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Contents

The Cisco Kid 1
 Soap Opera Myths 6
 "The Well-Dressed Corpse" 7
 Identify Old Photos 9
 A Case for Dr. Morelle 10
 The Black Flame of the Amazon 11
 Radio 100 Years Ago 13
 Dangerous Assignment 14
 Purchasing Groups 15
 Stay Tuned America 16
 Acquisitions 20

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The Cisco Kid: Casting an Archival Discovery Martin Grams

It was the afternoon of May 14, 1947, that six of the nation's top children's programs were hit with a boycott instituted by the Lafayette District, P.T.A., in San Francisco. The membership of 318 pledged itself to tune out programs such as *Tennessee Jed*, *Hop Harrigan*, *Sky King*, *Tom Mix*, *The Lone Ranger* and *The Cisco Kid*.

This was among the earliest (if not first) recorded action taken by a parent group to curtail the activities of network or local programs which, they claimed, was teaching "nothing but death and violence." Their efforts were short-lived, however, and *The Cisco Kid* (along with his contemporaries) continued to ride the airwaves from coast-to-coast. If anything, *The Cisco Kid* was due for vast expansion courtesy of Frederic W. Ziv and his transcription empire.

The history of radio's *Cisco Kid* program began on the evening of October 2, 1942, when Mutual premiered a weekly prime time rendition of the motion picture *Caballero*. Under the direction of Alvin Flanagan, the hero romanced women with as suave a reputation as Cesar Romero established on the big screen. Sponsorship entitlement of time slots would result in *The Cisco Kid* program bouncing back and forth at various time slots in two-month increments, Friday and Tuesday evenings, settling for an eight-month



Jack Mather and Harry Lang

position on Saturday evening through 1944. Executives at Mutual believed the program had potential to gain a sponsor, as a result of the on-going motion pictures that were being produced in Hollywood.

Frederic W. Ziv and John Sinn, having purchased the radio rights, licensed the series for broadcast over the Mutual Broadcasting System. The program originated out of New York City with Jackson Beck in the title role. In July of 1943, days after the radio program went off the air for a few months (it would return in October 1943), Ziv and Sinn sat down with Phil Krasne and James Burkett, producer of the *Cisco Kid* movies at Monogram Studios, to work out and coordinate a plan whereby both the weekly radio program and the motion pictures could cross-promote each other. By November, screen tests were being made to find an actor who could play the role both on radio and in the movies concurrently. (It would take a few years for that to happen, but we cannot blame them for trying in 1943.)

The weekly prime time program concluded on the evening of February 24, 1945. While it looked as if the series would not return to radio, Ziv never gave up hope. One year later, a major shake-up at Mutual created a vacancy. George W. Trendle sold his Michigan Radio Network to ABC and the network gained an exclusive: *The Lone Ranger*. Up until then *The Lone Ranger* program aired over the Don Lee Network three days a week. The shift to ABC meant *The Lone Ranger* would no longer air over KHJ in Los Angeles. Frederic W. Ziv agreed to license *The Cisco Kid* as a substitute for *The Lone Ranger*, which would air three-times-a-week. Children in Los Angeles who wanted to hear *The Lone Ranger* simply had to change to KECA and listen to their program at 6 p.m., while *The Cisco Kid* aired over KHJ at 6:30 p.m.

Intercontinental Bakeries, makers of Weber Bread, sponsored the new rendition. While the program aired three times more frequently than the prior Mutual rendition, *The Cisco Kid* aired regionally (not nationally) over KHJ in Los Angeles, while *The Lone Ranger* continued to air nationwide from coast-to-coast over ABC.

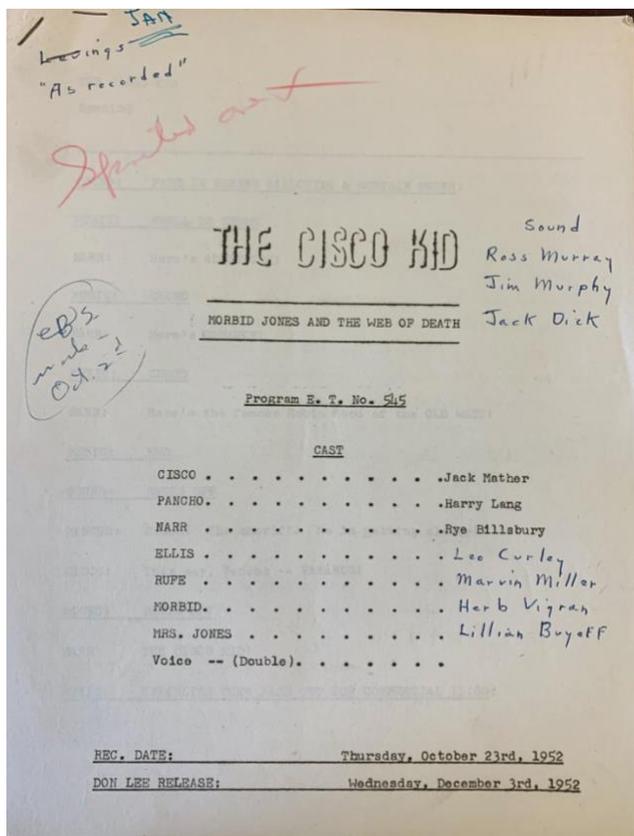
Beginning with the broadcast of Monday, January 10, 1949, Paul Pierce was hired to direct the program and ZIV funded the recording of each and every broadcast that followed. ZIV had intentions of syndicating the series via transcription disc. Initially the broadcasts were recorded as they aired live, with the Weber Bread commercials deleted out afterwards. For syndication purposes, the programs needed to run a span of 25 minutes, allowing for local announcers to deliver the sponsor's message. Within a few weeks, by March, it was decided that the assignment would be easier if the radio adventures were recorded in advance without the commercials. For the KHJ broadcasts, Weber commercials would be delivered live just as the syndicated renditions across the country.

For a brief summary of the above: *The Cisco Kid* was broadcast as a weekly program from October 2, 1942, to February 14, 1945. Beginning February 25, 1946, *The Cisco Kid* aired three days a week over KHJ in Los Angeles. Two years later the radio broadcasts were recorded for syndication.

Two radio broadcasts pre-syndication era, "The Cisco Kid Meets His Sister" (December 11, 1942) and "A Ghost for the Cisco Kid" (May 13, 1944) exist in recorded form. The remainder of the recordings that circulate today in collector hands (over 300 at present count) are from the Frederic W. Ziv syndicated series. For the record, all 792 of the ZIV syndications exist in recorded form even though more than half are not circulating yet. For collectors of old-time radio programs, any recording of *The Cisco Kid* radio program pre-dating January 1949 should be considered rare and a true find.

Recently, most of *The Cisco Kid* radio scripts have been digitized and careful review of them led to a number of discoveries.

The first discovery (and not much of a surprise) is the fact that collectors have been assigning a broadcast date for the syndicated episodes. Syndication meant the series aired at various days and time slots across the country, in regional areas each with different sponsors, which makes assigning a broadcast date futile.



Script *Cisco Kid* #545

For the new three-times-a-week rendition, which premiered on Monday, February 25, 1946, Jack Mather and Harry Lang were hired to play the leads. The program was tamed to fit a format best suited for children. Romance between The Cisco Kid and the damsel in distress was tamed down; Pancho became more of a comedic sidekick.

However, *The Cisco Kid* can be one of the exceptions since the radio scripts do feature a "Recording Date" and since those episodes were first heard over KHJ in Los Angeles before they aired across the country through syndication, if any airdates should be assigned, the KHJ broadcasts make more sense. (Many of the radio scripts also include the KHJ broadcast date on top of the recording date.) Thus syndication disc #1 would be dated January 10, 1949, #2 would be dated January 12, #3 would be dated January 14, #4 would be dated January 17, 1949, and so on.

Every broadcast included an official episode number and a script title. Back in the 1980s and 1990s it was common for collectors to create "collector titles," adding confusion to collectors who discovered they had duplicate recordings with alternate titles.

