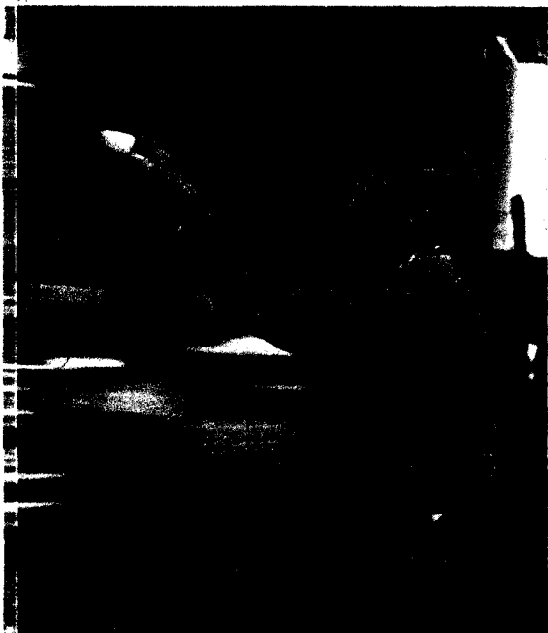




Conductor Charlie Kincaid (left) and head brakeman Johnny Osteen take time for chow in caboose 2098 at end of run in Albuquerque, New Mexico



Cliff Jacobsen kids passing Diesel whose crew has no stove, no coffee



Telling engineer to bring train in more, rear brakeman rotates wrists as he guides coupling of cars in a yard



Skipper checks watch constantly during run. He is responsible for keeping train on time

PHOTOGRAPHS FOR COLLIER'S BY MARVIN KONER

## Collier's COLOR CAMERA



Brakeman Johnny Osteen uncouples locomotive tender from car behind. All uncoupling is manual



From cupola—raised observation deck of caboose—Skipper Kincaid watches train

# Little Red CABOOSE

**C**ABOOSES—those little shanties hung on the ends of freight trains—are rolling offices out of which strong men do business. Fitted with desks, tools, cookstoves and bunks, they are traveling headquarters for conductor and crew. Up front, the engineer and fireman yank 20, 40 or 100 cars along at 40, 50 or 60-plus miles an hour; but it's the conductor and his brakemen who hold the train together.

Called everything from brain boxes to monkey cages, cabooses pilot groups of cars from one terminal to the next, hand them over to other cabooses and locomotives and rattle back home again with a new batch. The long, fast red-ball freight trains you see chewing up the right of way at breakneck speeds are fed their cars by dozens of cabooses run by scores of men from here to Whistlestop and back again.

Charlie Kincaid and his crew are typical. They ride caboose 2098 on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe's Third District local of the New Mexico Division, pulling out of Las Vegas, New Mexico, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 5:30 A.M. and running west some eight hours and 131 miles to Albuquerque. They make the return trip on alternate days.

Charlie Kincaid, forty-six, has been railroading for 20 years. He's the conductor. On the train you call him Skipper, Boss Man, the Brain. He's the man with the book and the watch. On his local run, he's got to know where to pick up bathtubs and put down tractors. Skippers on the main line have the same worries—only more so. Often sitting behind mile-long manifests, they have scores of cars to keep tabs on—carload shipments of fruit, livestock, armaments, the thousand-and-one products that tie the nation together. The Skipper and his boys keep their eyes on everything—and the Skipper is the boss on every train, even to the engineer.

On Santa Fe's 2098, Charlie's assistants are Clifford Jacobsen, the rear-end brakeman; and John Osteen, the head brakeman, who rides the "head," or front end of the train. Cliff and Johnny do most of their work when a train is being made up and cars are being redistributed. Their heaviest jobs are coupling and uncoupling, and working the hand brakes of unattached cars. On the run, they help the Skipper keep an eye on the wheels, the load, the signals and the rails. If Johnny wants to get from the head to the rear end to talk to the Skipper or sit down a while, he's got to walk along the tops of the moving cars. That's not easy, but like the old-timers say: "If you ain't half man, half monkey you've got no business in the cage on the tail of a freight."

