

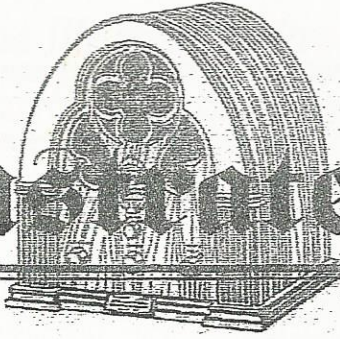
The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

The Illustrated Press

Number 399

April 2012



The Illustrated Press

Membership Information

Club Membership: \$18.00 per year from January 1 to December 31. Members receive a tape library listing, reference library listing and the monthly newsletter. Memberships are as follows: If you join January-March, \$18.00; April-June, \$14; July-September, \$10; October-December, \$7. All renewals should be sent in as soon as possible to avoid missing newsletter issues. Please be sure to notify us if you have a change of address. The **Old Time Radio Club** meets on the first Monday of the month at 7:30 PM during the months of September through June at St. Aloysius School Hall, Cleveland Drive and Century Road, Cheektowaga, NY. There is **no** meeting during the month of July, and an informal meeting is held in the month of August.

Anyone interested in the Golden Age of Radio is welcome. The **Old Time Radio Club** is affiliated with the Old Time Radio Network.

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All Submissions are subject to approval
prior to actual publication.

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Send all articles, letters, exchange newsletters,
etc. to: **The Illustrated Press**

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Library Rates:

Audio cassettes and CDs are \$1.95 each and are recorded on a **club supplied cassette or CD** which is **retained** by the member. Rates include postage and handling and are payable in U.S. funds.



Editor's Two Cents !

Greetings to all of our radio club members. Before I go any further I'd like to make a correction from last month's newsletter. Dom's article on Mercedes McCambridge should have read Mercedes McCambridge: She Made You Hate Her. I inadvertently said love her instead of hate. Also I would like to thank the many members who attended our recent spaghetti dinner on February 26th. It was very successful.. We also welcomed new member Bob Lutz into the fold. He is our newest member, and was present at our March meeting. Our last meeting had Dan Marafino asked some tough, tough radio trivia questions. Only the astute radio experts were able to handle them. I had some Superman trivia which were a wee bit easier to answer. Rich Olday mentioned there will be another media sale on the first weekend in June on Harlem Rd. between Dingsen and Clinton. Loads of good stuff will be available for good prices, we were told. More info next month. Missing from our meeting was Anne Wainman, who took a little bump to the head after a fall. Bob has assured us after a few stitches Anne is doing well, outside of a black eye. We hope to see her in April. In this issue Dominic has an article on big bands entitled "What A Time It Was" In the article he mentions

Russ Columbo, a gifted singer in those early days of radio. He was no relation to the Peter Faulk one. Columbo, for living a very short life and career, had a very interesting one. I will do a little piece on him in May. Some interesting tidbits on how he came to pass away at the tender age of only 26. Hope you like it. Also a reminder to all members. I welcome all articles pertaining to old time radio and such. Your articles are always welcome.

Fellow member Bill Shishko writes:
Thanks for the good work. I regret that I live too far away to attend meetings. I enjoy the newsletter,

Bill

Just glancing at Dominic's article on the big bands. Indeed, it was quite a time. No cell phones, TV, or computers. The car you were driving had a clutch and you had to shift gears. You got your news and entertainment from the radio or a newspaper that went for less than a nickel. You had great bands coming into town each week with the greatest music around. If you found a quarter on the street you think you hit the jackpot. Things moved at a much slower pace, and I believe that was good. Anyway read the first part and I hope you enjoy the nostalgia. I did. Next month part two. Thanks to Bill and Mary Barren for giving me a dozen or so of The Radio Mirror magazines (circa 1941). Hope everyone enjoys an early spring. Hope to see all in April. Happy radio listening.

