

AIR CHECK

NEWSLETTER OF THE RADIO ENTHUSIASTS OF PUGET SOUND (REPS)

THE EARLY RADIO ADVENTURES OF SAM SPADE

by Martin Grams Jr.

When Dashiell Hammett's *The Adventures of Sam Spade* made its debut over ABC in August of 1946, personable Howard Duff, a comparative unknown in Hollywood circles, was assigned the title role. The selection of young Duff for the hard-hitting detective was perfect casting, his success was immediate, and Hollywood began predicting important things to come for this new personality.

Just one year after his *Sam Spade* debut, Howard Duff found himself under personal contract to Mark Hellinger, movie producer. His first screen role as *Soldier* in Hellinger's production of *Brute Force*, had rated him star material from critics throughout the country. He received on-screen credit as *radio's Sam Spade*. Even when Duff was given offers for movie roles, he never gave up the radio gig, often making long trips to multiple studios so he could juggle both acting mediums.

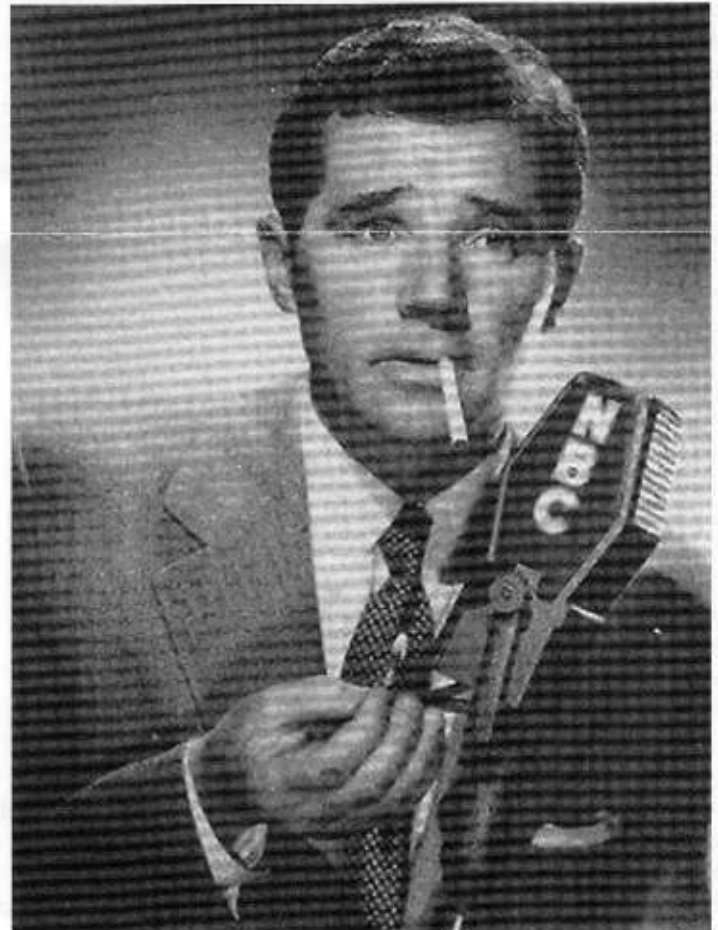
The enormous success of the Sam Spade radio program, spawned a comic strip series, magazine articles and radio cross-overs, and at one time Universal Studios even considered the possibility of making a Sam Spade movie with Duff in the lead.

All this and much more because of a single radio program, based on a fictional detective glamorized in one novel, three short stories, and the impressive 1941 motion-picture, *The Maltese Falcon*. Dashiell Hammett, the creator of the fictional private eye, received royalty checks for the use of his character, but had no direct involvement with the series except the lending of his name in the opening and closing credits.

Prior to *The Adventures of Sam Spade*, the famed Hammett detective appeared in character on three prior occasions, all of them were adaptations of motion-picture version of *The Maltese Falcon* (not an adaptation of the novel). The first was *The Lux Radio Theatre*, broadcast February 8, 1943. The hour-long radio broadcast featured a cast completely different from the film. Edward G. Robinson, best known for playing tough guys in Warner Bros. gangster pictures, played the role of Sam Spade. Laird Cregar played the role of Casper Gutman.

The second adaptation of *The Maltese Falcon* was on the September 20, 1943 broadcast of *The Lady Esther Screen Guild Theatre*. Broadcast in a thirty-minute time slot, this dramatization featured four actors reprising their film roles for this abridged version: Humphrey Bogart as Sam Spade, Peter Lorre as Joel Cairo, Sydney Greenstreet as Casper Gutman, and Mary Astor as Brigid O'Shaughnessy.

The third adaptation of *The Maltese Falcon* was on the July 3, 1946 broadcast of *Academy Award Theatre*. Broadcast in a thirty-minute time slot, this version featured Humphrey Bogart, Sydney Greenstreet



April Membership Meeting Saturday April 5th, 2008 2:00- 4:00pm Join us for a live radio recreation of The Sam Spade drama *The Blood Money Caper* first heard on CBS radio 09-29-1946. The drama will be followed by a special telephone interview with Martin Grams, Jr., author of the new book - *The Radio Adventures of Sam Spade*. Copies of The Sam Spade book will be available at the membership meeting with a portion of the sale proceeds going to REPS.

and Mary Astor reprising their film roles. Coincidentally, this dramatization was broadcast over the CBS radio network, just nine days before the ABC network premiered *The Adventures of Sam Spade*.

Howard's Duff big break [after getting his radio start in Seattle] came in the spring of 1946. William Spier, producer/director of the CBS radio program, *Suspense*, was involved in bringing Dashiell Hammett's Sam Spade character to the airwaves. Spier was looking for that perfect voice - the persona who could best represent the character he had in mind.

"The most memorable moment of my life came when I was at my lowest spirit," Duff recalled in a column for the *National Enquirer* in 1957. "It was right after World War II, and, like a million other guys, I was back home with an honorable discharge and no job. I wanted to be an actor. Day after day, I made the rounds of radio studios and always received the standard brush-off. Eating regularly became a problem for me."

