

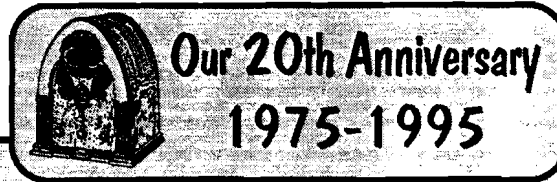
The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

THE ILLUSTRATED PRESS

Number 230

November 1995



TONIGHT

Coca-Cola

PRESENTS

The Song Shop

A friendly 45
minutes of
good music,
good songs,
and good fun.

Starring

KITTY CARLISLE

Featuring

FRANK CRUMIT

Reed Kennedy ... Alice Cornett ... The
Song Shop Quartette ...

24 Voice Glee Club ...

under the musical direction of
GUSTAVE HAENSCHEN
with a 50 piece orchestra

WIBX 10:00 P.M.

EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT

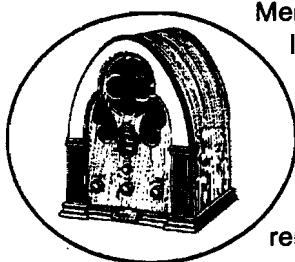


[1937]

Publication of the *Old Time Radio Club*

Membership Information

New member processing, \$5.00 plus club membership of \$15.00 per year from Jan 1 to Dec 31.



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

soon as possible to avoid missing issues. Please be sure to notify us if you have a change of address. The **Old Time Radio Club** meets the first Monday of every month at 7:30 P.M. during the months of September to June at 393 George Urban Blvd. Cheektowaga, N.Y. 14225. The club meets informally during the months of July and August at the same address. Anyone interested in the Golden Age of Radio is welcome. The **Old Time Radio Club** is affiliated with The Old Time Radio Network.

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 Green Hornet: Father of the Lone Ranger

by Alf Walle

Those of us who love Old Time Radio are familiar with the relationship between Dan Reid of *The Lone Ranger* and Britt Reid of *The Green Hornet*. We know that both were written by Buffalo's Fran Striker, produced by George W. Trendle, and aired via the Mutual Network from Detroit's WXYZ. Those facts are so commonplace they hardly need repeating.

Another common assumption is that *The Green Hornet* is actually an updating of *The Lone Ranger*; Britt Reid is viewed as a blatant copy living in urban America. This belief is wrong; Striker's Green Hornet slowly evolved and the seeds of the series predate the conception of the Lone Ranger. I recently spent two weeks inspecting the Fran Striker manuscript collection (a part of the State University of New York at Buffalo archives) and found some startling facts proving a prototype of the Green Hornet clearly predates the Lone Ranger.

There is no denying that strong similarities exist between the masked man of the plains and the Green Hornet, an urban counterpart. The Hornet's sidekick, Kato, was an Oriental whose skills in science and technology rival Tonto's knowledge of Indian lore. Since both have exotic skills and are of ethnic origin, the analogy is obvious; the Hornet is "Kemo Sabe" by another name. To make comparisons even more overt, Britt Reid, the Hornet, is actually depicted as a descendant of John Reid, the Lone Ranger. These similarities have led the public to believe that the Hornet is merely a modern Lone Ranger thrust into the 20th century by General Mills, its long time sponsor. Actually, the opposite is true; an earlier precedent can be traced to *The Manhunters*, a long forgotten radio series which actually predates *The Lone Ranger*. Striker began writing city based crime dramas before the Ranger had ever been imagined.

In March, 1932, while Striker was still in Buffalo and selling scripts through the mail, he created the *Manhunters*. The first episode was narrated by a character named Duffy, who Striker describes as an "old police officer, kindly and slow speaking." The show starts with Duffy's voice, "Pull up yer chairs folks, and gather close. I've got a yarn for you tonight that'll make your hair stand on end before I'm

through. I'll never forget one time when I was in more active work than I an now..." Striker intended Duffy to be a permanent anchorman, but the old cop, who seems a borderline senility victim with a dramatic flair, was dropped and a conventional announcer whose lines have the melodramatic flair of a Walter Winchell replaced him.

Striker's breakthrough came in episode #7 which introduced Warner Lester, who in one form or another was to survive for the next 20 years and form the essential ingredient of *The Green Hornet*. Abandoning a formula which portrayed the police as "white hatted" heroes, Striker describes Lester "as neither with the law or against the law. He occupies a rather peculiar position, on a line that is neither within nor without the law. His cleaver manner of thinking, usually brings him the solution of a crime before the police are able to solve it and he often profits thereby."

