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Collectors Comments from Joe Webb

Welcome to our third issue. I am pleased to announce the addition of a new regular contributor, Steve Lewis of Newington, Connecticut. Steve is a math teacher, publisher of Mystery-File for mystery novel buffs, and he reviews mysteries for the Hartford Courant. And of course, Steve is a collector, and we've exchanged a good number of tapes over the past few years. Bob and I, and I hope you, too, welcome Steve into the Collector's Corner.

This issue also marks the debut of Jim Maclise as a writer, and an in-depth look at I Love a Mystery. My introduction to Carlton Morse's programs has been a slow one. Of late, I have been addicted to the Adventures by Morse series entitled, "City of the Dead," which I found to be both exciting and entertaining. I am also a fan of One Man's Family, but must confess ignorance when it comes to ILAM. So glad Jim is here to educate me!

Our contributors have lined up a number of topics that we know you will be interested in. And that brings me to another point, that being that COLLECTOR'S CORNER is not and will never be a one-person operation. Nor will it ever be a two-person operation. The time and efforts of all involved (including myself) are rewarded not by profit (since after we hit break-even point, all funds after that will flow into the newsletter for expansion), by by the psychic reward of seeing one's own work in print and available for the enjoyment of others.

One of the most substantial contributions comes every issue from our art director, Bob Burchett. His design of our headings and developing designs of layout and artwork are really helping to differentiate COLLECTOR'S CORNER from other publications on the same subject. More of Bob's work will be seen in future issues as the image of COLLECTOR'S CORNER becomes more clear in our minds.

What directions would you prefer to see us aim toward? What have you thought of our first three issues? Bob and I would like to know. So please, write to Bob Burnham at 17173 Westbrook, Livonia, MI 48152, or to me, Joe Webb, Valley View Drive, Yonkers, NY 10710. We're anxious to hear from you!



Carlton E. Morse at his best. And you can still Love a Mystery. by Jim Maclise

The classic mystery-adventure serial, I LOVE A MYSTERY (which Jim Harmon in his book The Great Radio Heroes pronounces the greatest radio show of them all) was written and produced by Carlton E. Morse, who had already invented the definitive scap opera. ONE MAN'S FAMILY. The creation of I LOVE A MYSTERY solved the major problem of the mystery-adventure program—how to tell a convincing and suspenseful story in 30 minutes. Morse's answer was simple—don't. Instead, he applied what he had learned from

his soap serial to the mystery story and found that fifteen minute episodes five nights a week kept his audience on the edge of their beds (For most of its existence, the show was broadcast at 10 PM, although for a while it ran in the afternoon.).

ILAM (let's use the initials from now on) ran across America's airwaves twice: the first time from January 1939 until the end of 1944 from Hollywood and later on CBS; The second run began ten years after the first, and ran from the Fall of 1949 until 1952, then disappearing forever (or so we all feared). During these thrill-packed years writer-producer Morse provided his enthralled listeners with not just one, but two and often three detective-adventurers, often adding their pert and seductive secretary as a bonus attraction. The A-1 Detective Agency handled anything from searching out the psychopath in your friendly neighborhood family mansion to playing hide-and-seek with man-sized vampire bats in crumbling South American temples.

The members of the agency, who were more like foot -loose soldiers of fortune than men who worked out of an office in Hollywood, usually consisted of Jack Packard, Doc Long and Reggie York. Jerry Booker was their primary secretary, but aside from her good looks and ability to get into trouble and scream at appropriate moments (like the Friday night fade-out), she was unimportant. Jack Packard was the head man, an ex-medical student who had one bad experience with a female in college and had never forgiven the entire sex. He is logical, tough minded, bordering on cynicism, and likes to stick to business. Doc Long, a red-haired Texas Huckleberry Finn sort who's grown up to discober both women and fistcuffs, is given to occassional

bragging and likes to swear in such homespun oaths as "honest to my Grandma." He'll make a pass at anything in a skirt, is always anxious for a good fight, and is quick to accept a supernatural explanation for strange goings-on. Thus, Jack and Doc are almost exact opposites, the former cautious and rational, the latter wreckless and emotional. The third man is Reggie York. York is English, down-to-earth, dependable, brisk, to the point, a mechanical wizard and as modest as Doc is not. Thus, unlike the flirtatious Texan, Doc, Reggie is shy among women; but like Long he loves nothing more than a vigorous, head-bashing brawl.