"Then one day, when I was discouraged, disgusted and hungry, I dropped into a producer's office to try out for a role on a forth-coming radio program about the adventures of a tough private detective," Duff continued. "There must have been at least 100 other guys jammed in that office waiting to read for the Sam Spade role. I even recognized a few famous faces in the crowd, and it threw me into even a greater melancholy. By the time my turn came I was feeling real mean, and about as low as a patrolman's instep. When they handed me the script and told me to go ahead, I delivered the lines in a half-snarling, half-bored manner like a guy reading a grocery list. I put no punch into my delivery because I just didn't care any more about getting a job as an actor."

Spier was not initially impressed with Duff's performance, but his wife, Kay Thompson, became so enthralled with Duff's interpretation of the Sam Spade character that she continued to rally for Duff to her husband, until he relented. "Two days later, the producer of the Sam Spade show phoned me," Duff recalled. "'You've got the job,' he told me, 'You sound just the way we want Sam Spade to sound. You're a natural for him.' Becoming Sam Spade, private eye, for radio fame, was the greatest moment in my life. It just goes to prove that luck can happen to a guy when he least expects it.

An audition record was made for *The Adventures of Sam Spade* (dated May 1, 1946) and Howard Duff played the title role. The audition record cinched a sponsor, Wildroot Hair Tonic, and a network, the American Broadcasting Company. The recording was never broadcast on the air, leaving the radio audience and fans to this day wondering just what the plot was, and the opportunity to hear Howard Duff make his dramatic appearance as Sam Spade. Both the audition record and the first few broadcasts of the series gave no air credit for the writers. Spier intended to convince the network, ABC, that Dashiell Hammett was personally involved with the episodes, since the contract between Spier and Hammett stated the author's name would be employed in the epigraphs each week.

Of the 13 episodes broadcast on ABC, seven were Bob Tallman - Jo Eisinger originals; the remaining six were adaptations of Hammett's short stories. Tallman and Eisinger never received writing credit for any of the ABC broadcasts.

The 13 episodes broadcast over the ABC network were perhaps some of the best of the series. The plots were clever and intricate. Spade's clients had little ethics and when the situation called for desperate means, Spade threw his good intentions out the window.

The premiere broadcast, *Sam and the Guiana Sovereign*, was an original script by Tallman and Eisinger, and played much like *The Maltese Falcon* with a cast of shady characters, stooping to betrayal and murder to gain possession of a valuable artifact.

The second broadcast of the series, *Sam and the Farewell Murders*, broadcast July 19, 1946, was the first of many episodes adapted from a Dashiell Hammett story. Though Hammett had no participation in the radio productions, many of his short stories were adapted (or in some cases the plots were lifted) from short stories already published in magazines and periodicals.

This episode, adapted from *The Farewell Murder* (originally published in the February 1930 issue of *Black Mask*), concerns Miriam Farewell, who hires Sam to visit her father-in-law, the great, wealthy Carter P. Farewell, whose life has been threatened in a poison pen letter. After one failed murder attempt, she fears the culprit will try again.

Actor Howard Duff fit the description of Sam Spade to a tee. The radio audience apparently liked his character, as did the trade papers that began publishing photos of the actor in costume, including the hat. Duff didn't just sound like Spade - he looked like the private detective. The actor stood six feet and a half inch tall, weighed 183 pounds, and had brown hair and blue eyes.



The third broadcast of the series, *Sam and the Unhappy Poet*, offered a brief glimpse of Spade's one-liners that would become the jovial trademark of the series. Spade receives a visit from Eli Haven, a dramatic poet, who feels the shadow of death tailing his every move. Asking for Spade to hold an envelope for him, and open it only when the papers report his death, Sam cannot figure out the paying client's motives - at first.

In *Zig Zags of Treachery*, broadcast August 23, 1946, Spade recounts his caper to Effie from a hospital bed. This was the only episode of

photo, Lurene Tuttle, William Spier, Howard Duff

goto page 4

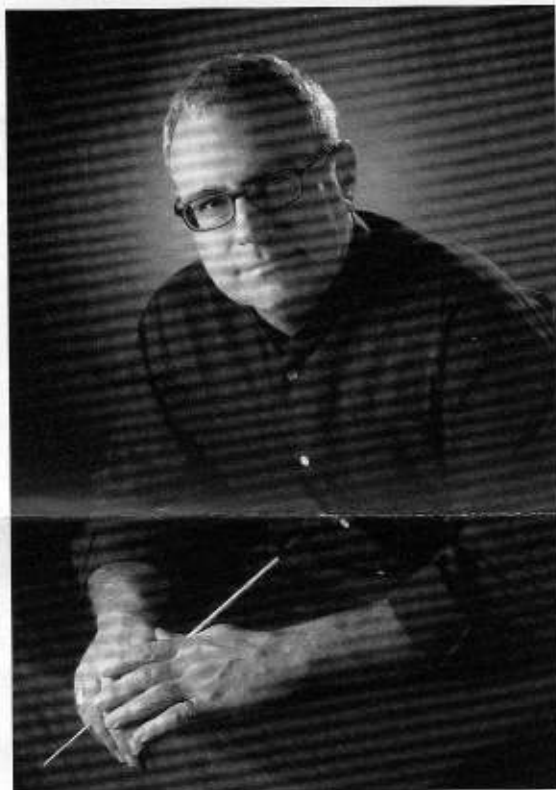
PONTIAC BAY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PRESENTS

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Orchestra
and guest
conductor,

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Sunday, March 9, 2008 at 7 PM. The Edmonds Center for the Arts, 410 Fourth Avenue North, downtown Edmonds. Tickets: \$15 general, and \$12, students, seniors, and children. For information and advance tickets: www.pontiacbay.org and 206-364-0907

