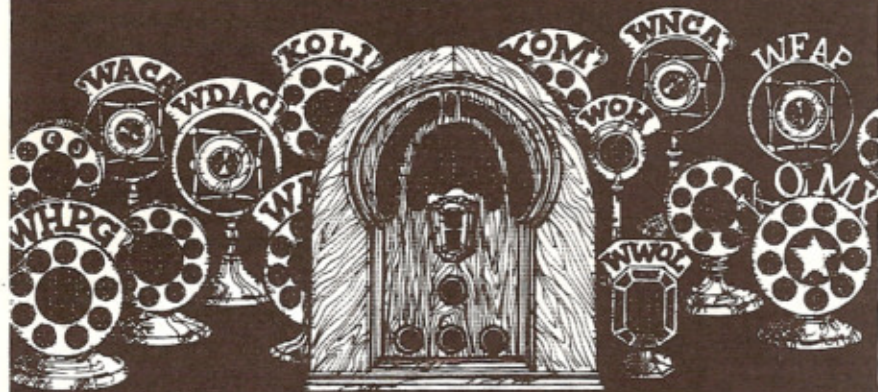
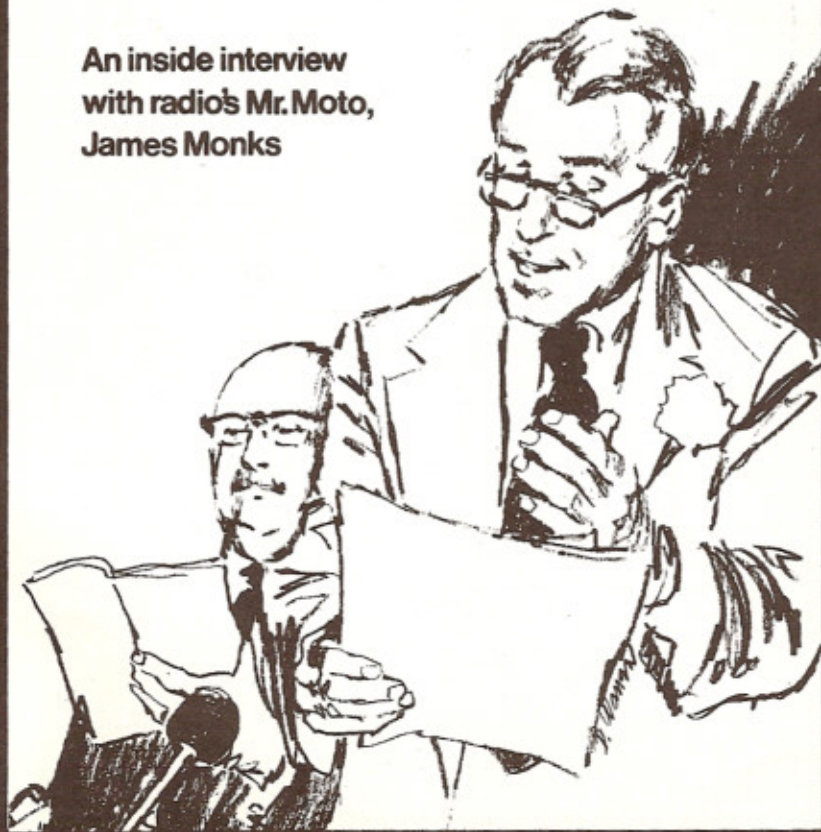


Collector's Corner



Volume I No.2 April 1978 \$1.25

An inside interview
with radio's Mr. Moto,
James Monks



COLLECTOR'S CORNER is published monthly by Joe Webb and Bob Burnham. Art director Bob Burchett. Subscriptions mailed first class are \$7.50. Individual copies \$1.25. Mail to Joe Webb 5 Valley View Drive, Yonkers, NY 10710.

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All articles, news, club news releases are to be sent to Bob Burnham, 17173 Westbrook, Livonia, MI 48152.

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Collector's Comments from Bob Burnham

Response to COLLECTOR'S CORNER #1 has been very favorable. Some I've seen in publications of others, and some has just filtered through the collecting grapevine. I'm also happy to say that our success is such that we are in a financially stable condition and Joe and I won't have to sell our Teacs and tapes in order to pay printing bills. Hopefully, things will remain the same in the future. Our target is 400+ subscribers by year's end, to be the largest circulating newsletter.