But perhaps the biggest find was the cast, documented on the cover of each and every radio script. Actors who were well-established on radio played multiple roles on the program including Parley Baer, Tom Holland, Jane Webb, Virginia Gregg, Lillian Buyeff, Parley Baer, Herb Butterfield, John Dehner, Ge Ge Pearson, Peggy Webber, Tim Graham, Ralph Moody, Alan Reed, Rye Billsbury, Vic Perrin, Ralph Moody, Charlie Lung, Jay Novello, Joan Banks, Byron Kane, Lou Krugman, Howard McNear, Jack Petruzzi, Jeanne Bates, Peggy Webber, Herb Ellis, Marvin Miller, and Barney Phillips.

Because the announcer never delivered acknowledgement of the supporting cast at the close of the programs, the extant radio scripts provide us with a number of surprises. Silent screen star Francis X. Bushman, who went off to Chicago in the early thirties to try his hand at a radio career, returned to Hollywood during the 1940s and his name appeared on no less than 49 episodes of *The Cisco Kid*. Silent screen actress Ynez Seabury, whose career was under the direction of D.W. Griffith and Cecil B. DeMille, played the role of Annie in "Arms for the Cisco Kid" (episode #48) and as Betty and Ma Grimstead in "An Execution for the Cisco Kid" (episode #52). Silent screen actress Betty Blythe, best remembered today for her exotic roles in such films as *The Queen of Sheba* (1921) and her

starring portrayal of H. Rider Haggard's *She* (1925), appeared in four episodes of *The Cisco Kid*, listed below:

- (as Maude) "Murder at Massacre Junction" #401
- (as Sadie) "The Lady of Six-Gun Café" #425
- (as the Duchess) "The Duchess of San Antonio" #451
- (as Cora) "War Drums" #562

Radio actress June Foray, best known for supplying voices for cartoon characters including Rocky the Flying Squirrel and Cindy Lou Who, played supporting roles in four episodes:

- (as Amelia) "A Cape for the Cisco Kid" #11
- (as Frances) "Four Aces for the Cisco Kid" #45
- (as Betsy) "Senorita Pancho and the Cisco Kid" #63
- (as Hazel) "Slaves for the Cisco Kid" #103

Actor Billy Gray, who played the role of James "Bud" Anderson, Jr. on the weekly television sitcom, *Father Knows Best*, played supporting roles on seven episodes:

- (as Reardon) "A War for the Cisco Kid" #14
- (as Yancey) "Handcuffs for the Cisco Kid" #29
- (as Boots and Ed) "A Tax for the Cisco Kid" #30
- (as Porky) "An Ambush for the Cisco Kid" #38
- (as Sheriff Grimstead) "An Execution for the Cisco Kid" #52
- (as Frank) "A Lion for the Cisco Kid" #50
- (as Coker) "A Dead End for the Cisco Kid" #55

Actor Jeff Chandler appeared in two episodes, under the name of Ira Grossel (his birth name). Chandler did a lot of radio in the 1940s, including playing the title role of *Michael Shayne*. After signing a lucrative contract with 20th Century Fox, Chandler was granted permission to continue doing radio as long as he was billed "Ira Grossel" instead of "Jeff Chandler," except when the movie studios wanted to highlight one of his up-coming movie appearances. In a 1951 interview with Hedda Hopper, Chandler remarked how he enjoyed performing for radio more than movies, citing radio actors "have to make their roles come alive, and they only have their voices with which to do it, but in pictures, the technique is quite different. The actor is only a small part of the performance. He lends his intelligence and personality to the role, but the greatest part of the performance belongs to the producer, who puts him in a certain type of part; the director, who tells him how to play it; and the cutter, who edits what's

done. That's why I find being a movie actor not particularly gratifying." While his name was not credited on the air, his name is listed as "Ira Grossel" on the cover of two scripts: as Bill in "A Rescue for the Cisco Kid" (#43) and as Jim in "An Arrest for the Cisco Kid" (#66).

Names also discovered among the cast of *The Cisco Kid* radio programs was actor Pinky Parker, who appeared in a dozen episodes, and actress Louise Arthur. Stephen Chase, the actor best known for playing a doctor in *When Worlds Collide* (1951) and the iconic scene in *The Blob* (1958), played supporting roles in 13 episodes. Of those 13, the following presently exist in collector hands: "Return of the Laughing Bandit" (#178), "The Bull-Whacker" (#222), "Murder at Red Clay Bend" (#276), "Gold in the Conestoga" (#288) and "The Mystery of Nine Mile Mesa" (#291).

Don Harvey, who would later play the recurring character of Collins on television's *Rawhide*, can be heard in episode #320, "Killer's Bullets at Chicken Creek." Mark Lawrence, best known for playing tough guys in B-mysteries and film noir on the big screen, played a role in episode #70, "Gun for Hire." Elizabeth Harrower, known for playing the recurring role of Miss Perkins, the schoolteacher, on television's *Dennis the Menace*, played the female lead in the same episode ("Gun for Hire") and in episode #115 titled "Stampede." Frank Lovejoy, before building up star status on radio for such programs as *Night Beat* on NBC radio (1950-1952), and guest star billing on such programs as *Suspense*, appears in two episodes of *The Cisco Kid*: "The Prophet of Boot Hill" (#101) and "Trail of the Iron Horse" (#140). Roscoe Ates, best known as Soapy Jones, the sidekick to cowboy star Eddie Dean in a series of silver screen Westerns from 1946 to 1948, plays supporting roles in two episodes of *The Cisco Kid*: "His Honor, the Killer" (#126) and "The Lady Sheriff of Sandy Gulch" (#165).

Actress Julie Bennett, who played supporting roles on thousands of radio broadcasts and later made a living providing voices for animated cartoons (including Cindy Bear on *The New Yogi Bear Show*), appeared in half a dozen episodes. She played the recurring character of "Julie" in the following three episodes: "Stage to Silver City" (#602), "Laramie Land Grab" (#624) and "Outlaw



Mala Powers

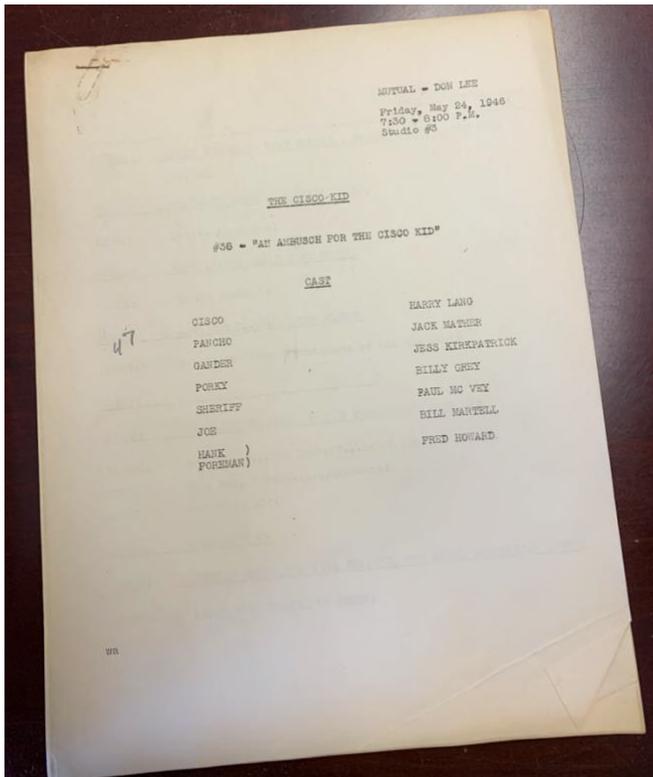
Justice" (#636). Radio announcer Art Gilmore, later to be narrator on television's *Highway Patrol* and *Mackenzie's Raiders*, played supporting roles on almost a dozen episodes including: "The Fighting Mountain Man" (#540), "The Trouble Makers" (#549), and "The Hurricane" (#559).

Actor Richard Boone, who would later become a household name as Paladin on television's *Have Gun-Will Travel*, also acted on radio. He can be heard on such broadcasts as *Dragnet*, *Suspense*, *Escape* and *Dangerous Assignment*. In *The Cisco Kid* episode titled "The Vanished Ones" #588, he played the role of Heinrich. Bill Johnstone, radio actor best known as Lamont Cranston, alias "The Shadow" on radio during the early 1940s, appeared in two episodes: as Otto in "The Corpse Maker" (#661), and as Turk in "House of Gold" (#696).