Paul
Secord

President

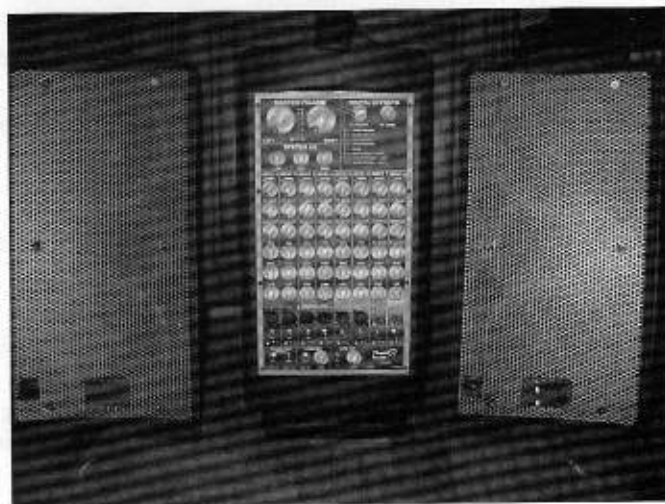


A NEW SOUND IN PUGET SOUND

There is a new sound in the Puget Sound area and the new sound is at the Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound. We have acquired a new sound system which has been very much needed for quite some time. A generous donation from a REPS member made this possible and for this the club is forever thankful.

The sound system is a Fender Passport Deluxe PD-500. It is portable and has two high output Neo-Precision speakers. The Fender system will greatly improve the excellence of the sound we can produce at Showcase as well at the Membership Meetings at the Norse Home. Also, because the unit is portable we can put it to use at other REPS events whenever there is an opportunity. Just being able to produce top quality sound and to manage the recordings we can produce will be a great benefit to REPS and to all in the listening audience.

Bob Cardenas and Jim Dolan are eager to get the system up and running and by the April 5th meeting it should in place. So, there is only one way to hear it live for the first time and that will be April 5th that the Membership Meeting at the Norse Home.....be there and enjoy!!! Thank you.



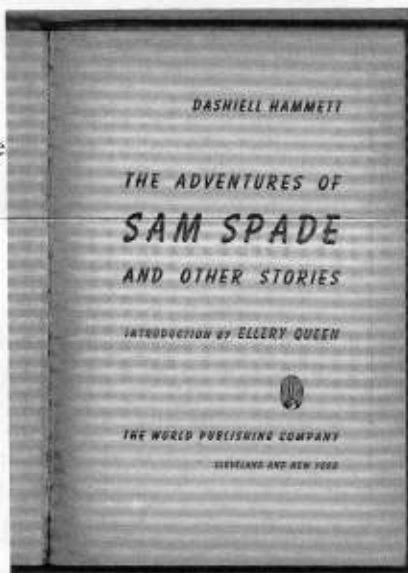
the thirteen ABC broadcasts to feature Spade dictating his caper from a clinic, while recovering from his wounds. Spade, however, would dictate his adventures from a hospital bed more than once throughout the series.

The final broadcast of the ABC series was *The Gutting of Couffignal*, broadcast October 4, 1946. In the original story, a White Russian general leads a military-style operation to rob the cream of California society, who were gathered on an isolated island for a wedding. Though this story features more action than mystery, Spade's character is put to the test when he confronts a princess, who tempts him with a percentage of the profits. Spade turns her down, preaching the honesty of his profession.

"Let me straighten this out for you, Princess," he explains. "I'm a detective because I happen to like the work. I could find other work that pays better. Even a hundred dollars more a month would be \$1,200 a year. Say 25 or 30 grand between now and my 60th birthday. I'm passing that honest 30 grand up because I like my work and want to do it as well as I can. Otherwise, there's no sense to it. You can't weigh that against any sum of money. I can't imagine a pleasanter future than twenty-some years more of the work I'm doing. I'm not going to blow it up."

Faithful listeners of the Sam Spade program were treated to a double dose of Sam Spade adventures that week. Wildroot wanted to continue sponsoring the program, but the ABC network did not wish to air further adventures. When the initial contract of thirteen weeks ran out, so would Sam Spade. Wildroot and Spier proposed continuing the series on CBS, and the network accepted the program with open arms. This is no surprise since Spier was involved in the popular *Suspense* program, also broadcast on CBS. Under the new contract, CBS requested the series begin its broadcast on September 29, five days before the final ABC broadcast. While listeners could hear the presentations over ABC on Friday evenings, they could listen to additional capers over CBS on Sunday evenings. And Sam Spade would become situated for in a permanent time slot of 8 to 8:30 p.m., (Eastern Standard Time) on Sunday evenings until 1950 when CBS would drop the series.

A noticeable change began with the first CBS broadcast. Tallman and Eisinger were given on-air credit as writers of the scripts, while Dashiell Hammett was still credited as the creator of the fictional detective. Eisinger, however, was under contract to Columbia Pictures and was forced to employ a pseudonym, Jason James, so the studios would not know of his involvement. Ann Lorraine began co-writing scripts with Bob Tallman for the earliest CBS broadcasts. She left after assisting Tallman with a few episodes.



The first episode of the CBS series, *The Blood Money Caper*, was loosely adapted from the short story, *\$106,000 Blood Money* by Dashiell Hammett, originally published in the May 1927 issue of *Black Mask*. In the original short story, a super-crook attacks not just a single bank, but the entire financial district of San Francisco, with the help of hundreds of other criminals gathered from all over the United States. The super-crook then turned around and wiped out most of his helpers in order to keep the loot for himself - hence the term *Blood Money*.

In the radio production, Taylor Newhall, President of the Golden Gate Trust, hires Spade to check on the movements of his daughter, Ann. He suspects she is spending time with Red O'Leary, a "disreputable character." Spade tails the two to the Blue Bottle Bar and Grille, and with acute observation, discovers that Red is the ringleader to what becomes the largest coordinated bank robbery in San Francisco history. The crooks profit ten million, and as the hours and days pass, a rash of murders across the city reveals Red's motives: the fewer gangsters involved, the larger chunk of blood money for the survivors. Sam avoids profiting from a piece of the action, saving his own hide, and lives to tell the tale.

