



RETURN WITH US NOW...

RADIO HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION OF
COLORADO

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Abbott and Costello's Greatest Routine

by Paul Barringer

I'm sure most of you remember the comedy team of Bud Abbott and Lou Costello. The two were successful in movies, television, and, of course, radio. One of their comedy routines remains a classic today. That comedic routine was known as "Who's On First?"

This funny routine involved the two trying to keep track of the perplexing roster of a fictional baseball team with unusual names, the likes of "Who", "What", "I Don't Give A Darn" and others. I used to love this routine every time the pair did it on radio. I still listen to it whenever it is presented.

Although the two comedians performed the routine some 15,000 times over twenty years, it did not make its' first appearance on their radio program. The two funny guys first did the routine in the 1940 film, "One Night in the Tropics" where it was presented in a somewhat shorter version. The two would later refine the skit on their radio show to the form in which we know it today.

Because of this routine the two are widely assumed to have been the first non-baseball playing celebrities to be inducted into the Baseball Hall Of Fame. The assumption is not completely true. The Baseball of Fame enshrines only former players, managers, executives and umpires. The comedic-duo are "featured" in the museum with a Gold Recording of the routine placed on permanent display along with a framed copy of the dialogue that became synonymous with the duo.



Although Abbott & Costello are not enshrined in the Baseball Hall Of Fame, they each have three stars on the Hollywood Walk Of Fame, each having a star in Motion Pictures, Television and, of course, Radio.

Author's Challenge: *Can you name the players and their positions on the baseball team and can you name the position/player that was never mentioned in the routine? (See end of article for the answers...)*

This article was originally written for RWUN as a short filler on the "Who's On First?" routine, so I did not go into detail on Abbott and Costello on radio. However, I would like to relate to you a poignant remembrance of one episode of the program which I heard as a child.

RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO

PO BOX 1908, Englewood CO 80150

Dedicated to the preservation of old-time radio programs, and to making those programs available to our members

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No conventions have been submitted for announcement



This particular show was Lou Costello's return to the air after a long bout with rheumatic fever. I was only 11-years-old at the time, but this show has been etched in my mind for sixty-four-years; I will never forget it.

Since this was the first show with Costello in about a year, my mother, my brother, my sister and I were all anxiously awaiting Lou's return. Early in the show we all noticed something askew, Lou's timing seemed a little off, and at times his voice seemed to crack. Thinking it could be just because of the long layoff, we didn't pay too much attention to it. Additionally, quite often during comedy shows with an audience present the cast would sometimes pause for the audience laughter. But this did not really seem to be the case in this particular program, although the show went on as usual.

I don't remember the content of the show, but I vividly remember what happened next, (even at the young age of eleven). At the show's conclusion, Bud Abbott took the mike and told the studio and radio audience that Lou and his wife had lost their young son, Lou Jr. to a tragic accidental drowning in the family pool just before air time. "Butch" as he was nicknamed, (just under one year old at the time) had been kept up late that night, so he could hear his father's voice on radio for the first time. Lou Costello had told the others involved with the show, *"Wherever he is tonight, I want him to hear me"* and refused to abort the show.

No one in the studio or radio audience was told beforehand about the tragedy, nor did they have a clue as to what had happened before the show went on the air. I'm sure they, like my family and I, were stunned that the show was even presented, let alone with Costello appearing on the program.

It was on this night that Lou Costello became the epitome of the age-old saying, *"The show must go on"*.

Answers to Author's Challenge

The players' names and positions in the routine listed in the order of a batting line-up for a baseball team, not listed in the order as presented in the skit.