Curley Bradley, best known for playing the role of Tom Mix on the long-running radio program, played supporting roles in nine episodes of *The Cisco Kid*.

- (as the sheriff) "Mule Team Murder" #457
- (as Harley) "Judge Colt's Law" #490
- (as Coke) "Gamblers! Gunmen! And Gold!" #506
- (as Mike) "Murder at Fort Mojave" #514
- (as Sid) "The Mystery of Desolation Canyon" #542
- (as Bob) "Law of the Panhandle" #556
- (as Boone) "The Lady From Lubbock" #574
- (as Charley) "Cashiel Raynor's Revenge" #598
- (as Randy Wolfe) "Killer in the Jail House" #637

Willard Waterman, best known for the role of Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve on *The Great Gildersleeve* on both radio and television, played supporting roles in ten episodes. Six of those ten exist



in collector hands in case anyone wants to listen to them: “The Buffalo Skinner” (#131), “The Gila Stallion” (#146), “Cisco Takes the Trail” (#162), “Avalanche in Arrow Pass” (#177), “The Hermit of Ghost Town Three” (#186), and “Stampede on the Chisolm Trail” (#241).

Perhaps the biggest question that remained unanswered (until now) was which episodes specifically did Mel Blanc play the role of Poncho on *The Cisco Kid*. Until now encyclopedias and magazine articles only listed his name but never the specifics. According to the radio scripts, Mel Blanc played the role from episodes #582 to 591, and again from #630 to 781. Lou Merrill played the role from #600 to 602. Dick Beals played the role of Panchito from #626 to #630, the last of which he shared an adventure with Poncho, who made a return to the program.

Perhaps the biggest surprise was to discover Mala Powers listed among the cast. The actress who appeared in dozens of Westerns and science-fiction movies in the 1950s and became a cultural icon over the years, played hundreds of supporting roles on radio including *This is Your FBI*, *The Lux Radio Theatre*, *Jeff Regan*, *Investigator*, *Stars Over Hollywood* and *The Adventures of Red*

Ryder. The majority of her radio credits remain unknown due to a lack of proper documentation. Thanks to the preservation of *The Cisco Kid* radio scripts, her credits as they appear on *The Cisco Kid* are now fully documented and listed below.

- (as Sarah) “Beyond the Frontier” #336
- (as Martha) “A Lesson for Billy Jewell” #346
- (as Dolly) “To Please a Friend” #358
- (as Cleo) “Death by Telegraph” #380
- (as Ruth) “Checkerboard of Death” #386
- (as Vi) “The Wagon Box War” #404
- (as Nora) “The Handsome Bandit” #419
- (as Nancy) “The Land Rush” #426
- (as Martha) “The Race for Life” #436
- (as Lorrie) “The Birthday Party” #444
- (as Molly) “Pancho and the Forty Thieves” #459
- (as Betty) “Barbed Wire War” #474
- (as Ann) “The Courtship of Joe Martin” #515
- (as Cassandra) “South of Del Norte” #523
- (as Clara) “Pancho and the Princess” #548
- (as Betty) “Rodeo” #541
- (as Marion) “Convict’s Escape” #557
- (as Lola) “Murder at North San Juan” #583
- (as Phyllis) “Fight at Devil’s Canyon” #597
- (as Agatha Mason) “War in the Pecos Valley” #621
- (as Gayle) “Mark of the Eagle” #628
- (as Nora Knowles) “Killer in the Jail House” #637
- (as Mary) “Blackmail at Roundup” #650
- (as Carol) “Treasure of the Aztecs” #664
- (as Mary) “Lynch Law” #708
- (as Lorna) “The Gunmaker of Texas” #701
- (as Lorry, the young girl) “The Gunhawk” #720
- (as Nancy) “The Trap” #726
- (as Lulu) “Sheriff Longhair” #743
- (as Vinnie) “Vengeance of Vinnie Bolton” #758
- (as Judy) “Gamble for Life” #768
- (as Donna) “The Daughters of Cimarron” #776

When it comes to cast documentation for radio’s *The Cisco Kid*, and the digitizing of the radio scripts, we should value such discoveries and efforts as it provides a record more accurate than what has been documented elsewhere on the Internet. There are a number of old-time radio fans who listen to recordings and make general assumptions who is in the cast, then contribute their assumptions to websites. (Yes, you read that correctly.) Regrettably, this pertains to hundreds of other radio programs, not just *The Cisco Kid*, listed on the Internet with incorrect cast details. All of which is a

long-winded way of stating that the information contained in this article was taken directly from the radio scripts – no guesswork applied. Personally, I always prefer to go to the source... at least, document from the source.

On a positive note, *The Cisco Kid* is just one of many radio programs in the past year that received some form of preservation and documentation thanks to historians consulting archival materials. Ten years ago, there were a dozen people who would go to the expense traveling to archives, in an effort to properly document old-time radio. Sadly, as of today, that number has dwindled down to two. With so many old-time radio programs that have yet to receive proper documentation, fans of *The Cisco Kid* can rejoice for extensive treatment about this program (beyond these cast discoveries) will be published in a book in the next year or two, along with other programs produced by Frederic W. Ziv.



Clearing up Some Internet Soap Opera Myths

Michael W. Miller

Let me start by stating that while I am a fan of old time radio overall, I am not necessarily a soap opera fan. Last year I volunteered to do some work for Ted Davenport and have been dutifully documenting his collection since then. As I listen to each series, I search the internet for information on the shows to make sure I get actors' and actresses' names spelled correctly and to check the show dates and episode numbers. One thing that has always bothered me in my nearly 40 years as

an OTR fan is misdated shows. Perhaps being an engineer by training, I enjoy trying to determine the correct show dates. In addition to correcting show dates, I also realize a lot of the series information on various internet sites is wrong. Martin Grams has pointed out many times how an error will propagate itself in books and articles. This article is my attempt to correct some of the information you will read on two of these series. To paraphrase Yogi Berra, "You can hear a lot just by listening."

As Ted's collection is quite extensive, there are many soap operas to go through and I have now completed *Ma Perkins* and *The Goldbergs*. I am still working on cleaning up show dates and will share the correct dates with the OTRR library once I am 99% sure. What I am 100% sure of is that the published show dates of *Ma Perkins* for 1949 and early 1950 are in error as are virtually all episodes of *The Goldbergs*. For now, let's bust some internet myths for both shows, but mostly *The Goldbergs*.

Myth #1 – The radio audience of *Ma Perkins* did not know Virginia Payne played Ma until the show's final performance

During the 1949 - 1951 seasons, announcer Charlie Warren would credit Virginia Payne once a week during the show's closing. This usually took place after each Tuesday's show, unless Ma was not in that day's story. If she was not in Tuesday's show, she would normally be credited the next time her character appeared. However, there was at least one case where she was not on the Tuesday broadcast, she was on Wednesday and Thursday, but she wasn't credited until the end of Friday's episode. Only one problem, though, she wasn't in that Friday's episode.

Myth #2 – *The Goldbergs* ran until 1946

The Goldbergs went off the air on March 30, 1945, per articles in *Dixon Evening Telegraph*, March 29, 1945, and *Cumberland News*, March 30, 1945. There were multiple papers carrying the story, so I just picked a couple as examples. According to the articles, Duz (from Proctor and Gamble) ended their 8-year sponsorship and Gertrude Berg planned on doing a war tour visiting troops. *The Goldbergs* did return to radio briefly in 1949-1950 as a 30-minute situation comedy.

Myth #3 – With the death of James R. Waters, Gertrude Berg kept the character of Jake, but he was always off mic.

James R. Waters left *The Goldbergs* in December of 1944 and was replaced by two different actors. The initial replacement appeared as Jake 10 times in December of 1944 and January of 1945. The 3rd Jake appeared in two episodes in February 1945. Even before Waters left the show, Berg did not have Jake appearing as often. Waters passed away on November 20, 1945, in Woodmere, Long Island, New York (*New York Times*, November 21, 1945).

#4 (More Trivia than Myth) – Molly’s catchphrase, “Yoo-hoo! Is anybody?”