This episode would be an important caper in the history of the radio program. References to *The Blood Money Caper* would be cited among other episodes, and two sequels would be written, featuring the characters that survived this caper. One humorous scene involves Sam's initial attempt to weasel into the Blue Bottle Bar and Grill, reprinted below.

FLORA: Just get in town dearie? Or are you local talent?

SPADE: I'm from K,C, That makes you happy?

FLORA: K.C. eh, Pobey?

SPADE: Pobey Pushkin? He's still eatin' jute.

FLORA: Know him, eh? What's your name?

SPADE: I got a dozen. You like Little Morphy?

FLORA: (hard) Little Morphy's dead!

SPADE: (softly) I know. I was with him in the busted caper that croaked him. He give me his name before he died.

Martin Grams Jr. is the author of *The Radio Adventures of Sam Spade*, documenting the history of the radio program, including a detailed episode guide with plot summaries, trivia and more. Martin is also the author of *Suspense: Twenty Years of Thrills and Chills*, *The I Love A Mystery Companion* and *Inner Sanctum Mysteries: Behind the Creaking Door*.

[AJ Elliott, Dashiell Hammett's niece, is a friend of your editor. As a child, AJ would sit on her uncle's lap and listen to his stories of the Southwest. Desert oil paintings by Dashiell Hammett hang on her office walls in Bellevue just off the Bellevue-Redmond Road. Besides being a talented writer, Dashiell Hammett was also a talented painter.]

CD 2032 CHASE					
1	10-19-1952	SUN	Man Hunt	<i>FIRST HALF SCRATCHY</i>	
2	1-4-1953	SUN	Fortune Hunter		
CD 2033 CHASE					
1	1-11-1953	SUN	Professor Calvin And The Voice		
2	1-18-1953	SUN	Killer At Large		
CD 2034 CHASE					
1	1-25-1953	SUN	The Creeper		
2	2-1-1953	SUN	Corpus Dilecti		
CD 2035 CHASE					
1	2-8-1953	SUN	Greedy Crockeys		
2	2-15-1953	SUN	The Will		
CD 2036 CHASE					
1	2-22-1953	SUN	Jail Break		
2	3-1-1953	SUN	Frame For Murder		
CD 2037 LIFE OR RILEY					
1	1946		Playing Hookey		
2	1946		Riley's New Dog		
CD 2038 LIFE OR RILEY					
1	1946		Simon's Play		
2	9-8-1945	SAT	Lay Offs	<i>77</i>	
CD 2039 LIFE OR RILEY					
1	9-15-1945	SAT	Feud With New Neighbor, Gillis, Over Junior's C		
2	11-24-1945	SAT	Babs And Simon Married	<i>88</i>	
CD 2040 LIFE OR RILEY					
1	12-1-1945	SAT	Lodge Election, Phonograph Record Saves Rile		
2	12-8-1945	SAT	Riley Takes Job Promotion Exam	<i>90</i>	
CD 2041 LIFE OR RILEY					
1	12-15-1945	SAT	Grandma's Boy Friend, Captain Riley	<i>91</i>	
2	2-2-1946	SAT	Junior's School Play		
CD 2042 I LOVE A MYSTERY					
1			The Thing That Cried In The Night	<i>1 TO 6</i>	
CD 2043 I LOVE A MYSTERY					
1			The Thing That Cried In The Night	<i>EPISODES 7 -</i>	
CD 2044 I LOVE A MYSTERY					
1			The Thing That Cried In The Night	<i>EPISODES 13</i>	
CD 2045 FAT MAN					
1			Murder Plays Hide And Seek	<i>J SCOTT SMART</i>	
2					
CD 2046 TARZAN					
1	7-26-1951	THU	Terror At Night	<i>29</i>	
2	8-2-1951	THU	Trouble Off San Laurencia	<i>30</i>	
CD 2047 TARZAN					
1	8-9-1951	THU	Curse Of The Pharaohs	<i>31</i>	
2	8-16-1951	THU	Head Hunters Of Wombesi	<i>32</i>	
CD 2048 THE SAINT					
1	11-5-1950	SUN	Kidnapped Daughter		
2	11-12-1950	SUN	Return Of Harry Morgan		
CD 2049 THE SILENT MEN					
1	5-14-1951	MON	Miracle Cure		
2	10-14-1951	SUN	The Big Sneak		
CD 2050 LIFE OF RILEY					
1	3-9-1946	SAT	Music Scholarship For Babs	<i>103</i>	
2	4-6-1946	SAT	Silver Fox Fur Coat	<i>107</i>	
CD 2051 LIFE OF RILEY					
1	4-13-1946	SAT	Shoplifter	<i>108</i>	
2	4-20-1946	SAT	Giant Easter Bunny	<i>109</i>	
CD 2052 LIFE OF RILEY					
1	4-27-1946	SAT	Gambling Does Not Pay	<i>110</i>	
2	5-4-1946	SAT	Gillises Stay After A Fire	<i>111</i>	
CD 2053 LIFE OF RILEY					
1	5-11-1946	SAT	Junior Forgets Mother's Day	<i>112</i>	
2	5-18-1946	SAT	Playing Hookey	<i>113</i>	
CD 2054 LIFE OF RILEY					
1	6-8-1946	SAT	Bread Shortage And The Black Market	<i>116</i>	
2	6-15-1946	SAT	New Suit For Father's Day	<i>117</i>	
CD 2055 THE CHASE					
1	3-8-1953	SUN	Special Delivery		
2	3-15-1953	SUN	The Lady Is A Corpse		
CD 2056 THE CHASE					
1	3-22-1953	SUN	Woman Forman		
2	3-29-1953	SUN	Murderers Row		
CD 2057 THE CHASE					
1	4-5-1953	SUN	Bank Robbery - Kidnapping		
2	4-19-1953	SUN	Kingdom Lost		
CD 2058 THE CHASE					
1	4-26-1953	SUN	Leading Man Talent Search		
2	5-3-1953	SUN	Circumstantial Evidence		
CD 2059 THE CHASE					
1	5-17-1953	SUN	The Hold Up		
2	5-24-1953	SUN	Tiger Lily		
CD 2060 THIS IS YOUR FBI					
1	2-15-1952	FRI	The Old Hat	<i>358</i>	
2	2-22-1952	FRI	Unwelcome Fugitive	<i>359</i>	
CD 2061 THIS IS YOUR FBI					
1	2-29-1952	FRI	The Pay Off	<i>360</i>	
2	3-7-1952	FRI	The Skyway Man	<i>361</i>	
CD 2062 THIS IS YOUR FBI					
1	3-14-1952	FRI	Cross Country Fugitive	<i>362</i>	
2	3-21-1952	FRI	The Corruptors	<i>363</i>	
CD 2063 THIS IS YOUR FBI					
1	3-28-1952	FRI	Phantom Hitchhiker	<i>364</i>	
2	4-4-1952	FRI	Hollywood Shakedown	<i>365</i>	
CD 2064 THIS IS YOUR FBI					
1	4-18-1952	FRI	Masquerader	<i>367</i>	
2	4-25-1952	FRI	The Loner	<i>368</i>	
CD 2065 FISHERMANS WHARF					
1			Joey Reardon Story	<i>AUDITION 30 MIN</i>	
CD 2066 SOMEBODY KNOWS					
1	7-20-1950	THU	Unsolved Murder Of John P Bobanick		