1. Pitcher ... **"Tomorrow"**
2. Catcher ... **"Today"**
3. First Base ... **"Who"**
4. Second Base ... **"What"**
5. Third Base ... **"I Don't Know"**
6. Shortstop ... **"I Don't Give A Darn"**
7. Left Field ... **"Why"**
8. Center Field ... **"Because"**
9. There was ... **no player** named in the routine in Right Field

Ten Thousand Drunk Chickens

by Ray Kemper

This article was originally printed in RWUN in 2003

In the early 1950s, Bill James and I were assigned to do sound effects on an Escape or Romance or some such radio show. The director was William Robson, not an easy man to work for. If a script called for the rattle of onion-skin paper, you'd better darn well have onion-skin paper there. In this case, the script called for the sound effect of ten thousand drunk chickens. Bill and I looked at one another and wondered how in the world we were going to create such a sound.

We went through our entire record library and finally found one record of a yard-full of clucking, squawking chickens. We then tape-recorded our own voices clucking and hiccuping, then we sped that tape up and overdubbed it with the legitimate chickens. The result was exactly right – and funny. However, Bill looked at me and said, "You know, Robson is never going to believe this". I replied, "I know, but I've got an idea". We took our completed tape to the engineer who cut records for CBS and asked him to record a platter for us from our tape. He did that, and gave us an official CBS label, upon which we inscribed the words, "Ten Thousand Drunk Chickens". We pasted the label on the record and waited for show day.

On that fateful day, I was working on the turntables and when the time came for the chickens effect and I began playing it, Bill Robson hit the talkback and bellowed, "Ray, that isn't ten thousand drunk chickens!" I didn't say anything; I just took off my headsets, picked up the record, walked over

to the booth and held it against the glass. Robson read the label, blanched, and didn't say another word during the entire show.

Many years later, I was at a party at John and Mary Ann Meston's home. Bill Robson was there also, and I reminded him of the incident. He laughed like crazy and said, "I remember that you son-of-a-gun! You know, I knew I had been had but I couldn't quite figure out how, so I decided to keep my mouth shut." We both had a good laugh about it. Ah, the wonderful days of old time radio.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE GOOD OLD DAYS WHEN...

by Paul Barringer

- ♦ All the girls in gym class wore ugly uniforms?
- ♦ After turning on your TV set, it took five minutes for it to warm up?
- ♦ Almost everyone's Mother was at home when the kids got home from school?
- ♦ Pets were ordinary pets, nobody owned a purebred dog?
- ♦ When your parents gave you a quarter and that was considered a decent allowance?
- ♦ You'd reach into a muddy gutter for change you dropped or found, even if it was a penny?
- ♦ Your Mom wore nylons that came in two pieces?
- ♦ All of the male teachers in school wore neckties and female teachers wore high heels and had their hair done every day?
- ♦ You got your gas pumped, windshield cleaned, oil checked, and air in your tires if they needed it without asking, all for free, every time, and, you also got trading stamps to boot?
- ♦ When buying laundry detergent at the store, you found free glasses, dishes or towels hidden inside the box?
- ♦ Prize night at the movies, where similar items as above were given away, and sometimes large amounts of money were given away on special nights?
- ♦ You sometimes got to go out to dinner with your parents at a real restaurant (not a drive-thru) and this was considered to be a great privilege?
- ♦ Principals and teachers threatened to keep kids back a grade if they failed. . and they did?
- ♦ When every young man's dream was to have his own car...to cruise in, to drive with his arm around his girlfriend, go to drive-in movies and get popcorn, a coke and candy at the concession stand?

- ♦ When a boy and girl went steady?
- ♦ The keys to the car were left in the ignition, and the doors were never locked, so no one ever had to ask where the car keys were because they knew where they could be found?
- ♦ Lying in the grass on a summer afternoon on your back, with your friends and saying things like, "That cloud looks like a swan or..."
Kids played games with no adults to help them with the rules of the game?
- ♦ Stuff you bought from the store came with caps that even the elderly could open, and had no hermetic seals, because no one had yet tried to poison a perfect stranger?
- ♦ When a student was sent to the principal's office it was nothing compared to the fate that awaited the student at home? Basically we were in fear for our lives, but it wasn't because of drive-by shootings, drugs, gangs, etc. Our parents and grandparents were a much bigger threat! But we survived because their love was greater than the threat.