In surviving recordings, Molly can first be heard uttering this phrase around April 6, 1942 (my current guess on the date for this episode), where the Goldbergs are back from New York and Rosie is back from Florida. It is possible that it appeared prior to this date as many of the prior shows are missing parts of the beginning or end. In mid-January 1945, Molly’s opening changes to, “Yoo-hoo, duz everybody?” as a nod to the show’s sponsor (Duz) and continues until the end of the series two months later. Makes one wonder if this was a sign that Proctor and Gamble was thinking of dropping the show and this was Berg trying to keep the sponsor onboard.

There are many episodes of each series available in the OTRR library as are several uncirculated ones from Ted Davenport. The *UCLA Library Film and Television Archive* (<https://www.cinema.ucla.edu/collections/goldbergs/all>) has uncirculated episodes of *The Goldbergs* available from late 1942 until August of 1944. For *The Goldbergs* that are in circulation, both the episode dates and show numbers are currently in error, so about three story threads are out of sequence. If you want to start listening to those, I suggest you wait a little while until I finally solve the date puzzle and get them sequenced properly.

“The Well-Dressed Corpse”: Warning to the “Career Woman”?

Denise Noe

The episode of *Suspense* called “The Well-Dressed Corpse” was first broadcast on January 18, 1951. It is not a particularly suspenseful *Suspense* episode; indeed, it is rather lacking in this area. However, I believe the episode is worthy of note for a question it raises and leaves dangling and, more importantly, for a certain social significance.

When the episode opens, Ruth Franklin (Eve Arden) is in a police station, listlessly answering questions from cops. She acknowledges her name, her age of 33, and says she drives a car. In an appropriately defeated tone, she adds, “I’m the murderer you’re looking for.”

We then flashback to happier times. Ruth recounts being voted one of America’s “Ten Best-Dressed Women.” Ruth adds, “I always knew I would be.” Along with others honored as “Best-Dressed,” she attended a “meet the press” buffet luncheon — expensively and beautifully garbed, of course. She is put at a table with luncheon partner Ray Mason— just been voted one of America’s “Ten Best-Dressed Men.” They trade barbs and soon start flirting. They start seeing each other regularly.

At Ruth’s job, her secretary, PeeDee Wright, gives her info on the fellow, a file stating he was once a war correspondent and has authored two books on politics. He had a weekly column and a weekly radio program. He is 38 and unmarried.

Ruth and Roy are at a restaurant when Ruth informs Roy she plans to do something important. “Run for president?” he wittily queries.

“On, no, nothing as small as that,” she retorts. “I’m going to get married.”

Naturally, Roy asks whom she is will wed.

“A man named Roy Mason,” she replies.

Clunk.

Roy says he cannot marry Ruth. He is already engaged to a socialite named Elizabeth Granger.

Our heroine is stunned. She believed she had saved herself for “the one man who had what I had — brains and guts and talent. Then I realized I’d saved myself for what I couldn’t have.” Just as upsetting is knowing she lost out to a “socialite” whom she stereotypes as a lazy rich snob. How, oh *how*, could Roy prefer such a woman to our well-educated, hard-working, and

accomplished Ruth? She throws his books into the fireplace.

Within a few days, she and Roy get together at another lunch to talk things over. At their meeting, Ruth pounds on Roy for preferring “some grown-up child who never did anything for herself.” She storms off saying, “I hope I never see you again!”

Later he phones her. “We’re friends,” he says emphatically. “If I didn’t see you again, I’d miss you for the rest of my life.” She agrees to meet him at his place. He is ready to fix a drink, saying, “I knew you couldn’t turn down a Mason special.” Instead of discussing the nature of their relationship, Ruth pulls out a gun, She shoots and kills Roy Mason. As he dies, he tells her he wrote a letter to her about the situation.

After the crime, she plans to flee to Canada. But she cannot leave until she has seen her rival. She yearns to see Elizabeth Granger grieving, Elizabeth Granger sobbing, Elizabeth Granger emotionally destroyed. She searches the newspapers, the phone book and finds — nothing. Disguised in a veil and dark gasses, Ruth attends the funeral of the man she murdered. “I went to his funeral but she didn’t,” Ruth recalls. Why did this socialite not attend the funeral of her fiancé?

Desperate to know the fate of her rival — of the reason in her own mind for the murder — she returns to her place of business and asks Peedee for the information.

“I can’t help you now,” Peedee says. “No one can help you now. You’re a walking dead woman.” The secretary expresses the fear that someday “I may end up like you.”

Ruth pleads with Peedee to just to tell about Elizabeth Granger. “Oh, that,” the secretary replies in a desultory manner. Peedee reveals that got a letter from Roy Mason that she read herself. “It makes you look an even bigger fool,” Peedee asserts.

There was no Elizabeth Granger. Roy made the engagement up as an excuse not to marry.

After a few more twists, our anti-heroine is in jail. “I *am* somebody!” she wails as she prepares to spend her life as a number on a yard at best or to meet the executioner at worst.

This *Suspense* episode is puzzling in a way that invites listener speculation. It is not unusual for a

man to not want to marry a particular woman. There need be no special explanation for his having friend-zoned her. The oddity in this story is that a man who views a woman a “just a friend” would be so desperate to cling to the friendship. Someone posted a comment on YouTube suggesting we are to think Roy Mason is gay. But that does not make sense of the puzzle. Male homosexuals often form friendships with women but it is unlikely they would be desperate, as Roy most certainly is, were such a friendship to end. This leads to the possibility that Roy Mason is in love with Ruth Franklin. He cannot marry her, not because he is engaged to another woman, but because he has a problem that would prevent sexual consummation of the marriage. The nature of the problem would not be mentionable on a show of the era.

Perhaps more significantly, “The Well-Dressed Corpse” appears to be a warning (however unintentional) to what were then called “career women.” In our post-feminist era, it may sound overdone and misguided to some listeners — and still relevant to others. Ruth Franklin seems to embody the 1950s perception of the “career woman” and, to some extent, our modern ideal of a “successful” woman. Except that she achieves professional success but fails at a personal level. In contrast to the women called “just a housewife” in her time period, she lacks a fulfilling personal partnership. Perhaps at an even deeper level, it is meant to warn people, regardless of gender, that affluence should never be the main goal. “The Well-Dressed Corpse” is, after all, dead.

Eve Arden handles a dramatic role in a different vein tonight when she stars on “theater of thrills.” The chiller is entitled “The Dressed Corpse” and is calculated for the unexpected in thirty minutes of **Suspense** (WDAE, 9 P. M.).

Tampa Times, January 18, 1951

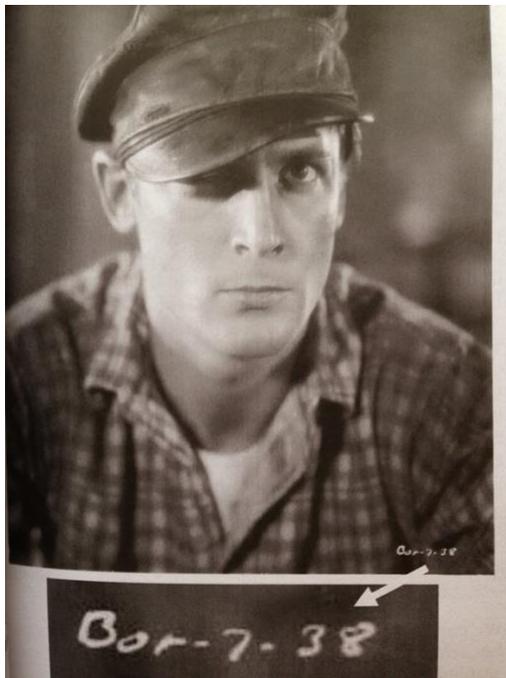
7:00—Suspense. Eve Arden, star of CBS' *Our Miss Brooks*, portrays a best dressed woman who becomes a murderer in the drama—"The Well Dressed Corpse." (KOPO).

Tucson Daily Citizen, January 18, 1951

How to Identify Old Photos Martin Grams

Have you ever been among a select handful of film buffs when asked to identify someone in a photograph? Like most in the group, were you unable to identify the actor or actress? Have you found it frustrating?