CD 2067 LIFE OF RILEY

- 1 6-22-1946 SAT **Morris Buys Riley House** 118
2 6-29-1946 SAT **Paper Route Subscription Contest** 119

CD 2068 LIFE OF RILEY

- 1 10-5-1946 SAT **Good Neighbor Week** 125
2 12-28-1946 SAT **New Year's Eve** 137

CD 2069 LIFE OF RILEY

- 1 1-11-1947 SAT **Efficiency Expert** 139
2 1-18-1947 SAT **Business Partners** 140

CD 2070 LIFE OF RILEY

- 1 1-25-1947 SAT **Riley's Honeymoon** 141
2 2-1-1947 SAT **Switched As A Baby** 142

CD 2071 LIFE OF RILEY

- 1 2-8-1947 SAT **Forgotten Birthday** 143
2 3-22-1947 SAT **Riley The Milkman** 149

CD 2072 CALL THE POLICE

- 1 6-3-1947 TUE **The Porter Case** 1
2 6-10-1947 TUE **Case Of The Kidnaped Killer** 2

CD 2073 CALL THE POLICE

- 1 6-17-1947 TUE **Case Of The Violent Vegetable** 3
2

CD 2074 THE CHASE

- 1 5-31-1953 SUN **Lucifer**
2

CD 2075 THE CHASE

- 1 6-7-1953 SUN **Million Dollar Hunt**
2 6-26-1953 FRI **The Playboy**

CD 2076 THE CHASE

- 1 6-21-1953 SUN **The Monster**
2 6-28-1953 SUN **Harry And The Talking Horse** LAST OF SERIES

CD 2077 THE CLOCK

- 1 11-17-1946 SUN **All The Money In The World**
2 7-6-1947 SUN **The Hyponist**

CD 2078 SLEEP NO MORE

- 1 12-5-1956 WED **Over The Hill & Man In The Black Hat**
2 12-12-1956 WED **Three O' Clock**

CD 2079 SLEEP NO MORE

- 1 12-19-1956 WED **The Storm & Anna Belle Lee**
2 12-26-1956 WED **Fish Head & The Death Of Olivia Beckey**

CD 2080 SLEEP NO MORE

- 1 1-9-1957 WED **Wax Work & The Man And The Snake**
2 1-30-1957 WED **Tilting Of Grannie Whitherall & Escape**

CD 2081 SLEEP NO MORE

- 1 2-6-1957 WED **Banquo's Chair & The Coward**
2 2-27-1957 WED **To Build A Fire & Three Skeleton Key**

CD 2082 SLEEP NO MORE

- 1 3-6-1957 WED **Thus I Refute & The Book Shop**
2 3-13-1957 WED **Escape Of Mr Trimm**

CD 2083 NBC SHORT STORY

- 1 1-11-1951 THU **Dead Man**
2 2-28-1951 WED **Mr Arcularis**

CD 2084 NBC UNIVERSITY THEATRE

- 1 3-19-1950 SUN **Angel Pavement** PART 1
2 3-19-1950 SUN **Angel Pavement** PART 2

CD 2085 NERO WOLFE

- 1 10-20-1950 FRI **Stamped For Murder**
2 10-27-1950 FRI **Case Of The Care Worn Cop**

CD 2086 NIGHT SURGEON

- 1 **Murder By Foil** 21 AFRS
2 **Seat Belts** 35 AFRS

CD 2087 TARZAN

- 1 8-23-1951 THU **Trophy Room** 33
2 8-30-1951 THU **Tarzan's Mistake** 34

CD 2088 BING CROSBY

- 1 11-16-1944 THU *f sinatra*
2 11-23-1944 THU *rise stvens*

CD 2089 BING CROSBY

- 1 11-30-1944 THU *spike jones*
2 12-7-1944 THU *dianna lynn*

CD 2090 BING CROSBY

- 1 12-14-1944 THU *jerry colona*
2 12-21-1944 THU *christmas show*

CD 2091 BING CROSBY

- 1 12-28-1944 THU *beatrice kay*
2 1-4-1945 THU *johnny mercer*

CD 2092 BING CROSBY

- 1 1-8-1947 WED *peggy lee, mickey rooney,*
2 1-15-1945 MON *al jolson*

CD 2093 BING CROSBY

- 1 1-22-1947 WED *Jack McVea, linn Romey, george*
2 1-29-1947 WED *bob hope, dorothy lamour*

