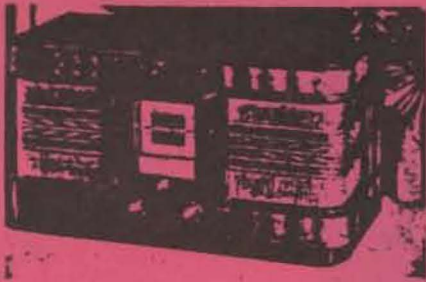


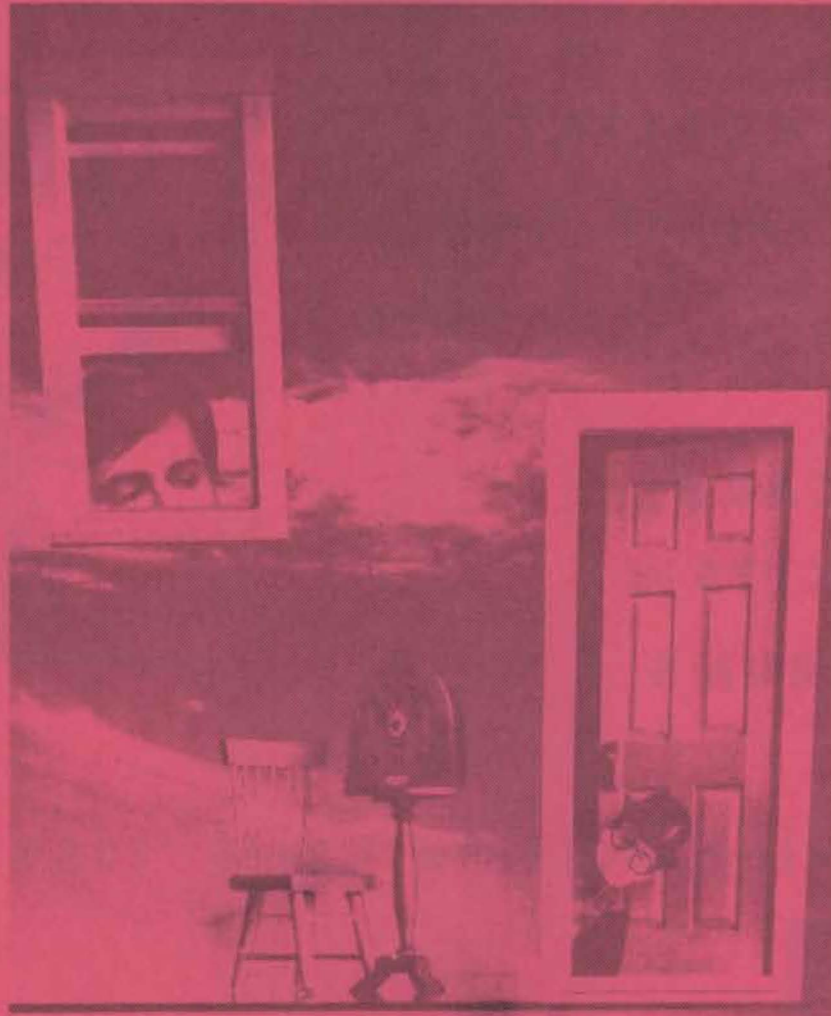
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*PRESENTS*

# **MEMORIES**



**THE RESURRECTION OF RADIO DRAMA**

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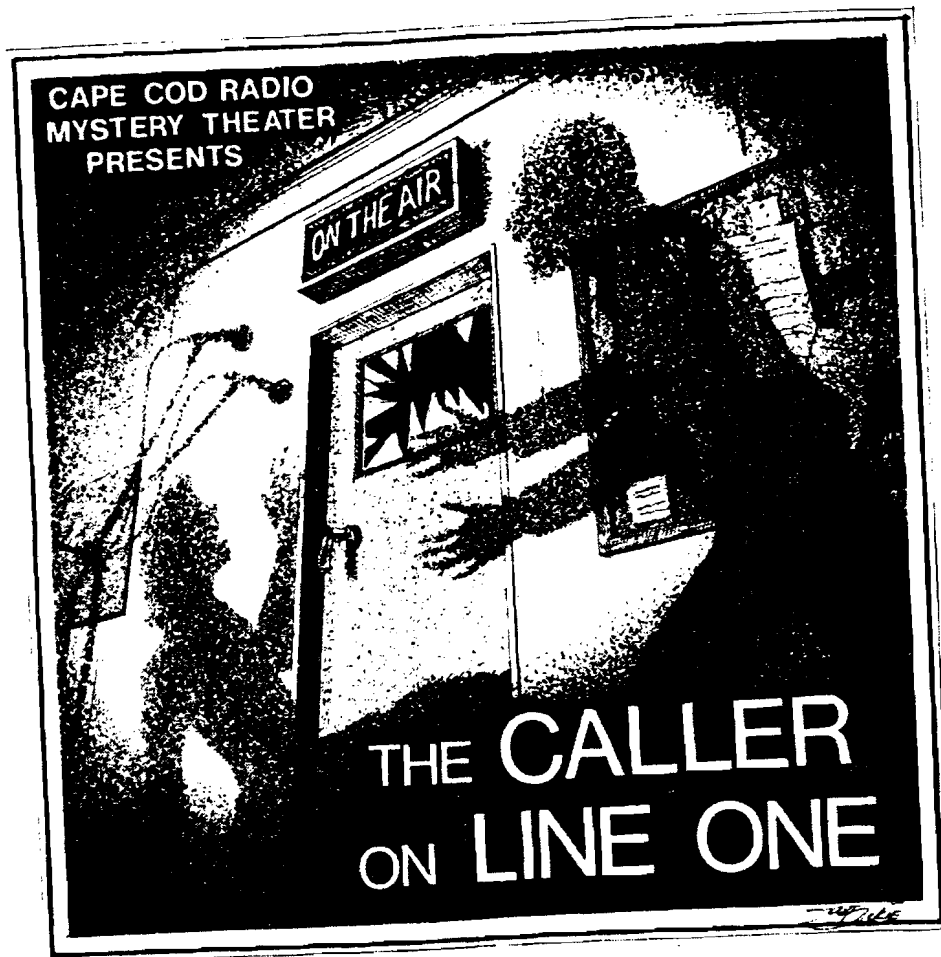
**THE RESURRECTION OF RADIO DRAMA**



**CAPE COD  
RADIO MYSTERY  
THEATER™**

HALLOWEEN NIGHT, 1983. A call comes to the local police: the host of a local call in show has been murdered on the air. The calls persists, both to the police and the radio station, but no body can be found and no killer located.

The talk show host never existed and the killer was the electronically recorded voice of a local actor. The hysterical phone calls were real. This "War of the Worlds" scenario actually happened, on Cape Cod and accurately illustrates the power of radio dramas produced by CAPE COD RADIO MYSTERY THEATER.