Subscribers who are receiving COLLECTOR'S CORNER to complete their NEWS AND REVIEWS subscriptions will be interested in knowing that the transfer process is now complete. Take note of the date on the mailing label or cover and it will tell you the cover date of the last issue you will receive unless you re-subscribe. All renewals are to be sent to the Yonkers address.

This issue, in TECHNICAL TIPS, I described my experiences with the Pioneer 707 reel-to-reel deck with variable speed. The technical end of collecting is one of my specialties and I intend to contribute to this aspect of COLLECTOR'S CORNER regularly. My qualifications as an audio writer extend to when I was 7 years old (a mere fourteen years ago) when I received my first tape recorder for Christmas. For my entire life, even pre-school, I've always had a keen interest in electrical things and during my adolescent years, I became an audio/electronics fanatic. I've worked with everything from IC chips to large transmitting tubes. I own a restored wire recorder and antique radios all in working order, and possess several tape decks and a complex audio set-up. I was technical director for the radio station at my old high school. For about six months I worked for Olson Electronics as a repairman and in sales. Currently, I'm employed as an engineer at two radio stations. Within two years I expect to acquire my First Class Commercial Operator's License from the gents who call themselves the FCC. When that occurs, you might say I'm set for life in terms of job security.

But does this make me qualified to be COLLECTOR'S CORNER's technical writer? Of course it does, but it certainly doesn't mean I know it all! This is one reason I'm glad our contributors have been getting into the technical end of our

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Interview: James Monks

by Joe Webb

((I first met Jimmy Monks on the day I interviewed him. It was the same morning I had one of the worst breakfasts of my life at the diner around the corner—lukewarm tea, burnt English muffins—and it was also cold and windy. I then went to Jimmy's apartment, and I interrupted his pushups—which he does more in one day than I've ever done in a month. None of what I've described yet about him can capture his warmth, sincerity, and kindness that you can feel by just being around him for even a short time -----Joe W.))

James Monks is not as well known as his brother John, who was responsible for screenplays for Brother Rat, 13 Rue Madelaine, and more. But COLLECTOR'S CORNER didn't interview John.

Jimmy's first radio part was on a program called ROSES AND DRUMS. "I was so nervous my script was rattling in my hands. Helen Claire, the marvelous actress I was with saw I was nervous and reached over and held my hand. At that moment all my fear disappeared. And I never felt fear in front of a microphone again."

Among his other credits are parts on HELEN TRENT (playing Gil Whitney for the last 4 or 5 months), THEATER GUILD, READER'S DIGEST, MA PERKINS, MY TRUE STORY, MARY FOSTER—EDITOR'S DAUGHTER, WHEN A GIRL MARRIES, and a small handful of SUSPENSE and JOHNNY DOLLAR parts.

Religious programming has played a part in his career, on programs such as the still-running ETERNAL LIGHT series, and CATHOLIC HOUR, and others. In a way this is a reflection of himself. "I'm not what you would call a religious person, but I am a spiritual person, entrenched in metaphysics."

More recent shows such as BRISTOL-MYERS RADIO PLAYHOUSE and THEATER FIVE are other credits. He was very fond of the PLAYHOUSE show THE LITTLE THINGS IN LIFE written and starred by Peg Lynch. Peg's work is highlighted on ETHEL AND ALBERT and THE COUPLE NEXT DOOR.

But Jimmy Monks had one starring role in a continuing series, and that was of MR. MOTO, the famous Oriental detective. In my opinion, Jimmy deserved a better showcase for his talents, but he has a

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great affection for the program, and understandably so. One anecdote about the series that he likes to tell is that of the secretary who took a phone message for Mr. Moto and came into the studio with it. Of course, Jimmy said, "I am Mr. Moto," but the secretary said, "No you're not. He's a short little Oriental fella."

