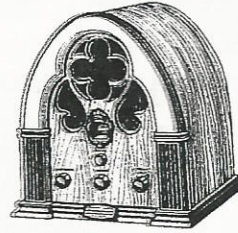


The Old Time Radio Club

Established 1975

The **ILLUSTRATED**

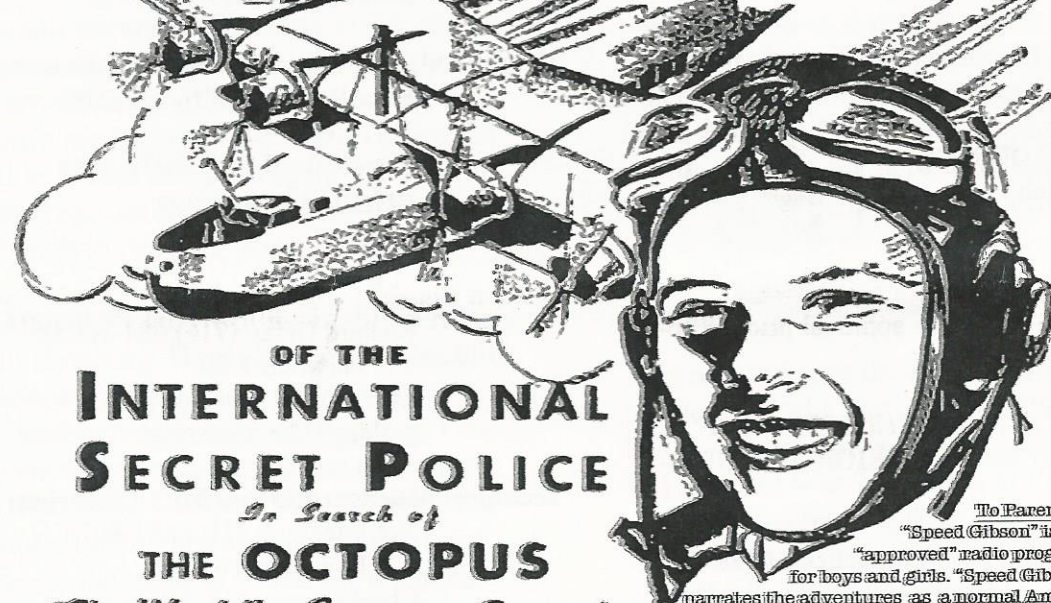


PRESS

Number 412

September 2013

THRILL to the ADVENTURES OF Speed Gibson



OF THE
**INTERNATIONAL
SECRET POLICE**

In Search of

THE OCTOPUS

The World's Greatest Smuggler

KROW

**MON., TUES.,
WED., THURS.**
5:45 p. m.

To Parents,
"Speed Gibson" is an
"approved" radio program
for boys and girls. "Speed Gibson"
narrates the adventures of a normal American
boy. It furnishes boys and girls with the fun,
thrills and adventure they crave without the
warfare, killing and violence so often found
in many adventure programs.

"Speed Gibson" takes off in a giant Clipper Plane to search out the Octopus, the world's most dangerous criminal. "Speed" is the youngest member of the International Secret Police. He's courageous and enthusiastic ... a typical American youth. Follow "Speed's" adventures on the radio! Help him capture the Octopus and his gang! Thrills! Excitement! Fun!

JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL SECRET POLICE

"Speed Gibson's" daring, crime-destroying organization

Get your application blank from your Independent Grocer or send your name and address to Remar Baking Company, c/o Station KROW, Oakland

"Speed Gibson's" programs are sponsored by

REMAR BAKING COMPANY

Producers of 20 delicious varieties of Remar Bread

The Illustrated Press

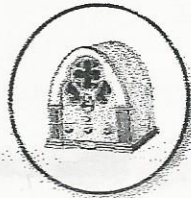
MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Club Membership: \$18.00 per year from January 1st to December 31st. Members receive a media library listing and a monthly newsletter. Memberships are as follows: If you join January-March, \$18.00; April-June, \$14.00; July-September, \$10.00; October-December, \$7.00. All renewals should be sent in as soon as possible to avoid missing issues of the newsletter. 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 p.m. 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 a Club picnic in August.