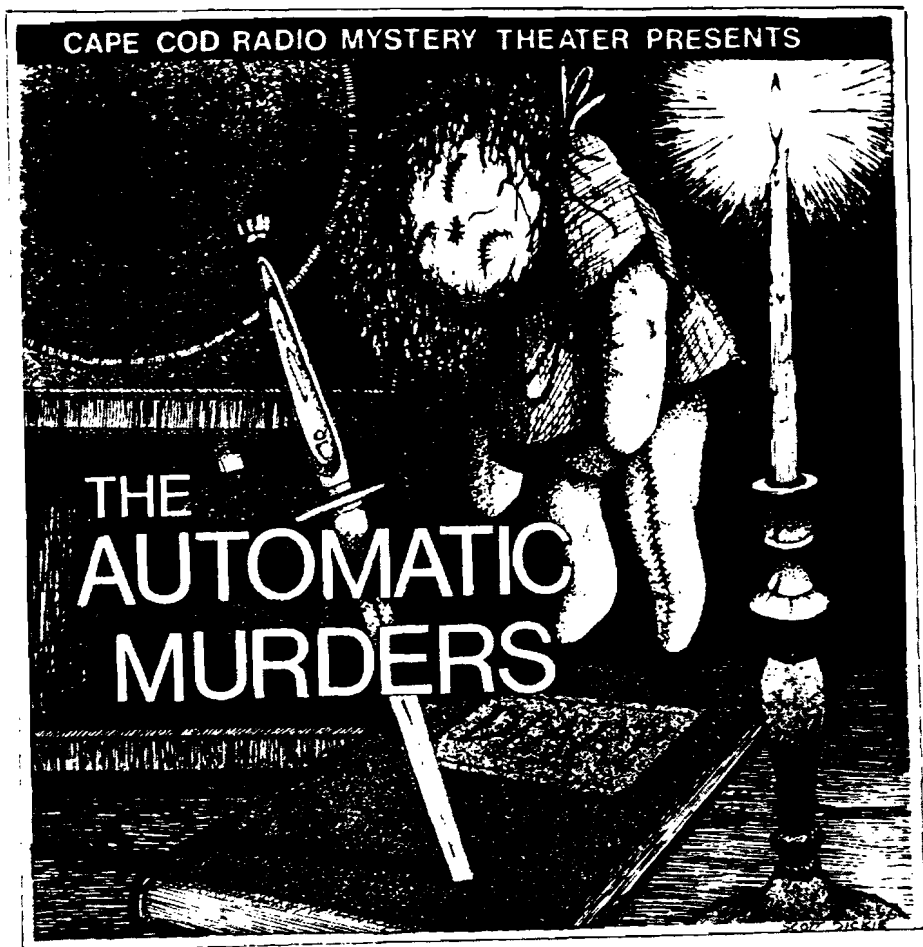
Tanya Macklin is host of "Talk Line" – a weekly, advice-on-the-air, radio program. Tonight, the problems of her listeners are about to take a back seat to one of her own. A problem so large it will threaten to transform her normally sane world into a nightmarish world of terror. A true, suspense thriller in the tradition of "Sorry Wrong Number."

(36 minutes)



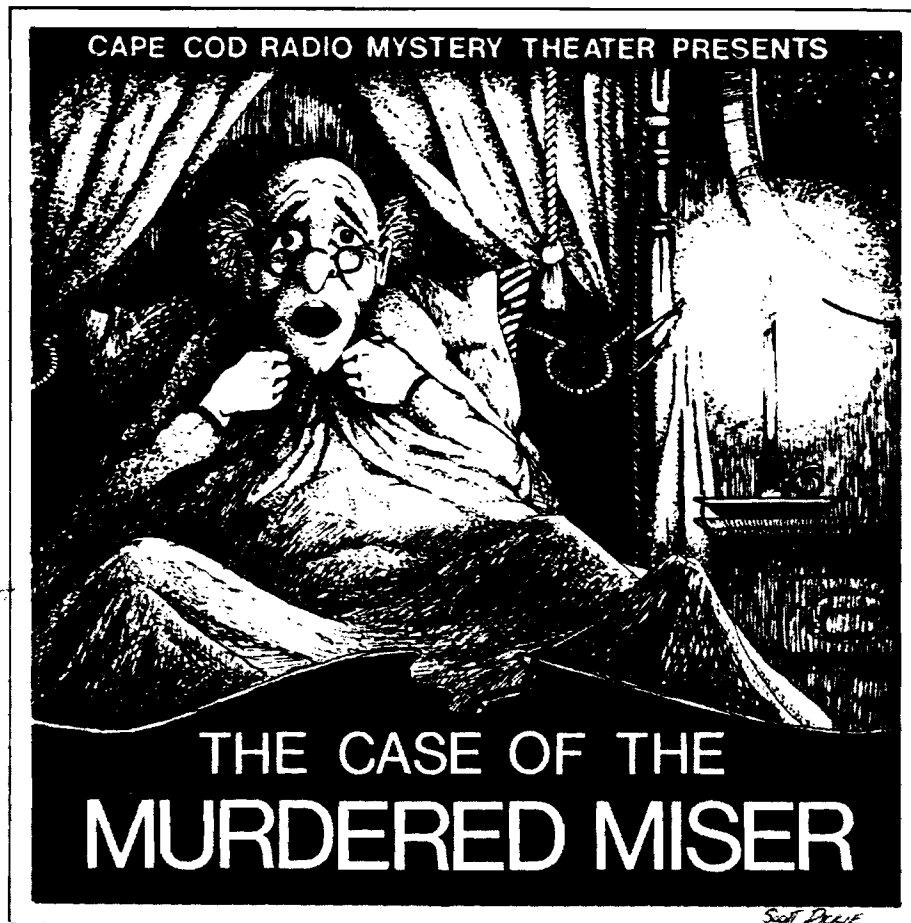
"It indicates how much is possible on radio, and the strength of people's imaginations," say CAPE COD RADIO MYSTERY THEATER creator, writer, and director STEVEN THOMAS ONEY. "The Caller on Line One" was the second drama produced by Radio Mystery Theater and along with a dozen other episodes, was released on audio cassette by a Metacom Audio Publishing Group.

Pleasant, idyllic Cape Cod is transformed in Oney's dramas into a dark, brooding, impenetrable peninsula. "The Cape is a good place for a mystery," Oney, a Barnstable (Mass.) resident since 1978 explains. "It's an old part of the country; there are ghosts, Indians, puritans, old graveyards, the ocean and shipwrecks." From the legend of the pirate ship "Whydah" to the gothic novels of Phoebe Atwood Taylor and the hardboiled detective stories of Robert B. Parker, Cape Cod has proved an aptly atmospheric setting for tales of mystery and suspense.



**A premonition of murder leading to violent death. Voodoo, séances, automatic writing and psychic messages from the dead are all elements in a bizarre murder plot. A worried Doctor Scofield calls in his friend, Captain Waverly Underhill. (49 minutes)**

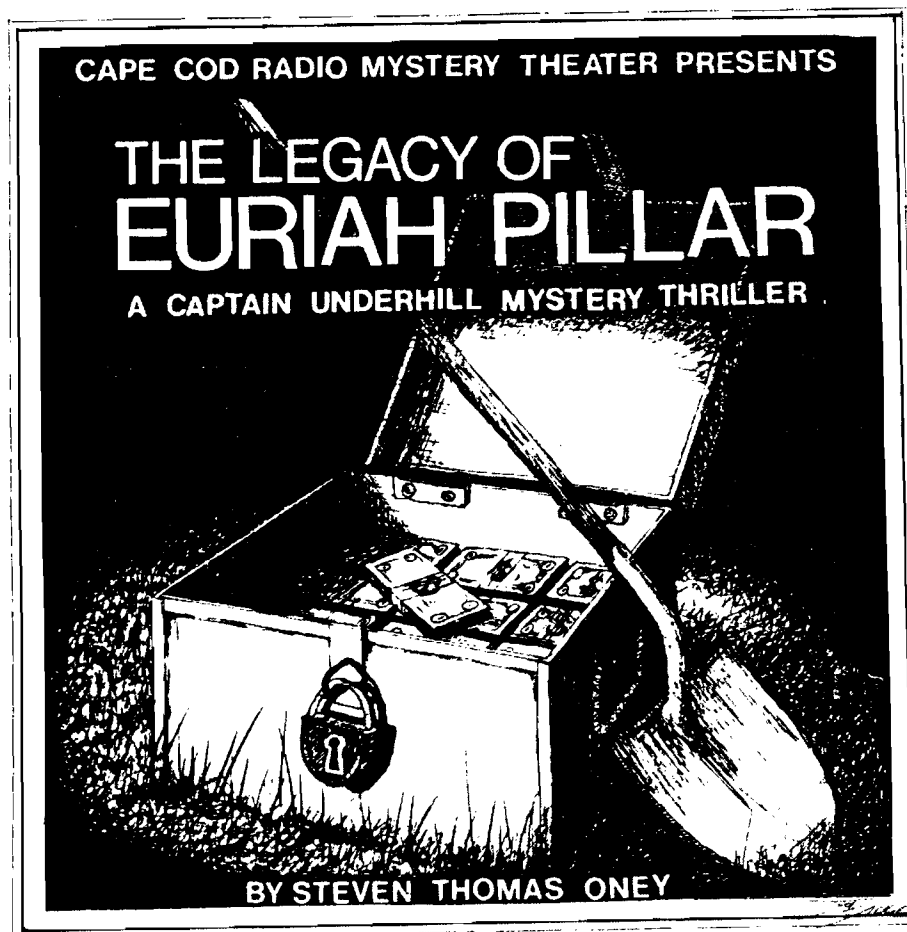
"The further away you get from the Cape the more interest there is; we're trying to give people a sense of the Cape. When people think of London, they think of Sherlock Holmes. In the same way it would be nice to create a fictional literary presence here," says Oney. The void is being filled by Captain Waverly Underhill, a retired detective who along with his side-kick Dr. Alexander Scofield, is called upon to solve a handful of mysteries ranging from a murder at a Provincetown art show to a family curse involving a mysterious beast stalking Cape marshes.