Occassionally, Reggie is replaced by some other (than English) ethnic type-a Swede or an Irishman - or sometimes the trio consists of just Jack, Doc and Jerry, their lovely secretary. More often than not, however, the dynamic duo of Jack and Doc go it alone. But to my mind at least, the ideal ILAM adventure requires the original threesome, as well as an exotic locale, a problem to solve which appears to involve the supernatural, and plenty of spinechilling suspense. Fortunately, the preceding was the usual Carlton Morse formula and he usually stretched it out to a three or four week story, 15 minutes each evening, Monday through Friday (During 1942, the program, then sponsored by Fleichmann's Yeast, expanded-maybe the yeast did it-to a half-hour once-a-week format.). The serial which seems to most ILAM addicts (we've really gone beyond being fans) to represent the ideal is titled "Temple of Vampires," but more on that later.

During its two separate runs, the ILAM cast changed completely. From 1939 to 1944, Michael Raffeto played Jack Packard, Barton Yarborough was Doc Long, and Walter Paterson was Reggie York (Paterson's death around 1940 explains why Reggie did not last out the series). All three of these actors did double duty for producer Morse inasmuch as they all played major roles in his ONE MAN'S FAMILY serial as well. A-1 secretary, Jerry Booker was played by movie star Joan Blondell's sister, Gloria. This first ILAM cast and original series is best avaliable on today's tapes in the several episode (half-hour format) of "The Pirate Loot of the Island of Skulls," in which our heroes stowaway on a wealthy widow's yacht enroute to a treasure island where they face the "cult of the Jaguar" in the persons of the High Priest, "Holy Joe," and his female sidekick, Sunya. The thrills are provided by the everpresent dangers contained in an underground cavern of enormous dimensions, with its narrow ledges, secret passages, rope ladders, etc. The sinister sounds include the cries of jungle cats, the whine and chirp of insects and birds, and the hollow reverberations of the huge cavern (No radio program, not even INNER SANCTUM or SUSPENSE, had

better sound effects. Equal maybe, but not better!)

Today, the most readily collectable ILAM materials consist of tapes of the second series from 1949 to 1952. Admirers of the older original version sometimes disparage the "rerun," but those who hear it for 'the first time are just as attached to the fifties series. I well remember as a young boy, listening to "Temple of Vampires" one night when my parents were out and a lightning storm crashed about the house until finally, just as the boy, Hermie was explaining about the red lips and very white teeth of the vampire priestess, Angelina -the lights and radio both went off, leaving me the nerve-shattered shell of a man that I am today, (As I write this article, rain paurs outside my window and I listen anxiously for sounds of distant thunder and imagine a flickering in the overhead light). So I will defend to the death the later series and even go so far as to claim that Tony Randall's (yes, that Tony Randall) Reggie York is far superior to the earlier ones, that Russell Thorson's Jack (while not as acidly sarcastic) has virtues that equal those of Raffetto, and that Jim Boles as Doc Long is, honest to my grandma, more downright likeable, if a bit more "cornball," than Barton Yarborough.

Before reviewing the avaliable serial tapes, one thing is crucial to mention. Barring perhaps INNER SANCTUM'S squeaking door (and personally, I am willing to unbar it and let it squeak), no mystery or adventure show had a better opening than did the second version of I LOVE A MYSTERY.