CD 2094 BING CROSBY

- 1 12-11-1946 WED *jerry colonna, peggy lee*
2 12-18-1946 WED *peggy lee, charioteers*

CD 2095 BING CROSBY

- 1 12-25-1946 WED *christmas show*
2 1-1-1947 WED *joe frisco, peggy lee, charioteers*

CD 2096 BING CROSBY

- 1 2-5-1947 WED *beatrice lillie, peggy lee*
2 2-12-1947 WED *groucho marx*

CD 2097 BING CROSBY

- 1 10-1-1947 WED *gary cooper*
2 10-8-1947 WED *jimmy durante*

CD 2098 BING CROSBY

- 1 10-15-1947 WED *dinah shore*
2 10-22-1947 WED *burl ives, clifton webb*

CD 2099 BING CROSBY

- 1 10-29-1947 WED *boris karloff*

2 11-5-1947 WED *ozzie and harriet*

CD 2100 BING CROSBY

1 11-12-1947 WED *peter lorre*

2 11-19-1947 WED *barry fitzgerald*

CD 2101 BING CROSBY

1 11-26-1947 WED *frankie laine*

2 12-3-1947 WED *al jolson*

CD 2102 BING CROSBY

1 12-10-1947 WED *Walter o' keefe*

2 12-17-1947 WED *joe frisco*

CD 2103 BING CROSBY

1 12-24-1947 WED *Christmas Show*

2 12-31-1947 WED *danny Thomas*

CD 2104 BING CROSBY

1 1-7-1948 WED *brace beemer*

2 1-14-1948 WED *george burns*

CD 2105 BING CROSBY

1 1-21-1948 WED *burns and allen*

2 1-28-1948 WED *esther williams*

CD 2106 BING CROSBY

1 2-4-1948 WED *Jimmy Durante*

2 2-11-1948 WED *Oscar Levant*

CD 2107 BING CROSBY

1 2-18-1948 WED *robert Taylor*

2 2-25-1948 WED *Peggy Lee*

CD 2108 BING CROSBY

1 3-3-1948 WED *Jack Benny*

2 3-10-1948 WED *James Stewart*

CD 2109 BING CROSBY

1 3-17-1948 WED *Margaret O' Brien*

2 3-24-1948 WED *Wild Bill Elliot*

CD 2110 BING CROSBY

1 3-31-1948 WED *Dick Powell*

2 4-7-1948 WED *Fred Astaire*

CD 2111 BING CROSBY

1 4-14-1948 WED *Fibber Mc Gee and Molly*

2 4-21-1948 WED *Clifton Webb, Crosby Children*

CD 2112 BING CROSBY

1 4-28-1948 WED *Claudette Colbert*

2 5-5-1948 WED *Barry Fitzgerald*

CD 2113 BING CROSBY

1 5-12-1948 WED *Henry Fonda*

2 5-19-1948 WED *Ethel Merman*

CD 2114 BING CROSBY

1 5-26-1948 WED *Beatrice Lillie*

2 6-2-1948 WED *Fred Allen*

CD 2115 BING CROSBY

1 9-24-1948 FRI *Claudette Colbert, Crosby*

2 10-6-1948 WED *Judy Garland*

CD 2116 BING CROSBY

1 10-13-1948 WED *William Gargan*

2 10-20-1948 WED *Dan Dailey*

CD 2117 BING CROSBY

1 10-27-1948 WED *William Powell*

2 11-3-1948 WED *Edgar Bergen and company*

CD 2118 BING CROSBY

1 11-10-1948 WED *Oscar Levant*

2 11-17-1948 WED *Adolph Menjou*

CD 2119 BING CROSBY

1 11-24-1948 WED *Bert Lahr*

2 12-1-1948 WED *Bob and Cathy Crosby*

CD 2120 BING CROSBY

1 12-8-1948 WED *Morton Downey*

2 12-15-1948 WED *Bob Hope*

CD 2121 BING CROSBY

1 12-22-1948 WED *Christmas Show*

2 12-29-1948 WED *Mills Brothers*

CD 2122 BING CROSBY

1 1-5-1949 WED *Betty Grable, Harry James*

2 1-12-1949 WED *Johnny Mercer*

CD 2123 BING CROSBY

1 1-19-1949 WED *Cast of Beulah Show*

2 1-26-1949 WED *Abe Burrows*

CD 2124 BING CROSBY

1 2-2-1949 WED *Jimmy Durante*

2 2-9-1949 WED *Groucho Marx*

CD 2125 BING CROSBY

1 2-16-1949 WED *Bob Burns*

2 2-23-1949 WED *Abe Burrows*

CD 2126 BING CROSBY

1 3-2-1949 WED *Dinah Shore, Burl Ives*

2 3-9-1949 WED *Phil Harris, Elliot Lewis*

CD 2127 BING CROSBY

1 3-16-1949 WED *Louis Armstrong*

2 3-23-1949 WED *Ethel Merman*

CD 2128 BING CROSBY

1 3-30-1949 WED *Dennis Day*

2 4-6-1949 WED *James Stewart*

CD 2129 BING CROSBY

1 4-13-1949 WED *Peggy Lee*

2 4-20-1949 WED *Rudy Vallee*

CD 2130 BING CROSBY

1 4-22-1949 FRI *Abe Burrows*

2 5-4-1949 WED *Alex Tempelton*

CD 2131 BING CROSBY

1 5-11-1949 WED *Alex Tempelton*

2 5-18-1949 WED *Rhonda Fleming*

CD 2132 BING CROSBY

1 5-25-1949 WED *Dorothy Kirsten*

THE LIFE OF A RADIO ACTOR

Dick Beals



If you were led blindfolded into a radio studio and listened to the conversation you wouldn't know who the actors were or the show they were about to rehearse.

Actors are just people hoping they receive that magic phone call from a director's office, which means another job awaits them. On the day of the recording they get in their car, drive to the recording studio, park their car and head for the studio, ready for work. And yes, it IS work. And No, it is not fun and it isn't a lot of laughs.