SEY CHASSLER

Collier's for July 28, 1951



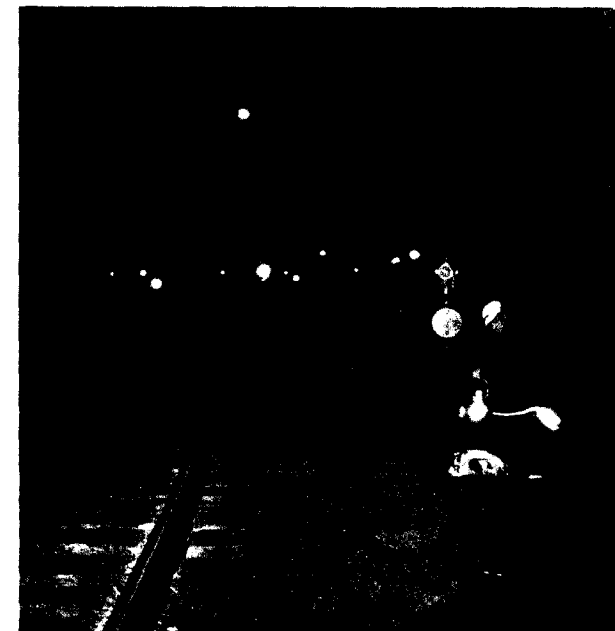
After closing a switch, rear-end brakeman hops on moving caboose, highballs engineer to speed ahead



Brakeman rides helper locomotive taken on to push heavy freight up steep grade



During run Osteen checks wheels, brakes, load while "riding top" of speeding train to head end



After night's rest, crew starts again, as switch is thrown in predawn darkness





CULVER

Two great faces. Dead-pan Buster Keaton joined big-nosed Durante in film *The Passionate Plumber*.



Two great showmen. Sir Harry Lauder, Scotch comic, met Jimmy in Glasgow, praised him highly.

Two great noses. Durante and Big Rosie, elephant with whom he shared billing in extravaganza *Jumbo*.

INTERNATIONAL



Continuing *SCHNOZZOLA! Jimmy Durante's Life Story*

# Schnozz Goes

Performing without his pals, Jim hit hard sledding in the thirties. But he had fun, too—as when he visited Europe on a “personal disappearance”

*The piano lessons paid for by his father, a poor barber in lower Manhattan, started Jimmy Durante in the entertainment business. He played at Coney Island and Chinatown cafés before meeting up with singer Eddie Jackson and dancer Lou Clayton to start a great team. With Durante as comedian, the trio grew famous in speak-easies, in vaudeville and in musical comedy. In 1929 they made one film in the East. And then Jimmy got an offer from Hollywood—but without his partners. At the urging of his two friends, he accepted. Clayton became Jimmy's business manager, and in the early '30s the trio headed West, hopes pinned to the humble Schnozz*

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**I**F I had gone with my son Jimmy to Hollywood,” the elderly ex-barber, Bartolomeo Durante, once remarked, “he wouldn't have lost the hair.”

As a matter of fact, it is doubtful that even Bartolomeo could have kept the Schnozzola from losing his hair in Hollywood, for, with rare exceptions, nothing seemed to go right for Jimmy there. He was cast in a series of potboilers that did his professional reputation no good; his name was forged to a check by an unknown con man; he was threatened by yet another hoodlum; and Eddie Jackson, one of his partners in show business, left the combination for the first time in years—and was a long time getting back into it.

Speaking of something else, Durante once remarked, in his best lower-Manhattan English: “I think the movies spert a person when they come out here.” Neither movies nor anything else could really “spert” the Schnozz, but his experiences in filmdom might have ruined a less resilient man.