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

CLUB MAILING ADDRESS

Old Time Radio Club
56 Christen Court
Lancaster, NY 14086



All submissions are subject to approval prior to actual publication.

DEADLINE FOR *THE ILLUSTRATED PRESS* IS THE 1ST OF EACH MONTH PRIOR TO PUBLICATION.

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Cheektowaga, NY 14225

Cassette Librarian:

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Lancaster, NY 14086
digbee45@aol.com

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



Editor's Two Cents:

Well, our 2013 picnic is history. It was a small turnout, but as I say every year, a good time was had by all. TV and newspaper star Dom Parisi graced us with his attendance. I will give him the title Mayor of Ardmore Street. Most of the regulars showed up also. Thanks a bunch to Bill and Mary for setting up the grill and bringing plenty of tables. As of August 5th Jerry Collins is still in re-hab in Hamburg. Hopefully he'll be back in shape by either the September or October meeting. Frank Bork and I did venture out to see the latest edition of "The Lone Ranger." While Frank was not all that crazy about the flick, I did see some merit in it, and for the most part I felt it was entertaining. I will give a more detailed review in the next newsletter. The idea about advertising OTR media in our newsletter was kicked around a couple months ago. If you have anything like a tape, CD, book or anything related to radio nostalgia let me know with description and price.

Message From Dick Olday:

Our library continues to grow. More new donations have increased our cassette library to over 10,000 cassettes with more still coming in. Also, our CD

library has surpassed 2000 CDs with still more to catalog. I have been very busy adding new shows and I believe we have something of interest for everyone in the club. The new catalog will be sent out to all members in December. New CDs include Sherlock Holmes and Harry Nile among others and cassettes include a number of Walk Softly, Peter Troy that were aired on the Armed Forces Radio network. The show was Australian in origin. A number of The Couple Next Door were also added including the first shows. Those of you who have attended past OTR conventions will remember Peg Lynch as the star. We also have added numerous shows that were broadcast on Same Time Same Station. Since then, our library has already added about 800 cassettes to our catalog, there are too many to list here. This is just a teaser to whet your appetite for the new CD catalog coming out in December. Look forward to many hours of OTR listening.

This month I start the first of a four part article of World War 2. Incidentally I had the pleasure of seeing one of the few B-17 world War 2 bombers at Prior Aviation this past week. It was indeed a thrill to see a great part of history. I hope all enjoy the article.

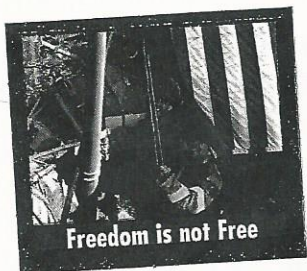
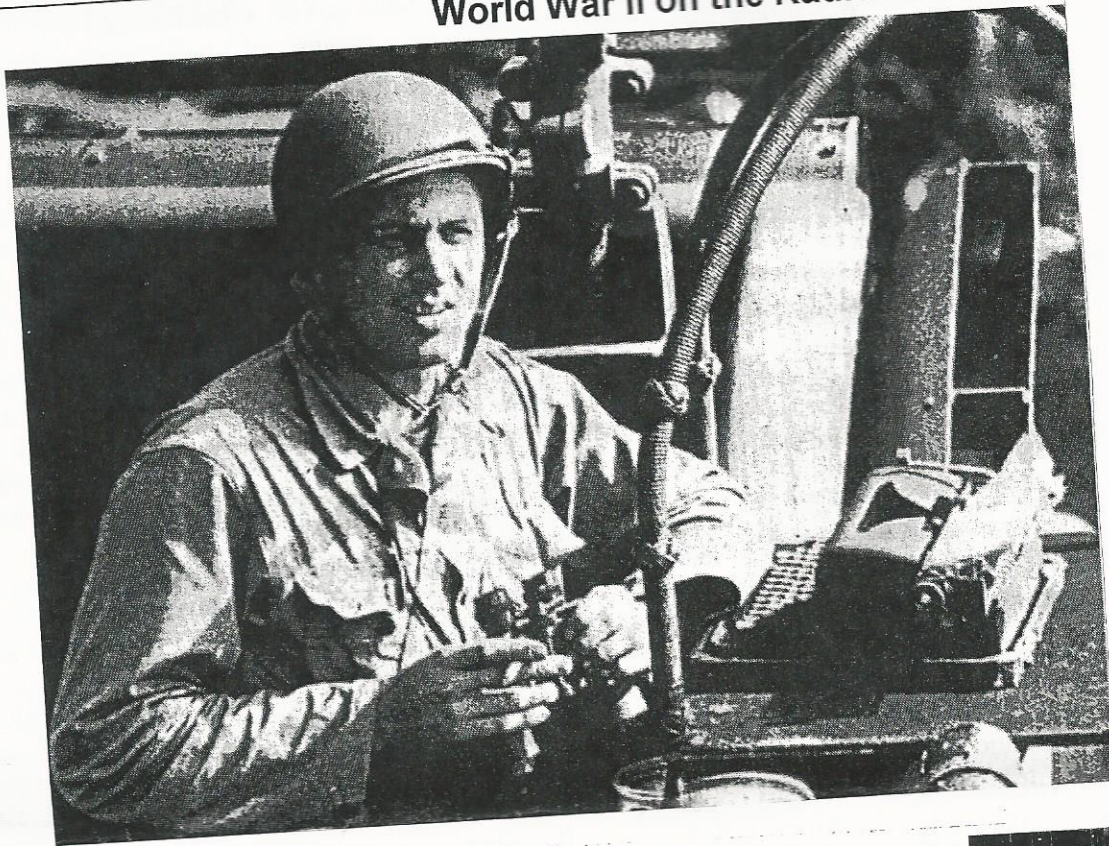
Welcomes are in order for our newest member to join the club. Welcome aboard greetings go out to Gary Hadedon. Welcome aboard!



