

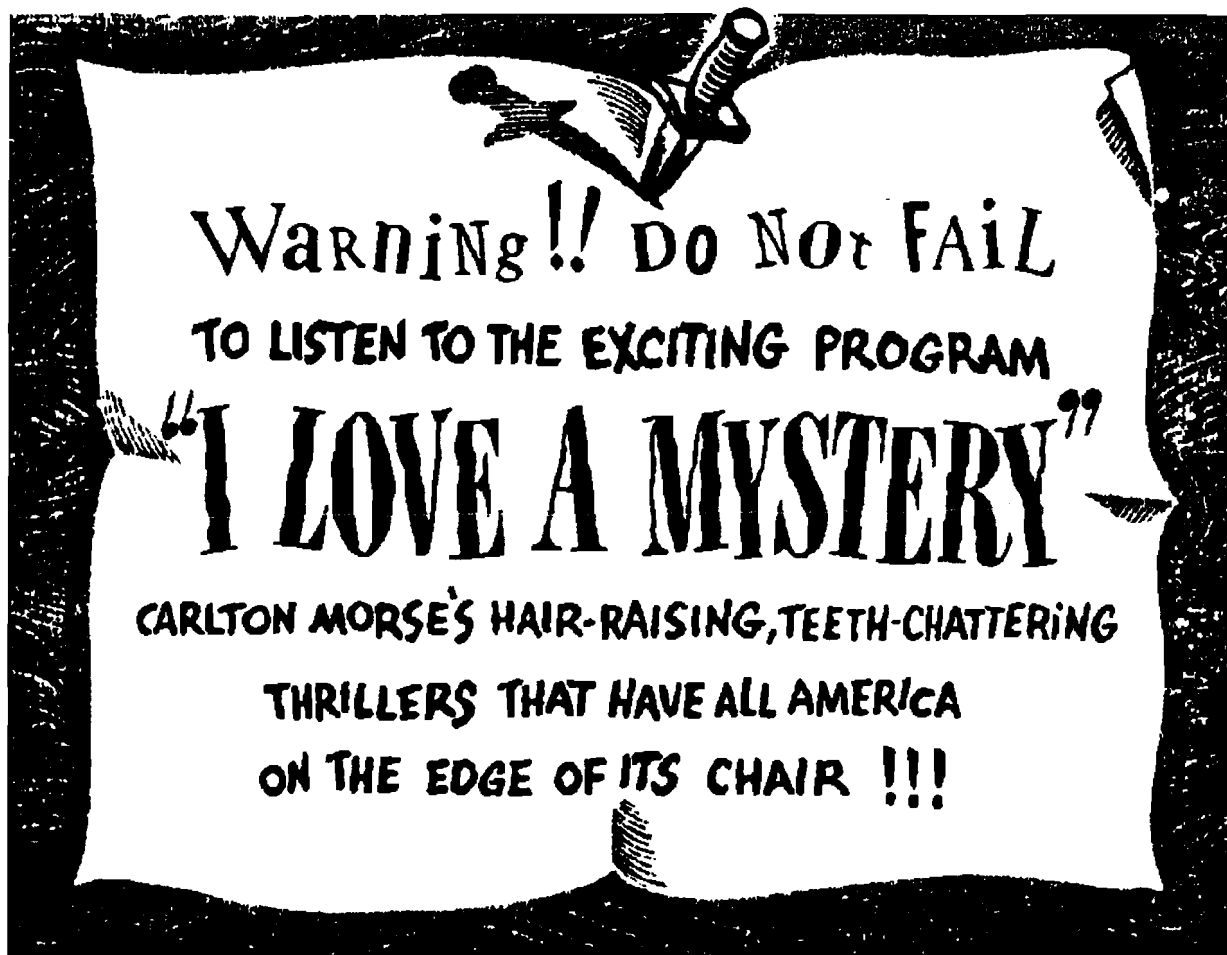
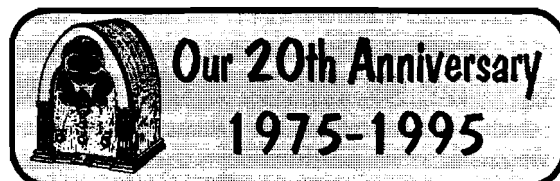
*The Old Time Radio Club*