Today it is at CBS, Sunset and Gower, studio 4. The show...Gunsmoke. Around a large metal table are some folks you know and some you don't. They are marking their scripts or just jabbering, or quietly creating a voice or a character that will please the director.

Blindfolded you wouldn't know who is whom, except maybe Parley Baer or sometimes Bill Conrad. Parley tells hilarious stories and nobody laughs like 5'8" 250 lb. Bill Conrad. But neither sounds like the part they play. But Howard McNear, (Doc), Larry Dobkin, John Dehner, Sam Edwards, Georgia Ellis, (Kitty), Ginny Gregg, Lurene Tuttle, No.

At 9:59 AM, Norm McDonnell walks in. All the laughter, conversation, script studying stops. Norm gets comfortable at the head of the table, sets his script down, and says, "Ok friends, let's see what this thing sounds like."

The read through sounds like the actual "on the air" radio show. Everyone is in character, there are no mistakes. Some slightly change their character when they think their character would be stronger when playing opposite a similar character.

But in doing so, they take a quick glance at Norm, who usually looks up and nods quietly. As the saying goes..."they are certainly on the same page".

When the last line is read, Norm might go through a few suggestions but usually these pros are all"pros". The sound effects guys have all their stuff organized and in place,, the announcer, George Walsh, is ready, the talent is ready, Norm is in the Control Room along with the writers, his secretary, (with the clock), and those in the first scene are at the mikes ready to go. Norm raises his right hand, glances at the cast and throws the first cue.



As the saying goes..... "these guys are good."



A quick aside.....The first show, entitled, "Billy the Kid", March 24th, 1952, was taped. It was the first show ever taped at CBS. The cast knew it, but we were so used to "live radio" that we did the show as if it was "live". No mistakes. When the last line by the

Photos: Dick Beals, William Conrad, Virginia Gregg



announcer was read, Norm raised his hands for "all quiet", looked at the engineer who nodded at him, threw his hands in the air signaling to Norm that the mikes were off, and Norm applauded. He pushed the talk button and said..."Nice job people. Thank you."

The cast nodded at Norm, put their scripts on the table, and quietly headed for the parking lot. When we passed the Control Room we waved at Norm and off we went.

We did the first six shows as if they were "live" radio, but they were taped. On the 7th show, Norm, just to break the pattern, asked Bill Conrad to read a line a slightly different way, "to please a fussy writer in here." Bill did, Norm looked back at the "fussy writer", who nodded and Norm nodded and Bill, with a slight grin tossed his script on the table and headed home.

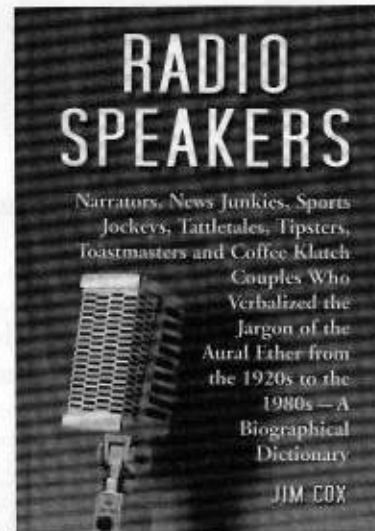


radio show on CBS.

But that set a new pattern. With all the writers in the Booth wanting to try different lines, like doing cartoons or commercials, Norm gave in and all show thereafter were "recorded". The sessions were much longer but the actors were so happy to get that Gunsmoke call, "The Show Must Go On", and it did. It was last dramatic

Photos: Howard McNear, Parley Baer, John Dehner

BOOK REVIEW



Radio Speakers by Jim Cox

368 pages, 7x10 hardcover, \$55

order from: www.mcfarlandpub.com, or 1-800-253-2187

In the days before television radio was the constant voice in American life. When radio spoke, America listened—especially to the men and women who spoke directly to their unseen audience. Sometimes formal, sometimes a familiar as the friend next door, their presence filled the airwaves: announcers, newscasters, sportscasters, showbiz reporters, advice consultants, emcees, and breakfast chatterboxes. These radio personalities became as popular and familiar as the most public faces of the time.

Here among profiles of more than 1100 'radio speakers' are famous names like George Ansboro, Red Barber, H.V. Kaltenborn, Dorothy Kilgallen, Edward R. Murrow, Louella Parsons, Walter Winchell, Brace Beemer, Fred Foy, Art Gilmore, Harry Bartell and more. Also amply represented are hundreds of lesser known individuals who left indelible auditory impressions. Whether their fame was forever or fleeting all were a part of the American voice during the grand epoch of network radio.

This book is a biographical dictionary of the men and women that were on the air rather than a description of any particular series. It is valuable as a tool in research of any of these people.

Jim Cox the author was at our 2004 Showcase at the Seattle Center. He is the author of several books on various aspects of radio, the most recent other than this one being *The Great Radio Sitcoms*.

Franz

The 2008 REPS Showcase will be held at the Bellevue Coast Hotel June 27th and 28th, Friday & Saturday 9am to 9 pm both days.

The cost of admission is -

Friday Only \$ 49.00

Saturday Only \$ 69.00

Full Weekend (\$ 110.00) Again we are offering a discount if you purchase the full weekend and register before May 1st, 2008 . After which admission will be \$118.00 for the full weekend.

If you are out of state, you can receive a special 10% discount when you fly Alaska Airlines. www.alaskaair.com You must use the special convention code to receive this discount. Code: ECCMR9860 last number is zero



We will have more details on the convention in the next *Air Check* but for now here is a list of confirmed out of town guests:

Janet Waldo (Meet Corliss Archer, Ozzie and Harriett), Louise Erickson (The Great Gildersleeve), Gloria McMillan (Our Miss Brooks) and her husband Ron Cocking, Stuffy Singer (Jack Benny Show), Dick Beals (Lone Ranger) , Dave Parker (Lone Ranger) , Tommy Cook (Lights Out) , Shirley Mitchell (The Great Gildersleeve) , Gil Stratton (Suspense), Bob Hastings (Archie Andrews) , Rosemary Rice (Archie Andrews), and Chuck McCann. Additional guests are still being confirmed.