**BASEBALL
10:30**

Sturgis Hedrick broadcasts the Buffalo - Jersey City baseball game.

World War II on the Radio



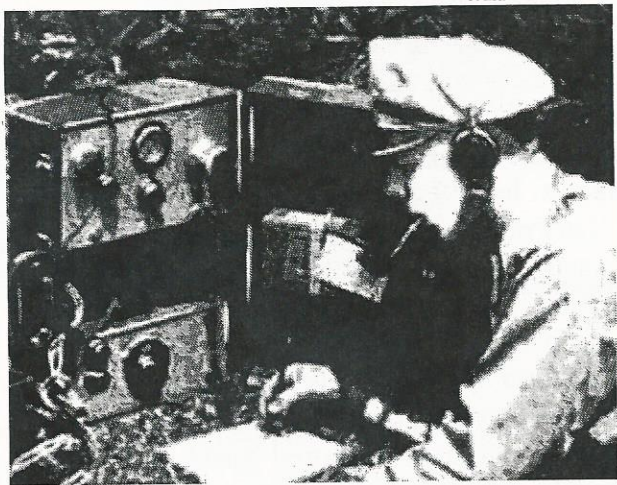
By
Tom Cherie



Back in the 5th grade at St. Margaret's Grammar School I remember studying about World War 2. I was barely ten years old and I was thinking to myself this stuff was like ancient history. The war had ended less then a decade ago. What foolish minds we had then. The war in Europe actually started in Sept. of 1939 when the Nazi forces invaded Poland. The entire broadcast of CBS radio affiliate WJSV in Washington DC had the complete coverage of the

Invasion. CBS had sent their leading journalist Elmer Davis to Europe in August of that same year. As tensions increased Americans became more concerned about events and more journalists came on to the scene. Edward R. Murrow was in Poland at the time the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany. By the summer of 1940 England was expecting a German invasion and CBS sent Larry LaSeur to cover events. When things got too hot for Murrow, he started

broadcasting from London as they were being bombed nightly. His live broadcasts would begin with, "This is London" and end with "Good night and good-luck". Probably the most famous radio bulletin to be heard over radio was the report of Pearl Harbor being attacked on December 7th 1941. My parents remember that report like I remember hearing of JFK's assassination on my birthday November 22nd. In the early 1940's the majority of housewives considered radio to be the main source of news, music, and also entertainment in the form of drama and comedy. In those days most women stayed at home, and the radio was their best friend. I recall my mother saying they were going to visit my grandmother in the early afternoon. In those days visiting relatives on a Sunday was a recurrent thing. We heard the news on the East coast at about 2:26 pm over the Mutual network interrupting a football game 63 minutes after the first bombs fell. NBC Red, Blue, and the CBS networks would soon follow. UPS sponsored radio show *Soldiers of the Press* 1942-1945 detailing the adventures of war correspondents on the front lines. After