How many of you remember, Nancy Drew, the Hardy Boys, Laurel and Hardy, Howdy Dowdy and the Peanut Gallery, Nellie Bell, Roy and Dale, Trigger and Buttermilk?

Summers filled with bike rides, baseball games, Hula Hoops, bowling and visits to the swimming pool on a hot summer day, and eating Kool-Aid powder with sugar out of your hand.

Do you remember a time when...

- ♦ Paramount decisions were made by going "eeny-meeny-miney-moe"?
- ♦ Mistakes were corrected by simply exclaiming, "Do Over!"?
- ♦ "Race issue" meant arguing about who ran the fastest?
- ♦ We would spend an entire evening trying to catch fireflies, or throwing up small rocks or pebbles at night and watching the bats swoop down trying to catch what they thought was an insect?
- ♦ Having two or three "Best Friends" wasn't considered to be odd or unusual?
- ♦ The worst thing you could catch from the opposite sex was "cooties"?
- ♦ Being caught with a slingshot in school was considered having a weapon?
- ♦ A foot of snow was a dream come true, especially for the kids when they didn't have to go to school for a couple of days?

- ♦ Watching Saturday morning cartoons, when they weren't considered 30-minute commercials for action figures?
- ♦ "Oly-oly-oxen-free" made perfect sense when playing?
- ♦ Spinning around, getting dizzy, and falling down was a cause for hilarity, laughs and giggles?
- ♦ When you faced the ultimate embarrassment, by being picked last by your friends to be on a team?
- ♦ 'War' was a card game?
- ♦ Placing an old baseball card in the spokes of your bike or tricycle instantly changed it into a roaring motorcycle?
- ♦ When you had to take drugs, it meant orange-flavored chewable aspirin?
- ♦ The ultimate weapon was a water balloon?

How many of these do you remember?



Coffee shops with tableside jukeboxes
 ...Blackjack, Clove and Teaberry chewing gum
 ...Reel-To-Reel tape recorders ...Tinkertoys...
 Erector Sets ...The Fort Apache Play Set ...Lincoln
 Logs ...15 cent McDonald hamburgers ...5 cent
 packs of baseball cards - with that awful pink slab of
 bubble gum...Penny candy...35 cent a gallon
 gasoline ... Jiffy Pop popcorn



When radio gave us the freedom to use our unlimited imagination, because it amused us, enlightened us, scared us, and often put us to sleep at night while listening to a program of music, adventure, comedy or mystery, and upon awakening the next day, you asked all your friends what happened on that certain episode, that you fell asleep during.? With all of our complex scientific developments and progress, don't you sometimes wish you could go back in time, enjoy the slower pace, and relish those simple times and share them with your children, and other children of today, and let them see what it was like in "The Good Old Days"?

If you can remember most or all of these, then you have lived!!!!!!

For those of you who don't remember, maybe it's time you took a break from your "grown-up" life, and enjoy your past, for you can always go back into the past, but as yet you can't enjoy the future, only speculate on it.

NOTE: Some parts of this article were taken from the internet and some of my own remembrances were thrown in. - Paul

An Announcer's Dilemma

By Danny Goodwin

(Reprinted with the author's permission from
www.old-time.com)



Only on live radio can the radio listeners expect the unexpected. One of the most bizarre events to air live over the microphone occurred on the May 26, 1946 broadcast of **THE FRED ALLEN SHOW**. Since his return to **NBC**, the relationship between Allen and the management of the network was strained at best. One of the network's pet peeves was that Allen would have his program run beyond the 30-minute time limit. When that happened, the program was cut off in mid-sentence by the sounding of the **NBC** chimes. To Allen's delight, the listeners would get mad at the network for cutting his program off. The May 26, 1946 broadcast was almost one of those long running broadcasts had it not been for the closing commercial and the quick narration of announcer Kenny Delmar.

The broadcast featured "**Mary Livingstone's husband**" (Jack Benny) as the special guest. If you know your old time radio, you already know of the long running "feud" between Fred Allen and Jack Benny. When the two men got together in front of the microphone, fireworks would usually follow.