James Monks has many observations about radio acting and his own career as an actor. "I felt there was more security in radio. Theater was very insecure. I saw many good actors just going from flop to flop, and that was not what I wanted. Of course, radio involved a lot of knocking on doors, going from agency to agency, but people with ambition don't get discouraged. They know their time will come."

He also stresses that an actor is always in charge of the emotions. "If you let your emotions get away from you, you're not acting anymore. You can be sure that when Agnes Moorehead was 'dialing that wrong number,' you feel the emotion, but Agnes Moorehead is in charge, and the material does not run away from her."

Important to the actor is also rehearsal time. "Time shortened in rehearsal takes its toll. The spirit of man alone needs reflection, and it takes time to get into that perfect characterization." On the subject of radio directors, "most of the best directors were at one time actors. I was very lucky that I worked for so many wonderful people who appreciated actors and respected their abilities."

Those who attended the 1977 Friends of Radio Convention (or heard the tape) have had a chance to experience Jimmy's acting ability first hand. His performance as Ben Falkenberg, the villain of the story, drew many ooohs and ahhs.

During radio's doldrums (between THEATER FIVE and CBS MYSTERY THEATER), Jimmy became a model, and was very busy. In fact, Alexander's, a leading department store chain, had an exclusive contract with him, for a few years.

"I really think radio will come back one day," he says. "There are so many people on the roads driving, salesmen and travelers, who tire easily of the music now played on stations. What better place to enjoy radio than while driving? Who knows? But it may be possible to show that people who listen to radio shows stay more alert while driving and have less accidents!"

He does realize that radio's return will take time. Especially since THEATER FIVE, RADIO

Continued on page 10



Technical Tips

by Bob Burnham

THE PIONEER 707 REEL-TO-REEL WITH VARIABLE SPEED

Pitch control for under \$400.00? That's exactly what you get with Pioneer's 700 series reel decks. With the appropriate "mail order discount," the RT-707 can be acquired for about \$350. This popular model has auto-reverse on play only. The RT-701 has most of the same basic features except auto reverse and is about \$50 cheaper. The model I have worked with for this review is the former.

The 707 features three motors, four tracks and two speeds (3.75 and 7.5 ips) in addition to the above features. Like the common Teac, the Pioneer also has solenoid operation with logic (few mechanical parts and the ability to go from one function to another without stopping and not ripping the tape to shreds in the process).

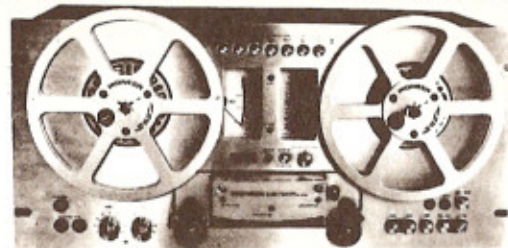
Aside from the unusual physical appearance (photo is on the next page), the Pioneer also has a few other interesting features. At first glance, one may think that the unit has a closed loop transport noting the dual pinch rollers. However, the left "pinch roller" is a tape guide and does NOT contact a capstan as the pinch roller on the right does. Also, the second pinch roller does not operate differently when the 707 is playing in reverse mode. The VU meters are also unusually placed, and seem to be the averaging-type meter, as are found on most Sony decks, as opposed to the peak type found on Teacs.

In actual operation, the machine felt a bit clumsy to me. The function buttons are not "feather-touch." When pushing them, they lock in place until STOP or another function is selected. The tension on the machine I tested was quite loose (the machine was only two months old) which makes the machine not only prone to damaging tapes, but also contributes to the somewhat "unpositive pause." This pause is also locking, and stops the tape motion, while the tape remains against the heads. In recording, the pause did a very crude job. If you like to do a lot of electronic editing, this machine would be a poor choice. On the other hand, physical editing with a splicing block is

possible since when the pause is depressed, the pre-amps remain on, and the tape lifters are not activated (keeping the tape against the heads). As a result you can move the reels by hand back and forth in pause (there's very little tension on the reels in this mode) and hear what's on the tape.

Channel leakage between the left and right tracks is quite detectable. While most leakage seemed to be concentrated in the frequencies, in recording a radio show on the left track peaking at +3 VU, I found the same show could be heard on the opposite track at about -15 to -10 VU on certain peaks. This is very poor compared to other reel decks I've worked with.