Two episodes later, Striker created a rivalry between Lester and Axford, the local chief of police which gave the show a unique twist. Not merely a solver of crimes, Lester was a "thorn in the side of Chief of Police, Axford, who has vowed to get the goods on him someday ... Axford was willing to give ten years of his life to see Warner Lester behind the bars of a jail. For solving crimes Axford was grateful to him, but Lester did not stop there. Invariably, he managed to fatten his own bank account with the proceeds from the crime, and do it in a manner that made it impossible for Axford to touch him."

In the *Manhunters*, the police are buffoons and Lester emerges as a clever and calculating, if congenial mercenary. Working himself out of this rather dubious plotline, Striker ended the rivalry by making the two anatomists partners. In later episodes this duo, paralleling the Lone Ranger's exploits, willingly aid the inept residents of city hall. From Lester's origin to the 1970's, the clever detective and the dumb but honest cop have been a cliché.

In 1936, WXYZ dropped *The Manhunters* and replaced it with *The Green Hornet*, a crime show based on city life and borrowing from the former, now defunct, series. Michael Axford, for example, actually

survived *The Manhunters*. The Hornet, a man who works outside the law and carefully avoids punishment, resembles Warner Lester. True, the modus operandi of wearing a mask was lifted from the Lone Ranger, but in most other respects, *The Green Hornet* is a revamp of *The Manhunters*.

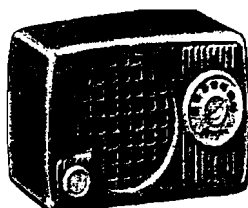
The Green Hornet stands for personal responsibility, and suggests that contradictions in the law, congestion in the courts, and legal loopholes often result in injustice. We are told, "He hunts the biggest of all game. Public enemies that even the G-men cannot touch." Eventually J. Edgar Hoover objected and the final phrase was euphemized to "... public enemies that would destroy America." This editing did little to alter the sentiments of the show.

An early episode states that the Hornet is "able to avoid the legal red tape and strike at the sources of unfair dealings. Because of the manner in which he operates, both the underworld and the police department sought the Green Hornet." Britt Reid uses the same illegal tactics as Warner Lester, but since Reid is a millionaire, he cannot be accused of mercenary tendencies. The Hornet's motives are never for profit and always for justice. In developing *The Green Hornet*, Striker created one of the immortal characters of the crime and mystery genre; the honorable detective who operates outside the law.

In a nutshell, Britt Reid is the millionaire owner of a major newspaper, The Daily Sentinel, who leads a secret second life as the Green Hornet. This modern vigilante is aided by facts provided by his reporters and his personal wealth provided by the paper. Ironically, The Daily Sentinel is also the Hornet's staunchest enemy. We are told the police were "hounded by the press so they maintained a relentless search for the Green Hornet. Only Britt Reid and Kato knew each one of the Hornet's supposed crimes covered a situation in which some public enemy whom the law could not touch, was to pay for his sins and face judgement. Only Britt and Kato knew that the Green Hornet and the manager of The Daily Sentinel were the same person."

The Daily Sentinel is a microcosm of the modern world which is so complex that the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing. Hopelessly tied to abstract law, not morality, The Daily Sentinel deals only with lawbreakers; it ignores the insidious criminal who twists the law to his own ends. Ironically, the Hornet who transends the law for just causes becomes the target.

--continued next month--



SAME TIME, SAME STATION

by Jim Cox

Early in the history of radio soap operas the idea of the professional -- the medical professional, in particular -- came into vogue. Some of the most popular serials ever to air had medics at their core like *Joyce Jordan, M.D.*, *Road to Life* and *Young Dr. Malone*. Others had ongoing characters whose livelihood also depend upon treating the ill and afflicted.

One serial exploited the theme of a woman's career in nursing as it clashed with her personal happiness. *This is Nora Drake*, a nurse at a mental hospital, was -- as announcer Bill Cullen told us each day in the opening epigraph -- "a modern story seen through the window of a woman's heart."

Originally scripted by medical specialist Julian Funt, who would write *Young Dr. Malone* in its glory days, *Drake* is probably best remembered for the pen Milton Lewis, who wrote it during most of its eleven year reign.

Nora was a nurse (later a departmental supervisor) on the staff of Page Memorial Hospital in a medium-sized town. Early on she fell in love with a physician, Ken Martinson. While he loved her, he was "burdened by many hangups of soap opera males," according to a leading observer on the genre. Thus, he was persuaded to act on his head and not his heart, dashing Nora's hopes for happiness. Ken hastily married a girl of unbridled emotion and a millionaire's daughter, Peggy King.