On this particular broadcast, Allen was unusually subdued. Both he and Benny would get in some cracks at each other, but it wasn't anything unusual. The final routine on the program was a skit called *King for A Day* with Allen as the M.C. and Benny as the contestant under the alias of "**Myron Proudfoot**." To the surprise of absolutely no one, Benny won the contest and was King for A Day. Allen presented him with some cheap gifts. The final prize was to have Benny's suit cleaned and pressed--- **AT THAT VERY MOMENT!** Two men grabbed Benny while a third man pulled off his pants in front of the studio audience, who couldn't believe what they were seeing.

With the audience laughing hysterically and Benny yelling for his pants, there was a small problem--- one that could get Allen in trouble with his sponsor, Standard Brands. That problem was one more commercial had to be presented--- with only seconds left! Delmar had to read the closing commercial for **Tender Leaf Tea** so fast, the listeners could barely keep up with him. To his credit, Delmar got the entire **Tender Leaf Tea** commercial on the air before the **NBC** chimes sounded. He also narrated the commercial with all the commotion happening right in front of him--- and that had to take considerable concentration in order not to become distracted.

*From the small mill town of Lincoln, Maine (about 50 miles north of Bangor), **Danny Goodwin** is among the first generation of the "New Generation" old time radio fans. He didn't have the opportunity to hear the radio programs firsthand because he was born in 1954. Despite this minor problem, he would become a fan of old time radio with the help of his mother, Kathryn B. Goodwin. When Danny was about 11, his mother would tell him about the wonderful things she heard on her radio. She also mentioned how much she loved the commercials for Lifebuoy Health Soap--- complete with the foghorn and "B.O." sound effects. This was when a small bud began to blossom in young Danny's head concerning the subject of old time radio.*

His interest would take on a new dimension when he heard his first old time radio program on cassette tape in 1977. As time went on, he would collect more cassettes of many different radio programs. He began to research and accumulate information on OTR programming and advertising.

Of the different subjects, putting the radio jingles, sayings, and excerpts into print is Danny's personal favorite, because his mother loved the Lifebuoy commercials. With his keen awareness of radio sponsors, Danny would develop himself into an expert on radio advertising. His expertise would lead him to a nationwide audience of old time radio fans. His articles and sketches appear on various OTR websites.

Today, Danny has dedicated all his research on radio advertising to the memory of his mother.

The Trivial Matter of OTR Trivia

*This quiz deals with general OTR knowledge.
Some of these questions are easy, but some are....
Good Luck, everyone! The answers are on Pg 8.*

- 1) On *The Halls of Ivy*, what was Victoria Hall's maiden name?
- 2) What was the name of *Lum 'n' Abner's* store?
- 3) On *Fibber McGee and Molly*, what was Mr. Wimple's wife's name?
- 4) *The Lone Ranger* rode Silver, Tonto rode Scout; what was the name of the horse ridden by the *Ranger's* nephew, Dan Reid?
- 5) At one point in the series, *The Great Gildersleeve* actually made it to the altar with Leila Ransom. Who stopped the wedding?
- 6) On *Gunsmoke*, what was deputy Chester's last name?
- 7) *A Voice in the Night* was an experiment in combining a musical variety program with a murder mystery drama. The singing detective who owned the Golden Oriole nightclub was...
- 8) Frank Chandler was also known as ...
- 9) In the late '30s, when Orson Welles intoned the famous "Who knows what evil LURKS in the hearts of men..." whose voice laughed?
- 10) The owner of the café Tambourine in Cairo was...
- 11) *Life with Luigi* always opened with three little words...
- 12) Who was *Mr. Keen's* assistant?
- 13) Who played "Liz" on *My Favorite Husband*?
- 14)
- 15) Two pieces of classical (or semi-classical) music are forever associated with two OTR shows. What were the themes for *The Lone Ranger* and *The Green Hornet* ?