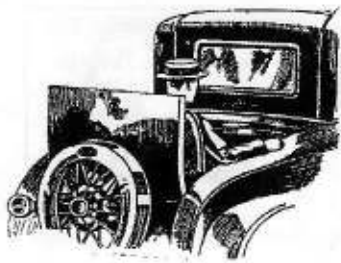
Gregg Oppenheimer who directed the fantastic Lux Radio Theater "Pinocchio" and the Fred Allen King for a Day show in 2007 returns this year to direct again. Gregg is the son of Jess Oppenheimer one of the creative forces behind I love Lucy. If you attended the 2007 Convention, we aim to bring you the same level of radio in 2008. We hope you can attend the REPS convention in 2008. Your attendance ensures that we can continue to bring you a REPS convention with a full complement of special guests.

To register please send your check to:

REPS
17334 Densmore Ave N
Shoreline WA 98133-5524



Please call (206) 542-6231 or (714) 545-0318 if you have any questions.



Rumble Seat

Franz

There are now about 2300 CDs in the CD Library and we have run out of shelf space all too soon. There is more wall space and new shelves will be on the way soon to hold our expanding collection.

There are some Bing Crosby programs in the catalog this time. Rather than title them as Philco or Chesterfield programs, they are all titled Bing Crosby. There are more available but we thought this would be a fair sampling of Bing's program and the guest stars he had each week.

There are quite a few *Railroad Hour* programs in good sound quality available. Since we had the Crosby musical CDs to make available, these are now followed by the operettas of the *Railroad Hour*. These also have a number of guest stars each week. The operetta *Lady Be Good* has Groucho Marx as the guest star. This is an exception to the sound quality standards we are trying to keep with CDs. It is quite listenable but a tad lesser quality. For sure Groucho either did not have a script or he discarded it. And he must have changed what he said in rehearsal when they were on the air. The singers must have been warned and did their best to not break up. This is live radio at its best, or worse, when not taken seriously.

Before *The Railroad Hour* switched to NBC, the first episodes on ABC in 1948 were 45 minutes long. Since a CD will only hold 80 minutes, we could not put two 45 minute episodes on a CD. We could put one 45 minute and one 30 minute episode on however. This does not make all the broadcasts in order on the CDs but does fill the CDs. After all the 45 minute programs were done and only 30 minuted episodes remain they are in order. Unfortunately not all the episodes available are in good sound quality. Again, however, there is a fair sampling of the program that are good enough to list.

Late news. Rosemary Rice chatted with Dick VanPatten a few days ago and he said he was planning to be in Bellevue for Showcase. He is feeling much better and is looking forward to coming.



How to use the Cassette, CD, DVD Libraries.

First of all each library is distinct. Catalog numbers in one library will have a completely different content than another. It is necessary to identify CD, Cassette, or DVD along with the catalog number. At the present time there are no MP3's in the library.

REPS Members may check out 10 CDs or 10 Cassettes or 10 DVDs for \$6.00. It is also possible to check out a double order 20 CDs or 20 Cassettes for \$12.00. This covers the cost of mailing and maintaining the library. You may mix Cassettes, CDs, and DVDs in the order.

At most of the meetings a few *grab bags* of 10 Cassettes or CDs are available for checkout from the library. Sometimes new members are confused, these are for checkout and then returned to the library after use. The *grab bags* are not for sale.

Checkout forms are available at the meetings, by request in the mail, on the web site, and a new form included with each library checkout. The library may also be used with the internet using PayPal. Instructions for that use are on the web site.

We get the CDs for our library from several different sources. Most of them are remasters taken from the original ET disks or original tapes.

One of our sources for CDs apparently had a faulty preference file in their computer. Although the content of the CDs in our library is correct, a few of the CDs will show an incorrect title in a computer. For example, a *Richard Diamond* CD has the correct *Richard Diamond* episodes as written on the CD itself and the catalog pages but the title that shows on a computer screen might say *Sam Spade*. In any case that CD is correct for content and catalog number. Even though there are not very many of those, it may take us awhile to find the ones that have errors.

Contact:

Darrell Anderson, REPS Librarian, 17232 174th SE,
Renton WA 98058.
425-226-7005, woods_inn@aol.com



Aircheck is created on a Mac G4 computer with *Adobe Indesign CS* and *Adobe Photoshop CS*. Most of the text is *Adobe Garamond Pro* at 12 points with the headlines at 12, 14 and 18 points bold. If you would like a copy on a CD, write to Frank Rosin, 9811 NE 139th St, Kirkland WA 98034.

AIR CHECK

NEWSLETTER OF THE RADIO ENTHUSIASTS OF PUGET SOUND (REPS)

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Scheduled Events

- Mar 9, 2008** Pontiac Bay Orchestra, *It came from Outer Space*, Edmonds Center for the Arts
- Mar 17, 2008** Imagination Theatre, Kirkland Performing Arts Theatre, 200th Harry Nile
- Apr 5, 2008** Board Meeting, Norse Home 11 am
- Apr 5, 2008** Regular Meeting, Norse Home 2 pm
Readers: *Sam Spade*, Dick Beals directing, phone call to Martin Grams
- May 3, 2008** Board and Regular Meeting Norse Home
- June 7, 2008** Board and Regular Meeting Norse Home
- June 27, 28, 2008** Showcase, Bellevue Coast Hotel
- July 5, 2008** No Meeting

Unless specified otherwise, Board Meetings are held in the Norse Home Board Room, Seattle, and start at 11:00 am. Regular Membership Meetings are held at the Norse Home, Seattle, and start at 2:00 pm. They are both on the first Saturday of each Month.

Darrell Anderson, Librarian

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