

# Klean Soap.... The Unknown Sponsor

"Try it for a dime....  
it'll be the best and biggest 10¢ worth  
of *fictitious* soap you ever bought."



Lincoln, Me. (DG)—

Don't feel bad if you never heard of a "**product**" called ***Klean Soap***. It was a brand name very few people knew about. It wasn't a regional product nor was it imported from another country. In fact, no one from the soap making companies in the United States had ever heard of ***Klean Soap***--- or took credit in making it!

By now you might be wondering, "**Why is *Klean Soap* mentioned in an article on radio advertising, since hardly anyone had ever heard of it?**" Believe it or not, ***Klean Soap*** was indeed a radio sponsor--- and complete with commercials at that! I will add, however, that it was a completely different radio sponsor from the established products you may be familiar with. Confused? As you read on, it will make sense why this "**product**" and others like it were used in this type of "**radio advertising**."

The commercial was presented in the same way as the commercials were on the radio. The announcer described how wonderful ***Klean Soap*** was for its unlimited cleaning uses, yet it was as mild as toilet soap for the hands. The best news of all, ***Klean Soap*** did all this for only 10¢. It was a soap that was too good to be true--- and it really was!

The truth to the matter--- there is no such product as ***Klean Soap***! With this shocking revelation, why is there an existing radio commercial for a product that didn't exist? The answer is simple and it makes a lot of sense. ***Klean Soap*** was an example of a fictitious sponsor that was used for an audition radio program. These were recordings of programs that were presented to potential sponsors or networks (much like a pilot episode for TV). The audition program was performed like an actual network radio program, complete with actors, an announcer, music, sound effects, and let's not forget, commercials\*. It gave the sponsor or radio network a general idea how the program was presented, and whether or not it was worth putting on the air. If it was, then ***Klean Soap*** was replaced with an actual sponsor, and the work would begin to present the program in the sponsor's time slot on the network.

***Klean Soap*** wasn't the only make-believe product that was used in sponsoring audition programs. There were many different products that supposedly were far superior in its ability to the popular



brands, yet costs far less than those brands.

If you're wondering what was the name of the audition program *Klean Soap* sponsored--- *Klean Soap* was the proud sponsor of **SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT**, a drama about a newspaper photographer. Although I have never heard of the actual radio program, *Radio Yesteryear's The Golden Age Of Radio* book mentioned that **SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT** was on the air from April 28, 1946-October 19, 1947 on the **Mutual Network** and through **Syndication**. If that was the case, more than likely the program either had local sponsors or was sustaining. I don't know of any nationally known product sponsoring the program.

Audition programs have had their share of success and failure during radio's golden age. Whether or not the program made the actual airwaves, *Klean Soap* or another fictitious product were used as the "**sponsor**" of the next program creation, whose creators hoped would be the greatest radio program ever presented.

Author's note-\* Not all audition radio programs used commercials or even had a sponsor for that matter. I used *Klean Soap* and **SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT** as examples of how an audition program was presented complete with commercials.