World War 1 the importance of recreation for troops overseas was becoming more important and the attempt to entertain them with radio was just beginning. When WW2 came about, the radio was a godsend to all the boys based in the US or overseas. Armed Forces Radio Network (NRFS) was created and music from home was brought to the troops in Britain. In 1942 there was actually little ground fighting being done. Fighting in Africa and some in the Pacific, along with Naval warfare were the only places our boys were in harm's way. That would change in another year or two. The most popular radio show during the war was *Command Performance* 1942-49. Service men were encouraged to write AFRS to request their favorite stars and songs. The A-list included stars such as Bob Hope, Dinah Shore, Fred Allen



Frances Langford, Spike Jones, Frank Sinatra, Burns & Allen, The Andrew Sisters, Bing Crosby, Judy Garland, Gary Cooper, Margaret Whiting, and many others, all appearing free of charge, allowing AFRS to produce extremely high quality radio shows. *Mail Call* was another early AFRS show beginning in 1942 which was broadcast as the troops were having mail delivered to their unit. This show also had an A-list and they also performed for free. Next month we get into the year 1943 as the war effort hits home a little harder.

The Adventures of Detectives Black and Blue

by Jack French © 2013

(Research assistance by Irene Heinstein)

They were not the first detectives to appear on radio, as some sources claim today, but they were fairly close. *Detectives Black and Blue* took to the airwaves on January 5, 1931. Of course, Sherlock Holmes had been featured in several radio programs before that, dating back to 1922, although this Baker Street detective would not get his own series until much later.

By 1929, CBS was broadcasting *True Detective Mysteries* on a weekly basis on Thursday nights, but this analogy did not have a featured crime solver, but rather a series of different ones. The first true continuing detective series was *National Surety Secret Cases* which began on NBC in 1930 from the studios of WJZ with a "Detective Harkness" as the hero. Despite the intriguing title, most of the "secret cases" turned out to be routine burglaries, thefts, or frauds.

On radio Harkness worked for National Surety Company (the sponsor) which had been incorporated in New York in 1897, covering casualty insurance, fidelity and surety bonds, plus burglary insurance. By the 1930s it had become one of the largest companies in its field.

"*The Adventures of Detec-a-tives Black and Blue*" as the network actually referred to it in its publicity blurbs, was created by the familiar team of Harry A. Earnshaw (1878-1953) and Raymond R. Morgan, who included their names in the large advertisements praising the series in flamboyant terms, i.e. "America's Greatest Radio Success." Black and Blue always referred to themselves as "detec-a-tives," underscoring the fact that they were not to be



taken seriously. They were stumbling, bumbling investigators whose purpose was to uncover mirth, not evidence, in the course of their inquiries. Even the sponsors pointed out in their publicity items that Black and Blue were "comedy detectives" and "boys and girls will want to follow their funny adventures." Although the series had started out as a Tuesday through Saturday evening show on the west coast, within a few months it had been moved into "the children's hour" at 5:15 pm.

The firm of Earnshaw-Young, with their offices at 714 West 10th Street in Los Angeles, would create the radio program for *Chandu* in 1932. Harry Earnshaw and Raymond Morgan wrote the early scripts for this series, with help from Vera Oldham, who eventually took over the writing. When that magician was popular enough on radio to be made into a 1934 movie serial (with Bela Lugosi in the lead) Earnshaw, Morgan, and Oldham received screen credit for their radio shows, upon which the screen play by Barry Barrington was based.

There were two primary sponsors for *Black and Blue*; Folger's Coffee at the beginning and lasting about two years. The second sponsor was Iodent Toothpaste for about a year and then it became a syndicated series, ending about 1935.