Well, Ed and Susan Poole have undertaken the monumental task of doing the job for you. A recent 140-page book, *Production Code Basics for Movie Still Collectors*, helps you understand those little codes on the bottom of the photographs and identify unknown actors in movie stills. If you don't know what I am talking about, check out the photograph below and look at the bottom right corner.



Yeah, you've seen them. Those are called “portrait codes” and they help you verify not only what studio they originate, but the movie as well. Sometimes the codes refer to the director. From Mack Sennett to 20th Century Fox, Louise Brooks to Marilyn Monroe, and Andre de Toth to Leo McCarey, those codes will help you figure out who is in the photograph.

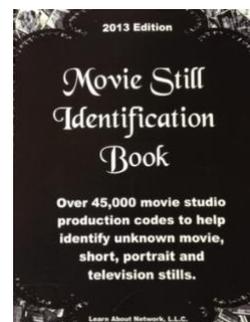
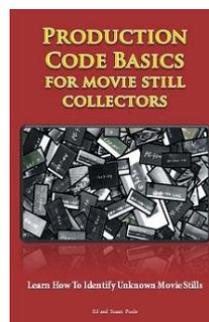
Below is a scan of a photograph and a zoom in for the production code. Yeah, now you know what I am talking about.

Broken down in simple-to-understand chapters including the production process, the publicity department, the advertising department, the special photographer, tricks and revisions applied within the studios over the years, and looking outside the major studio framework, this book will provide you with the necessary tools for identifying unknown movie stills.

Even better, the authors compiled a second book, literally the size of a telephone book, titled *Movie Still Identification Book*. This spiral-bound production contains over 45,000 movie studio production codes which serve as a starting point for both movies and television programs. So . . . if you have a photograph with Tallulah Bankhead and want to know what movie it is for, this book is a wonderful companion. After all, a standard publicity photo might have the actress standing before a plain backdrop and the gown she wears may not match any of the movies she appeared in. Wardrobe test? Probably. But for what movie? Nothing can be more frustrating than having a photograph for a motion picture and incorrectly “assume” what movie the photo belongs to.

Yes, I have seen reference books use publicity stills from the major studios and then misidentify the movie for which the photo belongs. I cannot fault the authors of those books because a reference source such as this one was not readily available. Until now. So hopefully the next time someone uses a studio publicity shot of James Cagney from, say, *Public Enemy*, they won't claim it to be a publicity photo from the wrong movie. The proper identification is available at their fingertips.

The website to purchase these two books is www.LearnAboutMoviePoster.com. They offer an annual subscription to an on-line database but you have to renew every year and the book is obviously a one-time purchase. Your call. I suggest the book.



Our final release of 2021 is an update of an older set, [A Case for Dr. Morelle](#). As soon as we last updated this set a couple years ago, we almost immediately received a set of all 13 episodes from a listener in England. They were all in the lossless flac format and, upon listening, were equal or better quality than what OTRR had just released. It is a bit frustrating when the timing of events like this occur; if only we had received the upgraded shows a week or two earlier, we could have included them in the updated set. Thus, we knew almost immediately after releasing the last update that yet another update would be in the works at some point. Finally, that some point has come. Version 2112 of [A Case for Dr. Morelle](#) is now available. Below is the series summary and artwork from the program set.

A Case for Dr. Morelle

A Case for Dr. Morelle was a 13-episode series which ran weekly in 1957 on the BBC Light Programme from April 23 to July 16. According to the author Ernest Dudley, the character of Dr. Morelle began life in 1940 during the World War Two air raids, as he was trying to think up a different kind of detective while also providing a comic role for the actress Jane Grahame, who was also his wife.

The result, originally heard on the radio show *Monday Night at Eight*, involved the acerbic criminal psychologist Dr. Morelle and his eager but less than helpful secretary Miss Frayle. In the 1957 series, Dr. Morelle was played by the English comic actor Cecil Parker and Sheila Sim played the long-suffering and devoted Miss Frayle. In addition to radio plays, Dudley wrote a stage play as well as a number of novels and short stories featuring these characters.

Audiences loved the opinionated and eccentric Morelle, whose disdain for his loyal secretary was an extension of his general lack of regard for humanity. Unlike Sherlock Holmes, who based his analysis on physical clues left at the scene of the crime, Morelle generally conducted his investigations via a series of interviews, although he sometimes included physical evidence in his analysis. He used his knowledge of criminal psychology to determine which of the suspects fit the psychological profile of the criminal. Often during the story, Miss Frayle would irritate the doctor by interrupting him as he was conducting an experiment or testing some scientific theory.

His solutions to the crimes - whether murder, blackmail, larceny or some other crime - were always based on psychology.

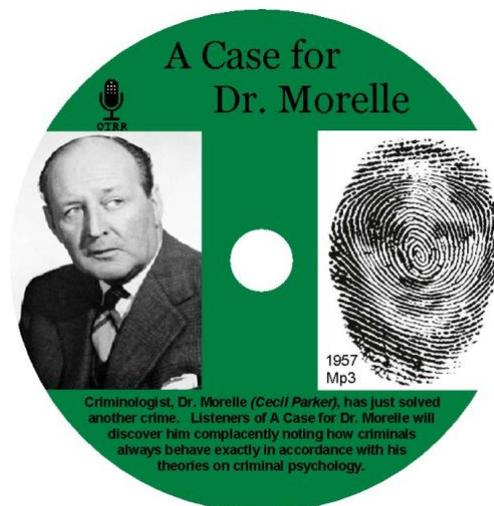
Cecil Parker

As popular with British audiences as American audiences, dour, imperious, gritty-voiced Cecil Parker entertained international audiences for over fifty years. Equally at home with 'heavy' roles as light comedy and slapstick roles, Cecil Parker's droll delivery was highly prized as a perfect counterpoint to comedies, mysteries and powerful dramatic presentations alike.

Born in East Sussex, England, Parker undertook his first Stage appearances in 1922 following his World War I service in His Majesty's Scottish Guard and receiving the Mons Star with his unit. Honing his skills over the next three years of journeyman acting 1925 found him appearing regularly at stage venues in London's West End.

A succession of supporting roles in early sound film soon found him a highly sought after character actor in increasingly prominent roles, culminating in a series of hits on both sides of the Atlantic between 1945 and 1955.

Parker is most fondly remembered among radio fans for his role as the quixotic, imperious Dr. Morelle in the BBC Light Programme classic, *A Case for Dr. Morelle*, one of the era's more perfect marriages of performer to character. Cecil Parker perfectly embodied the character, long after becoming the only actor to remain inexorably associated with Ernest Dudley's fictional sleuth.

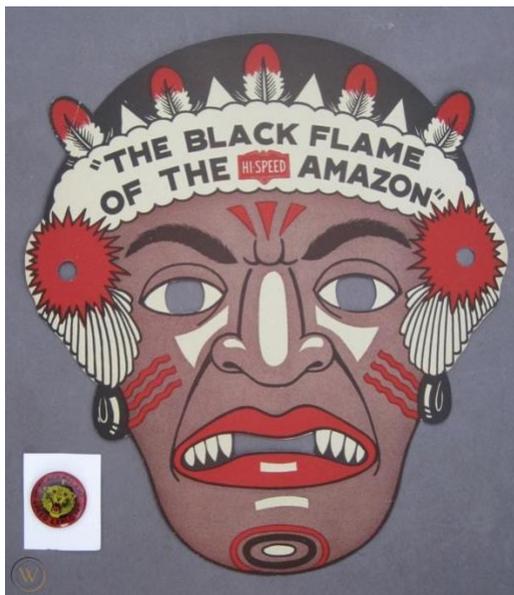


Our first release of 2022 is the semi-obscure serial [*The Black Flame of the Amazon*](#). While it's a program that has been circulating for many years, during the process of formalizing this set I did not meet a single person who had listened to it. Printed here are the series synopsis, photos of some premiums associated with the series, and the Maintained CD artwork.

