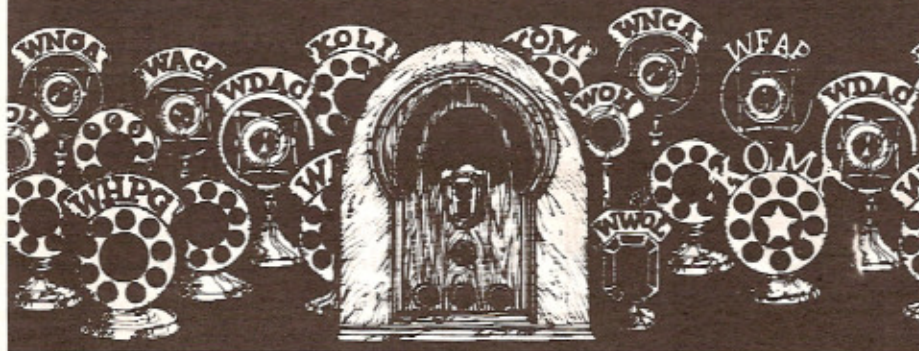


Collector's Corner



Number 17 July 1979 \$1.25

"LOCKED ROOMS" MYSTERIES

sound processing

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Collector's Comments from Joe Webb

Usually I use this spot to ramble on about how good CC is, and how well both Bobs and I work together and how great our contributors are. Well, I'm not going to do that this month. Instead, I'm going to relieve myself of one of my pet peeves about fandom and its dealers. In my case, I am a dealer doing business as OLD RADIO WAREHOUSE. But that's not the kind of dealer I'm talking about. I'm talking about the dealers who sell programs and programs only (well, I mean tapes of programs). But anyway....

What peeves me is that there are no "big" dealers carrying COLLECTOR'S CORNER as part of their offerings to customers. Most of them have been approached by me in person, by phone, by letter, or by combinations of the three. And it's not that CC wouldn't be profitable for them. The few who are now selling CC (notably BRC OTR Distributors, Omega OTR, Rogue Press, Radio's Golden Memories, and World of Yesterday) would tell you that I am quite generous in supplying CC to them with no money down! CC won't pay the rent, that's for sure. But it more than pays its way.

But the dealers give the same reasons for not carrying CC. Firstly, CC is marked as being published by ORW. Of course it is! That's who publishes it in conjunction with Bob Burnham!

Secondly, and the one that initially bothers me, is that they say other dealers advertise in CC. CC is expensive to produce and needs advertising support. That's why any publication takes advertising. But if other dealers are advertising here, why aren't fandom's biggest? Judging from the letters we've received, CC is worth supporting, and though the initial ads were not doing well, response now is quite good. One dealer, Reels Only, actually collector Bill Snook, consistently advertises here and goes out and recommends us to his customers! His customers are pointed here not only to enjoy CC, but to see his ad. And it works!

Thirdly, and related closely to #2, is that many dealers are insecure and are afraid that their customers will try other dealers. If a customer is satisfied, that customer will stick with you. Why be insecure? Be confident!

Fourthly, and this one hurts a lot, is that dealers do not want customers to find out about trading, because that will undermine their business. Trading, however, is the foundation on which this hobby is built: it makes the hobby what it is--FUN! I know for a fact that if you give a customer information about the hobby, and help them to get started, they will remember you, and refer other people to you. It's called goodwill. Goodwill is one of the greatest assets any person, any business, can own.

So we're right back where we started. Only the dealers mentioned above have had the guts to carry CC—the publication

that adds to the enjoyment and reinforcement of the hobby in people's minds.

Any comments? Any dealers willing to respond? I and fandom would like to hear them. We'll print them here. If you want your name withheld, please specify--CC is respectful of your wishes. Just send your comments to Collector's Corner, PO Box 267, Centuck Station, Yonkers, New York, 10710.

In the meanwhile, your thoughts are asked for sound effects man Ed Blainey, who is hospitalized, and is now doing pretty well, but will be in the hospital for a while yet.

We'll have a rundown of convention news next month with a complete list of guests and workshops. This should be the convention to end all conventions. Send your \$16 right now to Jay Hickerson, Box C, Orange, CT 06477 to reserve your spot for October 20, 1979.

I'll be teaching/hosting a course on OTR this fall at Elizabeth Seton College in Yonkers. The course will be on Monday nights for six weeks beginning October 15th. If you would like more information, please drop me a line at the address mentioned above. I'll publish cost information in the next issue.