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Dr. Scholl's Zino-pads

Jack Webb
By Tom Cherre

If ever there was a stickler for realism, it was Jack Webb. I really believed he was a real honest to goodness cop. Sgt. Joe Friday acted like one and sounded like one. Of course that was many years ago. I should have realized he wasn't a real cop because he didn't frequent the donut shops. Only kidding! He wanted you to hear the footsteps he and his partner took walking down through headquarters. The police sirens were authentic L.A. police sirens. All the police lingo they used such as R&I 5-10, #221 in progress, M.O. 41-77 A&S, stakeout, APB, and many others were all legit. He worked very hard with the Los Angeles Police Force to help him provide the most realistic police show on the air. At his



Los Angeles in a rooming house run by his mother. His father left home before he was born and never met with him for the rest of his life. One of the tenants in the rooming house was an ex-jazzman who gave young Jack a recording of Bix Beiderbecke's "At the Jazz Band Ball". This would lead to a lifelong devotion to jazz music. In the late 1920s and early 1930s Webb went to Our Lady of Loretto Church, where he served as an altar boy. He attended Belmont H.S. and later St. John's University where he studied art. During the war he enlisted in the Army Air Force. After washing out of flight training, he applied for a hardship discharge citing the fact he was the primary wage earner for supporting his mother and grandmother. After his discharge he eventually got into radio at San Francisco's KGO. *The Jack Webb Show* was a half hour comedy show. It had a limited run in 1946. In 1949 he left comedy and starred in *Pat Novak for Hire*, a radio show about a man who worked as an unlicensed private detective. In between radio Webb had a featured role as a crime lab technician in a semi-documentary film called *He Walked by Night*, based on a real-life murder of a California Highway

Jack Webb



funeral he was buried with full police honors, including a 17-gun salute. The chief of police also announced that badge #714 would also be retired even though Webb never served a day on the police force. The LA Police later named a police academy auditorium after Webb.

Jack Webb was born on April 2nd 1920 in Santa Monica California. He grew up in the so-called Bunker Hill section of

Patrolman. It was during this filming Webb got the idea for a recurring realistic police program. This program was to be called *Dragnet*. He based the show on real cases from LAPD files, featuring authentic depictions of the modern police detective, including methods, mannerisms, and technical language and jargon. The show hit the air in 1949 and ran on radio until 1954 when it later went to TV. I can never forget Joe Friday walking and his arms never moved a millimeter. The later TV *Dragnet* with Harry Morgan, I never cared for. The radio version with Barton Yarborough and Ben Alexander were the best. Friday was completely different than a Boston Blackie or a Mr. Keene or a Martin Cane. He always went by the book. I don't think I ever heard him laugh or make with a joke. He was no Columbo either, but with his feet pounding the pavement and a lot of questioning he always got the bad guy. When Webb first proposed his *Dragnet* to CBS they turned him down saying people would lose interest in the story when they never got to see the crime committed. They told him there just wasn't enough action. Webb then decided to go to NBC and they let him go for four weeks with the stipulation that they could pull the show at anytime since it had no sponsor. After 18 weeks they finally got Liggett & Meyers (L&M) that stayed with them as sponsor for the next seven years. The show became an icon. The theme song was played all the time. People mimicked Joe Friday all the time. Lawyers were using some of Joe Friday's monologs in their closing arguments, and high schools and colleges were using similar scripts. Merchandising toy guns, finger proofing kits, board games and many others hit the market. After acting in the 1967

Dragnet Webb turned to producing television shows including the very popular "Adam 12", "The DA", "O'Hara", "US Treasury", and "Emergency". Webb was considering a third series of *Dragnet* in 1983 with actor Kent McCord as his partner, but in December 1982 Jack Webb was stricken with a heart attack and died. Jack Webb was married four times, the most popular of his spouses was Julie London. She also starred with then husband actor/musician Bobby Troup. London was considered a torch singer for her notably sultry voice and vamp singing style. Wife Opal Wright survived the late Jack Webb. Webb was underrated as a director. He was different because he wanted to let people see how the real the police world was. Just like Lt. Columbo. Not really. **April Fool!**



Clem McCarthy By Tom Cherre

Okay, has anyone out there ever heard of Clem McCarthy? I didn't think so. If you were an old horse racing fan of the 30's or 40's you may have had a little recollection of him. His main claim to fame was that he was one of the greatest race track announcers of all time. He was also one of the top prize fighting broadcasters in his day. Believe it or not McCarthy has the distinction of having the largest radio audience for a single broadcast. That event took place when he announced the blow by blow description of the rematch Joe Louis-Max Schmeling fight at Yankee Stadium on June 22nd 1938. It was estimated that he had seventy million listeners. That's not too bad considering there were less than 130,000,000 people in the country.