Established 1975

# THE ILLUSTRATED PRESS

Number 221

February 1995



[1940]

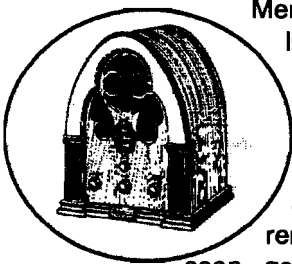
**MONDAYS 8:00 P.M.**

**WBZ** and other stations of the Blue Network

Presented by **FLEISCHMANN'S FRESH YEAST**

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Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing, and a monthly newsletter.

Memberships are as follows: If you join Jan-Mar, \$15.00; Apr-Jun, \$12.00; Jul-Sep, \$8.00; Oct-Dec, \$5.00. All renewals should be sent in as

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**Club Mailing Address**

Old Time Radio Club  
P.O. Box 426  
Lancaster, N. Y. 14086

Back issues of *The Illustrated Press* are \$1.50 postpaid. Publications out of print may be borrowed from our Reference Library.

**Deadline for *The Illustrated Press* is the 1st of each month prior to publication.**

*The Illustrated Press* is a monthly newsletter of The **Old Time Radio Club**, headquartered in Western New York State. Contents except where noted, are copyright 1994 by the OTRC.

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## *The Adventures of Jack, Doc, & Reggie*

by Peter Bellanca

One of my favorite radio programs is Carlton E. Morse's *I Love a Mystery*. *I Love a Mystery* was first aired from Hollywood on January 16, 1939 over the Pacific Coast outlets of the National Broadcasting Company's Red Network. Jack Packard, Doc Long and Reggie Yorke, three soldiers of fortune, were the heroes of the program who co-owned the A-1 Detective Agency, whose motto was: "No job too tough, no mystery too baffling." It was located "Just off Hollywood Boulevard and one flight up." Their secretary and sometimes detective partner was Gerry (Jerri) Brooker who was played by Gloria Blondell. When Gerry wasn't available her place was taken by Mary Kay Brown, who according to Doc Long was "the cutest little ol' secretary ever to fill out a dress so nice."

Jack Packard, played by Michael Raffetto, was the leader of the trio, and was a hard nosed unsentimental tough guy with a marked distrust of woman, particularly ones that "got themselves in trouble." Jack's feeling about woman may stem from when he was in medical school and "got a girl in trouble" and was kicked out of college. The story lines usually revolved around his trying to solve some exotic mystery. If Jack was the straight man, then Doc Long, played by Barton Yarborough, was the comic. Doc was a red-headed Texan who never backed away from a fight. Almost as tough and intelligent as Jack, he was what Jack could never be, a ladies man with a sense of humor. The number of passes that Doc made at the girls were legion, and it was implied that he scored a few conquests along the way. Reggie Yorke, played by Walter Paterson, was from England, very British and tough as nails. His character was less defined, boarding on second banana status and in many episodes he was completely written out. He was kind to the ladies to a point of embarrassment and ultra polite. When he was absent from the program

his place was usually taken by one of Jack's secretaries.

The program opened with a shrieking train whistle echoing through the night, a clock tolls the hour, the announcer tells you the setting and the haunting organ strains of *Valse Triste* by Sibelius. I still get chills when I hear that opening.

There are two origins of how Jack, Doc, and Reggie met. One has them meeting in a Chinese (Japanese) prison after the bombing of Shanghai by the Japanese in 1937. They vowed that if they survived they would meet in San Francisco and form a detective agency to right the wrongs of the world. In the second, while fighting for China in the late 1930's the three meet during a battle with the Japanese, and outnumbered about 100 to 1, vow that if they get out alive they would meet in a certain bar in San Francisco next New Year's Eve. Of course they survived, meet, and form the A-1 Detective Agency to battle the unsavory elements of society until 1944, when they left airwaves. Some of the program titles from this period were "I Am the Destroyer of Women," "My Beloved is a Vampire," "The Hermit of San Filipo Adavapo," "The Thing Wouldn't Die," and "The Decapitation of Jefferson Monk."