An "historical" mystery. A flashback, courtroom melodrama that poses the hypothetical question: What if Ebenezer Scrooge had been murdered? With appearances by Charles Dickens, Bob Cratchit, and that most famous of English barristers, Sir Percy Mason  
(68 minutes)

Oney's entry into radio drama came after blind luck led him to pick up some cassettes of old radio mysteries. The early shows were primitive compared to today's standards, but Oney realized they contained the essence of what makes mysteries entertaining: pacing, heavy plot lines and tension. He submitted a number of scripts to CBS Radio Mystery Theater, and they were enthusiastic about the ideas, Oney says the varying length of programs from 36 to 77 minutes, ultimately resulted in their rejection.

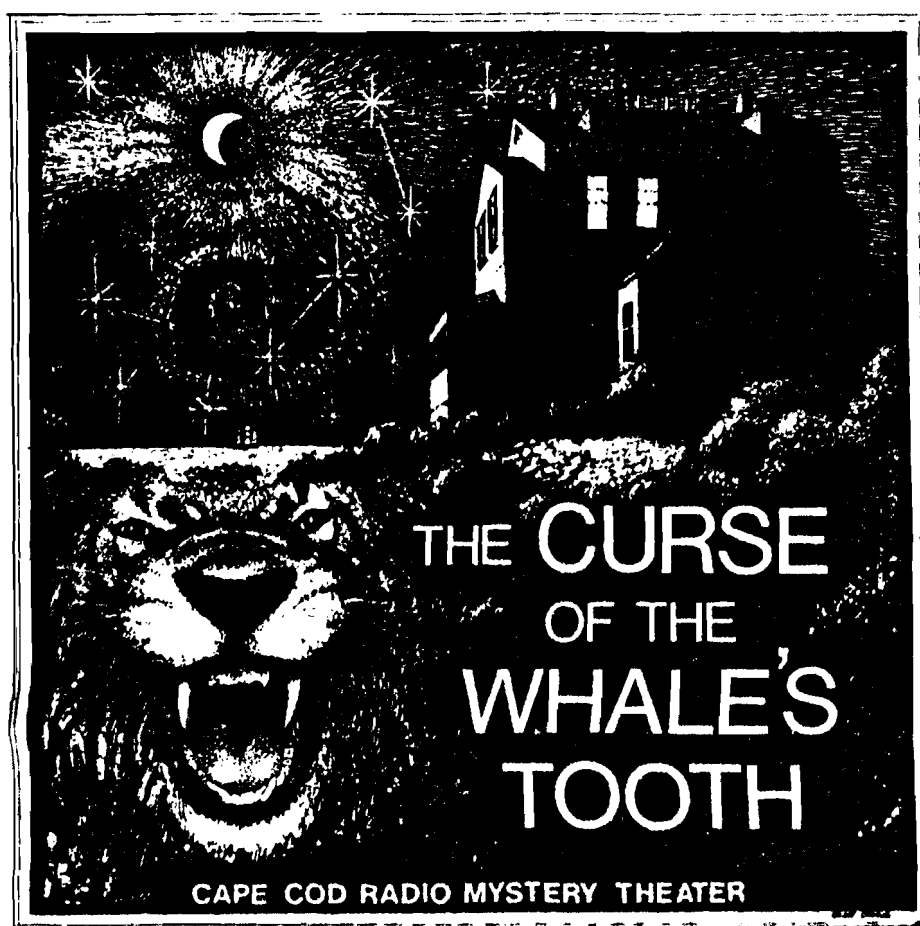
Oney found other people interested in resurrecting radio drama and, together with engineer John Todd and musician/composer Mark Birmingham the first Cape Cod Radio Mystery Theater drama was produced on a shoestring budget at HT Recording Studio in Dennis (Mass) and aired September 1, 1983 on Provincetown's WOMR.



A "twist" mystery. The bizarre terms contained in an old man's will set off a chain of events that leads to treachery, deceit and threefold murder. A Captain Waverly Underhill mystery thriller.  
(44 minutes)

The first few programs were broadcast irregularly on WOMR during 1983 and 1984 and on Cape Cod's Community College's WKKL, and Martha's Vineyard's WMVY. Later, through a grant from the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities and help from The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, more than 80 stations across the country affiliated with National Public Radio broadcast episodes of Cape Cod Radio Mystery Theater.

"Now that I've stumbled into it, I'm surprised other people haven't taken advantage of radio," says Onet. "Radio is close to Reading: you have an ability to get inside someone's mind which you don't have in TV and film."



A gothic mystery with a modern day twist. The classic mystery story combining a lurking sense of danger in a strongly atmospheric setting. A strange and interlocking chronology of events dating back to the whaling days of New Bedford. The reawakening of a family curse foretelling that another death is about to take place. A Captain Waverly Underhill mystery.  
(76 minutes)



With only a handful of radio dramas broadcast nationally, Oney thinks the medium has been neglected, relegated to gossipy talk shows and bubble gum music. "Radio was such an exciting medium for a long time, then television came along and usurped it," he says. "There has been radio drama all along, but on such a small scale. Nobody has yet to explore all of the possibilities." Through **Cape Cod Radio Mystery Theater** and other outlets Oney feels, "more and more people are learning to open up their ears."

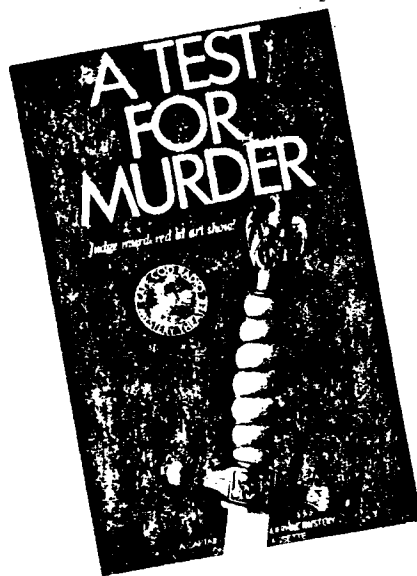


A psychological thriller. A journey inside the mind of a young woman who lies trapped in a coma. A guided tour through the twilight realm of the subconscious mind, where the real and the surreal coexist, where the past mingles with the present, and where the Specter of Terror, once encountered, presents itself in its purest, most elemental form.

