

# Not an "Angry Man"

## Humorist Jean Shepherd Speaks on Warm And Funny Things at Fairleigh Dickinson

RUTHERFORD — An "angry" man, dressed in an "angry" green plaid sports coat and ivy-league slacks, stepped on the podium, stared defiantly at a very sympathetic audience, and said two "angry" words:

"Twenty-five cents."

It wasn't perceptible at first. A chuckle never is. This one spread from one end of the Fairleigh Dickinson auditorium to the other. Then it was silent as a capacity crowd assailed the "angry" voice.

But, this time it spoke loudly and disappointingly, as angry voices often do. "Twenty-five cents!"

The chuckle matured into a laugh. The "angry" man continued.

"And the funny thing about it—the dance is a hunk and a quarter. It just gives a man an idea of what he's worth."

### Sensitive Man

The audience knew what it was in for. They had come out on a cold Friday night to hear a sensitive man speak about things that are warm and funny to them. (The plight of the poor starving, empty Ovaltine jar, the lost art of head-thumping and the unfortunate Cheap White Sox.) They had come to see a man they can listen to any week night. They had come to see Jean Shepherd for a 25-cent admission.

Shepherd's visit to FDU, entitled "An Evening With Jean Shepherd," was sponsored by the Rutherford campus student council and "The Editor," the student newspaper. Shepherd's appearance proved a university dance.

Although he is best known for his nightly 11:15 program on WOR radio, Shepherd is a man of many talents. He has acted on the legitimate stage, worked in night clubs, written books, "cut" comedy albums, and written articles and drawn cartoons for The Village Voice. He is a product of a Chicago childhood, the steel mills, Indiana University, World War II, and the U.S. Army. He speaks on all these subjects with an enthusiasm, wit, and warmth that captivates an audience and draws the listener to turn him off.

Shepherd seems to be an angry man, but more than that, he is concerned. He deplores spathy, but is concerned with but two related topics, which he airs nightly. He is not particularly concerned with wars, the Bomb, politics, or the important things like Jack Paar (although he speaks on all with equal vigor). His topics go deeper than that.

### Life and Truth

He talks about life and truth. He speaks about these two little words in a manner that would shame many a philosopher. Most important, he tells about their effect on other people—especially Jean Shepherd. When he talks, it is often humorous. This is only natural.

However, Shepherd is important in the radio field—not be-



JEAN SHEPHERD

cause he talks—but because people listen. About 500 people listened Friday night. (The auditorium-gym was so jammed that additional chairs had to be secured. Finally, bleachers were used to seat another 40 persons.)

What is Jean Parker Shepherd? Any fan has a multitude of questions to ask him, but that one is at the top of the list. Up until Friday evening he had defied definition. This reporter asked the one man who could give him an answer.

Jean Shepherd scratched his head thoughtfully and said regretfully, "I'm sorry, I can't help you."

Alas, he still defies description. The one man who could help... could not.

Is he a comic? No, he never really tells a joke. Is he a wit? No, he delves further into his subject. Is he a critic? Who isn't? Is he a philosopher, humanitarian, satirist, psychologist, or humorist? The last description probably fits him best.

"Nobody takes a humorist seriously. Humorists can get away with murder. I like it that way."

He then went on to make references to J. D. Salinger, Barry Goldwater, Billy Graham, and Fidel Castro. In short, he "got away with murder."

Concerning Goldwater, he said, quite frankly, "He would have us return to the simple, homely virtues of our forefathers, but they were all revolutionists."

However, Shepherd, the humorist, is but one aspect of the man. While guesting on the Long John Nebel Show, which follows its own broadcast, Jean summed it all up when he called himself a non-stop talker.

He has made non-stop soliloquy ("It's not a monologue," he insists) a profession. Few have done this successfully. Only Will Rogers and possibly Robert Benchley come to mind. However, Shepherd is incomparable.

### His Famous Book

At Fairleigh, Shepherd did a short soliloquy from a play. For the most part, though, it was monologue. What was probably the high point of the evening came when a bright-eyed young scholar asked about his book, "I Libertine."

The author answered with the long rambling story-teller's quality that has made him famous. It was then revealed that he was the perpetrator of the biggest literary hoax of the 20th century!

A few years ago Shepherd had asked his listeners to think of the weirdest book title possible, then phone him. "I Libertine" by Frederick Roland Hewing was born. Both title and author are fictitious.