[*The Black Flame of the Amazon*](#)
Ryan Ellett

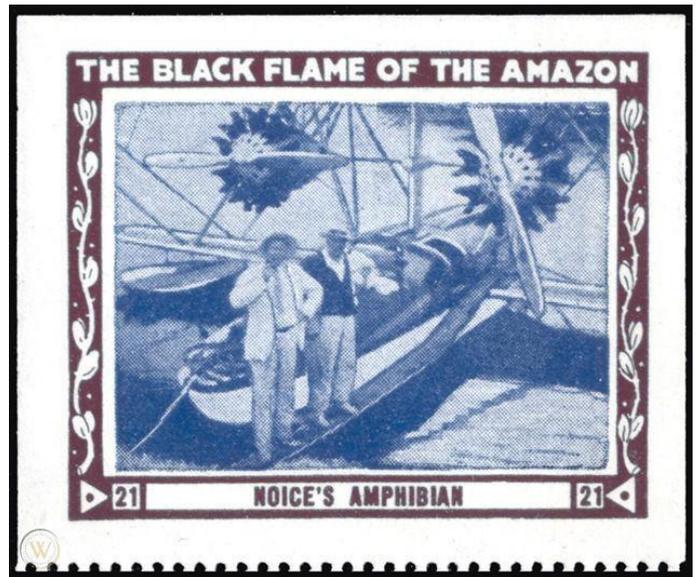
When Van Cronkhite Associates Incorporated, a Chicago-based radio consulting agency, dissolved in early 1938, some of its former employees promptly created TransAir Incorporated, another agency focused on building and selling radio programming, especially news and transcribed shows.

With William F. Arnold as president, Ray Launder as vice-president, and John Taylor Booz as secretary, TransAir quickly sold its first series to Toledo, Ohio's Hickok Oil Company. That first sale was *The Black Flame of the Amazon*, a quarter-hour show that Hickok wanted on the Michigan Network as well as stations in Toledo, Cleveland, Canton, and Youngstown. Recorded by Aerograms Incorporated out of Hollywood, *The Black Flame of the Amazon* premiered on February 14, 1938.



The program aired five days per week and featured adventurer and explorer Harold Noice.

Noice had spent the last half of the 19-teens on Arctic exploration trips and spent significant time among the Inuit. He later turned his attention to South America and the Amazon region, the period during which the *The Black Flame of the Amazon* is very loosely based. Noice played himself in the series and the scripts were written and produced by Aerogram's J. B. Downie.



After going off the air for the summer, Hickok Oil renewed *The Black Flame of the Amazon* on September 26, 1938 for a 39-week run to last through the school year. The show's reach expanded to Cincinnati's WCKY, Richmond, Virginia's WRVA, and other stations in Kentucky, North Carolina, and West Virginia under the sponsorship of Strietmann Biscuit Company and Felber Biscuit Company, both subsidiaries of United Biscuit Company.

Promoted as an educational adventure series, the producer created a Hi-Speed Explorer's Club after a gasoline brand of the Hickok Oil sponsor. Executives boasted that over 450,000 youngsters joined the Explorer's Club after hearing about it on *The Black Flame of the Amazon*. Other sponsor information includes the Independent Packing Company backing the program in St. Louis and Jefferson City, Missouri, in 1940 and Pacific States Oil Company underwriting it over San Francisco's KFRC in 1941. Industry records hint that 225 episodes were recorded, meaning there are potentially many new ones to be unearthed and

added to this set. Print advertisements for *The Black Flame of the Amazon* have been found as late as 1952.

Sources:

Dunning, John. *On the Air: The Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio*.

Broadcasting February 1, 1938, August 15, 1938, October 15, 1938, August 1, 1938, December 1, 1938, January 1, 1939, January 1, 1940, February 10, 1941

Radio Daily January 31, 1938



The BLACK FLAME of the AMAZON
FEATURING HAROLD NOICE
FAMOUS EXPLORER
Brought to you by
PETER PAN FRESH BREAD

HEY KIDS!
HERE'S A REAL JUNGLE THRILLER
This week learn how you can join the Explorer's Club. Get a gang together and listen to this jungle thriller.
Join Harold Noice, on his exciting adventure in the "Wilds" of South America.

Mondays thru Fridays 5:15-5:30
KFAB 1110 on Your Dial

Hastings (NE) Daily Tribune (9-22-1952)



ATTENTION! CHILDREN
Tune in on Station WSPD, Toledo,
for our New Serial—Starting Tonight at 6:15
"The Black Flame of the Amazon"
SPONSORED BY
HI-SPEED DEALERS
MARION HI-SPEED
KAY & MILLER, Distributors

539 Silver St. 409 Davids St.
Main and Farming. Bellefontaine and Henry
Church and High. 1198 E. Center St.
Columbia and Prospect Riggs Motor Sales.

The Marion Star (2-14-1938)



Radio 100 Years Ago

Enjoy a look back at what was going on in the world of broadcasting 100 years ago.



Inside view of the radio-telephone station of the Chicago Opera House. The voice and music are picked up on the stage by several microphones connected to this set and radiated over a large area, enabling anyone with a receiving set to hear the whole performance.

Radio News, February 1922

Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences to Have Radio Station

A PERMANENT radio station is to be established on the roof of the Academy of Music, by the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, where members will be able to communicate with distant points and enjoy radio concerts broadcasted from different radio stations. Director Charles D. Atkins of the department of education, made this announcement in his report, at the monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees.

The first exhibition and demonstration of wireless telegraphy and telephony will be conducted by the department of electricity.

Director Atkins said he had secured permission from the Academy Board to install antenna on the roof of the Academy, where a permanent radio station will be established.

Regular radio meetings will be held. Through this station members will be able to communicate with distant points at these meetings and enjoy some of the radio concerts broadcasted from different radio stations.

Wireless Age, January 1922



MAGNAVOX

PROGRAM FOR THE WEEK

The Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Company announces for its fifty-fourth week of broadcasting from station KDKA, the following program:

Sunday, January 1, 1922

- 10:45 A. M. Services of the First Presbyterian Church, Sixth Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa. Sermon by Rev. Maitland Alexander, Minister.
- 3:00 P. M. Radio Chapel at Station KDKA by the Rev. Edwin J. Van Etten of the Calvary Episcopal Church, Shady Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa. Special music by Boy Choir from Trinity Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.
- 7:45 P. M. Services of the Calvary Episcopal Church, Shady Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa. Sermon by the Rev. Edwin J. Van Etten.

Monday, January 2, 1922

- 5:30 P. M. Play-by-play report of the football game between Washington & Jefferson College, and University of California. (Arranged through the co-operation of the Pittsburgh Post).
- 6:00 P. M. Roger Babson Letter on Business Conditions.
- 6:30 P. M. Mrs. James M. Thompson. Soprano
Norman F. O'Hara, Tenor
Fred Lotz, Pianist
Miss Alicia Guthrie, Reader

Tuesday, January 3, 1922

- 8:30 P. M. Concert of Cornell Glee Club at Carnegie Music Hall, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Wednesday, January 4, 1922.

- 6:30 P. M. Stokes Concert Company

Thursday, January 5, 1922

- 8:30 P. M. Malt's Quartet, of George Westinghouse Commandery No. 567. Clarence Harper, first tenor; David S. Cumming, second tenor; W. Ford McCurry, baritone; Andrew Schudette, bass; Frank Hill, accompanist.

Friday, January 6, 1922

- 8:30 P. M. Richard Kountz, and singers.

Saturday, January 7, 1922

- 8:30 P. M. Program to be announced by radiophone.

Week Day Schedule

- 10:00 to 10:10 A. M. Music
- 12:30 to 1:00 P. M. Music
- 2:00 to 2:10 P. M. Music
- 4:00 to 4:10 P. M. Music

*On Saturdays no broadcasting done at these periods.

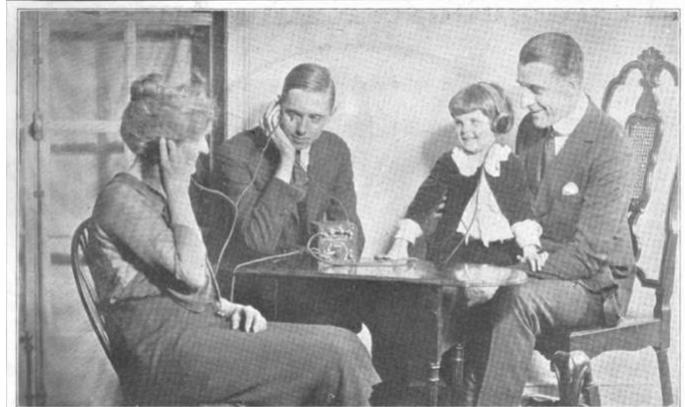
- 7:30 P. M. Uncle Wiggily Bedtime Story from the Pittsburgh Sun and Music for the Kiddies, and Grown-ups who still enjoy them.