In 1948 Jack, Doc, and Reggie surfaced for thirteen weeks on the ABC Network in a new series called *I Love Adventure*. From this series we learn that Jack spent the better part of World War II in the intelligence branch of the U.S. Army, Doc went back to China and joined the Flying Tigers and Reggie joined the Royal Air Force. (ed note: for more on *I Love Adventure* see the September, 1992 IP)

They reappeared on radio in 1949, from New York City on the Mutual Network. Jack was

played by Russell Thorson, Doc by Jim Boles, and a young actor named Tony Randall played Reggie. Mercedes McCambridge appeared in many of the New York productions. The scripts used in the New York productions were the original scripts used in the Hollywood productions of 1939 to 1944.

The three heroes left the airwaves for good in 1952.

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## We All Love A Mystery

from RADIO VARIETIES, August, 1940

by Joe Alvin

When the National Broadcasting Company announced in January 1939 that it was launching a new adventure mystery serial called *I Love A Mystery*, and written by Carlton E. Morse, the NBC Hollywood News Editor Matt Barr, read the program traffic department notice several times and then reached for the telephone.

"Look" said Barr to the program traffic manager, "there's been some mistake here. It says Morse is going to write a pulp thriller series. You mean somebody else. Morse is the guy who writes *One Man's Family*, you know, a radio classic or something. He can't be writing mysteries too."

We didn't hear what the traffic manager said to Barr, but the same day, January 12, 1939, the NBC News Letter carried the following item: *I Love A Mystery*, a new adventure mystery serial drama by Carlton E. Morse, will make its debut over the NBC Red Network, Monday, January 16.

All of us here in Hollywood knew Carlton Morse as an august, scholarly personage who for years had been turning out in *One Man's Family* as high class a piece of drama as ever was churned out by any man's mill -- a sort of 20th century Boswell to the Dr. Johnson of American family life -- a kind of savant who looked at the elemental mysteries of life with veil piercing clearness -- to whom voodoo and vampires and high priestesses and New York kidnapers and eccentric murders were things crawling in Stygian valleys beneath his literary Olympus.

Carlton Morse had all of us fooled and we didn't know it. He blitzkrieged us into a tale of three adventurers who dodge out of a hair raising escapade in China and arrive in the United States to step into a welter of dead bodies, political corruption, kidnaping, gangster alliances and proceed to clean up a California town slicker than a whistle. Jack, Doc and Reggie -- Jack the Brains, Doc the Lover, and Reggie the Fighter -- marched out of Morse's fertile imagination and into a series of radio adventures that a super logical mind would snub in derision as unthinkable and impossible. Or so we of NBC Press in Hollywood thought. We hadn't reckoned on the listening public.

John Q. Public took *I Love A Mystery* to his collective bosom right from the start. The program's Crosley reached for the sky. Fan mail started with the hundreds, leaped soon to thousands. College professors wrote them. So did grade school kids, college girls in convent schools, police patrolmen, business men, government officials, domestic and foreign. A plot was laid in the Nicaraguan "jungle." Nicaragua protested. There was no "jungle" in Nicaragua, said the spokesmen. The jungle was shifted to the "tropics." A killer dying on the gallows said he was happy because the warden granted his last request, to hear an episode of the "mystery" and it turned out to be one concluding the series. Police in the northwest found three stray puppies. They adopted them and named them Jack, Doc and Reggie. Kids in an eastern city invented a new game built around the adventures of the three comrades. They called it Jack, Doc and Reggie. It made Bart Yarborough, who plays Doc, swell with pride. "The only trouble with our game so far," wrote the boyish inventor, "is that everybody wants to play Doc and we've got to draw lots who's going to be Jack and who's going to be Reggie." An so to the fanfare of fan mail and flowering Crosley reports, *I Love A Mystery* grew and grew like Topsy and brought author Morse new stature as not only one of radio's best writers, but also as one of the most versatile.