He then told his entire radio audience to periodically ask for the book in various book stores. What resulted was a mass movement that sent New York book dealers into hiding.

According to Shepherd, the fictitious title reached the New York Times best-seller list, was banned by the Catholic Church, and Earl Wilson's column read, "Had lunch with Freddy Hewing—great guy."

"In fact," says Shep, "some libraries still carry file cards on the book."

Finally, the story broke in, of all places, the front page of The Wall Street Journal. Eventually, due to popular demand, Shepherd wrote the book.

"I Libertine" is not the only book he has written. "The World of George Aor" was published about a year ago. Shepherd's two comedy albums, "Jean Shepherd and Other Fables" and "Will Failure Spoil Jean Shepherd?", have done very nicely, he says. He has also appeared in a variety of off-Broadway plays. Because of his tight schedule, he had to curtail last year's television program, "Inside Jean Shepherd". It was similar to his night-time talk show on radio.

As for the future, Jean has begun taping a TV show for WABC which should appear next year. A new book entitled "What Time Does The Balloon Go Up?" is also in the offing. Pertaining to special engagements, Shepherd said, if asked, he would consider speaking at other colleges. "Yes, I'd speak at Tranerck," he said, referring to one of Fairleigh's other two campuses.

At the beginning of his talk, Shepherd declared he was not a nice person. On the radio he often gives an angry impression.

However, at FDU, he charmed his audience with the wit and smile that befits — not an angry man — but a nice person.

He once said, "We're all in the same boat — all of us. All treading at once. All hoping to God our boat won't sink."

If the world can depend on "angry men" like Jean Shepherd, we won't sink.

By JOHN CICHOWSKI

### LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT

AN ORDINANCE TO REGULATE THE INSTALLATION OF BURGLAR ALARM EQUIPMENT IN PATERSON POLICE HEADQUARTERS AND FIRE ALARM EQUIPMENT IN THE PATERSON FIRE HEADQUARTERS BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF FIRE AND POLICE COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF PATERSON AS FOLLOWS:

#### SECTION 1: DEFINITIONS.

Burglar Alarm Equipment shall be defined as any and all equipment installed in the Paterson Police Headquarters for the purpose of transmitting a signal or alarm to the attention of the Police Department from a location in the City of Paterson outside of the Police Headquarters for the purpose of obtaining police response thereto.

Fire Alarm Equipment shall be defined as any and all equipment installed in the Paterson Fire Headquarters for the purpose of transmitting a signal or alarm to the attention of the Fire Department from a location in the City of Paterson outside of the Fire Headquarters for the purpose of obtaining response thereto.

Contracting Party shall be defined as any person, firm or corporation entering into an agreement with the City of Paterson for the installation of burglar alarm equipment in the Paterson Police Headquarters and/or fire alarm equipment in the Paterson Fire Headquarters.

SECTION 2: No person, firm or corporation shall be permitted to install any burglar alarm equipment in Police Headquarters or fire alarm equipment in Fire Headquarters without first having entered into a contract with the City of Paterson to do so.

SECTION 3: Each contract shall provide: (a) that for each installation there shall be paid to the City of Paterson a fee of Fifty (\$50.00) Dollars.

(b) in addition thereto there shall be paid to the City of Paterson an amount equal to ten (10%) per cent of the gross annual charges paid by the person, firm or corporation in whose behalf the said installation has been made;

(c) permits shall be granted to representatives of the City of Paterson to inspect and examine the books and records of the contracting party upon forty-eight (48) hours' notice in writing;

(d) copies of all bills forwarded by the contracting party to its customers shall be sent to the City Comptroller simultaneously therewith;

(e) the obligation for the maintenance and upkeep of all burglar and fire alarm equipment so installed, shall be the sole responsibility of the contracting party.

SECTION 4: All persons, firms or corporations having installed burglar and fire alarm equipment in the Paterson Police and Fire Headquarters shall, on the effective date of this ordinance shall within sixty (60) days hereafter a contract with the City of Paterson in accordance with the terms and provisions of this ordinance or shall remove said installation within said period of time.

SECTION 5: All burglar and fire alarm equipment installed pursuant to the terms of this ordinance shall be conformable with specifications approved by the Boarding Fire & Police Commissioners.

SECTION 6: The ordinance shall take effect on the passage of a resolution and shall be enforceable.

PASSED: November 17, 1962