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HOTLINE'**



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While visiting relatives in Palm Beach, Fla., I heard the news that Joey Bishop had terminated his ABC-TV show. The Palm Beach Spa was shrouded with gloom. Many residents were practically in tears. Never had an entertainer demonstrated his popularity so convincingly. All through the big dining room one could hear a repetition of the same regret, "I can't believe it. We never miss Joey's show."

If Palm Beach were any criterion, Johnny Carson and Merv Griffin would be running completely out-distanced in second and third spots. As it is, Mr. Nielsen claimed that Joey trailed badly in third. Statistics prove it isn't that simple. There are other factors but Bishop isn't claiming foul or

pressing sour grapes. He and ABC-TV are negotiating the payoff of his

existing contract. It's said to be mighty remunerative, running into attractive figures that could enable Joey to sit back and watch the world spin a rosy hue around his rocking chair. One can't imagine Bishop relaxing. It's a sure bet he'll plunge back into the entertainment world without missing a stride.

The popular comedian-host philanthropist-musician (numbers system)-country/western recording artist-actor said he isn't talking-well, not much.

"Barney, you must not take this as an affront," he volunteered. "I'm not giving out a story. I've said all I had to say on the air. That's how I feel. We're in the midst of settling the deal and I just don't want to talk."

Joey said that the national press and wire services have attempted to pin him down for a story. "Just say that my golf game was so bad I'm now taking lessons again," he suggested. He's also in-

involved in combating drug addiction. "We're working on the construction of a new hospital in Philadelphia."

As I said, Bishop was skirting the main issue but he did pay me the supreme compliment of saying something instead of cutting me off with stony silence. "I've had many offers from Las Vegas and others but I think I deserve a good rest."

"My organization produced the show contractually and I suppose I could leave town and let my people handle production during my absence. However, I don't think that would be fair to the network who is paying for production. So I've kept in touch with the office by phone. I don't want to go there in person. It could become maudlin."

About the report that after Dick Cavett takes over the spot he'd be replaced by someone else, possibly Monty Hall of Let's Make a Deal fame, Joey disclaimed any positive information.

In regard his substitute hosts while his production contract remains in effect, he commented, "I have based the selection of hosts on guys like Norm Crosby, who used to fly into Hollywood from Las Vegas to be my guest when I needed him. He's entitled to consideration as a host for his kindness and thoughtfulness to me."

About Monty Hall, Bishop said, "He's a friend. He exceeded a show. Keep Talking, that we did many years ago. I think he's a good man."

"We also have Stanley

Myron Handelman, who will host. He, too, graciously has run over to our show when we needed a guest. We'll also have Frank Sinatra Jr., as a host.

"For the last week, Regis will host the show. He'll be able to wrap it up better than anyone. Regis knows best what to say properly."

Does Regis have any plans, other than his own show? "Not that I know of."

When I commented that after Regis had walked off the show many months ago, I had never dreamed that one day the boss would do the same, Bishop remarked, "The true irony was that on both occasions Vic Damone was our guest. He said he isn't coming anymore."

"Oh! Calcutta!" opened in Los Angeles at the Fairfax Theatre, right in the center of our corned beef and strudel oasis. The way the

cast's male members kept losing their trousers, you'd think that the borsht belt had snapped its buckle.

At Aliza Kashi's Coconut Grove opening, Ariel and Will Durant enjoyed the Singer-comedienne's Yiddishisms and Israelisms. When Aliza interrogated Ariel in Yiddish, the noted philosopher's wife replied in like.

Grand Rabbi Yehuda Horowitz was in our midst. The Stycziner Rebbe, ultra-orthodox leader who lives in virtual seclusion in Brooklyn, N.Y., arrived recently at Los Angeles International Airport and received a reception by hundreds of members of the Los Angeles Orthodox Jewish community that rivalled any greeting tendered a famed motion picture star.

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