The original series was good with its unearthly electronic electronic shreiking, and both versions used the Sibelius "Valse Triste" with its fragrance of death and sinister evil, for their musical theme. But the plaintive call of the railroad steam engine whistle blending into the beginning of the eerie organ waltz, followed by the police siren and the screech of braking tres; then the announcer's voice:

"A new Carlton Morse adventure thriller,

"Temple of Vampires," and finally the tolling of the clock chime which announces the hour. This was a classic opening, and did as much to create the atmosphere of cozy impending doom as anything which followed in the exciting story itself. If you first heard that opening and you were between the ages of nine and 19, let us say, you were probably hooked for life. And if you don't believe this, then buy (as I so foolishly did, poor lost soul that I am) just one hour of "Temple of Vampires." If you can listen to it once, then set it aside without the insatiable urge to know, own, beg, borrow or steal more!!! —well you my friend, are ILAM addiction-proof. You need not read any further.

But let us assume that you, like myself, are about to become a veritable ILAM crazy. You recall those nights alone in bed in the dark with the low glow of the radio dial and the thrill of the ILAM opening and you know that you've simply got to relive those fifteen minutes of fearful escape! How should you start? Where should you begin? What should you acquire first? What's even avaliable, for crying out loud!? Well reader, that's exactly what I am about to tell you. And also, I'll warn you about certain shortcomings which a few of the tapes suffer from, not to mention certain episodes which (if you are wise and heed my advice) you will avoid cpmpletely.

So let us now look at the avaliable programs in chronological order. I have already mentioned the best ("Island of Skulls") from the 1939-1944 series and only scattered individual episodes of the series exist otherwise. No serial exists complete from this sequence. Therefore, we shall proceed with the 1949-1952 series.

"The Thing That Cries in the Night" is readily avaliable in good sound and complete in 15 episodes. The story originally commenced on Hallowe'en night in 1949 and ran for three weeks.

Jack, Doc and Reggie are met at the Los Angeles airport by an unexpected chauffered limousine and whisked away to a Hollywood mansion where strange murders, slashings, or stairway falls occur every time a baby's cry is heard. The problem: There hasn't been a baby in the house in 20 years! This is a prime quality ILAM adventure and is highly recommended. None of the complete serial tapes, however, have all openings and closings. Some episodes do contain them, but you may wish to record a short opening and closing tape of your own because the only way to listen to ILAM is 15 minutes nightly. Otherwise, Lord forbid, you defeat its cliff-hanging effect!

"Bury Your Dead, Arizona" is the second complete 15 chapter serial. This is a werewolf plot and the story is perhaps overly melodramatic on first hearing. But basically, this tale of the three companion's encounter with Maestro the magician and his strange assistant Nasha, who can change forms, is first rate. The sound on this tape is very good.

"The Richard Curse" (sometimes titled "The Million Dollar Mystery") features, in addition to Jack, Doc and Reggie, Mercedes McCambridge, who has already appeared in the first serial as Cherry. She appears in the next two stories as well. But here, she is Sunny Richard, a girl



Jack Packard, Doc Long, and Reggie Yorke (left to right), mysterious trie of "I Love a Mystery,

whose curse seems to bring death to every male admirer attracted to her wealth and beauty. This is another three week serial with only one not very crucial episode missing. This tape contains both openings and closings (but none of the announcer's recaps, which none of the complete serial shows contain simply because they are not necessary). This show has fine sound and is up to ILAM fan's expectations.

"The Temple of Vampires" is next and originally ran from January 2 to January 27, 1950. Most ILAM freaks consider this the best of the series and it is certainly my favorite. Unfortunately it is only about 60% complete (I have corresponded with two persons who claim to have the missing sections, but refuse to release them. If anyone reading this owns them and will sell them, please let us know). The good news is that the 11 existing chapters are sufficient to follow the story, which picks up right where "Richard's Curse" leaves off. Our heroes have purchased an airplane and with Sunny Richard and a seven year old boy stowaway, are flying off to South America in search of adventure. They crash-land in the Nicaraguan jungle near a crumbling temple, which proves to be an active place of vampire worship and human sacrifice. The eerie atmosphere of the temple, the monk's cells high above the main floor, the floating figures fifty feet in the air, the kidnapping of the boy Hermie, and later of Sunny, all are marvelously evoked with all the magic of sound that OTR can muster.