Realizing his mistake only a short time later, he asked Peg for a divorce presumably to follow his heart and marry Nora. The unflinching Peg, however, would not be thwarted; she confronted Nora and then roared away in her car, driving in haste which resulted in a horrible accident that left her a helpless cripple. Believing the only honorable thing to do was to follow a life of misery, Ken pined away for Nora while committing himself (and everybody else to hopeless agony by remaining with his invalid wife. Peggy, meanwhile, seemed to seize every opportunity she could grasp to add misery to his already wretched existence. She sought to destroy any chance for happiness that Nora may ever have imagined.

In subsequent plot development, Nora's long lost father, Arthur Drake, suddenly appeared, proving himself a man of strong emotions and weak mind. Until then, she believed she was an orphan. After Nora's father introduced her to gambler Fred Molina, Drake turned a gun on Molina, wounding him seriously. Dr. Martinson's career was jeopardized as he attempted to remove the bullet from Molina's chest, without reporting it to the police, in an effort to protect Nora's father. Meanwhile, Peggy threatened to expose them both. Nora's trauma-ridden life received more woe as her father, whom she had grown to revere in their brief relationship, was carted off to prison.

This Is Nora Drake was among a crop of only three serials going on the air in the late 1940's to achieve sustained popularity. (The others were *Wendy Warren and the News*, introduced in 1947, and *The Brighter Day*, in 1948.)

First aired at 11:00 A.M. October 27, 1947 on NBC, *Drake* reached the distinction that only a handful of soap operas would share by broadcasting on dual networks at one time. In its second year, 1948-49, it was programed at 11:15 A.M. on NBC and again at 2:30 P.M. on CBS. NBC dropped it in 1949, while most of the rest of its run it was broadcast on CBS at 2:30. When CBS cut its network programing from 63 to 30 hours weekly, *Drake* and three of its counterparts -- *Backstage Wife*, *Our Gal Sunday*, *Road of Life* -- were casually deleted from its schedule January 2, 1959.

Its faithful sponsor for seven of its eleven years was Toni Home Permanents. Bristol-Myers picked up the rights to sponsor it a couple of years. It was under multiple or sustained sponsorship in other years. *Drake's* highest Nielsen rating -- in the 1949-50 season -- approached that of some evening programs in prime time. Virtually to the end it sustained very respectable ratings.

Charlotte Holland was the first Nora, playing the part for about two years. Joan Tompkins subsequently stayed with it almost until the end. In the fall of 1957, she left the role to seek more lucrative acting jobs by moving to the West Coast. After an audition of eighty-four aspirants, Mary Jane Higby -- who had starred for most of a long run as Joan Davis in *When a Girl Marries*, now cancelled by ABC -- won the role of Nora and saw it to its finish.

Other regulars in the cast included Everett Sloan and Ralph Bell, who both played Arthur Drake at

different times; Alan Hewitt as Ken Martinson; Lesley Woods, Joan Alexander (of Della Street fame in radio's *Perry Mason*) and Mercedes McCambridge, who each played Peggy King Martinson; and Larry Haines as Fred Molina.

Other prominent radio actors and actresses gracing *Drake's* cast list for a spell were Elspeth Eric, Les Damon, Leon Janney, Roger DeKoven, Joan Loring, Irene Hubbard and Charlotte Manson.

While Bill Cullen is best remembered of *Drake's* announcers, extolling the virtues of Toni products each day, he was preceded briefly by Ken Roberts. Music, with lots of organ stings, was provided by Charles Paul. At least twenty-eight episodes of *This Is Nora Drake* are still available on tape.

In an advertising message broadcast on the program of September 13, 1948, Bill Cullen told listeners: "Each month more than a million women use Toni Home Permanents -- school girls, secretaries, housewives -- women with no more experience or training than you have!" The condescending remarks, if said on the air in the 1990's, would probably have resulted in the announcer, ad agency and network brass all being fired.

Foote, Cone and Belding, the agency supervising *Drake*, was surely working in a kinder, gentler, more accepting age (except, perhaps, of women). Yet all of it was fantasy. Perhaps that's why housewives and secretaries by the millions bought into those commercials, and sales of home permanents soared.

Confused??

by Dom Parisi

The Defense Rests or *Defense Attorney* -- which is which?? I think they are the same show! I have heard radio shows of each of the above named programs and they both feature Mercedes McCambridge as the lead star. The programs are not listed in Tune in Yesterday by John Dunning, nor are they in The Big Broadcast by Frank Buxton and Bill Owen.

Miss McCambridge, the husky voiced one, is a defense attorney in both shows. She fights for the people who may be or may not be guilty. Usually the person is innocent and was convicted of a crime by mistake or by the misjustice of justice.