(42 minutes)

Unlike the old radio shows which relied on stock characters and formula scripts, Oney has attempted some rather innovative variations on the standard radio drama. "The Hypnotist" is told from the point of view of a woman who has gone into a coma after narrowly escaping a murderer. The stream of consciousness and space age sound effects come closer to avant garde video than traditional radio drama, and the tension is psychological rather than emotional or physical.

The Captain Underhill programs on the other hand, are straight laced detective stories, analytical and witty in the style that Conan Doyle would have admired. More than half of the programs recorded so far have featured the Underhill character with such titles as "The Curse of the Wales Tooth," "The Automatic Murders," and "The Legacy of Euriah Pillar."



The Judge at a Provincetown art show is murdered on opening night. Captain Waverly Underhill is faced with a freshly murdered corpse and a room full of suspects.

(43 minutes)

In recording technique, Oney's Scripts resemble a modern musical recording more than old time radio drama. Actors, all of them local, first record dialogue; sound effects are then added, and finally the music, using a polypyonic synclavier. Mixing a program can take up to a week.

Oney plans to bring back the psychopath who created such a stir in "The Caller on Line One," as well as work on radio dramas for children. With his band of volunteers, he hopes to lead a minor revolution in radio.

He says with a grin, "I'm trying to do the same thing for radio that Hitchcock did for film."

Timothy J. Wood  
The Review

**PLAYBACK** A murderer records his crimes and sends the tapes to the police. In his own demented twisted mind, he's daring the police to stop him before before he kills again! Audio mystery at its finest!

(69 minutes)



MURDER FROM THE BRIDGE Waverly Underhill and Alexander Scofield M.D. attempt to unravel the mysterious chain of events which lead to the death of a man found aboard his sailboat in the waters off Cape Cod. Was it suicide, as the authorities have chosen to believe? Waverly Underhill thinks not.

(35 minutes)

## CAPE COD RADIO MYSTERY THEATER

"It's a foggy night on old Cape Cod. A perfect night... for a mystery!" Cape Cod Radio Mystery Theater, a radio theater organization founded in 1983 and located on Cape Cod, presents a new series of spine-chilling, radio mysteries that are destined to become classics.

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**and MARVEL COMICS**



# Radio mystery theatre producer sculpts sound effects for submarine story

*Bathroom plungers and Volvo tires create essence of underwater sounds*

By Rebecca Morris

Two actors sit ensconced in a 1960s stereo couch. Audio taping is about to begin. Washtubs, concealing microphones, hang from the ceiling and face the actors whose voices now take on an unreal, tinny quality. This is an underwater radio play.

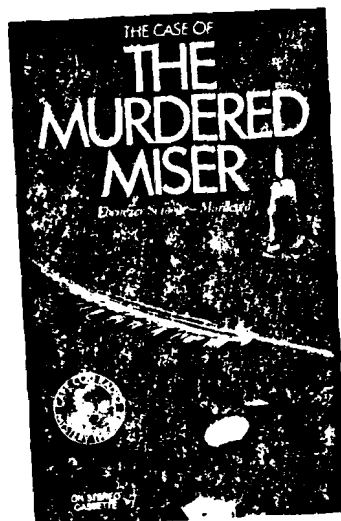
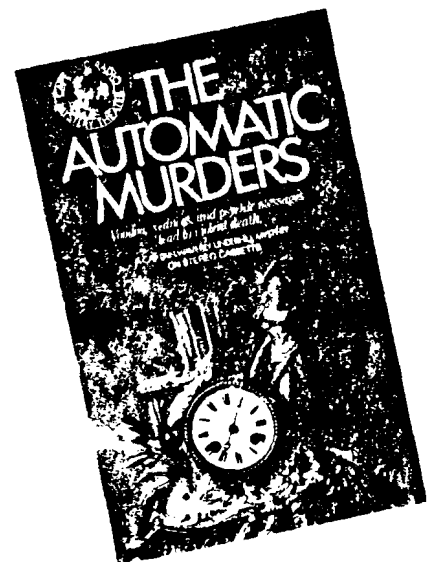
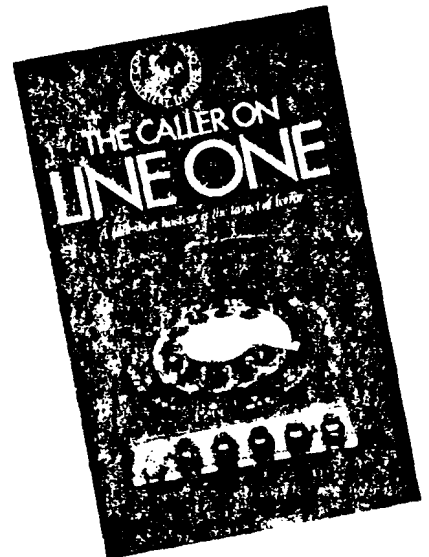
The recording studio, a converted garage in Dennis, is a mess of cables and discarded odds and ends. Standing opposite the actors, on the other side of a large window, the author and his engineer push buttons to create on audio tape what they have already imagined — two men are trapped in a bathesphere, a mini-sub, searching for treasure on the bottom of the ocean.

"This play is going to be fun, fun to do and fun to listen to," smiles Steven Oney, writer, producer and director of 11 Cape Cod Radio Mystery Theater plays. The 12th, now in production, is "Revenge of the *Titanic*." Chief engineer for the series of plays to date is John Todd. Mark Birmingham, a Cape resident who now lives primarily in California, composes and mixes the music in Los Angeles.

How a written script becomes "theater of the mind," as radio is frequently called, is a fascinating and exacting process.

The cast of characters this time around includes Stephen Russell, Dug Credit, Jim Granlund and Michael Mellor. Credit plays Captain Hugo, an entrepreneur and the money behind the pillaging of the *Titanic*. The script describes him as "renowned for his adventuresome expeditions to test the great myths and legends of the world — Loch Ness, Big Foot, Abominable Snowman and the Bermuda Triangle." Russell is Mr. Smalley, pilot of the *Hugo One*, the mini-sub. Smalley is intimidated by Captain Hugo. Granlund is a crew member aboard the *Glommer II*, mother ship to the sub and Mellor is a newsreel announcer.

To produce a radio play, actors are recorded during several weeks of rehearsals and tapings. Many sound effects are created on the spot; others are mixed in and edited later. At one point, Granlund, for example, talks to the other characters through an intercom to sound as if he is in the radio room of *Glommer II*.





Some sound is recorded on video tape on a digital recorder which produces a quieter, more suitable sound for compact disc and can be more easily manipulated when edited. The sounds are then laid on six-track tape along with the dialogue, other sound effects and original music. "Quality and time are related," Oney says of the laborious process. "There is a sculpting process to it."

Rehearsals are a series of stops and starts. Oney directs the actors while paying meticulous attention to the sound effects that will take the audience on the same voyage as Hugo and Smalley, a voyage three miles down to the dark and cold bottom of the Atlantic.

*Oney: I listened to a lot of what we did last night and I liked what you snuck in.*

*Credit: Oh. The grunts?*

*Oney: Give us a good eight seconds worth of snoring. Don't make it too realistic. We don't want a half hour's worth. You look awfully comfortable in there, Hugo.*

Oney will go to any lengths to find interesting sounds. "We did recordings in a Jacuzzi tub, from inside a car wash and in a World War II turret in the backyard of an Osterville house for this show," he explains.

Armed with a tape recorder while on a trip to Florida, Oney got the idea of taking it into the hot tub with him. "I put the mic in a plastic bag so it could go under water," Oney remembers. He then experimented, placing it sometimes close to and other times away from the powerful jets. "It made a variety of sounds. I'll use the sound where they're trapped on the bottom in the sub and they have to set off some explosives to try to free themselves," he says, obviously quite pleased with the results.