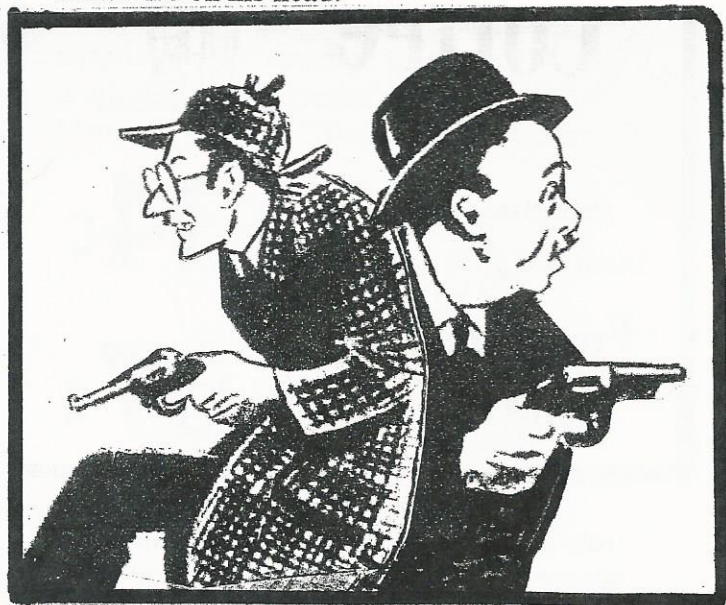
James Folger at age 15 came from Nantucket to California with his two older brothers, seeking their fortune during the California Gold Rush. It turned out that he made his fortune in coffee beans, not gold nuggets. James founded his coffee company in San Francisco in 1850, and named it after himself, of course. It would go on to become the largest coffee company in North America.

In 1931 when the firm sponsored *The Adventures of Detec-a-tives Black and Blue* five times a week, they also sponsored a second program, which aired weekly on Thursday nights at 9 pm entitled *Folgeria*. Billed as "the comic opera of the air" it

supposedly featured music, intrigue, and humor.

Folger's tried to connect their two programs in their advertising campaign by referring to Black and Blue as "the sleuths of Folgeria" or "the comedy detectives from Folgeria." Throughout the year of 1931, Folger's ran regular ads, primarily in west coast newspapers, that promoted both their crime-solving pair and their comic opera.

These ads frequently had caricatures of Black and Blue, which actually resembled the two actors in the leading roles, Charles Forsyth (Jim Black) and Len Wright (Frank Blue.) In both the drawings and actual photographs of the two used in the publicity campaign, Forsyth, a large man who resembled Oliver Hardy, dressed like him too: dark suit, black tie, and dark bowler hat. Slender Len Wright whose mustache was more noticeable than Forsyth's, was usually portrayed in black and white checkered coat and a Sherlockian deerstalker hat which sat crosswise on his head.



Folger's produced a number of premiums directly connected to the show. They sent out a large photo of the two actors, both in business dress and in their "detectives" costumes. The company also distributed brass badges, embossed with an eagle and the inscription:

DETECTIVES BLACK & BLUE FOLGER'S COFFEE

By far the most unusual premium offered by the coffee company was a free rubber doll of the funny private investigators, with each pound of Folger's Coffee purchased. So a customer could plunk down the 34 cents it cost for a pound of coffee in 1931 and get their choice of a Black or Blue toy doll.

Apparently the manufacturer of the rubber toy dolls was working with insufficient information of the two as they had previously been portrayed. Black doll was still the taller of the two and he had his bowler on, but he was wearing the black and white checkered suit that Blue had always worn. Blue's doll was smaller than Black and wore what looks like a sports jacket and dark trousers with his deerstalker.

The second sponsor, the Iodent Chemical Company of Detroit, which advertised its toothpaste on the show, did not publicize the program as much as Folger's did in the press. But they did offer a few premiums, including a similar brass badge (on which "Iodent" replaced "Folger's") and a deerstalker hat, resembling the one Blue supposedly wore all the time.

Earnshaw, who wrote most of the early scripts, placed his fictional detectives in a city he knew well, Duluth, the port city of Minnesota on Lake Superior. He had spent 15 years living and working in Duluth in the early 1900's. He was employed there with a wholesale grocery firm, Stone, Ordean and Wells Company and edited their house organ, a humorous magazine called *Ginger*.

