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Autobiography & Memoir

Soupy Sez! My Life and Zany Times
Soupy Sales
M. Evans and Co.
978-0-87131-935-7
(November 25, 2001)

"Maybe Soupy's greatest

gift was that he was the first entertainer who made us feel hip without wishing we were grown-ups," one of Sales's admirers says of the comic's early TV show for kids. Those old enough to remember the 1960s will remember that "The Soupy Sales Show" was the top-rated program on television. Sales, whose real name was Milton Supman, was born in Franklinton, North Carolina, in 1926. After graduating from college, he was hired as a radio scriptwriter at a small station in Huntington, West Virginia, soon becoming the area's most popular D.J. He moved to Cincinnati in 1950 and began his TV career with "Soupy's Soda Shop." In 1953 he moved to Detroit, worked in TV there, then went to Los Angeles in 1960, where he eventually became a television legend before moving to New York.

Soupy Sez! is his memoir of 50 years in the business. His shtick was throwing pies in his guests' faces (sometimes he was on the receiving end). Tony Curtis, Burt Lancaster, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Alice Cooper were just some of his targets. His shows also featured wisecracking puppets—Pookie the Lion, Marilyn Mon Wolf, Herman the Flea, Hippy the Hippo, and two dogs, White Fang and Black Tooth. Two actors provided the voices of all these characters. Throughout the book are tributes from his peers, among them Larry Storch and Dick Clark. Bill Carruthers, one of Sales's directors, Peter Strand, a producer and co-writer, and Frank Nastasi, an actor and colleague, have some candid—and usually funny—stories to tell.

Adding to the book's charm are Sales's definitions ("'dialogue' is how you make a phone call to a tree") and corny jokes ("Huntington has a great device for removing snow. It's called July."). Equally corny are a series of phony radio advertisements: one for Punjab cigarettes that has do to with mugging, and one about a dogcatcher school ("a job with a little bite to it"). Sales's co-author, Charles Salzberg, has written fifteen books, including Missy Hyatt, First Lady of Wrestling. Sales is seventy-five years old now and his pie-throwing days

are probably over, but readers can get an inside look at this very funny man without getting whacked in the face with meringue.