To create the sound of the bathysphere being lowered into the ocean, Oney and his wife Debbie, late one night, secured microphones to the back wheels of their Volvo wagon and put one down the gas tank. They then rocked the car back and forth to find just the right sloshing sound.

Oney is always thinking sound. When a reporter rewinds film in an automatic camera, Oney likes the sound and stores the idea away for a future production. For one play, Oney needed sounds of cars crossing a bridge. He went around his house pounding everything with his fist to see what it sounded like. Finally he found hitting a piece of rubber with a toilet bowl plunger gave him the effect he wanted.

For every 20 things that Oney tries, he uses one. He sometimes prethinks effects that he needs. It's been said that Oney doesn't watch a sunset, he *listens* to it, perceiving even the environment through his ears.





Director Steven Oney (third from left) consults with cast and crew in the control room

Oney: Can you guys talk script for a second? Stephen, can I give you the bad news while you're standing way over there? I don't think we're going to use anything we did last night (they all laugh). It wasn't that it was so bad. I made the big mistake... You two guys should have been side-by-side. There is even that part in there about "They speak in the hushed tones that one assumes in the presence of..." That business.

Oney: Tonight, if we can do it, let's do scenes seven and eight.

Russell: All for naught last night.

Oney: Not really. If we really get in a jam we could use it. It was like a rehearsal.

Russell: This must be like working in films.

Credit: You rush to the dailies and say, "God everything we shot yesterday is crap."

"He's a 'Smalley' sort of person," Russell says about the character he plays in "Revenge of the Titanic." "It is his lot in life to be always working for people who have power over him. He's not sure about this expedition, but a job is a job. Later, he lets his feelings be known. It sort

of comes out at once when things reach a crisis."

Credit says the great Hugo is a bring 'em back alive character. "He's a pompous ass, used to getting his own way and being in charge."

It is Russell's second radio mystery theater play with Oney and Credit's first. "It's great fun," Russell says of the unpaid work. "Steven is a wonderful writer. I totally missed radio. (He is 35.) I'm very much a TV baby. You often find this is the case, that people who missed something are the most active in resurrecting it."

"I remember the last of radio theater," 38-year-old Credit adds. "People don't read and exercise their imagination enough. Radio gives them a chance to paint pictures with their imaginations."

Both actors say as uncommon as radio acting is these days, it is not all that different from the stage work they usually do.

"It's still the basics. You create character," Credit says. "You're just missing one of the tools, that of stage presence. So you put more into your voice."

Russell reminds Credit that the great Russian acting teacher Konstantin Stanislavsky said voice is everything. And Russell says it is not disconcerting to work without an audience. "An audience is the icing. But the cake exists without the icing. Some of my most satisfying performances in live theater have been in rehearsals. But live theater vanishes. With this (radio), we have a permanent record."



John Todd positions microphones while Stephen Russell and Dug Credit sit 'trapped' in a simulated bathysphere

Oney: I think we will redo the paragraph on page 27 and let Hugo chime in a little more with his irritability. What we're going to do is begin with their (Hugo and Smalley) arriving at the bottom so the static needs to be higher up on your static generator there. Dug, say 'We're sinking' instead of 'We're taking on water...And a few of those whaaaahs!'"

Any resemblance of "Revenge of the Titanic" to last summer's French expedition lifting artifacts from the burial ground of the *Titanic*, which had been untouched for 75 years, is entirely deliberate on Oney's part. "There is a strong urge to lambaste the French," Oney explains. "In a way, the play is about what should have happened to them. It lampoons their behavior."

Oney takes his jabs at the French expedition. He says he names the mother ship in the play *Glommer II* because the characters are "glomming" onto things. By the play's end, the great Hugo is not the fearless man of the hour, and is in fact reduced to being just another *Titanic* souvenir.

The 1986 exploration by Robert Ballard which found the *Titanic* did not touch the remains of the ship. The luxury liner lies on the ocean floor in international waters. Various countries had attempted to stop the French from carrying off the contents, though they failed in their efforts.

"Revenge of the *Titanic*" may be set on the bottom of the ocean floor off Newfoundland, but inspiration came as Oney walked Sandy Neck Beach near his West Barnstable home. He talks of how one day he stood on a dock and watched the ferry from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia pulling into Bar Harbor, Maine. Months later, walking the Cape Cod beach, he was struck again with the image of the ferry and the idea for "Revenge of the *Titanic*" came to him "out of the blue. I was wading and all of a sudden I knew what I was going to write."

He thinks of creativity as an enigma. "You let the dog out without a leash," Oney says of ideas. "It comes back with something and you think, 'oh, that's great.' Then you have to put the leash on it and direct it. It's a mystery to yourself as you're doing it."

Oney consulted Martin Bowen of the Deep Submergence Laboratory at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution while working on his own expedition parody. Bowen was inside the mini-sub *Alvin* during Ballard's historic finding of the *Titanic* and operated Jason, the robot that went inside the ship with a camera. "I asked what it was like in the sub, the temperature at the bottom, what it sounded like. Bowen says it does sound incredible. It's hard to tell what direction sound is coming from or how far away it is. You can hear your voice bouncing back to you from the surface of the water as well as the voices above," Oney says. Oney has tried to recreate similar sound effects for his radio drama.

Oney also uses sound to foreshadow what is to come. For example, on the descent of the mini-sub to pick up the artifacts from the *Titanic*, Hugo hears music playing. He's the only one who hears it and it will be music from the same era that was playing on the *Titanic* the night it sank in 1912.

"The *Titanic* is a symbol of so much," Oney says of his subject. "It is a symbol of terror, of cowardice and of heroism. And it really lends itself to radio theater."

Oney hopes the radio play will air by Halloween. It could be rushed to completion this summer if an exhibition of *Titanic* artifacts scavenged by the French tours the U.S. "Revenge of the *Titanic* will be offered by satellite to National Public Radio affiliates across the country. About 120 NPR stations and some independents have carried the series. On Cape Cod, WFCC will carry the plays for a second year. Ironically, the Chatham station is the only one in Massachusetts to carry the locally written, acted and produced series.

Todd: Okay. Let's slate it and you're on.

Oney: Page 27, scene 6, take three, starting with the paragraph 'an orchestra playing.' ■

## RADIO GROUP'S SUCCESS IS NO MYSTERY

BY ANNE COLDEN

SPECIAL WRITER

Chatham- It's a rainy night and you're alone in your home in the woods of Cape Cod. The wind howls and hisses through the pine trees and rattles the rafters. You turn on the radio for some company and you think, some comfort.

If at 8 p.m. on Thursdays through November, you turned the dial to WFCC-FM in Chatham, comfort is not what you'll find. Instead, you may hear the sound of a corpse dropping to the floor, stairs creaking and women shrieking.

The reason! Cape Cod Radio Mystery Theater. A series of radio dramas designed to scare, enthrall and maybe even amuse listeners.

The series is the creation of Steven Oney, 36, of West Barnstable, who wrote the first installments in 1983, after trying unsuccessfully to get other things he had written published.

Radio seemed a more accessible medium and one in which he could have some control over the final product. He said, "Being a child of the 1950's the golden age of television, he didn't listen to radio much. "I grew up with the television tuned to "The Twilight Zone " and Alfred Hitchcock" he said.

But once he got started, he realized that radio was " a hell of a medium to convey suspense."

And that's precisely why WFCC president Joseph Ryan was interested in the series. "The wonderful thing about radio is that it lends itself to using your imagination." Ryan said. Oney has been the director and producer for the series, but he readily credits his friends, whom he recruited to collaborate. None of them knew much about producing a radio drama when they started. They include Scott Dickie of Hyannis responsible for sound effects and black and white illustrations. John Todd of Dennis, chief engineer; Mark Birmingham, now of Los Angeles, who composed the music; artist Jerry Williams, formerly of West Yarmouth, who designed the promotional poster; and Oney's wife, Debby, who is a series actor.