The pitch control has a detented position in the center (normal speed) and will allow you to vary the speed from +9.2 to -7.6%. This is perhaps one of its most attractive other than appearance and price. If another one of your concerns is how fast it rewinds or forwards tape, rewind for an 1800' reel is about 102



seconds, and will fast forward the same reel in about 89 seconds.

In recording music, the 707 did an excellent job. The best S/N ratio with this machine is obtainable with Scotch 207 (S/N is factory adjusted). Pioneer's specs for S/N are 58db. This is inferior to Teac's 65db with the same tape for its A2300SX model. It is only 2db's better than the least expensive Akai (the 4000DS, available for less than \$300). The frequency response is 30-24,000hz at 7.5ips.

Wow and flutter specs were very good. Under all conditions, wow is actually less than .01%! Flutter, in a combined record-play measurement is .08% at 3.75ips and .065% at 7.5ips.

I recorded some FM interstation hiss and found that the bias and EQ switching Pioneer recommends were not always optimum. Recording at 7.5 ips, I found leveling the meters at around -10 was the best way to determine correct EQ

NEWS

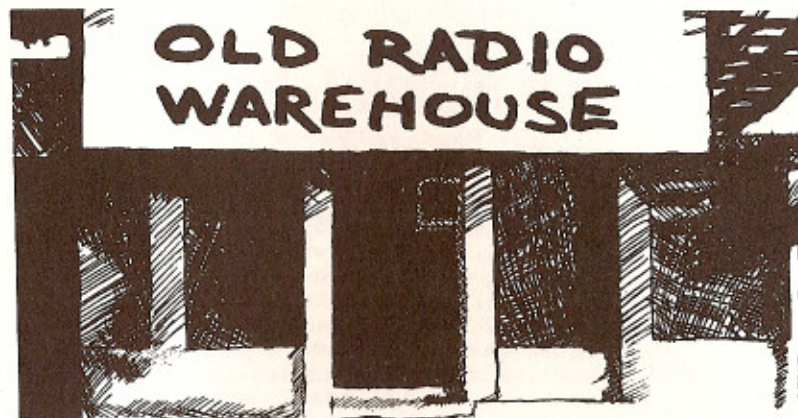
That terrific JOHNNY DOLLAR series is in the news because more of the 5-part serials are on their way. It is very possible that the entire 78 week run of this format starring Bob Bailey will make it into collector's hands. Many consider the "five-parters" to be the high point of the series. There is likely to be a 10-part story in this run.

Many people have asked about the 1960s series BLACK MASS, especially since it is hard to find in good sound. Upgrades are on their way. Concurrent with this news, WBAI-New York has been broadcasting the series. Broadcasts will end in March 1978.

Many collectors are familiar with the TEAC A2300-SX reel-to-reel deck. More and more collectors have discovered the virtues of such a machine. Well, TEAC has just increased their price to dealers to about \$400, an increase of about \$25.00. Many dealers will not be passing this price increase on until they get their new shipments (which will be soon, so don't walk, run.....).

The ABC Network recently donated 25,000 discs to the National Archives in Washington, DC. For years the Network has denied any knowledge of the discs. About 4500 of the discs have now been recorded, but the greatest majority of the discs are recordings of news broadcasts.

Planning is about to begin for the 1978 Friends of Radio Convention. The first meeting will be in April. Chairman of the committee is HELLO AGAIN's own Jay Hickerson. The convention will be held on October 7, 1978 at the Bridgeport, Connecticut Holiday Inn. For the past two years the convention was held in Meriden, but the crowd was not comfortable in the small quarters there. The Bridgeport facility is large enough to hold the growing number of attending fans and is about 45 minutes closer to New York City.



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AIRWAVES #12: Convention issue with many pictures and feature article.

AIRWAVES #13: Radio Goes To War, Philip Marlowe article and log.

COLLECTOR'S CORNER #1: Al Hodge interview, hints on buying used equipment, book review: WHO WAS THAT MASKED MAN?, Suspense 1942 log.