Jimmy made his entrance into movie-capital society with a typical Durante flourish. He had met Louis B. Mayer briefly at the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio; on that occasion, the executive had identified himself as the man who “paid the checks.” Soon afterward, Mayer invited Durante and some other stars to a party at his home. Jimmy was puzzled by the deference with which even the loftiest of the stars treated Mayer. He turned to Lou Clayton—the erstwhile dancing member of the team of Clayton, Jackson and Durante, who was now serving as Jimmy's business manager—and sought clarification. “Ain't that only the cashier?” he whispered.

Clayton, presumably too startled to reply, didn't enlighten Durante; when the Schnozz encountered the movie executive later in the evening, he greeted him with cordial good fellowship. “Always glad to see you,” Jimmy told Mayer. “Never too busy to say hello to the cashier.”

The grinning Mayer finally set Durante straight. The first picture in which Jimmy worked in Hollywood was Charles MacArthur's adaptation of the story *Get Rich Quick Wallingford*, by George Randolph Chester. Directed by the late Sam Wood, it scored a great critical and popular success, and so did Durante personally. The *Cyrano of the Cellars* had put his famous nose to a golden grindstone, and his producers all but kissed him. It looked as if fortune was smiling on the Schnozz.

But paradoxically, his initial success brought him trouble. Suddenly in great demand on the M-G-M lot, Jimmy was used in one picture after another—usually when a producer felt he had a film that needed uplift. Durante's contract didn't specify how many pictures he was to make in a

year, and he made a great many, to the intense distress of his business manager. The furious Clayton reported after one trip to New York that he had seen Jimmy's name in lights at three different theaters within a two-block area.

Despite the prominence of Jimmy's billing on Broadway, where he was loved and admired, he got few worth-while roles in most of these pictures. Usually, he played mere comedy bits, sometimes simply walking on, rolling his eyes, saying, “Hot-cha-cha-cha,” and making his exit. He grew so tired of that expression, which he had first used during his night-club days, that he ultimately dropped it from his repertoire and refused ever to say it again.

After Wallingford, Durante applied the pulmotor of his personality to a weakling called The Cuban Love Song; he followed that up by appearing in another dilly, *The Passionate Plumber*; in all, during his first year, he supplied adrenalin to four such films. As time went on, the number of bad roles mounted, and Jimmy's popularity began to wane.

There was just one bright spot during this Hollywood period. In 1932, M-G-M lent Durante to Paramount for a part in *The Phantom President*, which starred George M. Cohan. The celebrated actor-song writer was a long-time friend of Clayton, Jackson and Durante, and he saw to it that Jimmy was properly treated.

“I'm not very hot about going to California,” Cohan told Clayton in New York, “because I don't know just how things are done out there. But I'm glad to be with Durante, and I'm going to see that his part is good. Let's see what we can do for that great guy.”

Cohan did succeed in building up the Schnozzola's part to such an extent that he later commented: “They ought to call this picture *The Nose*, instead of *The Phantom President*.”

## Pouring Oil on Troubled Waters

Despite what threatened to be a general downturn in his career, the Schnozzola remained his usual humble, cheerful self. He soothed the aroused Clayton, refused to sulk, and amiably accepted the parts that were handed to him.

“We're going along all right,” he reassured Lou. “We're going good.”

One factor that contributed to Durante's calm amidst the chaos of his film career was the fact that his wife, Jeanne—who had never liked having Jimmy perform in the speak-easies of Broadway—had found real happiness in California. She had never enjoyed the East, feeling that her husband's time-consuming work there posed a threat to her marriage; on the West Coast, they were able to spend more time together than ever before.

Nevertheless, there were occasions when Jimmy had to leave California to venture anew into the hurly-burly of Broadway. Early in 1933, he received an offer to go back on the stage in a musical comedy called *Strike Me Pink*. The show, already in production, was backed by Waxey Gordon, bootleg syndicate head, collector of first editions, graduate of Sing Sing, and would-be emulator of Florenz Ziegfeld.

Durante didn't want to leave California, largely because of Jeanne's objections. Furthermore, he wanted no part of Waxey Gordon. However, Benevolent Charlie, a friend of the old days, had asked Durante to take the part as a special

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