And who are the three musketeers who bring the cunning Morse plots and counterplots to light? Jack Packard, is Michael Raffetto, a veteran stage and radio actor, who studied law, but like Don Ameche, gave up Blackstone for grease paint and the spotlight. And Jack, as you know from the script, is the brains of the trio, a Maxime Weygrand of strategy. Doc Long, is Bart Yarborough we mentioned before, a handsome, curly haired actor

who comes right naturally by that Texas drawl of Doc's. Bart was born in Texas and has hung his hat in many quarters of the globe before finally settling down to a fairly regular home life and Hollywood radio. The liability that Doc brings to the musketeers is his perpetual interest in the skirted segment of the earth's population. His assets: He can pick any lock ever made and he can play a game of poker so surefire that when the musketeers are broke, they take off their shirts and give them to Doc as a starting stake. If Reggie sounds British to you, there's a good reason for it. He is played by Walter Paterson, a native of the empire of which the sun never sets, who only last year obtained the final papers that made him a naturalized American citizen. Walter looks a great deal like Reggie, the young blond giant of the trio. There, however, the similarity ends. Reggie is a pugnacious sort of a fellow who fights at the drop of a hint. Patterson is a quiet family man who, rarely gets excited. When he does, strange things happen. Recently, when he became a father he forgot to tell his radio colleagues about it for five days and remembered it finally only because somebody asked whether the baby has arrived.

"I was so excited my mind just went blank," explained Walter.

But back to the musketeers. Their friendship, in the script, dates back to a memorable night in Shanghai, when the city was being bombed by the Japanese. Up to that time each had been an independent soldier of fortune. They found, in meeting, that each of them had a good reason, namely a neck that stuck out, to shake the dust of China of their feet. They pooled their resources, consisting mostly of courage enough to face a loaded cannon and audacity enough to tweak the general's nose, and got out of Shanghai fast. What their backgrounds were before they met is something so secret that we doubt that even Carlton Morse knows. But he certainly doesn't want to tell.

Since they set foot on American soil a year ago last January, the trio has been through some extraordinary adventures. Cleaning up the gangster ridden town in the west was only the beginning. Next they solved the mystery of "The Blue Phantom," a boat carrying a scientific expedition whose members and crew insisted on disappearing under most mysterious circumstances. Then the musketeers went on to bigger and better things. They

blasted a kidnap ring out of New York, battled a cult of vampires preying on natives in the tropics, solved a murder that removed a curse off an old San Diego family, foiled a cunning scientific killer, and finished a magician who terrorized the desert with werewolves.

That's only a few samples of what Mr. Morse's Don Quixotic toughies will undertake. Right now they're looking for a mysterious God with a diamond eye in French Indo-China. Don't be surprised if one of these days had them fighting some deadly spies from Mars. On *I Love A Mystery*, any thing can happen, and does. Only recently a press dispatch from Rumania carried a story which if serialized by Morse would sound as fictitious and impossible as any adventures of Jack, Doc and Reggie. It was the story about five Texans hired by an unnamed power to do nothing but sit on dynamite kegs in Rumanian oil fields. Their job is this: If Rumania is invaded and the oil fields are threatened, the Texans, expert dynamiters, are to blow the wells all the way up to the famous inverted bowl. It's the kind of a job Jack, Doc and Reggie would glory in.

Carlton Morse has proved more that his literary versatility with *I Love A Mystery*. He has proved that we all love a mystery, and we all love adventure.

**DIAL WHEC TODAY!**  
**MONDAY Is Always**  
**A Great Big**  
**GODFREY**  
**DAY!**  
**Tune In The**  
**ARTHUR GODFREY**  
**MORNING SHOW 10:15 A.M.**

**GODFREY'S**  
**TALENT SCOUTS**  
**At**  
**8:30 P.M.**

## Gangbusters

by Dom Parisi

The preview program was called *G-Men* and dramatized the John Dillinger shoot-out. This story set the tone of the show. It went on the air regularly as *Gangbusters* in 1936. From its beginning gunshots, police whistle, screeching tires and the burst of machine guns, to its closing "clue" announcement, *Gangbusters* brought to the air the real life drama of actual police case stories throughout the United States.