Clem McCarthy



McCarthy in 1948.

McCarthy was born in 1882. He was also the voice of Pathe News's RKO newsreels. He was the first public-address announcer at Bowie race track and at Arlington Park in Chicago. The gravel-voiced McCarthy, "whiskey tenor" grew up around horses, worked as a handicapper for the *Morning Telegraph* and the *Daily Racing Form*.

McCarthy is remembered dubiously for miss-calling the winner of the 1947 Preakness Race. Apparently there was a crowd of people standing on a platform in front of him blocking his view of the far turn, just as two horses with similar silks switched places. After he realized his "faux pas" he said "What am I talking about ladies and gentleman. I've made a terrific mistake. I've mixed horses up." Faultless was the winner, not Jet Pilot. McCarthy made a quick and humble admission of the blown call saying "Ruth struck out. Today I did the same. I am in distinguished company." The criticism eventually blew over. Bill Stern who had his regular sports show delighted in reporting McCarthy's bad call numerous times. Years later McCarthy would remind many that Stern occasionally made the wrong calls in football. An example was Stern telling us a certain back heading in the end zone for a touchdown, but it was the wrong player so at the last second he says Johnson laterals to Smith for the touch down. There was no TV so no one caught on. Years later McCarthy would recall "You can't lateral a racehorse."



Sports Illustrated

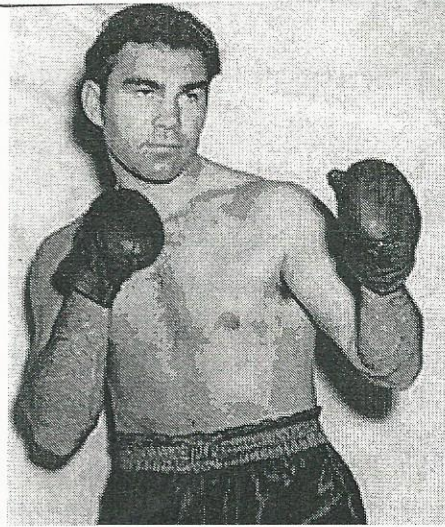
Getting back to the fight, this was a sporting event, but in 1938, with Hitler

gaining steam in Nazi Germany it had political ramifications that would be heard around the world. In their first fight in 1936 with Schmeling defeating Louis for the first time, Schmeling was praised as a national hero in Germany. His wife was treated like a queen, and the couple was given every possible luxury available to them at the time. Nazi Germany elevated Schmeling as the perfect specimen of the Arian superiority beating the black American thus making him the Nazi hero. The outcome of the rematch was quite a bit different than the 1936 match. As Hitler was becoming more powerful, political overtones became even more important to the upcoming fight. This time Louis was the victor in a first round knock out (actually 2 minutes and 4 seconds). McCarthy description went like this; "Louis, right and left to the head, a left to the jaw, a right to the head



Louis and Schmeling, 1971.

and referee Art Donovan is watching carefully. Louis measures him. Right to the body, a left up to the jaw, and Schmeling is down! The count is five! five, six, seven, eight....the men are in the ring! The fight is over, on a technical knock out. Max Schmeling is beaten in one round."



Max Schmeling in 1936

Louis went on to become a major celebrity in the United States, and was considered to become the first true African-American national hero. He would go on to serve in the United States Army in World War 2. When prominent blacks asked him about serving in the war, he said, "There are a lot of things wrong with America, but Hitler ain't gonna fix them." Schmeling ceased to be a national hero. It was noted, during the *Kristallnacht* of November 1938 Schmeling provided sanctuary for two young Jewish boys saving them from the Gestapo. Schmeling was then drafted into the paratroopers as a punishment. As a sidelight to this story I had the privilege of meeting Marshal Myles the last manager Joe Louis had. He had told me he tried to get Joe to save as much money as he could, but apparently it didn't work out. Joe was almost broke when he passed away. Max Schmeling who would later become one of Joe's best friends paid for his funeral and was also a pall bearer. Joe Louis unlike Mohammed Ali (Cassius Clay) served in the army and was well liked by all. He and Clem McCarthy were both Champs.

What A Time It Was!