I believe the program lasted for only one season on ABC. The dates are the early 1950's. Can anyone shed a little more light on the subject?

The March of Time

by Peter Bellanca

Some listeners grouched that it was too sensational, but that never stopped others from tuning in each week to *The March of Time*. Modeled after its sponsor, *Time* magazine, and launched over the CBS network on March 6, 1931, the program became the most popular news documentary in the annals of radio. Its first dramatized news story was the re-nomination of "Big Bill" Thompson as mayor of Chicago. *Time* magazine produced the program for its entire run and sponsored it from 1931 to 1932 and from 1937 to 1945. Remington-Rand and Wrigley's Spearmint Gum were the sponsors from 1933 to 1936. First heard on CBS, it went to NBC in 1937 and finished on ABC (NBC Blue) in 1945.

The program was broadcast live, with the news stories recreated in the studio by teams of actors, sound effect engineers, and musicians. Throughout its fourteen years on the air, *The March of Time* attracted some of the brightest talent in the business. Orson Welles, Agnes Moorhead, Jack Smart, Kenny Delmar and Arlene Francis were among those who delighted in impersonating the newsmakers of the day. Another, actor Dwight Weist, earned the title "Man of a Thousand Voices" since, from one moment to the next, he might be Adolf Hitler, Fiorello LaGuardia, John L. Lewis, or the man on the street. The program gave the impression that the actual voices of the newsmakers were used. This of course was not true, the program used actors fluent in dialect and voice patterns to impersonate the actual newsmakers. Many listeners were fooled by this mimicry.

Since most radio news at the time was little more than a rehashing of highlights culled from the day's newspapers and wire services, *The March of Time* was indeed unique. With its lively reenactments of episodes in the week's news, it offered all the drama of a newsreel, giving folks in their living rooms the feeling that they were right there where history was happening. All of *Time* magazine's hundreds of world wide reporters were at the beck and call of the radio program. In the early 1940's the program began to phase out the dramatizations and replace them with "live" coverage from the scene of the story. The magazine's large overseas staff of reporters gradually began to replace the studio actor.


Linking all the stories together was the program's narrator/announcer, although Ted Husing and Harry Von Zell were narrators early in the programs history, the most memorable narrator was Westbrook

Van Voorhis. His portentous tones lent an air of weighty believability. He was known on the program as the "voice of time." Some of the more memorable lines spoken by Van Voorhis were "As it must to all men, death came this week to ..." and "Time marches on!"

But then, listeners really did not have any trouble believing. They just had to tune in, shut their eyes, and they were there.

The programs producer/director was Arthur Pryor Jr. and the news editor was Bill Geer. William Spier of *Suspense* fame and Homer Fickett, who was a director for the *Cavalcade of America* program, were also directors on the *March of Time*. The musical directors were Donald Voorhees and Howard Barlow.

HOBBY-LOBBY



**Starts on
WHAM
today!**

There's nothing so interesting as other people's hobbies -- unless maybe it's your own hobby! Hear Dave Elman with his world famous program, "Hobby-Lobby" on WHAM tonight and every Thursday at 7:30 P.M. You're sure to enjoy it!

**7:30 P.M. TODAY and Every Thursday
WHAM 1180 on your dial
Rochester's number 1 station**

[1950]

Richard Diamond, Private Detective

by Peter Wall

Richard Diamond, Private Detective came to NBC on April 24, 1949, representing the new Dick Powell image. Powell had gone almost full-circle, starting as a glamour-boy singer in the 1930's, graduating only through sheer stubbornness to the super hard-boiled Phillip Marlow in the film, *Murder My Sweet*, and finally arriving at Diamond -- a charming mix of slick sophistication and two-fisted action. As Diamond, Powell even managed to sing once in awhile.

Movie producers had given Powell a hard time when he tried to break away from his babyfaced crooner image, and in *Murder, My Sweet* he had earned his stripes. So he relaxed with Richard Diamond and truly seemed to enjoy the part. Diamond was a happy-go-lucky dick, rather a lightweight who still managed to hold his own with Sam Spade, Johnny Dollar, and the others of that ilk. He enjoyed the free life, enjoyed his girlfriend Helen Asher, and most of all, enjoyed ribbing the cops. Diamond tried to cooperate with frustrated Lieutenant Walt Levinson, but his special delight was badgering the incredibly dumb desk sergeant, Otis. Levinson was given a good ride by Ed Begley, who must have turned up on just about every radio series ever done. Otis was played by Wilms Herbert, who also doubled as Miss Asher's sheepish butler, Francis. Francis usually showed up at the end of the show, When Diamond would drop by Helen's Park Avenue home for a bit of song and fluff. It was a nice contrast to the rough-and-tumble body of the story, a time for Diamond and his girl to plunk out a song or two from one of Powell's early movies, share a piano stool, and maybe smooch a bit on the side. That was when Francis would enter, fuming "You never warn me!" and rush out of the room.