The show sought and received the blessings of J. Edgar Hoover, then head of the F.B.I., who sometimes reluctantly, even allowed the use of F.B.I. files and approved the scripts. New York Commissioner of Police, Lewis J. Valentine advised and acted on the show, and received billing. He later retired from the force to become a full time member of the cast.

Each broadcast ended with a segment called "clues" (today Unsolved Mysteries on TV with Robert Stack uses the same format). The clues gave detailed descriptions of the most wanted criminals on the F.B.I.'s list and told the listening audience that these people were armed and to be considered dangerous. The clue segment was responsible for apprehending a great many criminals.

*Gangbusters* was on the air for over twenty years and was created by Phillip H. Lord. He was associated with radio almost from its beginnings. Lord also played the minister, Seth Parker in the series from the same name. When Lord came up with the idea for *Gangbusters* (or *G-Men* as first called) he ran into a dispute with Hoover about some of the technical details of the show. Lord renamed his show *Gangbusters*, detailing the work of ALL local and federal law enforcement officers.

Colonel H. Norman Schwarzkopf (father of Desert Storm Gen. Schwarzkopf) also served as a regular narrator along with guest spots by the Texas Chief of Police, the Mayor of St. Paul, MN, the Police Commissioner of Pittsburgh, PA, and officials from other cities. Of course, most of them were there by "proxy" and were impersonated by radio actors.

The stories stuck close to actual facts. If it seemed to violent and with to much shooting, all one had to do

in the thirties was open up their daily newspaper and read what was reflected in real life. After all, this was the terrible thirties.

## They Rode the Airways: Cowboys on Radio

by Dom Parisi

continued from the January, 1995 IP

*Frontier Gentleman* premiered on February 9, 1958, one of the last programs to ride the air waves. Each episode began with, "Herewith, an Englishman's account of life and death in the west. As a reporter for the London Times, he writes his colorful and unusual accounts. But as a man with a gun, he lives and becomes a part of the violent years in the new territories. Now starring John Dehner, this is the story of J.B. Kendall, *Frontier Gentleman*."

This fine western drama was the last important show on radio. It was heard on CBS for a brief period and remains as the only serious rival to *Gunsmoke* in the western adventures.

John Dehner as Kendall was just right for the role. Dehner also played Paladin in *Have Gun, Will Travel*, a show probably more remembered than *Frontier Gentleman*. Dehner was supported by a cast that included radio pro John McIntire, Larry Dobkin, Stacy Harris, Jeanette Nolan, Harry Bartell and Virginia Gregg. Anthony Ellis, the writer-director of *Gunsmoke*, *Escape* and other top notch shows was the creator of *Frontier Gentleman*.

Kendall's adventures in the western territories came in all forms. He met nameless drifters, bushwackers, and real people from history. Among the historical characters were Jessie James, Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane. Once, while playing a game of poker, the pot he won was a slave girl named Gentle Virtue. Another strange adventure involved a brush with the supernatural while he was on the prairie in Kansas. One episode centered around a small town production of Shakespeare that turned into shambles, while another involved a condemned killer who asked Kendall to write his story. What a shame that Dehner's and the rest of the cast's fine performances was a form of entertainment that was on its way to biting the dust.

*Hawk Larabee* rode into radio from the Columbia

Broadcasting System in 1946. There really isn't to much to say about "Good Ole Hawk" except that it was a unusual program that was heard in two different versions.

This was the story of the Black Mesa Ranch and it's owner, Hawk Larabee, played by Barton Yardborough. Barney Phillips played his partner Sombre Jones. Hawk told stories which were accompanied by singing bridges between the acts.

In the other version, Yarborough was demoted to the role of sidekick Brazos John, while the title role went to Elliott Lewis. William N. Robson was the producer and director. The program opened to ..."The Hawk's whistle," and the announcer's cry, "The Hawk is on the wing!"