- 7:45 P. M. Special News, Government Market Reports, Summary of New York Stock Exchange, Weather Report.

- 8:30 to 9:00 P. M. Musical Program
- 9:00 to 9:05 P. M. News (United Press Service)
- 9:05 to 9:30 P. M. Musical Program

- 9:55 to 10:00 P. M. Arlington time signals

Program subject to change



Throughout the length and breadth of the land, thousands of families are listening to music, concerts, news of the day, lectures, weather reports, church services, etc., right in their own homes with a \$15.00 "Marvel" Radio Telephone Receiving Outfit. No longer is it necessary to have expensive apparatus or any knowledge of experience in wireless telephony.

Dangerous Assignment

Ryan Ellett

Dangerous Assignment, with Brian Donlevy in the lead role of Steve Mitchell, was developed by NBC during the summer of 1949 at a cost of \$15,000. Other shows developed as part of this new programming blitz by the network included *Dragnet* at a cost of \$34,000, *Richard Diamond* at \$51,000, and *Four Star Playhouse* at \$60,000. Seven episodes were broadcast that summer, from July 9 to August 20, 1949. When no sponsor stepped forward the show left the airwaves for six months.

Originally scheduled to replace Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis' program at 10:00 in early February 1950, *Dangerous Assignment* instead took Dave Garroway's slot at 10:30 with Garroway getting pushed back to 11:30 while *Night Beat* claimed the 10:00 time. Initially a sustained program, in the spring of 1950 General Mills signed to take sponsorship of the show beginning May 10 as part of a large bundle sale with NBC.

In September 1950 it was announced in the trades that Donlevy had formed a production company – New Colony, Inc. – to bring *Dangerous Assignment* to television. He purchased the video rights from writer Bob Ryfe, who was also the package owner, and signed Ryf to script the visual version in addition to continuing his radio responsibilities. While Donlevy funded the start-up himself, he had an understanding with radio sponsor General Mills that the cereal manufacturer would take over production costs if the initial results were satisfactory.

When *Dangerous Assignment* was once again looking for a sponsor in 1951 NBC advertised to potential backers that it had a gross weekly cost of \$4,117, in comparison to \$1,823 for *Hollywood Love Story* and \$8,820 per half hour of Tallulah Bankhead's *The Big Show*.

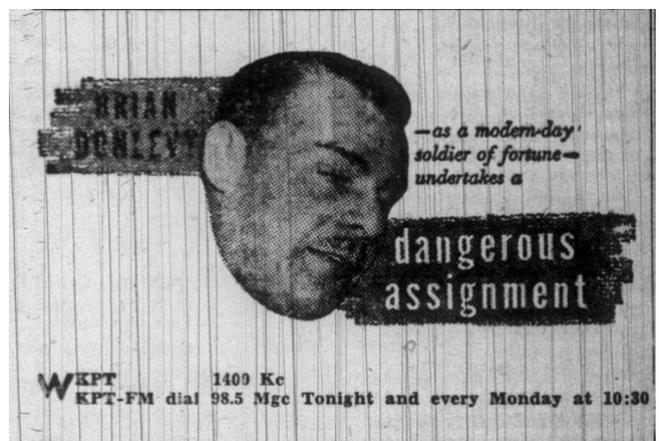
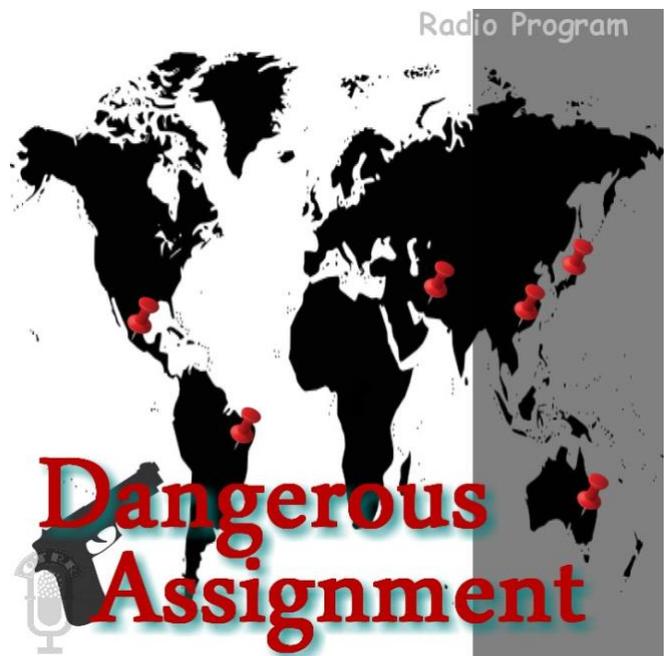
Dangerous Assignment ran until July 1953 on radio and could be found in syndication on various television stations throughout the 1950s and even into the early 1960s. An Australian-based radio version was produced in 1954.

In addition to Donlevy as lead character Steve Mitchell, his boss The Commissioner was played by Herb Butterfield and the Commissioner's secretary, Ruth, was played by Betty Moran. Under the

authority of a never-named federal spy agency, every week secret agent Steve Mitchell was off to an exotic locale to solve an international mystery.

Interestingly, destinations in U.S.-allied countries were regularly identified, from Italy to France to Norway, while Communist-bloc nations were not, usually referred to as simply a Balkan or Eastern European country. Old-time radio author John Dunning found the episodes "predictable" but audiences found the series if not ground-breaking at least enjoyable enough to afford it more than three years on the airwaves.

The head writer was Bob Ryf with Adrian Gendot frequently attributed as co-writer. Bill Cairn directed and Robert Armbruster provided music for most of the run.



Purchasing Groups

The Old Time Radio Researchers Purchasing Group:
Contact Jim Wood at OTRPG@Bookfixer.com
Dues: 5\$ per month.

Ted Davenport Purchasing Group:
Contact Ted at tedotr52@gmail.com
Dues: 35\$ per month for 18 hours of both circulating and uncirculating material from transcription disc.

Doug Hopkinson Purchasing Group:
Contact Doug at auditorium117@gmail.com
Dues: \$30 for 7.5 hours.

Support the *Old Radio Times*

Since its debut in December 2005, the *Old Radio Times* has been offered free to the old-time radio community. It is the only free group publication in the hobby and it will remain so. However, as a way to help readers show their appreciation for the zine, we've created a Patreon page where you can pledge a regular donation to the upkeep of the zine and the work of the Old Time Radio Researchers in general.

Visit [the Times' Patreon page](#) to become a subscriber, paying \$1 (or \$2, or more!) to our dusty coffer each time a new issue is published. We are currently on a bi-monthly schedule so the total annual cost could be as little as \$6.

Visit Our Blog

Another little-known resource for the Old Time Radio Researchers is our blog, found [here](#). It was dormant after the death of Jim Beshires but in recent months we have reactivated it. Please subscribe to be automatically notified of new posts.

A Reminder

The Old Time Radio Researchers online library remains one of the most valuable sources of downloadable OTR programs available freely to the wider public. Many newer members appear unfamiliar with this resource. [Visit here!](#)

Wistful Vistas

From the Editor's Desk
Ryan Ellett

The old year ended and the new year began with a lot of projects coming to fruition for the Old Time Radio Researchers. In this issue you'll find information about our final set of 2021 and first sets of 2022, [A Case for Dr. Morelle](#), [The Black Flame of the Amazon](#), and [Dangerous Assignment](#), respectively. While last year was a little slow in the release of Maintained sets, this year we'll be moving at a quick pace to get all of our new and updated sets out to you.

I'm excited to welcome Michael Miller to our pages with his first contribution, debunking some misunderstandings about soap operas or serials.