*****NEW YORK STATE RESIDENTS ADD*****
*****APPLICABLE SALES TAX TO ORDERS*****

BOB BURNHAM, continued from page 3

magazine. It's likely I'll learn something in every technical article that's received, and this is one of the essential purposes of TECHNICAL TIPS—to teach and learn. And there's always something to be discussed pertaining to the tape or tape recorders—the actual meat of the OTR hobby. My final comment is to those of you who are newcomers, or on the "teach-ee" end of TECHNICAL TIPS. If you have a problem, question, comment, idea, or whatever, relating to the technical end of collecting, mail it directly to me, Bob Burnham, 17173 Westbrook, Livonia, MI 48152. I'll respond either by return mail or in the pages of COLLECTOR'S CORNER.

JAMES MONKS, continued from page 5

PLAYHOUSE, ADVENTURE THEATER, and the NEVANS OF CEDAR GROVE are all in the radio graveyard. But we still have CBS MYSTERY THEATER and NPR's EARPLAY, so there is still some hope.

((I'll be seeing him again soon, and many collector's should be able to see him at the next convention. "I had a marvelous time," he wrote after the 1977 convention. That's fine, Mr. Monks, because we all did. Because of you, your spirit, and Ben Falkenberg.--JW))

Circulating MR. MOTO shows:

--Assignment G-31 --Crooked Leg
--A Force Called X07 --Kurloff Papers

TECHNICAL TIPS, continued from page 7

and bias, and comparing incoming and playback signals with the monitor switch. With the reel of Scotch 207, I found the Pioneer capable of a flawless job.

The tape I used to record radio shows was Ampex 641 (comparable to top grade Shamrock). Except for channel leakage, I found the 707 capable of doing as good a job of recording as any of the other brands I've worked with including Sony, Teac, Revox, Ampex, and IT, the latter three all ranging in prices over \$2000.

I'm dubious about the Pioneer's durability. However, if you want pitch control, it's the only machine to consider.

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Collector's Corner OTR Log

SUSPENSE

This issue, the SUSPENSE log started last issue with 1942 continues with 1943. Original research on this log was done by Jay Hickerson, publisher of HELLO AGAIN. Jay spent many hours in libraries researching the series, and through the past six or so years Jay and other collectors have revised and updated the log. This log represents the most up-to-date revised log.

SUSPENSE-----1943

Date	Title	Stars
1/5	Nothing up my Sleeve	Geo. Coulouris
1/12	Pit and the Pendulum	Henry Hull
1/19	Devil's Saint	Peter Lorre
	****SUSPENSE then moves to Hollywood	
1/26	Death Went Along for the Ride	R. Bellamy
2/2	Doctor Prescribed Death	Bela Lugosi
2/9	The Hangman Won't Wait	S. Greenstreet
2/16	In Fear and Trembling	Mary Astor
2/23	Will You Walk into My Parlor	??
3/2	The Night Reveals	Frederic March
3/9	The Phantom Archer	Ralph Bellamy
3/16	Cabin B-13	Ralph Bellamy
3/23	The Customers Like Murder	Roland Young
3/30	The Dead Sleep Lightly	W. Hampton
4/6	Fire Burn and Cauldron Bubble	P. Lukas
4/13	Fear Paints a Picture	Nancy Coleman
4/20	Moment of Darkness	Peter Lorre
4/27	Diary of Saphronia Winters	Agnes Moorehead and Ray Collins
5/4	Death Flies Blind	Richard Dix
5/11	Mr. Markham, Antique Dealer	P. Lukas
5/18	ABC Murders	Chas. Laughton
5/25	Sorry, Wrong Number	Agnes Moorehead
	This is the first broadcast of this most famous of all SUSPENSE programs. One of the few if not only radio program made into a feature movie. This broadcast includes the mistake in order of spoken lines at climax of the broadcast. The mistake is acknowledged at the beginning of the next episode, <u>Banquo's Chair</u> , and repeat date is announced.	
6/1	Banquo's Chair	Donal Crisp
6/8	Five Canaries in the Room	Lee Bowman
6/15	Last Night	Kent Smith
6/22	Man Without a Body	Geo. Zucco
6/29	Uncle Henry's Rosebush	Agnes Moorehead
7/6	The White Rose Murders	Maureen O'Hara

SUSPENSE 1943, continues....