That's it for this month. See you next time.

Joe W.



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**Collector's Corner
presents...**

Mystery Dial III: Locked Rooms

by Steve Lewis

As promised in the last installment of this column, the topic this time around is that long-time staple of mystery-fiction: the locked room murder. The subject is worthy of a long, scholarly treatise at the least—but please note that this isn't it! I'll leave to some other intrepid individual a comprehensive listing of every impossible crime ever perpetrated for entertainment purposes. An investigation of their popularity could be begun as well, from the standpoints of both reader and author.

Of course, the obvious answers are probably also the best ones. If you're a reader, the challenge is directly stated: can you figure it out before the author's characters do? If you're a writer, the problem is, like Houdini, can you keep coming up with a bigger and better rabbit from your hat than you did the time before?

As far as radio writers are concerned, the popularity of the murder impossible to have happened has another facet, although easily explained: The listener has to keep his ears glued to the radio every minute for fear of missing something essential...and of course, that way, the commercials even might be heard!

One of the favorite programs of many collectors is most certainly, the *Suspense* series, which was also probably one of the longest running as well. It was on CBS radio more or less continuously from July 17, 1942 until the final episode, broadcast September 30, 1962. For most of the early years, up until 1948, the man who was both producer and director was William Spier, who certainly did his best to live up to the program's motto of always holding the final solution "until the last possible moment." During the first two or three years' run, many of the scripts were written by none other than John Dickson Carr, doubtlessly the most famous practitioner of the locked room mystery, with more than 70 published novels to his credit. Most of them contain some form of impossible puzzle challenge to the reader, and if I'm a fair sample, most of his millions of readers failed the test.

My own personal favorite of the Carr/*Suspense* collaborations was first heard on April 6, 1943, and is entitled "Fire Burn and Cauldron Bubble." The star was (then) famous movie actor Paul Lukas, who played a professional magician responsible for the special effects in putting on a performance of Shakespeare's "Macbeth" (e.g. Banquo's ghost) in London's famed Drury Lane Theater. Care to play along? What I'll try to do in what follows is to outline the

crime briefly, throw in what I consider the essential clues, as well as a red herring or two and leave you (heh,heh!) to figure out how it was all done. No fair, those of you who have the show on tape, even if you haven't listened to it yet: leave the tape recorders off!

Well, as it happens, during the first act, a former actress is killed in a theater box guarded by two loyal servants, in full view of 3000 unsuspecting people. No shot from a silenced revolver from across the theater, no dagger thrown from the neighboring box. She died of a stab wound through the right eye, and there's no sign of the weapon anywhere. Some clues: She's too vain to wear glasses. The box underneath was paid for, but it remained unoccupied. And a man sneaked in and out of an aisle seat on the ground floor during the performance.

Besides the drama of the crime and its solution, what makes this particular program most memorable to me, at least, is that in the background the play is going on at the same time: the screeching of the witches and the loud, rumbling claps of thunder, always at the most appropriate moment. Unfortunately, there is one question that just might remain in your mind even after the murderer's identity is disclosed. Why on earth was such a far-fetched method of killing the lady required? Don't ask.

For more on John Dickson Carr and the work he did on the early Suspense series, as well as other information about his writing on other radio series, including the British BBC, be sure to read Mike Nevin's article "The Sound of Suspense" in the October 1978 issue of "The Armchair Detective." Thankfully, most of the Suspense shows are in circulation and easily available.

My copy of the Suspense program entitled "The Locked Room," broadcast on January 27, 1944, comes from an Armed Forces transcription disk, and so it contains no information as to who wrote it. At this later date, however, it seems probable that Carr was not the author, as he was no longer working on the series at the time.

From the title, it is, of course, a program worth investigating. It is indeed another fine radio venture into formal puzzle detective work. It begins with the theft of a million-dollar diamond from a locked study, watched over from the outside of two employees of the man inside, the owner of the diamond. Shortly before he dies, he says that he was attacked by an unknown assailant. He was sitting at his desk, taking his daily dose of medicine, when someone must have sneaked up on him from behind. There is a ladder outside one of the windows, but all of the windows are locked from the inside, and there is only the one door.