THE OTR CODE

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After reading The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown and The Eight by Katherine Neville, I marveled at the authors' ability to hide a message inside another message. I wondered if I could do that. The result is the piece of bad poetry that follows.

It's easy to discover the OTR reference in the poem. A more difficult challenge is to find all the clues. I count ten. Can you find them all? The answers are on Pg 8.

THE OTR CODE

Wide grins make marks signifying comedy.

Seek bare facts guarding valuable alms.

Cool Lime Jello Man plays with sod that is rank.

Sham raucous idle work fools nobody mostly.

Good Saint Julian promotes hearing that which he idolizes.

Seek sounds of signs marching lastingly as rows not columns.

A multitude of sweet loaves, of draping pies, of bonny cakes heating.

In Old Time Radio, waves issue to recostume the costumes of sound for all.

Mother Nature erupts in glory. She fizzes the bicarbonate of the active volcano Etna.

Living skies smile, living running water giggles, and the livingstone laughs.

The OTR Code Solution

In line seven, a multitude of baked goods is a Baker's dozen. Three Baker's dozens equal thirty-nine(10)that magical age which never seemed to change.

If you catch the hint given in line six, consider yourself a Master Puzzle Solver. Sounds of signs refer to letters and rows mean lines. If you take letter from each word corresponding to its line number, you will spell a character Jack once assumed for the Truth or Consequences. That is, take W from word one (wide) in line one; A from word two (bare) in line two; L from word three (Jello) in line three; etc. If you continue, you will find the Walking Man(9).

Saint Julian is the Patron Saint for fiddle players.(8).

Two clues are in line three. Jello(6) was Benny's sponsor from 1934 to 1942. The "sod that is rank"(7) refers to the blooper by Mary on December 3, 1950 by saying "Run my car up on the grass reek."

The second line refers to a "bare" guarding alms or money. That was Carmichael the Bear(4). The first letter of the last word in each line spells Carmichael(5).

Also in the first line is part of a name, Sadie Marks(2) aka Mary Livingston. The last line also has her name(3).

The first clue is the word comedy(1). This should alert you to a comedian or comedy show.

Lets examine each line and I'll number each clue.

Solution: The Jack Benny Show

From the desk of the Editor

by Carol Tiffany



This issue of RWUN is mainly the product of one of our most loyal and prolific contributors, Paul Barringer. Paul is both a tireless researcher and an expert on OTR trivia. He specializes in nostalgic articles featuring windows on the world as it once was and the entertainment which enriched that world. Paul's fertile imagination is constantly creating new ideas for articles reflecting this viewpoint.

We are all greatly enriched by Paul's writing and are proud that he is a fellow member of RHAC and willing to share his knowledge and experience.

Good listening to all...

The Trvial Matter of OTR Answers

- 1) Victoria Cromwell
- 2) The Jot-em-down Store
- 3) Sweetieface
- 4) Victor
- 5) Her supposedly dead husband
- 6) Proudfoot
- 7) Carl Brisson
- 8) Chandu the Magician
- 9) Frank Readick (the Shadow of the first two series)
- 10) Rocky Jordan
- 11) "Dear Mama Mia..."
- 12) Mike Clancy
- 13) Lucille Ball
- 14) 15) "The William Tell Overture" and "The Flight of the Bumblebee"

TAPE 1942 WORDS AT WAR

1200'

1L	03-07-44	#039: The Weeping Wood
	03-14-44	#040: Science At War
2L	03-21-44	#041: Der Fuhrer
	03-28-44	#042: A Bell For Adano
1R	04-11-44	#044: Wild River
	04-18-44	#045: The Silence Of The Sea
2R	05-02-44	#047: The Curtain Rises
	05-09-44	#048: Gunners Get Glory

TAPE 1943 WORDS AT WAR

1200'

1L	05-16-44	#049: Lifeline
	05-23-44	#050: Story Of Lend Lease
2L	06-27-44	#054: Fair Stood The Winds For France
	08-08-44	#060: The Nazis Go Underground
1R	08-29-44	#063: Simone
	09-05-44	#064: The Veteran Comes Back
2R	09-12-44	#065: One Man Air Force
	09-26-44	#067: Journey Through Chaos

