

## *Lou Costello Final Speech*

Gyu Min, now Bud Abbott

\*Takes a shot\*

No, Who is on first!

I'm asking YOU who's on first

Well, that's the man's name.

That's who's name?

Yes.

\*Pause\*

\*Laughs\*

Now those were the days, huh Lou. Who's on first! People call it the best skit of all time! The routine that took wordplay comedy to another level! The act that was placed in the National Baseball Hall of Fame in New York, that continues to play to this day! The performance that we never did the same way twice!

\*Looks at the calendar; March 24th, 1978\*

Today was it, Lou, I'm growing too old to remember myself! A little boy came up to me this morning, it's the 30th anniversary of Who's On First already! It's been a while.

It feels just like yesterday when we began our work, wow. Yeah, you were at the Eltinge Burlesque Theater, I remember. 42nd Street, New York City, the early 1930s. Just a minor burlesque comedian starting off; you needed a partner for your show that night, what were the odds that a puny cashier like me would fill in! And who would've thought that a devious, fast-talking, straight man and a short, fat, sweet-natured dimwit would make such a great duo? The second I met you, I knew your clean brand of comedy is what I needed.

I remember when we got together officially in 1936 and signed with the William MORRIS talent agency... Then we were quickly off to The Kate Smith Hour radio show! 2 years as regular performers, we were able to first perform none other than "Who's on First?". It wasn't long until we were called the most popular comedy team of all time, spreading laughter throughout the nation. Boy was it fun. From our continuous radio shows on The Kate Smith Hour that introduced some of our best material, to the booming numbers with our movies including "Buck Privates" and "Abbott and Costello meet Frankenstein" getting us to the top of the box office at a point, even reaching into the world of TV with The Abbott and Costello Show. The pioneers of burlesque comedy.

And I remember, ever since we first worked together, I always admired your determination and passion. You told me you wanted to perform ever since you were little. Taking inspiration from silent film actor Charlie Chaplin, you dropped out of high school to pursue your Hollywood dream! You even had a career as well! The free throw champion of New Jersey, an exceptional boxing career under the name Lou King, you turned down several scholarships offers to hitchhike to Hollywood instead. And it wasn't any easy for you immediately. The only jobs you could find featured minor stuntman work at best. When you finally decided to go into comedy, our timing to meet was perfect for each other. Since you met me, you continued to express your driving passion

for performing. You'd give up your financial rights to me constantly just for the sake of another gig or one more show. You were such a clown then.

But with great success comes its own problems, huh. All throughout my career with you, a couple of drinks after a show wasn't anything new. Meanwhile, you were suffering from your problems with rheumatic fever. It was something like 1945, I was going through quite the low point in my life. I ended up hiring a domestic servant of yours that you fired. I'm sorry for that Lou, I wasn't alright. We let a molehill become a mountain through mistakes. You wouldn't talk to me outside of cameras since then. It wasn't long until we went our separate ways.

Then 1959. After your mediocre solo career in film, you died of rheumatic fever, just short of your 53rd birthday. You stuck a needle of laughter and happiness into the ball that is the world, only to take it out inevitably. People loved you, Lou. And I didn't stand a chance. Nobody would be able to live up to you. I even tried at several comebacks with other comedians, but all they did was blatantly try to imitate your natural poise.

But you sure as heck left a legacy buddy. Not only to people all around the world but outside your performing life as well.

Remember Milton Pommer? The 14-year-old girl who sold her long blonde hair to purchase and promote war stamps, we called her goldilocks. Her appendix removal had complications, and it resulted in her to be just around 60 pounds; she was supposed to die. But you read the paper about her, and you flew to the mayo clinic in Rochester to pay for her operation. You saved lives. Or what about the Lou Costello Jr Recreation Centre in Los Angeles? In commemoration of your son Little Butch, who drowned in the family pool just under a year old in an accident, you created a place where children were able to play safely, saving thousands of children by allowing them to learn to swim. And of course, me. You inspired and helped me when I needed it the most. Everything you did behind the scenes, I saw it all. And the worst your hardships, the more you shared laughter to others.

So despite everything that happened Lou, you'll still be the man on first.