The diamond is found later in the room of one of the employees, inside an accidentally broken lamp. The mystery increases when the diamond is discovered to be only a replica...or is it? Also on hand to share in the suspicion are the victim's doctor and a venomous diamond merchant

(played as only Hans Conreid could play him) who declares the dead man to have been a cheat.

Also in the cast are Virginia Bruce, Allyn Joslyn and George Zucco. It could be that there are too many complications for them to fit into two short paragraphs, but the solution, while not difficult, is an admirable one. The scene in which the culprit finally reveals him/herself certainly does its best in helping maintain the standards implied by the title of the series...Suspense.

Speaking of formal detective puzzles, however, if they're really your favorite kind of mystery story, the radio version of the famous detective character Ellery Queen is certainly the show for you. Created and written by cousins Manfred Lee and Frederic Dannay, the radio program stuck tightly to the "armchair detective" format so well suited to that medium. It never delved very deeply into matters like characterization, even of the leading characters. Since they had to return week after week in exactly the same roles, perhaps that should read "especially of the leading characters." Many of the individual shows were of the variety more generally described as "impossible crimes," but one that came into my collection very early on is titled "The Adventure of the Dead Man's Cavern," and it does contain a true locked room murder.

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HISTORY
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Three ways of sound processing

by Joe Webb

The sound processing of OTR has become popular these past few years. Of the many reasons why, two stand out. As collecting and collectors have matured through the years, they have made increasing demands on sound quality. Also, the availability of these units has greatly increased, with many of them at reasonable prices. This article will cover the concepts of three types. In later issues, specific models will be evaluated.

Let me say right at the beginning, that no matter what sound processing equipment you have available to you, the equipment can only remove or shape what is in the recording. It cannot put something that is not there back into the sound. In other words, no matter what your equipment, you cannot give it a dead skunk and ask it to bring it back to life. Nothing beats a low generation recording copied correctly from the discs.

In fact, most of the sound problems today are due to the fact that the discs were not carefully and properly recorded. But that's another subject.

1. The Equalizer The equalizer has become very popular. It was never designed for OTR, and because of this, it is many times not as useful as it should be.

There are two types of equalizers. The traditional is called the "graphic" equalizer. The position of its frequency knobs form an imaginary curve. This curve is the shape of the frequency curve impressed upon the sound going into the equalizer. This is explained more later.

The parametric equalizer is relatively new. It has fewer knobs, but they are adjustable to allow "custom" shaping of the frequency curve rather than the pre-set frequencies of the graphic equalizer.

The proper use of an equalizer is to tailor recorded sound to the area in which it is played. For example, if your room is furnished in mainly wood furniture, you would have a problem getting good bass response from your equipment. You would

use the equalizer to boost these lower frequencies and compensate for the surroundings.

The OTR collector, however, tends to use the equalizer as more of a filter; eliminating the low and high ends of the frequency range. Since equalizers cover the frequency range of 20 to 20,000 hz, and radio programs normally cover only 50 to 5,000 hz, equalizers have "too wide" a range for OTR. And high and low frequencies cannot be eliminated enough to really "clean up" a program.

One way to turn your equalizer into a true OTR piece of equipment is to double-equalize. No, you don't have to buy another equalizer. Give the following a try, and hopefully it will work with your graphic equalizer.

Have the program go into "left input" run a short cable from "left output" to "right input". Then run "right output" into either your tape deck or your amplifier. This configuration will send the program through the equalizer twice — usually with wonderful results.



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Equalizers average about \$300, but range from \$150 to \$750 and sometimes more. It is suggested that the graphic equalizer be used for its simplicity of use. As experience is acquired, it is possible to trade up to the parametric units. Speaking of experience, practice with your equalizer consistently. Check your sound processing a few days later to find out if it sounds as you had originally intended.

2. Dolby System Dolby System is what helped make fine recording on cassettes possible. It is useable in all formats, but is unfortunately misunderstood by many. The purpose of Dolby is to reduce tape hiss caused in the recording process. It is not meant to remove already existing hiss.

Think of a Dolby circuit as a miniature equalizer (and you can duplicate the following example with your own equalizer). Tape hiss is a constant, straight, flat line. Frequencies which can be heard by the human ear (20 - 20,000 Hz) are also basically flat in response. Since tape hiss cannot be manipulated, the sound can be massaged to mask annoying high frequency hiss.