A 1915 advertisement in a journal that listed jobs for writers, Earnshaw stated his monthly magazine was always in need of "snappy jokes that are clever and original." In addition, he indicated jokes about the grocery business or food products were preferred and he would pay twenty-five cents each for jokes he accepted. Around 1918, he moved to

Boston, MA where he and a partner, Edward Randall, had bought the publishing firm of Everett Press. A decade later, he had his own advertising and production firm in Los Angeles, but he never forgot the northwest territory of Minnesota.

Approximately a half dozen audio copies of this series have survived, the first episode, and five others from the syndicated period....dates not confirmed but probably 1933-34. In the first episode Black and Blue (they never used their first names with each other) are clerks at Brownstone and Parker, which not surprisingly, is a wholesale grocery warehouse. Both men are single and reside at Mrs. Webster's boarding house on Lake Street.

Gayne Whitman (1890-1958) the announcer in this first episode, assured us Black and Blue are "the dumbest and luckiest" detectives and "we promise you thrills, suspense, humor, and action" in this series. It will take a few episodes before these warehouse employees are officially "detectives" but they quickly uncover crime at the warehouse and they make mention of Roy Bowman, the warehouse foreman who will become their arch nemesis in subsequent adventures.

Every episode started off with a lively, rousing march tune which ran at least a minute at the beginning and end, sometimes a minute and a half. Of course this permitted any local sponsor to make his pitch (over the music after the engineer lowered the volume) and thus not interrupt the story of the day. As in soap operas, the announcer (not Gayne Whitman in later episodes) would provide a "catch-up" section, telling briefly of the circumstances leading up to "today's adventure." Sometimes mention is made of the intrepid duo's motto, "Detec-a-tives Black and Blue; good men, tried and true" which was used to impress potential clients or bolster their own courage.

Two of the surviving episodes are consecutive ones from the story of Olga

Ragloff and the stolen bonds. (Note that episode titles differ from one dealer to another since none exists in the recordings so conflicting names have been accorded the episodes by various dealers and collectors.)

In these two programs, Black and Blue, having just saved Olga Ragloff from a fiery death in an old flour mill near Duluth and are in the process of trying to steal back her bonds from gangster Roy Bowman. He was the former crooked warehouse foreman stealing sugar but now he's an arch criminal. Black and Blue make their way to his 5th story apartment where he catches them in the act of escaping with the stolen bonds. A fight in the darkness ensues and Black accidentally throws Blue through the skylight.

Folger's Coffee



Detectives
Black and Blue

1 lb. 34c

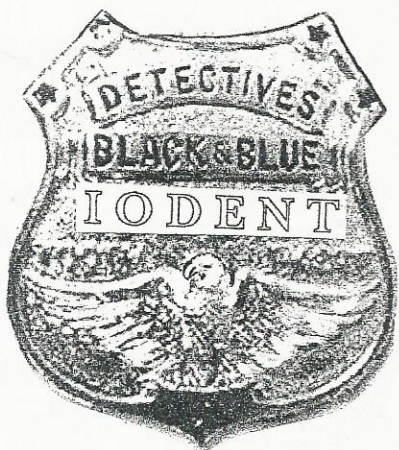
Free With
Coffee

2 lbs. 67c

Three other shows in circulation are from another case, and while related, are not consecutive. They deal with Black and Blue going north into Canada to help capture the scar-faced Indian named "The Ghost" In the course of that investigation, they take the wrong train, are thrown off in the snow, are captured by railroad bandits, later captured by renegade Indians, but manage to escape in a horse-drawn sleigh.

Sound effects are what you'd expect in a low-budget 30s syndicated show. Those from the sound effects albums are fine (motor boats, fog horns, steam trains) while the ones performed manually by the sound effects man are mediocre. Footsteps, door knocks, and broken crockery are not realistic. The most noticeable need for improvement is in the gunshots, which sound exactly like a wooden lathe slapped against a leather pillow, which was probably how they were done. Moreover, all gunshots sound exactly the same, regardless of firearm called for in the script: pistol, shot gun, or Winchester repeating rifle.

Supporting cast is kept to a minimum, with *Black and Blue* having 75 % of the lines. One or two other males voices are occasionally heard in each episode, rarely three. There are no women's parts in the existing audio copies but presumably ladies were portrayed in other episodes. The vocabulary is typical of the 30s; guns are called "gats" and an expression of dismay is "For the love of mud." At least once or twice in each show either *Black* or *Blue* mispronounce a common word, i.e. "Russia" is referred to as "Roosha" and "Grant's Memoirs" become "Grant's Muh-MOR-eez."