By Dom Parisi

Call them what you like-big bands, hot bands, swing bands, great bands, or sweet bands. No matter what they were called, they were out there. The stock market crash and The Great Depression that followed in the 30's resulted in a halt to the "Swinging Era" as they were called. Fortunes were lost, people were out of work and unemployment was at an all-time high. It was a sad, sad time. The choice of music went from the bouncy "Charleston" and upbeat music to the simple "four-four" style. Crooners competed with one another to gain the



public's ear. Rudy Vallee and his megaphone raised the pulse of the female population. Bing Crosby and Russ Columbo sang their hearts out. The country slowly began to listen and smile again. People danced their troubles away to the music of Guy Lombardo, Wayne King, and Paul Whiteman. The Dorsey brothers, Tommy and Jimmy were making music that hinted at better times to come. But really, in 1934, it wasn't their time to shine. A guy named Benny Goodman and his clarinet with a coast-to-coast radio show helped launch the



"Big Band Era." In August of 1935 Benny got his break when he landed a contract to perform on a network radio program. He was a big success. Soon more bands climbed on the band wagon - Les Brown, Stan Kenton, Glenn Miller, and others. It was not uncommon for bands to steal musicians from other groups. Count Basie, Kay Kyser, Duke Ellington, and Sammy Kaye all had their moments of musical warfare. After World War II broke out, a bunch of the musicians donned uniforms. Artie Shaw and Eddy Duchin ended up in the navy. Glenn Miller picked the air force. Into the navy went Claude Thorhill, while Clyde McCoy's band enlisted as an entire unit. Ted Weems joined the coast guard along with six of his band members. Back home the bands continued to play. Harry James, Les Brown, and Tommy Dorsey performed at USO Shows. They were doing their part in the war effort. Gasoline rationing put restrictions on civilian travel as did midnight curfews. Brownouts and the 20% amusement tax didn't help. People weren't going out and having a good time or listening to live band music. During the big band bash you might turn on your radio and hear....."Good

Woody Herman



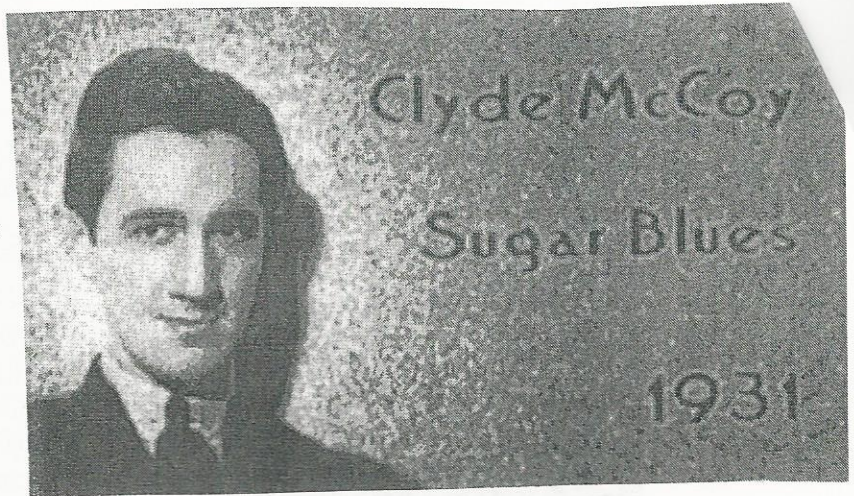
evening everyone”.....from the starlight roof of the Waldorf Astoria we bring you the music of and like magic a transformation took place and you were treated to 30, 60 minutes of live music by Guy Lombardo, Benny Goodman, Miller, and other leading bands. Radio broadcasts were created for the bands and tobacco companies were waiting to sponsor the shows. Camel sponsored Benny Goodman as well as Bob Crosby’s group. For Harry James and Glenn Miller it was Chesterfield. Tommy Dorsey had Raleigh-Kool. The networks battled each other for a chance to grab top names for their broadcasts. The ones who profited from all this were the band leaders who could hold out for a top offer to come their way. Many remotes (as they were called) were aired from famous locations – the Hollywood Palladium, one of the largest U.S. ballrooms at that time. It had a 6500 seating capacity, and the place was usually packed, sometimes leaving people waiting in line to enter. Opened in 1940 with Tommy Dorsey’s Band, the Palladium replaced Palomar in Los Angeles after it was destroyed by fire in 1939. On balconies overlooking the 12500 square feet of dance floor in the