*Hawk Larabee* may very well have been another of the first adult western type of show. But, it was a CBS failure. It later became *Hawk Durango*. The show may have been a flop, but it paved the way for another adult western, *Gunsmoke*.

*Gunsmoke*, one of the most famous westerns was first heard on CBS on April 26, 1952. Norman Macdonnell was the producer and director of the show. He demanded realism that was seldom achieved on radio. Macdonnell surrounded himself with the same type of professionals who worked with him on the *Escape* program.

Everything about *Gunsmoke* was first rate, from the music and the acting to the writing and the sound effects. *Gunsmoke* offered the listening audience total radio, complete involvement, from the opening scene to the last L&M commercial.

When the marshal rode out on the plains you didn't need a narrator to know what was going on. One could hear the prairie wind and the squeak of Matt's pants against the saddle leather. You could almost hear the bit moving in the horses's mouth, and even count the hoofbeats on the dry earth. Even when Matt unlocked a jail cell door you heard every key drop on the ring. You heard the spurs ring with every step he took. You heard everything, buckboards passing, muted shouts of the kids at play, and dogs barking. Credit for the sound effects go to sound men Tom Hanley, Ray Kemper and Bill James - true audio giants.

There was only one man to play Matt Dillon; that

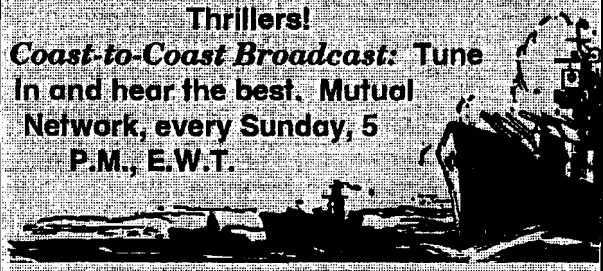
man was William Conrad. He probably appeared on more radio programs than any other actor. Conrad had great support from Georgia Ellis as Kitty Russell, Parley Baer as Chester Proudfoot and Howard McNear as Doc Adams. James Arness on TV was good, but he never quite achieved Conrad's style.

*Gunsmoke's* stories were violent for radio in those days. Even the horror shows never killed as brutally as in *Gunsmoke*. You learned quickly in this series that, violence breeds violence and "around Dodge City and the territories on west, there was just one way to handle the killers and the spoilers, that's with a U. S. Marshal, and the smell of gunsmoke.

In the mid 1950's, *Gunsmoke* was sponsored by Chesterfield and L&M cigarettes. Roy Rowan announced the early shows. The show alternated between Saturday and Sunday time slots until its final broadcast on June 18, 1961. What a great program it was! One of the finest on radio!

---to be continued next month---

**MOOSE FIRESIDE PARTY**  
**TOPS IN ENTERTAINMENT AND DRAMA**  
*Entertainment:* Griff Williams and his famous orchestra and the Moose Fireside Party Chorus.  
*Drama:* Professional cast reenacts deeds of heroism on far off battlefields by Mooseheart boys in the Service.  
**Thrillers!**  
*Coast-to-Coast Broadcast:* Tune in and hear the best. Mutual Network, every Sunday, 5 P.M., E.W.T.



**WGR -- Every SUNDAY**  
**550KC 5:00 P.M. to 5:30 P.M.**  
[1943]

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1935

**TUNE IN TONIGHT**

**"Refreshment Time"**

ON THE AIR

*Coca-Cola*

PRESENTS

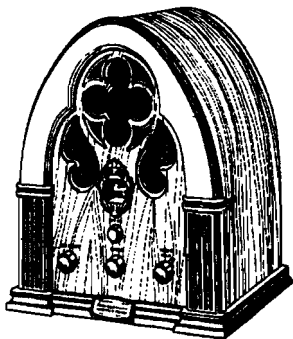
**RAY NOBLE** and His Orchestra

with a supporting cast of stars  
Columbia Network

**EVERY WEDNESDAY NIGHT**

WIBX 9:30 P. M.

Old Time Radio Club  
 Box 426  
 Lancaster, NY 14086



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**STANDARD TELEVISION**  
**STATION**