It's difficult to determine when any syndicated show stopped airing. While this series started on the west coast on the Columbia Network, it eventually went into syndication and would have been heard

mostly on smaller, non-network stations. Best guess would be in the 1934-35 range. It was usually a daily show, so conservatively over 400 episodes might have been produced. (And today, some of them might still be in a little-used broom closet of an 800 watt station in Podunk, Iowa.)

Long after *Black and Blue* disappeared, the firm of Earnshaw & Young continued its entertainment business, including *Chandu, the Magician* which was broadcast through the late 1940's. The original announcer, Gayne Whitman, remained at the microphone for many years. He left *The Adventures of Detec-a-tives Black and Blue* in 1932 to take over the lead in *Chandu*, a role he would hold for three years. Thereafter he was the announcer or narrator on dozens of radio series: *Cavalcade of America*, *Pacific Story*, *The Greatest of These*, *The Telephone Hour*, etc.

Little is know of Len Wright after his years of playing *Blue*. His partner at the mike, Charles Forsyth, switched to the sound effects table at CBS in Los Angeles and became the chief sound effects artist for *Lux Radio Theater*. John Dunning praises Forsyth's work there as "capturing authentic recorded sounds as he traveled during summer breaks" and also "developed innovative manual effects." Having heard so many inadequate sound effects as *Black*, he may have been inspired to do much better when he had the chance.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Jack French is a vintage radio researcher and historian. His book, *Private Eyelashes: Radio's Lady Detectives* won the Agatha Award for Best Non-Fiction. He and David S. Siegel compiled (along with 20 other contributors) a new McFarland book. *Radio Rides the Range: A Reference Guide to Western Drama on the Air, 1929-1967* is posted on McFarland site now and will be released this fall.



THE 8TH ANNUAL
MID-ATLANTIC

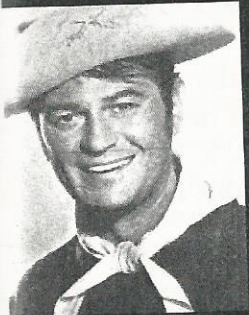
NOSTALGIA

CONVENTION

SEPTEMBER
19 - 21
2013

Hunt Valley Inn
Hunt Valley, Maryland
(formerly the Hunt Valley Marriott)

check out this incredible lineup of guests!



LARRY STORCH
F-Troop
The Ghost Busters



JULIE NEWMAR
TV's Batman
My Living Doll
Seven Brides for Seven Brothers



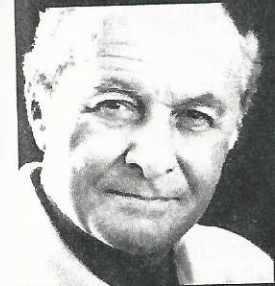
MARGARET O'BRIEN
Meet Me in St. Louis (1944)
The Canterville Ghost (1945)



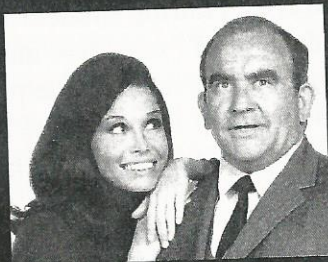
JOHNNY CRAWFORD
The Rifleman
The Mickey Mouse Club



ELIZABETH SHEPHERD
The Avengers
The Tomb of Ligeia (1964)



ROBERT LOGGIA
T.H.E. Cat
Nine Lives of Elfgo Baca
Big
Independence Day
Heck, name it and he did it!



ED ASNER
The Mary Tyler Moore Show
Lou Grant



DIANA SOWLE
Willy Wonka
and the Chocolate Factory



NORMAN LLOYD
St. Elsewhere
Alfred Hitchcock's Saboteur (1942)
Charlie Chaplin's Limelight (1952)

special
weekend
guest!



MAMIE VAN DOREN
Untamed Youth (1957)
Running Wild (1958)
Guns, Girls and Gangsters (1958)
Sex Kittens Go To College (1960)

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