For those curious about the missing chapters,



DOC LONG (played by Barton Yarborough) is as REGGIE YORKE (played by Walter Pater-





JACK PACKARD (played by Michael amart at lock-picking as poker-playing but he son), brawny, six and a half feet tall, deep meet the sever picked locks on the wrang side of the leg-work for Jack. Slow-thinking, but law. Unlike Jack. Doc likes good-looking girls. doggodly faithful, he is the Porthos of these worlded them into a treentieth century vitation of the law. Unlike Jack. He is homospins, extremely loyal to his comrades modora musiceteers who operate against crime the "Three Musiceteers." He supplies the Seams

they involve: (a) Jack and Doc's discovery of the vampire bat's cages, (b) Reggie's confrontation with the vampire priestess back at the airplane, and (c) the final earthquake's destruction of the temple. These would be great to have, but if they sound exciting. I can at least vouch that the avaliable episodes are equally so. Sound is good to excellent-Highly recommended.

The fifth serial, "The Battle of the Century," is a real change of pace and is really the only ILAM comedy. Our three heroes find themselvez stranded by their wrecked car on a country road near a large Northern California ranch. The story involves a farm girl (Mercedes McCambridge again, but with a country-girl accent) whose Daddy won't let her marry the boy she loves. Jack, Doc and Reggie set out to help her and the climax of this serial contains perhaps the biggest flat-out brawl ever broadcast-what Jim Harmon (again in The Great Radio Heroes) describes as:

"A rain of socks and punches until every hand of every sound man in MBS aches like a toothache and is swollen twice its size."

Among the many comic scenes is on where the ranch cook, Belshazar, bangs on a dinner gong and yells. "Come and get it!" over and over at the top of his lungs while a dead tired Jack Packard tries desparately to sleep through the unholy racket. This incident proves Mark Twain's theory that a bad joke can always provoke laughter if told over ad nauseum; it gets funnier the longer it goes on.

This 18 chapter serial is missing four episodes, but

the story is nonetheless, easily followed. Caution: Because this one is a comedy and not a mysetry, it is atypical ILAM and probably not one to acquire early in your collecting.

This finishes my catalog of the complete and reasonably complete ILAM serials, except for the 1952 "Hermit of San Felipe Adavapo" to be described shortly. From 1950, the following single and double episodes can be purchased and include Tony Randall as Reggie (as do all of the programs mentioned thus far): From March 30, 1950, "The Blue Phantom," from April 20 and 27, 1950, "You Can't Pin a Murder on Nevada, " and from 1950, "The Snake With the Diamond Eyes (exciting, but only one chapter). Also, two episodes of "Murder in Turquoise Pass," and one chapter of "Incident Concerning Death." Only ILAM addicts like me will want these serial fragments, or the following ones with only Jack and Doc: From 1951-two chapters of "The Killer of Circle M. " "Murder is the Word for it (two chapters which make a fairly complete story, as recaps are included and one episode is crucial- the other is the finale), " and from 1952, "The Graves of Wamperjaw, Texas (two chapters)." Sound varies on the above shows, but all are quite listenable.

Sound problems plague the last of the nearly complete serials, "The Hermit of San Felipe Adavapo." This program was recorded off the air on a 1950's home tape recorder on a paper tape, and is listenable 85% of the time. This 1952 adventure is a sequel to an earlier, but alas, missing, story entitled "Stairway to the Sun" (one which Morse himself considers one of his very best). This sequel involves Jack and Doc in search for a lost civilization of ancients who hold the keys to wisdom, immortality, etc. The innocent young girl who, along with the old hermit, leads them through jungle and mountains, seems to combine influences from H. Rider Haggard's novel, SHE, and W.H. Hudson's South American romance, GREEN MANSIONS with its wild heroine, Lima. This tale thus has many elements of romance/fantasy. While we're discussing possible literary influences, it may be noted that Morse's inspiration for ILAM's heroes and its adventure-mystery format seems to have been equal portions of 1930's detective stories-for example, Dashiell Hammett, the three comrades in early Kipling, and Rider Haggard. And we mustn't forget that Doc Long is much like a grown-up Huckleberry Finn.