The group's amateur status might have worked against them, but it hasn't. "In a way, it was a strength, it hasn't gotten in the way of being entertaining," Oney said.

"We've really attempted to convey a sense of Cape Cod: in that sense it's kind of fun to listen to.... We use locales people are familiar with." The first in the series. "A Test for Murder." was set at a Provincetown art opening, while other settings include Cape Cod Hospital. The Cape Cod Canal, a Cape radio station and Woods Hole.

Oney has used several forms of the mystery genre in his tales, including thrillers like "The Caller on Line One", about a psychotic killer who stalks a radio talk show hostess while she's on the air. There are Gothic mysteries, intentionally overwritten and ornate like "The Curse of the Whale's Tooth."

In other stories, Oney experimented "The Hypnotist." the story of a woman in a coma "struggling to release herself from her surrealistic realm." is told from inside the woman's mind.

The first two installments have used a more traditional form—the sleuth and his sidekick—featuring former police captain Waverly Underhill Dave Ellsworth and retired doctor Alexander Scofield (Wally O'Hara).

Oney said he wanted Scofield to be more of a doctor than that other famous sidekick, Doctor Watson. "I wanted him to be an old man and I wanted him to act like a doctor. He's always pretending to be senile, but he's not, of course."

Not just along for the ride, the sidekick serves an important role in moving the story. "The sidekick is like the audience, he asks the questions the audience wants to ask". Oney said.

The dramas are spiked with humor and exaggerated characters. "To a certain extent they have to be spoofs on themselves" Oney said. In "A Test for Murder," in which the jurist at a Provincetown art show is found murdered, a minor character familiar to anyone who knows the Cape appears on the scene—the summer cop. This one, upon seeing his first murder victim, exclaims, "Boy he's really dead isn't he!" The sage Underhill coolly responds, "You've just seen your first dead body; if we move quickly, you may yet get to see your first murderer."

There's also a disgruntled, struggling artist, who calls the murdered art show judge a "creep," and another character, believing the whole thing has been staged, says, "It's one of the best examples of performance art I've seen."

In the thrillers, the main aim, naturally, is to scare. "We try to scare ourselves, If we're scared, we figure others will be too." Oney said.

The most time-consuming part of the process is the sound effects, because they are recorded in the real world, not in a studio.

For an upcoming show, "The Buoy," the group recorded the sound of a truck lifting a garbage bin and processed it through a synthesizer to simulate the sound of a buoy's chain being stretched. Oney said.

Oddly enough, Cape Cod Radio Mystery Theater is probably better known in the Midwest or on the West Coast than it is on the Cape. While a number of the program's have been broadcast from time to time on Cape radio stations in the past, they haven't been aired in a series.

They have, however, aired on about 100 affiliates of National Public Radio across the country. The series is popular in Alaska, Oney said, "I don't know if it's because the nights are long or if they have good imaginations."

Oney credits the folks at WFCC, who bill their station as "fine arts radio", for airing the mystery series.

"For an FM classical station, this is a risk for them. It shows they believe in what they say they are. If this isn't fine art, at least it's folk art," Oney said.

Most commercial radio stations "play the ratings game very seriously," Oney said, and the mysteries don't fit their radio format.

But Ryan doesn't really think of the series as a risk. "We're very optimistic about it," he said.

"It's the sort of thing we are striving to do at our station, that is, something different....This had all the ingredients that would be ideally suited for what we had in mind-the setting is Cape Cod, the actors are Cape Codders, and it's a mystery."

Ryan had purchased a cassette of one of the broadcasts before his station went on the air last spring. "I bought one, and I got more information about it." It was an idea he kept in the back of his mind for the station to pursue. So when Oney contacted him, he and station manager John Miller were eager to make the arrangements.

The actors and many others involved have volunteered their talents so far. "None of us make our living at it," Oney said. Making money in radio is difficult, Oney said, because "the system that's

supposed to return the profits back to you is so full of holes, it's like a leaky bucket. By the time it gets back to you there's hardly a drop in it." Cassette tapes of the series are available in some Cape Cod book stores.

While radio's use as a medium for drama may have waned while television blossomed, Ryan and Oney believe the audience remains.

The radio listeners are seeking a "relief from the onslaught of blandness and crudeness of television," said Ryan.

Said Oney: "The audience hasn't gone away.... Along with children's programs, it's what listeners of public radio always clamor for more of."

Ryan said the response from listeners and advertisers has been positive, and he's looking forward to more of Oney's work. "I will follow him around and see what he's working on next. Hopefully, we will get the first shot at what he's doing."

Cape Cod Radio Mystery Theater will present a live performance, simulcast on WFCC, of "The Legacy of Euriah Pillar," on Nov. 5 at Barnstable High School. Proceeds will benefit the Cape Cod Conservation Compact, a group that helps towns in their conservation efforts, an appropriate cause for Oney since he worked for five years with the Nature Conservancy in Minnesota.

"I still have strong conservation leanings," he said, "but I couldn't shake loose from the hankering to do some creative writing."



## OTR Defense Fund

Only Lamont Crantson knows how long the legal battle over his shows will drag on...

### A special report from the Administrators of "The OTR Defense Fund"

**CONGRATULATIONS! YOU MAY HAVE WON \$15,874.50!!!!**

**By Carolyn and Joel Senter**

Well, you really haven't won anything, but now that we have your attention, please be aware that some real nice people recently got a bill for \$15,874.50! How would that grab you if it popped up in your morning mail?! Please let us direct your attention to a matter of considerable importance to all of us in the "OTR Community." We have previously published information about this issue, but we do admit to having been somewhat vague about the specific nature of the problem. We were deliberately vague, in part, because some of the people involved were too modest to want their problems advertised. We now realize that in being so obscure we may have de-personalized the problem to the point of making it appear to be some sort of philosophical issue rather than a real, human problem which might eventually affect all of us. Judging from the content of some of the conversations we have had with OTR folks around the country recently, it appears that we may have misjudged our previous approach. We probably should have gotten "down to brass tacks" earlier. We now think that we should have named names and cited figures in the first place. OK, we're going to do it now.

#### The Problem:

On, or around St. Patrick's Day in 1989, some folks whom one author has identified as "several OTR Dealers within The Hobby" were served Federal Court summons. These folks, named at the time or added subsequently, were in alphabetical order: Don Aston, Howard Brenner, Rex Bills, Bob Burnham, Carl Froelich, Charlie Garant, Larry Kiner, Dick Judge and Pat McCoy (we'll call these fellows "the defendants" in the remainder of this article). Any of these names ring a bell with anyone? They are names which are familiar to many of us because these are some of the folks who have made it possible for us to assemble our OTR collections. These same guys have also been, in our opinion, largely responsible for the preservation of Old Time Radio programming to the final decade of the 20th century. Without these folks, and people like them, it is not at all unreasonable to believe that old time radio programming would have simply become extinct by now. The aforementioned summons was issued as a result of a lawsuit brought in Federal Court in Connecticut by an organization called Premier Electronics (the plaintiff) who claimed to own exclusive rights to certain, as yet unnamed episodes of *The Shadow*. We all know that none of the OTR dealers would sell programming which they KNEW belonged to someone else. They have come to their current unpleasant legal position through no malice or untoward intentions on their parts. If there had been any infringement (a matter for the courts to decide, ultimately), it would certainly have been done innocently, and terminated on request.

Nonetheless, the suit alleged infringement and asked damages of \$100,000 from EACH of the defendants! At least some of the defendants offered a "no contest" settlement through which they agreed to surrender any money which they had collected from the sale of the contested programs (a few hundred bucks at most) and to withdraw the programs from their listings. Premier, the plaintiff, refused the settlement, continued the suit, but now demands "damages" from \$10,000 to \$20,000 from each defendant. The defendants were placed in a position of having to "knuckle under" or to defend themselves. Electing to pursue the latter course (a courageous decision and one certainly beneficial to the hobby), the defendants collectively hired a law firm from New York (we'll call the firm P & W, Esq.) to represent their interests in this matter. Now the folks at P & W, Esq. are really good at their business and, as is usually the case, really good things don't come cheap!