Palladium were two restaurants, three bars, and two soft drink counters. Harry James once drew 35,000 customers in a single week – 8,000 on a single night! There were other hot spots during this era. New York’s Roseland had mirrored walls and a ceiling laminated with electrical blinking stars. Frank Dailey’s Meadow Brook in Cedar Grove, New Jersey was a place with a large dance floor, tables around the dancing area and a balcony on all sides except over the bandstand. The place drew in huge crowds of college kids, especially at its Saturday Matinees. The Glen Island Casino located on Long Island off New Rochelle was a building with a ballroom on the second floor. It had a high ceiling crossed by heavy beams from which hung pennants from some of the major colleges and universities. The Glen broadcasted 18 shows a week, all around the country. The Meadowbrook was doing more than 20 broadcasts a week. Meadowbrook owner Frank Dailey, former bandleader, picked the bands of the Dorsey’s, Miller and Harry James. Dailey, along with help from his

Jimmy Dorsey



musician brothers, were picky in who they chose to play in their ballroom. Exposure in these places could make a band overnight. The Glen helped launch Glen Gray and the Casa Loma orchestra as well as Glenn Miller, Charlie Spivak, Woody Herman and the Dorsey Brothers to name just a few. The Manhattan Room in the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York and the Café Rouge in the same hotel drew in the bands. So did The Trianon in Chicago and The Castle Farms outside Cincinnati. They played in other well-known and not so well-known spots. Les Brown did The Log Cabin in Armonk New York, Fats Weller played The Lenox Club, also known as The Breakfast Club in Harlem and Tillio's Chicken Shack. These joints are long gone. Many of the clubs along 52nd Street in Manhattan looked like "clip joints", and they very well may have been. There was Ryan's, The Famous Door, Onyx Club, and Kelley's Stankos (being an ex drummer, I would have loved to had gone to some of these places, not to play, just to listen). These dives offered just about everything in swing and jazz. Red McKenzie sang



along with Bunny Berigan's trumpet. Berigan's rendition of "I Can't Get Started With You" is one of the best ever recorded. In these little known places long forgotten great artists performed Art Tatum, Fats Waller, and Joe Sullivan performed flawlessly on piano. Billy Holiday sang the "Blues" as nobody could. Though wages paid were sometimes sadly low, exposure helped put the performers in the limelight and up the ladder to fame. Of course in the better hotel ballrooms, customers flocked to hear the greats – Goodman, Dorseys, Miller, Shaw and Lombardo. At the Hotel Lincoln on Eight Ave. in New York, owner Maria Kramer paid musicians very little. If a band she booked as an unknown at that time (Artie Shaw) zoomed to fame, the band may return now and then to play a gig in the place they got started. Although not a big spender, Maria knew good music. Her hotel was one of the first white places to book Black Bands. Important as hotel gigs were to bands for money and prestige, their fame world wide depended even more so on record sales.

Benny Goodman

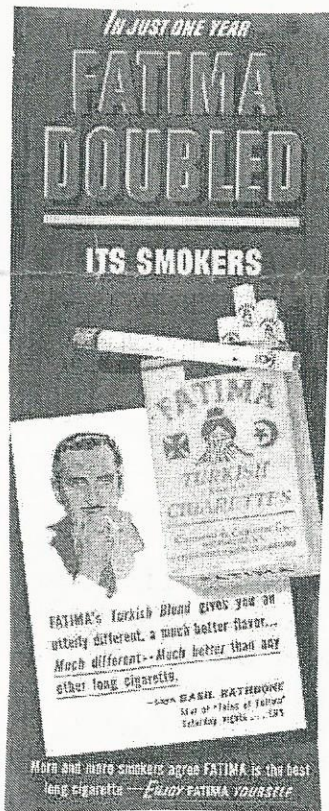
Original name: Benjamin David Goodman



Whatever Happened To Fatima Cigarettes ?

By Tom Cherre

Fatima was a brand of cigarettes produced by Liggett and Myers, or as we know it as L&M. The brand name dates back to the 1800s. It was marketed as an exotic blend of Turkish tobaccos. The name Fatima, a common Turkish or Arabic woman's name helped bolster the Turkish image. Before 1950, the package design included the image of a veiled Middle-Eastern woman.