Helen was played by Virginia Gregg. Between this role, Brooksie on *Let George Do It*, and Betty Lewis on *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar*, Miss Gregg spent a good part of her professional career trying to lead stubborn gumshoes to the altar. She never made it, but her failure was entertaining and believable.

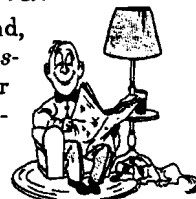
That was all fringe action, back-and-forth sallies between the regulars to open and close each case. The middle twenty minutes was where the going got rough, with muggings, shooting, knifings, threats, and bombs that might or might not go off. These situations required all of Diamond's OSS training and most of his natural cunning. William P. Rousseau directed when the show opened as a Sunday

night sustainer. Blake Edwards was an early Diamond writer, and directed some episodes himself. Don Sharp produced, Jamie Del Valle later became produced-director. Music was by David Baskerville and later by Frank Worth.

Rexall picked up the show before its first year was up. In 1950, it moved to ABC for Camels on Friday nights. Richard Diamond lasted until 1952. Later it was revived on television, with David Janssen playing the lead. Janssen played it straight, as an almost humorless Diamond with strictly a cops and robbers theme. But this was really Powell's show and Powell's character.

From the Editor's Chair

All good things must come to an end, and my tenure as editor of the *Illustrated Press* will be ending. After doing a couple of issues in the summer of 1992, I became editor of the *IP* by default in May 1993 when we could not get an editor to replace then editor Linda DeCecco. In that issue I stated that, "I am filling in this month, but can not do it on a regular basis." In the June issue I agreed to stay on until September 1993 when we hoped to have a new editor. Well, September 1993, '94, and '95 came and went and I'm still here. But I will only be the editor of the *IP* until January 1996. At that time I hope we will have a new editor in place.



If you are interested in becoming editor of the *IP* let me know. You **do not** have to be a local member to be editor. I am more than willing to help you get started, and my computer has a large number of OTR ads in various stages of clean up, and I can supply you with ads for quite a long time. You will also have a number of truly wonderful columnists who I am sure will continue to contribute to the *IP*.

WANT A GOOD LAUGH?

A wholly NEW TYPE of
Radio entertainment

DILL'S BEST TOBACCO

HALF HOUR for MEN

Starring J.C. NUGENT

Saturday 6:45 P.M. **WGY**

[1933]

★ TONIGHT ON WHAM YOU'LL ENJOY HEARING:

6:10 BOB TURNER: SPORTS
Always colorful, vivid, and interesting. Hear Turner tonight and every night with the latest sports news.

7:00 LIGHT-UP TIME
Frank Sinatra and Dorothy Kuzma are the feature stars of this fine musical show. Every night at 7:00!

8:00 THIS IS YOUR LIFE
Starting the inimitable Ralph Edwards!

9:00 BREAK THE BANK
Best Parks is your entertaining emcee with a fun-filled show.

9:30 MR. DISTRICT ATTORNEY
The D. A. solves another exciting case.

10:30 CURTAIN TIME
"Love, Honor, and Support" with Mary Elders.

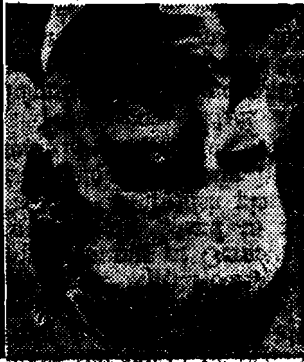
1956

NEWS AND STORIES FOR WOMEN ONLY!
FINEST IN MORNING MUSIC
featuring Mort Nusbäum

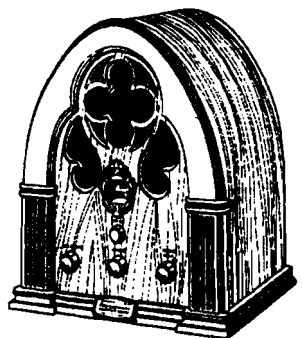
"FOR WOMEN ONLY"
9:15 a. m. daily

WHAM
ROCHESTER'S NO. 1 STATION

MORT NUSBAUM



Old Time Radio Club
Box 426
Lancaster, NY 14086



FIRST CLASS MAIL

STANDARD TIME
STANDARD