The most recent bill (and this isn't the only one) submitted to the defendants was in the amount mentioned in the title of this article, namely, \$15,874.50. Certainly for these individuals, this would be more than a noticeable amount of money—even when divided up among nine people. Somebody is going to have to pay this bill. Let us also hasten to mention that this figure of almost sixteen grand doesn't count any future legal costs nor does it count any other money spent by the defendants for individual or local legal assistance!

#### The Old Time Radio Defense Fund:

Along about last Fall, we established "The Old Time Radio Defense Fund" (we'll call it "The Fund," herein) with the purpose of offering OTR hobbyists around the country the opportunity to help the

above named dealers pay their legal fees. Our motivation was two-fold: First, we were extremely interested in helping these defendants avoid being "bullied" out of existence through the financial superiority of one "big business." Justice is expensive, and we wanted to help see to it that the defendants could "have their day in court" without crushing expense. Second, we felt that those of us in the hobby who have profited so bountifully throughout the years from the availability of good programming at reasonable prices, often due to the direct efforts of these very guys, shouldn't just stand by and let them take the onslaught of the legal attack all by themselves. We tried our best, at the time of the origination of The Fund, to remain neutral in the dispute. We certainly did not feel that it was our place to make any judgement as to who really "had the rights" to the disputed programming. We knew that this was a matter for the courts to decide. We just wanted to try to help the case get to court so that an appropriate legal decision could finally be made. We can't deny, though, that we would be pulling for the defendants, not only because some of them are our personal friends, but because if "big business" turned out to win, it might well mean the end of our hobby as we know it. If any "monopoly" were able to sew up OTR programming, they could control what shows were distributed to collectors, and at whatever price the "monopoly" might wish to levy!

Now, no matter what we do, it is possible (God forbid!) that the plaintiff might eventually win. We could not stand by, however, without making some effort to keep them from winning by default without a fair contest. Hence, the genesis of The Old Time Radio Defense Fund.

In spite of the rather wide publicity given to The Fund, through the courtesy of "The Illustrated Press," "Old Time Radio Digest," "Hello, Again," "NARA," and others as well as through several direct mail communications, we have been rather surprised at the number of active hobbyists who have never heard of it. We were astonished to find out that even one of the defendants, who is now a beneficiary of The Fund, never heard of it!

As of now, The OTR Community has graced The Fund with approximately \$1,600 in donations. On February 10, 1990, The Fund dispensed \$1,000 to the defendants' attorneys. At the present time, The Fund has the remaining \$600 in a bank account. By the time this article comes to press, this \$600 will have been dispensed. The defendants have been kept apprised of, and provided documentation of, the dissemination of these funds. Every cent collected has gone toward the legal expenses of the defendants; we have personally absorbed all of The Fund's costs (printing, postage, taxes, fees, etc.).

We had rather hoped that this article, which reveals who the defendants actually are and the size of the bills they are facing, might persuade other OTR devotees to make contributions. You see, we think that if everybody who ever bought a cassette or a reel from these vendors (or others "within the hobby") would contribute just two or three dollars, we would have more than enough to pay their current legal bill. We have to confess that there was a time a while back when we really got discouraged and were considering paying out the monies in The Fund and just dissolving it. As luck would have it, though, we started to receive a few more contributions and became encouraged again. We now plan to continue our efforts. We hope that everyone who reads this article will help us to help these defendants and that each reader will talk to a friend or two in OTR about contributing something, too. We think that these guys deserve all the help we can give them. But remember, your contributions won't go just for the direct benefit of these defendants; the outcome of this whole litigation may well affect the entire OTR hobby and ALL OF US who now love and enjoy it (not to mention future generations who may never have the opportunity to experience radio's Golden Age at all)! It is decidedly to the advantage of all of us to do whatever we can to try to keep OTR programming from becoming the exclusive property of limited commercial enterprises.

So, the OTR Defense Fund continues to be alive (albeit, a bit anemic) and ready to receive contributions. Won't you please help us help our dealer friends?

#### LAST MINUTE NEWS!

We have talked to a few OTR folks around the country recently and found that other dealers (some not currently involved in the litigation) are becoming reluctant to sell their wares because of the threat of "out of the blue" legal consequences, and also, that some COLLECTORS are becoming cautious about even TRADING programs with other collectors!

Such is the "fallout" from this whole thing!

**PLEASE CONTRIBUTE TO THE OTR DEFENSE FUND!  
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For any donation of \$10.00, or more, we'll send the donor an "I Love Old Time Radio" bumper sticker.

The address is:

**OTR Defense Fund**  
c/o Carolyn and Joel Senter  
4003 Clifton Av  
Cincinnati, OH 45220

## THE OTR DEFENSE FUND

by  
CAROLYN & JOEL SENTER

Most of the good news we have to share came from the Friends of Old Time Radio Convention in Newark. Each year the Friends of Old Time Radio present a philanthropic gift of cash to a worthy cause. This year, the OTR Defense Fund received a donation of \$500! Not only do we, and certainly the defendants, sincerely appreciate the money, but we are also very pleased that the membership of an organization with the prestige of The Friends of Old Time Radio has elected to recognize the existence of The OTR Defense Fund and to make public its contribution to the Fund. We are all very grateful, both for the monetary support and the moral support.

The FTOR Convention brought a bit more good news. Some of the attendees were, individually, quite generous in their personal contributions. We accepted contributions through several routes. Direct cash contributions, of course welcome. In addition, a few people made donations of merchandise, proceeds from the sale of which were all donated to the Fund. Larry Kiner and Dan McCoy both sent programming in the form of records and cassettes for us to take along. Both Larry and Dan are "Shadow" defendants, and, it would seem, believe in the old saying, "the Lord helps them who help themselves!" We received a big boost from the generosity of Ron Barnett (Echoes of the Past). Ron, whom most readers will know as a dealer of fine, high quality reels of OTR programming, is not one of the "Shadow" defendants. He donated quite a few reels for sale by the Fund with all proceeds going to the Fund. This donation, which is among the largest individual contributions The Fund has ever received and the largest voluntary donation made by an OTR Dealer, was most gratefully received. Ron's contribution, when combined with other individual donations offered by "rank and file" of convention attendees, added up to almost \$300! Altogether, then, the fund was enriched by almost \$800! This is more than has been collected during any whole month since the inception of "The Fund." Thanks to all!!

Now, about the bad news.