While all of the serials and fragments mentioned so far can be recommended either wholeheartedly or with some reservations, the final late 1952 episodes of ILAM are only for those collectors who insist on owning it all. Towards the end of its run, Russell Thorson as Jack Packard was replaced by Robert Dryden and the show was losing its vitality. There is a definite drop in quality in the two episodes of "I Am the Destroyer of Woman" and the single chapter of "Bride of the Werewolf" (which was the last ILAM serial to be broadcast in December of 1952.). Dryden (who had played other roles on the show) was not a good Jack, and most of the other actors and actresses sound like they're suffering from tired blood.

But lest this survey end on a sour note, let me assure you that the best ILAM is the best in radio mystery and adventure, combining excellent acting, very good dialogue, superb atmosphere and sound effects. You can hardly go wrong with "Thing That Cries in the Night," "Bury Your Dead, Arizona, " "Richard Curse, " and "Temple of Vampires." And if you add these to "Battle of the Century," and you play your tapes right, you can relive (or live for the first time) approximately 15 weeks of solid serial adventure. And amidst the build-up of cliff-hanging suspense. you will experience the exquisite comic irony contained in such lines as Doc's saying to Reggie, who has only reluctantly given in to Sunny Richard's request to go along on a South American plane trip after she has turned on the tears.

"Reggie, you sure are a sucker fer wimmen!"

Doc didn't realize how many more of us saps there were (and still are) out here who also went along for the ride!





Collectors Corner OTR Log

Circulating I LOVE A MYSTERY:

Full series, some have an occasional missing chapter:

Hermit of San Felipe Atabopho 1930s, 40s?: This version was recorded by microphone onto paper tape, and sound quality tends to be poor

Thing That Cries in the Night, or Faith, Hope, and Charity 10/31/49 to 11/20/49

Bury Your Dead, Arizona 11/21/49 to 12/11/49

Million Dollar (Richards) Curse 12/12/49 to 1/1/50

Temple of Vampires 1/21/50 to 1/29/50

Battle of the Century 1/30/50 to 2/24/50

Hermit of San Felipe Atabopho 5/19/52 to 6/15/52 Better copy of one listed above. but still not up to OTR standards.

Single episodes:

Case of the Roxy Mob 1/15/39 Snake with the Diamond Eyes: 1) a 5 minute clip of an episode from 1940, 2) a complete episode from January, 1940, 3) one episode from July 1950 But Grandma, What Big Teeth You Have:

1945 audition show 5/21/45 Isaland of Skulls: 7 eps., June 1951 Tropics Don't Call it Murder 3/39/50 last chapter

You Can't Pin a Murder on Nevada: 2nd chap?, 4/20/50, 4/27/50

Murder in Turquois Pass: 2 episodes, 8/50 Incident Concerning Death: 1 episode 12/50 Killer of the Circle M: 2 1950 episodes Music is the Word for it: 2 eps., 12/51

and last chapter 1/4/52 Graves of Wamper Jaw Texas: 2 eps., 2/52 I am the Destroyer of Women: 2 eps, 9/52 Bride of the Werewolf: 1 ep., 11/52 Girl in the Gilded Cage: 1 ep., 9/52

***It has bee rumored that Stairway to the Sun was the ultimate ILAM series. Information on whether it exists at present is not available.



Collectors Corner

The SUSPENSE log continues with 1944. A mistake was made in the flyers advertising this issue: those ads said this month would feature a log of 1945, but that will appear in our next issue. Warren Somerville, director at ABC, informs us of a mistake in our first issue. There was no program on 12/8/42. This was listed a "Death of an Old Flame," but Warren remembers it as a THEATER FIVE program. Thanks a lot Warren, at least we know somebody was reading!