When a sound is being recorded in Dolby, the high frequencies are boosted greatly. When the program is played back, these frequencies are lowered. The effect is that the high frequencies sound normal, and the hiss seems to disappear.

Dolby must be used in recording and playback. If used in recording only, the program will sound tinny and hissy. If used only in playback, the program sounds "dull". Dolby alone is not as versatile alone as an equalizer. Price for a Dolby alone is around \$200 - \$250, but is on most tape decks.

3. Phase-Linear Auto Correllator: Mentioning a brand name here is unavoidable since this unit is unique among the rest. Very simply, since tape noise is a constant factor, and not randomly occurring as is sound, this constant factor is subtracted through a variety of electronic wizardry. In use it is quite easy (once you get the hang of it) and is truly amazing. It may seem that the effect on programs is minimal, and unfortunately, this is many times the case. And this leads us to this article's conclusion.

Conclusion Of all of the above, the equalizer is the most versatile and most desired by the OTR collector. However, many programs require a lot of processing and this should be done in as few passes as possible. According to manufacturer

specifications, the ideal, the most magnificent sound processing network would be as follows:

First, send the program through the Auto-Correlator, and reduce hiss and rumble. Second, adjust the frequency range as necessary by a double-pass through an equalizer. And third, to prevent future hiss, use a Dolby unit. Of course, this means that you have to listen through the Dolby unit at all times when the processed program is played back. Another important point to remember is that double-speeding while processing can be counter-productive (since double-speeding doubles all frequencies and nullifies all equipment settings). Double-speeding cannot be done successfully through a Dolby unit.

Future articles here will deal with specific manufacturer reviews, dbx units, and transient noise removers. We also suggest the National Radio Trader Fall 1977 (available from National Radio Trader, Box 1147, Mt. Vernon, WA 98273 or Old Radio Warehouse, P.O. Box 267, Centuck Station, Yonkers, N.Y. 10710.)



Collector's Classifieds

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Collector's Corner
OTR Log

SUSPENSE

Date	Title	=SUSPENSE 1959=	Stars
1/4	Don't Call Me Mother		Agnes Moorehead
1/11	Night on Red Mountain		Richard Crenna
1/18	Ride Down Cajun		William Bishop
1/25	Four of a Kind		Elliott Reid
2/1	Return to Dust		Richard Beals
2/8	Death Notice		Victor Jory
2/15	The Signalman		Ellen Drew
2/22	Star Over Hong Kong		Marie Wilson
3/1	The Waxwork		Herbert Marshall
3/8	Madman of Manhattan		Myron McCormick
3/15	Death in Box 234		Frank Lovejoy
3/22	Script by Mark Brady		Marie Windsor
3/29	John Barbie and Son		John McIntire
4/5	PRE-EMPTED		
4/12	Too Hot To Live		Van Heflin
4/19	See How He Runs		Jim Backus
4/26	Deep Deep is My Love		Lloyd Bridges
5/3	The Amateur		Jackie Cooper
5/10	On A Country Road		Ida Lupino
5/17	Friend of Daddy's		Frank Lovejoy
5/24	Spoils for Victor		Robert Horton
5/31	The Man Who Would Be King		Dan O'Herlihy
6/7	Pit and the Pendulum		Raymond Burr
6/14	Drive-In		Margaret Whiting
6/21	Ivy is a Lovely Name for a Girl		Frank Lovejoy
6/28	Analytical Hour		Jack Carson
7/5	Blood is Thicker		Everett Sloane
7/12	Eyewitness		John Lund
7/19	Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge		Vincent Price
7/26	Night Man		Marsha Hunt
8/2	Red Cloud Mesa		Joseph Cotten
8/9	Everything Will Be Different		Cathy Lewis
8/16	Like Man, Somebody Did Die		Dennis Day
8/23	Headshrinker		Agnes Moorehead
8/30	A Matter of Execution		Peter Lazer
9/6	After the Movies		Kevin McCarthy
9/13	Death and the Escort		Don McLaughlin
9/20	The Beetle and Mr. Bottle		John Gibson
9/27	PRE-EMPTED		
10/4	Room 203		Ellen McCrea
10/11	Infanticide		Santos Ortega
10/18	Crisis of Dirk Diamond		Bernard Grant
10/25	The Easy Victim		Paul McGrath
11/1	Re-Entry		Lyle Sudreau
11/8	The Last Trip		Ralph Bell
11/15	Companion		Virginia Payne
11/22	The Thimble		Teri Keane
11/29	Leinengen v. the Ants		Luis Van Rooten
12/6	Dynamite Run		Mason Adams
12/13	Country of the Blind		Bernie Grant
12/20	Korean Christmas Carol		Bill Lipton
12/27	Moonlight Sail		Frank Thomas, Jr