If you're old enough you remember Jack Webb or George Fenneman pitching Fatima being the best of the long cigarettes available on Dragnet. Fatima also sponsored a short-lived mystery show called Tales of Fatima hosted by Basil (Sherlock Holmes) Rathbone. The show was sponsored by, who else, but

Fatima. I can't imagine what kind of popularity it would enjoy now, especially if it was promoted as a blend with exotic Arabic tobaccos.



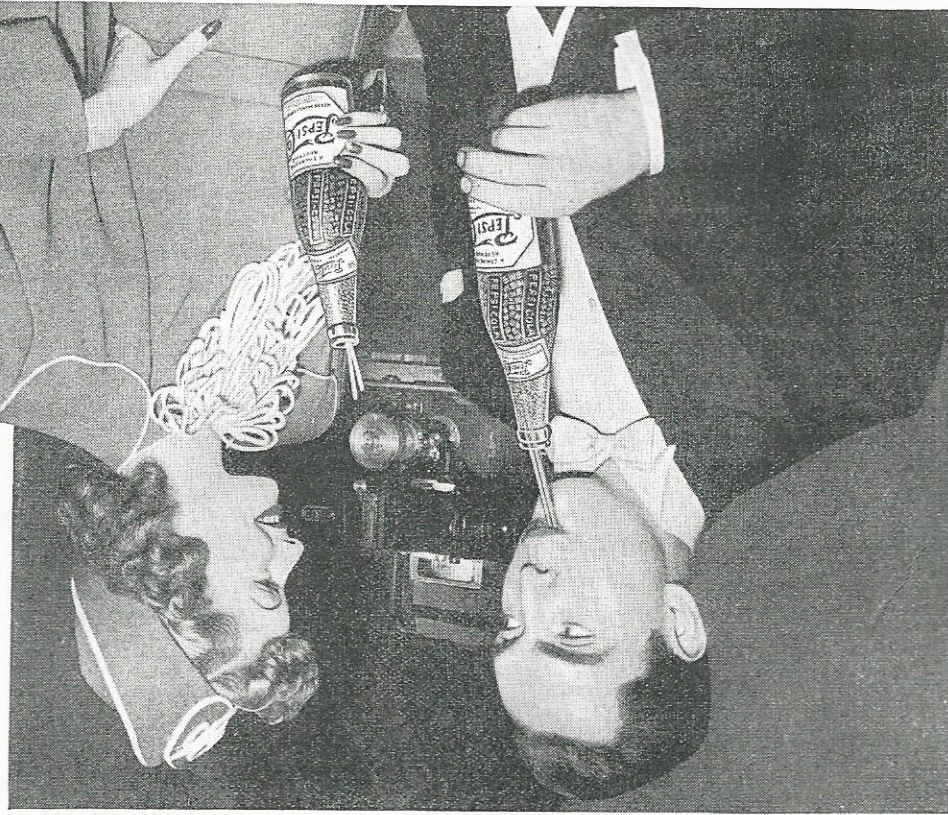
As with many tobacco products in the old days, there were premiums and also collector cards in the form of baseball players picture cards included in every pack. One of the most desirable was #22 in the year 1920. Ty Cobb was featured with his bio on the bottom saying: Ty Cobb, the demon batter and runner. The Georgia Peach. If anyone has one of these in his possession it is currently being sold on e-bay for \$3117. So far no takers. There were other premiums offered, but the Cobb card is the most valuable. Fatima's popularity started to dwindle in the middle 1950s and slowly disappeared from the many thousands of cigarette machines that we use to see everywhere, just like those telephone booths we use to see too. Chesterfield took over the Dragnet sponsorship along with L&M at the end. I'm not a smoker, but one may have a tough time trying to buy a pack of Chesterfields today. Tobacco companies were big spenders for radio and TV shows back then. I didn't use the product, but I always enjoyed the cigarette commercials.

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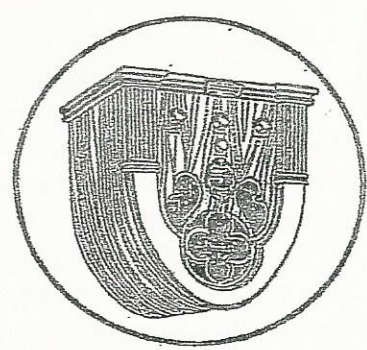
Edmond O'Brien and Lucille Ball starred in RKO-Radio Pictures' current hit "A Girl, A Guy And A Gob"

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