

# Laxative "In" Product For Over 35 Crowd, Radio Comedians

"Archie (Bleyer) has been drinking *Serutan* since the day they've been spelling it **front ward!**"

— Arthur Godfrey

Lincoln, Me. (DG)---

Over the years, *Serutan* had been one of the most famous laxative brands. It was also a wonderful source of jokes and laughs from the comedians of radio's golden age. Both the people who used it and the radio comedians can contribute *Serutan's* popularity to its advertising.

It was the product that made the number "35" famous. The number was associated with people who were over 35 years old, with whom the advertising was directed at. When people reached this age, they started to need help to maintain the proper bodily functions. *Serutan* was specially made to work the same way as nature's vegetables and fruits. Its "Vegetable Hydrogel" helped to gently erase the problem laxatives were used for. It was a pleasant alternative to harsh tasting and harsh working laxatives that made the people a little reluctant to use them.



■ *Serutan* was also famous as the product that spelled a word when its name was spelled backwards. Of course, *Serutan* spelled backwards was "Natures." The spelling of the product's name was where the radio comedians had their fun. With the exception of the enclosed comment by Arthur Godfrey (who was famous for mentioning other products by brand name on the air), the radio comedians didn't directly mention *Serutan* by name, but took great delight in ribbing its "Read It Backwards" advertising.



*Serutan* was the subject of tickling the funny bone, but it was really serious stuff. Since it was specially made for mature people, it usually sponsored or co-sponsored (with *Nutrex*) serious radio programs and newscasts.

When the 1940's began, *Serutan* was the sponsor of *PREDICTIONS OF THINGS TO COME*, one of radio's most talked about and controversial newscasts with Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen on NBC's *Blue Network*. Both Pearson and Allen gathered together the news some people in government and big business didn't want the listeners to know about. Unfortunately for those people, Pearson and Allen were accurate

in what they reported. At the latter stages of each newscast, Pearson and Allen made their predictions of what would take place during the coming week.

The duo broke up in 1942 when Allen went overseas to report the latest war news. Pearson continued solo on the newscast with the same hard-hitting news as before. *Serutan* sponsored his newscast for another 3 years.

After concluding its sponsorship of Pearson's newscasts, *Serutan* later sponsored other newscasts on either the ABC or Mutual networks. One of the newscasts made its debut when ABC was still known as the Blue Network. For its initial season, *Serutan* was the sponsor of *MONDAY MORNING HEADLINES* with Don Gardiner. If you examine the program's name closely, you might think it was on the air on Monday morning. Good guess, but wrong. The broadcasts didn't air on Monday--- or even in the morning for that matter! The newscast was on the air every Sunday evening at 7:15 PM. The reason why *MONDAY MORNING HEADLINES* was named as such was because the headlines that would make the Monday morning newspaper occurred on Sunday.

*Serutan* was also a prime example of "what could have been." From a personal viewpoint, it was unfortunate *Serutan* wasn't made by *American Home Products* (the *Anacin* people), because it would have been the perfect sponsor for one of the programs the company sponsored. If *American Home Products* did make *Serutan*, it was probably a good bet *Serutan* would have sponsored the CBS serial *THE ROMANCE OF HELEN TRENT*. If you really think about this, it's the perfect sponsor because *Serutan* was specially made for people over 35--- and the program's heroine Helen Trent was known to be over 35.

Like many of the sponsors of old time radio, *Serutan* eventually faded into oblivion. It was replaced with the modern laxatives of today. It's gone but not completely forgotten. For decades, *Serutan* was one of the most popular laxatives--- and the joking by the radio comedians helped it to maintain its popularity. It will forever be associated with the number 35, and the only product that encouraged the people to spell its name backwards.