7/13	PRE-EMPTED	
7/20	Murder Goes for a Swim	Warren William
7/27	Last Letter of Dr. Bronson	Laird Cregar
8/3	Friend to Alexander	Robert Young
8/10	The Fountain Plays	Edmund Gwenn
	****SUSPENSE moves to Saturday	
8/21	Sorry, Wrong Number	Agnes Moorehead
8/28	The King's Birthday	Dolores Costello
	****SUSPENSE moves to Thursday	
9/2	Singing Walls	Preston Foster
9/9	Marry for Murder	Lil Gish
9/16	Cross-Eyed Bear	Virginia Bruce
9/23	Most Dangerous Game	Orson Welles
9/30	Lost Special	Orson Welles
10/7	Philomel Cottage	Orson Welles
	****SUSPENSE moves to Tuesday	
10/12	Donovan's Brain (Pt 1)	Orson Welles
10/19	Donovan's Brain (Pt 2)	Orson Welles
10/26	After Dinner Story	Otto Kruger
11/2	Statement of Employee	Henry Wilson
		Gene Lockhart
		Margo
11/9	Cabin B-13	
11/16	Thieves Fall Out	Gene Kelly
11/23	Strange Death of Charles	Umberstein
		Vincent Price
	****SUSPENSE moves to Thursday,	
	Roma Wines becomes sponsor	
12/2	The Black Curtain	Cary Grant
12/9	The Night Reveals	Robert Young
12/16	Wet Saturday	Chas. Laughton
12/23	Back for Christmas	Peter Lorre
12/30	Finishing School	Margo

NEXT ISSUE: SUSPENSE--1944



CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT 1941 CODE-O-GRAPH REPRODUCTION

Here's an authentic reproduction in a heavy bright gold all metal badge and works exactly like the real one.

For each Captain Midnight 1941 Code-O-Graph reproduction badge and code book, send \$3.50 to Old Time Radio Premiums, 21 Woodcrest Drive, Riverside R.I., 02915

Happy Landings.

Collector's Comments from Our Readers

Reader offers inside look at Dragnet

Jim Gibbon Box 151-501 Holly St. Ellisville, MS. 39437

Dear Bob

In case you know of anyone interested, I have a videotape of Corwin (writer-director for many programs including his own for CBS) directing his Plot to Overthrow Christmas script. It was a PBS production several years ago, recreating the original show with great fidelity (except the sound effects man this time used carts (professional broadcast cartridges) instead of 78 rpm records for some of his items).

You see Norman Corwin directing from the control room and the actors, etc. in the studio working floor mikes. It's a remarkable recreation of how network radio worked, including a portion of the around-the-table rehearsal before the actual show. If you'll send me a 60 minute Betamax blank, I'll be happy to run off a copy from my U-Matic master tape.

I enjoyed your article on DRAGNET (in News & Reviews), which took me back to my college days in Los Angeles. Jack Webb was a friend of my acting teacher at USC (Lurene Tuttle) and at his invitation, I frequently sat in on the rehearsal/performances of his show.

I can still see the chubby orchestra conductor, Walter Schumann doing a 360 degree twirl during the pause and after the first four notes of the theme!

Your critique of the sound effects is quite perceptive. It was Webb who insisted on the quality. Once he ran out to downtown LA just to get a ten second venetian blind effect he wanted; and he was always going down into the bowels of NBC to find just the eddect he wanted to bring back. This was the only show to regularly employ not one but two sound eddects men and they worked center stage with the actors off to one side just under the client's both window.

Those gunshots were blanks. Anyone bringing in a cardboard box would probably have been hit with a stick by Webb.

The show was done live in 1949 and 1950, but the next winter they made a change. The acotrs, sound men and announcer (George Denneman) came in on Thursday and recorded everything but the music. Then on Thursday at broadcast time, you would see the orchestra and the sound man with two large turntables and on each

a 16 inch acetate disc containing scene by scene the show. This is what went out "live" and it's fortunate the needle never skipped a groove. Why? I guess it was the union and they hadn't come to terms with tape, although NBC was regularly using several large Ampex 15 I.P.S. recorders at that time.