TAPE 1944 WORDS AT WAR

1200'

1L	10-03-44	#068: Pacific Victory 1945
	10-10-44	#069: The Veteran Comes Back
2L	10-24-44	#071: Still Time To Die
	11-14-44	#073: One Damn Thing After Another
1R	11-21-44	#074: Barrier's Down
	11-28-44	#075: Camp Follower
2R	12-05-44	#076: The Guys On The Ground
	12-12-44	#077: Your School, Your Children

TAPE 1945 WORDS AT WAR

1200'

1L	12-19-44	#078: The Cross And The Arrow
	12-26-44	#079: Scape Goats Of History/History Of Bigotry In The United States
2L	01-02-45	#080: It's Always Tomorrow
	01-09-45	#081: Borrowed Night
1R	01-16-45	#082: Verdict On India
	01-23-45	#083: Story Of A Secret State
2R	02-13-45	#085: What To Do With Germany
	02-20-45	#086: Battle Report

TAPE 1946 WORDS AT WAR

1200'

- | | | |
|----|----------|---|
| 1L | 02-27-45 | #087: Faith Of Our Fighters |
| | 03-06-45 | #088: The Rainbow |
| 2L | 03-13-45 | #089: Can Do |
| | 03-20-45 | #090: Tomorrow We'll See |
| 1R | 03-27-45 | #091: Banshee Harvest |
| | 04-03-45 | #092: Full Employment In A Free Society |
| 2R | 04-10-45 | #093: Apartment In Athens |
| | 04-17-45 | #094: They Left The Back Door Open |

TAPE 1947 WORDS AT WAR/COMMAND PERFORMANCE USA

1200'

- | | | |
|----|-------------|---|
| 1L | 04-24-45 | WAW: #095: Brave Men By Ernie Pyle |
| | 05-01-45 | WAW: #096: The Hideout |
| 2L | 05-15-45 | WAW: #097: The Road To Serfdom |
| | 05-22-45 | WAW: #098: War Time Racketeers |
| 1R | 05-29-45 | #WAW: 099: Soldier To Civilian |
| | 06-05-45 | WAW: #100: My Country [Final Show] |
| 2R | 09-23-44 | CP USA: AFRS #139: Martha Raye, Lena Romy, Jack Carson, Jane Wyman |
| | 04 or 05-47 | CP USA: AFRS #270: Robert Walker, Janet Blair, Jack Paar, Frankie Laine |

TAPE 1948 THIS IS YOUR FBI

1200'

- | | | |
|----|----------|--|
| 1L | 04-27-45 | ESCAPED P.O.W.s - Paul Tanner |
| | 05-11-45 | WAR FRAUD - Andrew Rockland, War Profiteer |
| 2L | 06-01-45 | BANK ROBBERY - Phil Bardo, Arthur Clinton |
| | 06-08-45 | ESPIONAGE - Cora Lee Williamson, Spy |
| 1R | 06-15-45 | CONFIDENCE GAME - British Farm Equipment Ltd |
| | 06-22-45 | AUTO THEFT - Charles Meade |
| 2R | 07-20-45 | ESPIONAGE - Yatsy Takioka, Enemy Agent |
| | 07-27-45 | The Misery Chiseler |

TAPE 1949 THIS IS YOUR FBI

1200'

- | | | |
|----|----------|-----------------------------|
| 1L | 08-03-45 | Extortion - \$20,000 Or Die |
| | 10-11-45 | The Strange Extortion |
| 2L | 10-19-45 | The Marriage Racket |
| | 10-26-45 | The Serviceman's Fraud |
| 1R | 11-02-45 | The Desert Dictator |
| | 11-16-45 | The Allotment Swindle |
| 2R | 11-23-45 | The Bobby Socks Bandits |
| | 11-30-45 | The Big Breakout |

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