This issue also introduces many of you to our "Curated" sets. These are new sets that are less robust than our Maintained sets but are more reliable in regards to audio quality and labeling than an average episode taken from our library. We have two as of this writing: [The Strange Romance of Evelyn Winters](#) and [Stardust](#).

As usual, the *Old Radio Times* is always looking for new content. Book reviews, reminiscences, and historical articles are eagerly accepted. No professional writing experience necessary!

Edited by Ryan Ellett

Title font by Joe Adams

OldRadioTimes@yahoo.com



Stay Tuned America Schedule

(All times are Central Standard Time)

Monday:

06:30-07:00 - Unshackled!
16:00-17:00 - When Radio Was! ENCORE! w/
Greg Bell (Classic Episodes)
18:00-19:00 - When Radio Was! w/ Greg Bell
(Current Episodes)
19:00-20:00 - Make Believe Ballroom w/Jeff
Bressler (Repeat)
21:00-23:59 - USA Classic Radio Theater w/
Wyatt Cox

Tuesday:

06:30-07:00 - Unshackled!
16:00-17:00 - When Radio Was! ENCORE! w/
Greg Bell (Classic Episodes)
18:00-19:00 - When Radio Was! w/ Greg Bell
(Current Episodes)
19:00-21:00 - Same Time, Same Station - w/ John
and Larry Gassman
21:00-23:59 - USA Classic Radio Theater w/
Wyatt Cox

Wednesday:

06:30-07:00 - Unshackled!
16:00-17:00 - When Radio Was! ENCORE! w/
Greg Bell (Classic Episodes)
17:00-18:00 - Anything Goes!! w/ Lise Avery
(Repeat)
18:00-19:00 - When Radio Was! w/ Greg Bell
(Current Episodes)
21:00-23:59 - USA Classic Radio Theater w/
Wyatt Cox

Thursday:

06:30-07:00 - Unshackled!
16:00-17:00 - When Radio Was! ENCORE! w/
Greg Bell (Classic Episodes)
18:00-19:00 - When Radio Was! w/ Greg Bell
(Current Episodes)
19:00-21:00 - The Sounds Of Sinatra w/ Sid Mark
21:00-23:59 - USA Classic Radio Theater w/
Wyatt Cox

Friday:

06:30-07:00 - Unshackled!
12:00-13:00 - Anything Goes!! w/ Lise Avery (Repeat)
16:00-17:00 - When Radio Was! ENCORE! w/ Greg
Bell (Classic Episodes)
18:00-19:00 - When Radio Was! w/ Greg Bell (Current
Episodes)
19:00-21:00 - The Great Music Club w/ Mike Shannon
21:00-23:59 - USA Classic Radio Theater w/ Wyatt
Cox

Saturday:

06:30-07:00 - Unshackled!
07:00-12:00 - Swing Thing w/ Fred Hall
12:00-14:00 - Old Time Radio Classics w/ Jerry
Haendiges
14:00-15:00 - Make Believe Ballroom w/ Jeff Bressler
15:00-17:00 - Memories In Melody w/ Matt Taylor
17:00-19:00 - Seems Like Old Times w/ Craig
Orndorff
19:00-21:00 - American Standards By The Sea w/ Dick
Robinson
21:00-23:00 - The Sounds Of Sinatra w/ Sid Mark
23:00-23:59 - WoodSongs Old Time Radio Hour

Sunday:

06:30-07:00 - Unshackled!
07:00-08:00 - The Roaring 20's
08:00-09:00 - Sound Ideas w/ Clay Ryder
09:00-10:00 - Jazz Rhythm w/ Dave Radlauer
10:00-11:00 - Juke In The Back w/ Matt The Cat
11:00-12:00 - Rhythm Sweet And Hot w/ Mike Plaskett
12:00-19:00 - When Radio Was! w/ Greg Bell (Current
& Weekend Episodes)
19:00-19:30 - Imagination Theatre
19:30-20:00 - Golden Days Of Radio w/ Frank Bresee
20:00-21:00 - Powder River (Colonial Radio Theatre)
21:00-22:00 - Anything Goes!! w/ Lise Avery
22:00-23:59 - Archives Theater w/ Wally Stall



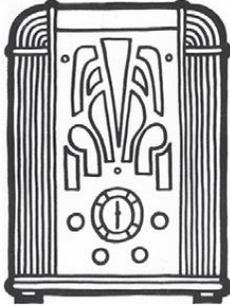
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- *Regular First Class supplements to those who are active*
- *Free 2021 catalog in pdf form or ask for printed version. Send e-mail to: bob@brcbroadcast.com or visit facebook.com/brcbroadcast*

- *Long-time supporter of most OTR conventions and clubs*
- *Founded and managed by Bob Burnham, Detroit based broadcast engineer, and host-producer of "Radio Vault" on WHFR.FM 89.3*



Created in 1984, the Metro Washington Old-Time Radio Club is the second largest old-time radio club in the United States. Club members enjoy monthly club meetings, an annual luncheon, and a bi-monthly newsletter. You do not have to live in or near Washington, D.C., to become a member. The newsletter, RADIO RECALL, is mailed to members from all over the country and loaded with fascinating articles, news of what is happening in the hobby, recently-discovered “lost” programs and more. Why not join the hundreds who enjoy the newsletter, which can be sent via email in PDF format, or be mailed to you through the post office?



You can sign up to become a member on the club website.

www.mwotrc.com

Old-Time Radio Researchers Acquisitions: New Episodes and Upgraded Sound Encodes

Please note that our distributions are available to OTRR Purchasing Group members first, and then made available to the public after about six months.

Distro 139

CBS Radio Mystery Theater 1-700 in .flac

This distro consists of the best sounding .mp3s currently available of CBS Radio Mystery Theater. About half of the recordings come from Ken Long's site <http://cbsrmt.thelongtrek.com> and the other half are from reel to reel recordings made over the air by David Oxford's good friend John Edwards. They are from radio station WBBM in Chicago. He purchased the reels from John in 2008 and worked like the devil to digitize 479 recordings on his Pioneer RT-707 reel deck before giving up in frustration and exhaustion. He had to wait 12 years before he could face the task again. He now has a Pioneer RT-909 and a Teac A-4300SX to join the 707 in recording the reels.

David had been aware of Ken Long's CBSRMT site for some time and decided to download Ken's entire site and comb it for the best sounding file of each episode available. This quickly proved to be too big and daunting a task. He recruited Tony Adams of our group to help him compare the numerous files in December 2018. They soldiered on month after month going through the files. Once they had selected Ken's best files, they compared them to David's recordings and chose what they felt were the Best of Available recording - abbreviated {BoA} in the mp3s.

This choice could be a little fickle at times. David preferred a recording with commercials and news left intact. Sometimes the best sounding file was stripped of everything except the story. A very close second file may have all the commercials and news - but not quite as good as the first. What to do? David collaborated with Tony and sometimes chose the stripped version and sometimes the very close second depending on the quality difference in the recording's sound. So, a little fickle! David will elaborate on the contents and statistics of this and future distros in a future communication.

A special thanks to Dave Tysver for creating an excel spreadsheet with actors and writers for me to import into

the artist field in these mp3s. He'll release this when he's finished tweaking a bit more and we'll include it with the other files in a near future distro. David will give thanks to all the second listener's down the road when I make more formal acknowledgments.

David plans to distro all his recordings (1393 files) to the group as Flac in RAW & Cleaned files in future distros to follow this one. About 611 of these he considered as Best of Available. He'll distro Ken's BEST of Available files in flac format but there are only 191 of these - most are mp3s with no lossless parent. There were many flac files available. However, these weren't considered the best recordings, unfortunately. The radio call letters are given for each file: KIXI, KIRO, KQV, WUWM, WBBM. John Edwards files are WBBM JE. TC is Time Corrected, SS = Sound Soap (an audio editing program for removing hiss, noise), EQ is equalization.

All files were time corrected using two notes in the closing theme music (if available and not abruptly cut off my a damned commercial!). This music is present at the beginning of each act but is often "talked over" and more difficult to measure. By experimenting with measuring all these notes in an episode, one finds some variation in playback of about 40 seconds if the slowest part of the tape is used over the fasted speed of the recording. Still, pretty good and your ears can't hear the difference over a 52 minute show.