The pre-recording technique gave Webb a little extra flexibility. For instance one day during rehearsal of a scene during which he was grilling a suspect, he decided to have the guy ask for a drink of water. So they took the microphone out of the studio and into Webb's dressing room and playing the scene in there, were able to include the sound of drawing a glass of water from the lavatory tap. It was little things like that which gave the show its class.

A lot of actors weren't able to master "the DRAGNET technique." Webb insisted on playing low key and not hammy--and the mikes had to be turned up to catch the sound. This gave it a quality similar to an overheard conversation. The studio they used was an auditorium with 400 seats and a stage although most of the time there was no one in the auditorium (I sat there once when I was kicked out of the client's booth because the Mayor of LA and his party were to use it).

Fatima was a new brand introduced about that time by the Chesterfield firm and they used DRAGNET to promote it. The show during its first few months was a sustainer (unsponsored except by the network). It caught on like STAR WARS and was soon sponsored--Webb almost quit then. If you have any of the sustainers, you'll notice there's no cast listed. Webb felt that made it seem more authentic. But then Chesterfield decided Webb had name value and ordered him to do a live or two plugging the cigarettes and identifying himself (I would give anything if I had smuggled a tape recorder in and preserved the day he and Yarborough mugged their way through a burlesque reading of the commercial during rehearsal!).

Notice sometime the two-way radio conversations with static on the other end. They used a scratchy record on an el cheapo record player and the sound man simply dropped the pick up or picked it up to simulate radio reception while in the control room someone would throw a switch sending the actor's regular mike through the filter circuit. They weren't alwaystoo good with their timing and you'll notice the crackle coming in too soon or too late and out the same way. Otherwise, considering it was live, I'd call the sound faultless.

In December of 1951, Yarborough suddenly died of a heart attack, and on the next show a hastily written script covered his death with Friday consoling Romero's widow (Webb played Joe Friday, Yarborough played his partner, Ben Romero). By that time, the

TV version was already in the works and the pilot episode (with Yarborough) had already been completed and, I believe, broadcast (a future partner, Frank--played by Ben Alexander--met a similar fate when Alexander kicked the Bucket). If any of your shows include Friday's mother, she was played by Peggy Webber, a beautiful actress in her twenties who could affect the voice of an incredibly old woman and in the same show play another role or two as a young person. with or without accent.

A remembrance of Al Hodge, Captain Video:

...As I remember the TV show, Captain Video himself would regularly disappear from the story, leaving the Video Ranger and others to work things out. Perhaps the exigencies of live television required such absences while performers looked over other matters, but the regular removal of Captain Video was to the plot like cornstarch in a watery stew, thickening it without changing the flavor. Eventually the hero returned and my heart would sing--Captain Video is here again! Everything will be all right and we can go on to another story.

Years passed, even "Captain Video and his Cartoon Rangers" went to its final fadeout and Al Hodge and some colleagues opened an amusement park at Roosevelt Field, Long Island. The place had a science fiction motif and utilized many of the special effects from the old Captain Video show. I worked at Spaceland in the summer of '58, taking passengers on simulated spaceship rides ("watch for the flashing red light as we go through the asteroid belt") and for excursions through the time warp chamber into the planet Vulcan.

Like many new businesses, Spaceland suffered from many management misconceptions and during its first few months there were several worried conferences in the front office. However, Al Hodge was often away on other business and was the least frequently seen--though best liked--of the owners.

One afternoon as I stood looking out on a nearly empty parking lot, worrying whether I might be getting a severance check, I saw a familiar maroon sports car pull up to the employees' entrance and automatically my heart sang and I thought "Everything's going to be all right. Captain Video is back!"

Life and art imitate each other, but this was reality's turn. There was no evil Dr. Pauli regulating the traffic flow between weekdays and weekends. Not even the Cosmic Vibrator could shake up the kids of Long Island to return more than once. It was a very mortal Al Hodge who came out from behind the closed doors and asked us to be patient. I tried to be patient. I was a good Ranger....

—Bill Jaker

((Bill is presently a producer/director for West Virginia Public Television. Bob and I thank him for his comments. --Joe W))

