnate.

ETTA: Are you crazy? How can a person be a refrigerator magnet?

IDA: Not magnet. Magnate! They say Sol Birnbaum sold more refrigerators than anyone in the greater...something area.

ETTA: My husband sold advertising.

IDA: Wait a second. Did he work for Barton-Clevinger?

ETTA: Yes.

IDA: So he is *the* Sol Birnbaum?

ETTA: I guess he is.

IDA: Sol Birnbaum, the advertising mogul.

ETTA: I don't think he's a mogul. Both his parents were from the same background.

IDA: What? Mogul. Mogul.

ETTA: My Sol may not be the brightest guy in the world but to call him that?

IDA: What's wrong with calling him a mogul?

ETTA: Doesn't that mean he's retarded or something?

IDA: A mogul is a bigshot.

ETTA: That's not my Sol. Oh! You must be thinking of Sol Birnbaumer — with the "er" at the end. He's the president of the company.

IDA: No relation?

ETTA: One's Birnbaum and the other's Birnbaum-er. You can't be related from part of your name.

IDA: That's true. So how can you blame the dry cleaner?

ETTA: They should be checking.

IDA: You want they stick their hands in your clothing's private parts? That's perverted. That's what that is. You know the kind of people they get to work at those places.

*(The Rabbi walks up to the podium.)*

ETTA: You're telling me. Why once I saw —

IDA: Shhh! *(points to the podium)* The rabbi.

RABBI: Ladies and gentlemen. Beloved Goldberg family. We are gathered here today to celebrate the life of an extraordinary man. A man who was the founder of an esteemed congregation.

ETTA: *(whispers to Ida)* I didn't know that.

RABBI: Beloved husband, father, grandfather, uncle, and friend.

IDA: *(whispers to Etta)* Beautiful speech the Rabbi's giving.

*(Etta nods)*

RABBI: We have come here today to pay our respects not only to a great man, but to a humble man. Not only a successful man but to a generous man.

ETTA: *(Whispers to Ida)* How true. He was all of that.

RABBI: Yes. Abe Goldberg was all those things.

ETTA: *(Whispers to Ida)* Which Goldberg?

IDA: *(Whispers to Etta)* He said Abe.

ETTA: *(Whispers to Ida)* Not Jerome?

RABBI: *(To Etta and Ida sternly)* ABE.

*(Etta and Ida look at each other, then quickly get up and start walking to the exit. They speak to each other in loud whisper.)*

IDA: I'm so embarrassed.

ETTA: Let's get a nosh.

IDA: Klein's Deli?

ETTA: On Maple.

IDA: Maple? Klein's is on Covington.

ETTA: Which Klein's?

THE END