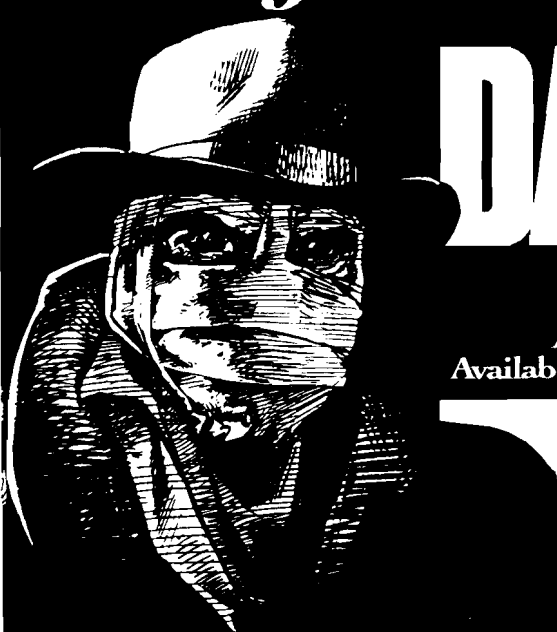
In spite of the sparkleing generosity of many good people, we think that we have failed, miserably, in getting "the message out to the OTR community at large! It would appear that no matter how hard we tried, and no matter how much support we have received from the good folks like FTOR, The OTRC (who have been steady supporters from the beginning), The Listening Guide Newsletter, the Daily Sentinel, the Old Time Radio Digest, and others we simply don't seem to have been able to convince the masses of OTR fans, collectors, and devotees of the gravity of this situation. It's like OTR fans don't seem to understand the fact that some of our most reliable and devoted purveyors of OTR are under attack has anything to do with them, personally. So what, if a handful of people have gotten into legal trouble for selling Shadow episodes? After all, people seem to think, when those guys decided to sell OTR programming, they took their own risks and stuck their own necks out, and, besides, they must have made a pot of money! Not so! Nobody has made more than a few hundred dollars on Shadow shows. The Courts must, eventually, decide this issue. Certainly, if there has been an infringement, it was innocently and without malice. But this is not the issue. The Conflict is not one between the plaintiff and nine program vendors from "within the hobby." It is instead an issue which concerns virtually all of us. If you happened to be at the Newark convention, you might have notice that only one vendor was selling any Shadow tapes. This is not the worst of it. People are becoming reluctant to do any kind of dealing or trading for fear of the "out of the blue" lawsuit! What we seem to be unable to get people to understand is that this issue is one which stands to affect the entire hobby and each and everyone of us who knows and loves it! IF, for some reason, we don't feel like coming to the aid of vendors who have been largely responsible for the very preservation of OTR programming and, certainly, for many of our personal collections, we must try to see it that our rights to preserve and enjoy OTR programming are properly defended through the proper channels.

We don't seem to be able to convince large numbers of people that it is not just the nine vendors who are in legal trouble, but, instead, it is our entire hobby which is maybe threatened. If the plaintiff is allowed to win by default simply due to lack of funds available to the defendants to pay for their "Day in Court," we, as OTR fans, will not only have failed our vendor friends, but we may well have failed ourselves and the very future of our hobby. We are having a great deal of trouble understanding why there seems to be so much apathy concerning the "Shadow" issue in the OTR community.

We must confess that we, personally, have something of almost a religious fervor about this cause for which the Fund exists. From our point of view, this whole matter seems to represent a potential, ominous threat to the relatively free flow of OTR programming, and we have great difficulty understanding why so many others don't seem to "see the light" and join us. After all, the plaintiff is but one company; there are thousands of us OTR fans and, if we all pull together, we could put up one hell of a fight!

If anyone among our readers here could make suggestions as to how we might be able to convince the OTR community that this is a matter of serious concern to each and every one of us, and that it is to our mutual benefit to unify and get behind the effort, we would be most grateful for your advice and assistance; or perhaps someone could explain what we are doing wrong. We don't seem to have been able to sustain a convincing campaign by ourselves. By hanging together we can muster a formidable front; separately we may find ourselves standing around watching our hobby hang!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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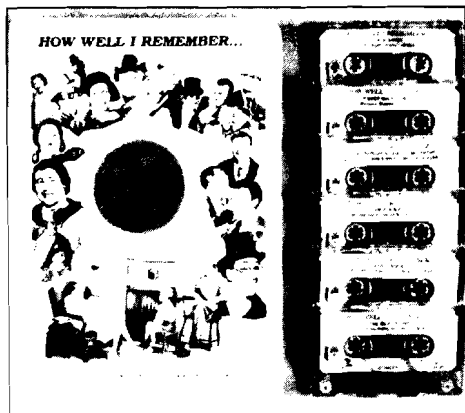
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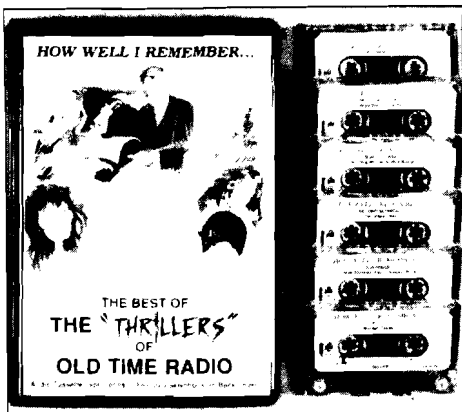
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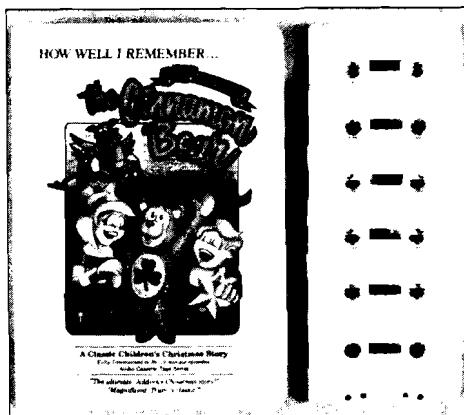
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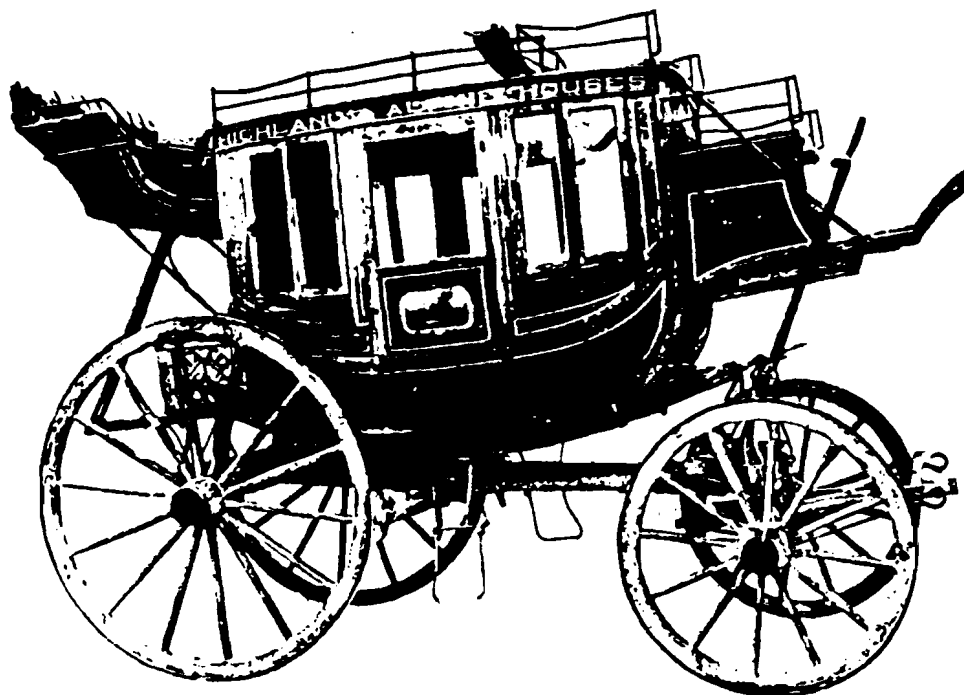
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- Golden Age
- Silver Age
- Dell
- Gold Key
- Charlton
- Walt Disney
- Horror
- Westerns
- Classics ILL.

### Comic Supplies

- Plastic Bags
- Comic Boxes
- Mylar Snugs
- Magazine Boxes
- Acid-Free Boards

**We also do mail order  
Ask about our want list service  
Gift certificates also available**

**YOUR ONE STOP LOCATION!**

### HOURS

Monday by appointment only  
Tuesday by appointment only  
Wednesday by appointment only

Thursday 12-8  
Friday 12-8  
Saturday 12-8

If these hours are an inconvenience, please understand that during the time I am handling down your personal wants and looking for new stock and ideas to help improve Fantasy World!  
Thank you for your continued patronage, patience and understanding