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	1-20-50 "Mr. Lucky" w/ C. Grant
	1-27-50 "It Had To Be You" w/ G. Rogers
2L:	2-3-50 "The Seawolf" w/ E. G. Robinson
	2-10-50 "This Thing Called Love" w/ R. Russell
	2-17-50 "It's In The Bag" w/ Fred Allen
1R:	3-3-50 "The Paleface" w/ Bob Hope and Jane Russell
	3-17-50 "Champion" w/ Kirk Douglas
	3-24-50 "Chicago Deadline" w/ Alan Ladd
2R:	3-30-50 "The Dark Mirror" w/ Olivia DeHavilland
	4-7-50 "The Fighting O'Flynn" w/ Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.
	4-21-50 "A Kiss In The Dark" w/ Jane Bryan
464	SCREEN DIRECTORS PLAYHOUSE (1800' 3 3/4 ips 1 track 6-1/2 hour shows)
1L:	4-28-50 "Dope of Sand" w/ Burt Lancaster
	5-5-50 "Baby Siles At Me" w/ Betty Grable
	5-12-50 "Butch Minds Baby" w/ B. Crawford
2L:	5-19-50 "Miss Grant & Richmond" w/ Lucille Ball
	6-2-50 "She Wouldn't Say Yes" w/ R. Russell
	6-9-50 "Mr. Blandings' Home" w/ Cary Grant
534-5	SCREEN DIRECTORS PLAYHOUSE (1200' 3 3/4 ips 1 track 4-1 hour shows)
1L:	11-9-50 "Shadow of a Doubt" w/ Cary Grant
2L:	11-16-50 "Lifeboat" w/ Tallulah Bankhead
1R:	11-23-50 "Glumy Brown" w/ Dorothy McGuire, Charles Boyer
2R:	11-30-50 "Mrs. Mike" w/ Joseph Cotten, Evelyn Keyes
536-7	SCREEN DIRECTORS PLAYHOUSE (1200' 3 3/4 ips 1 track 4-1 hour shows)
1L:	12-7-50 "My Favorite Wife" w/ Cary Grant, Irene Dunn
2L:	12-14-50 "The Lady Gambles" w/ Barbara Stanwyck
1R:	12-21-50 "Miracle On 34th Street" w/ Edmund Gwenn
2R:	12-28-50 "Alias Nick Beal" w/ Ray Milland
538-9	SCREEN DIRECTORS PLAYHOUSE (1200' 3 3/4 ips 1 track 4-1 hour shows)
1L:	1-4-51 "Prince Of Foxes" w/ Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.
2L:	1-11-51 "Sivvy" w/ Joan Fontaine
1R:	1-18-51 "The Big Lift" w/ Edmund O'Brien, Paul Douglas
2R:	1-25-51 "Spellbound" w/ Joseph Cotten, Mercedes McCbride
540-1	SCREEN DIRECTORS PLAYHOUSE (1200' 3 3/4 ips 1 track 4-1 hour shows)
1L:	2-1-51 "Take A Letter, Darling" w/ Rosalind Russell, Fred MacMurray
2L:	2-8-51 "Lucky Jordan" w/ Alan Ladd
1R:	2-15-51 "Dark Victory" w/ Tallulah Bankhead, Edmund O'Brien
2R:	2-22-51 "No Minor Vices" w/ Louis Jourdan, Dana Andrews
542-3	SCREEN DIRECTORS PLAYHOUSE (1200' 3 3/4 ips 1 track 4-1 hour shows)
1L:	"A Foreign Affair" w/ John Lund, Marlene Dietrich 2-1-51
2L:	"Bachelor Mother" w/ Lucille Ball, Robert Cummings 2-8-51
1R:	3-15-51 "Thelma Jordan" w/ Barbara Stanwyck, J. Corey 3-15-51
2R:	3-22-51 "The Great Lover" w/ Bob Hope, R. Fleming 3-22-51
544-5	SCREEN DIRECTORS PLAYHOUSE (1200' 3 3/4 ips 1 track 4-1 hour shows)
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