SUSPENSE 1944			
Date 1/6 1/13 1/20 1/27 2/3		Star(s) Alan Ladd Lucille Ball Paul Lukas Virginia Bruce Moorehead and	
2/10 2/17 2/24 3/2 3/9 3/16 3/30 4/6 4/13 4/27 5/11 5/18 5/25 6/1 6/15	The Palmer Method Death Went Along For the Dark Tower The Visitor Donovan's Brain (I) Donovan's Brain (II) Fugue in C Minor Case History on Edgar Lowe	Orson Welles Eddie Bracken Orson Welles Orson Welles Vincent Price ndes T. Mitchell Geraldine	
6/22 6/29 7/6 7/13 7/20 7/27 8/3 8/10 8/17 8/24	The Ten Grand Walls Came Tumbling Down Search for Henri LeFevre Beast Must Die Of Maestro and Men Black Shawl Banquo's Chair Man Who Knew How Diary of Saphronia Winters Actor's Blood	Paul Muni H. Marshall Peter Lorre M. O'Sullivan Donald Crisp C. Laughton	

Date	Title	Star(s)
9/7 9/14 9/21	Black Path of Fear Voyage Through Darkness You'll Never See Me Again Bluebeard of Bellac Man Who Couldn't Lose	Brian Donlevy O. DeHavilland Joseph Cotten Merle Oberon Gene Kelly
10/5	Dateline: Lisbon Merry Widower	John Hodiak Reginald
	Eve The Nightman Singing Walls	Gardiner Nancy Kelly Virginia Bruce Van Johnson
11/9	You Were Wonderful Dead of Night	Lena Horne Robert Cummings
11/30	The Fountain Plays Black Curtain PRE-EMPTED	C. Laughton Cary Grant
12/14	The Lodger The Brighton Stranger A Thing of Beauty	R. Montgomery John Loder June Duprez

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The Lady Who Loved Larceny The Vulnerable Vixon

The Trouble With Tanya The Wistful Witch

The Minx in Minx The Vanquished Venus

The Blue-Eyed Brazen The Doll With the Dreamy Disposition

The Winsome Wildcat Too Many Mais A-moping

REEL S1103 HARRY LIME #2 w/Orson Welles

#13 Every Frame Has a Silver Lining #14 Mexican Hat Trick

#15 Art is Long and Lime is Fleeting

#16 In Pursuit of a Ghost #17 Horse Play

#18 Three Far Things For Your Thought:

#19 The Third Woman #20 An Old Moorish Custom

#21 It's a Knockout #22 Two is Company #23 Cherchez La Gem

#24 Hands of Glory

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Suspicion 2/10/44
Donovan's Brain-Parts 1 & 2 5/29/44
Man Who Couldn't Lose 9/28/44
Fear Paints a Picture 5/3/45
Reprieve 5/10/45
Dame Fortune 10/24/46
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Sisters 12/19/48

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Buddah Man Mystery 4/8/37
Jirl in the Iron Mask 4/15/37
Helen Clevenger Case 4/22/37
Trailing Red Ryan 4/29/37
Death in Step-Ins 5/6/37

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Country of the Blind 6/20/48
A Tooth For Paul Revere 7/4/48
She 7/11/48
Habit 7/18/48
Man Who Would Be King 8/1/48
Fugitive 8/15/48

(See our February/March and January flyers for previous Escape reels)

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Gildy Neets Miss Piper, Leroy's Teacher
Gildy Meets Minister at Barber Shop
Gildy Forgets to Meet Leila's Train
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Gildy Wants to Be Alone With Miss Piper
Leroy Breaks a Window With a Golf Ball

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1936: for Jello/T'ain't No Use 1936: for Jello/One Two, Button Shoe 1940: for Jello/Coodnight Moonlight 1940: for Jello/Vine Street Viggie 1944: for Grape Nuts/Faper Doll 1944: for Grape Nuts/It's Love, Love

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