



← DANNY KAYE

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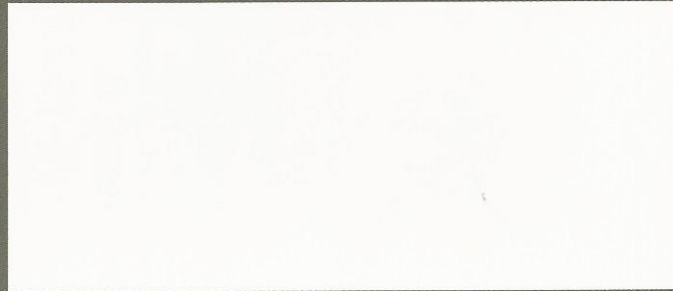
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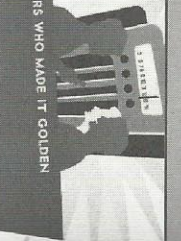
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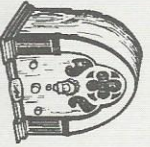
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BOOK 39, CHAPTER 4

AUTUMN 2013

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER

Hello, Out There in Radioland!



PHOTO BY DON POINTER

Past and present members of our *Those Were the Days* "cast": Richard Porter, Warren Sampson, Koni Shaughnessy, Ken Alexander, Chuck Schaden, Steve Darrall, Jim Weyrich

With this issue, *Nostalgia Digest* concludes its 39th year of publication. Some of you know that this publication has come a long way since Chuck Schaden assembled the first *Nostalgia Newsletter and Radio Guide* in the fall of 1974. The first issue was a whopping six pages long and included the schedule for *Those Were the Days*, a tradition we proudly continue to this day.

Today, the *Digest* is available in over 400 stores nationwide and has subscribers throughout the U.S., and even in Canada, England, Australia, and Japan. As we prepare to turn 40, we're eagerly looking ahead at the challenges we'll face — and we allow ourselves to look back fondly at an exciting and eventful year. A number of these events were mentioned in the recent Summer issue of *Nostalgia Digest*, including our *Those Were the Days* listeners joining us in honoring Bob Elliott (the first half of Bob and Ray) on the occasion of his 90th birthday and *TWTTD* founder and long-time host Chuck Schaden joining us at the Framemakers in Westmont (see above) in honor of the show's 43rd anniversary.

As *Those Were the Days*, *Nostalgia Digest* and our internet radio show (*Radio's Golden Age*) continue apace, so does our *Nostalgia Digest* Podcast, which celebrates its second anniversary this December. They can be downloaded for free through iTunes and at www.nostalgia digest.com. Each one is devoted to people, performers, topics and shows that we've featured within the pages of this magazine. This year, we've devoted episodes to radio stalwarts Henry Morgan, Kay Kyser, and *Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar*. We've also included our recent conversations with Bob Elliott, Joan Benny (who was kind enough to provide a photo of her father Jack for our recent Swimsuit Issue), authors David Koenig and Clair Schultz (talking about Danny Kaye and *The Great Gildersleeve*, respectively), and award-winning comic-book artist Alex Ross (talking about the Golden Age of superheroes).

As thrilling as all of these developments are, they remind us of a sentiment conveyed by many, but crystallized some years back by The Beach Boys, to wit: You need a mess of help to stand alone. So, as we head into the season of Thanksgiving, we'd like to take a moment and thank some of the people who help us to do what we do — on print, on the air, and online, and everywhere in between.

Nostalgia Digest is grateful to our many contributing writers, of course, and to Mark Braun, Brian Johnson, and Jason Thomas, who have provided us with their invaluable technical and artistic expertise as we battle (and occasionally master) new technologies and challenges. We'd also like to thank Larry Plecki and the folks at Schiele Graphics, who've been printing the *Digest* for the last decade, as well as the team at Signed Sealed and Delivered, for their role in getting the book from the printer into the hands of our subscribers.

To our *Those Were the Days* volunteers — including Rick Johnston, George Littlefield, Jim Weyrich and James Brevoort — thanks for making sure that all of our listeners' questions are answered and their requests are received and fulfilled. Thanks also to our talented coterie of engineers and technicians from this year, including Richard Porter, Warren Sampson, Koni Shaughnessy, Larry Youngberg and Jim Zarembski. Jim, Bill Holane and Bill Pollock have also provided us with invaluable technical assistance related to the production and dissemination of the *Nostalgia Digest* Podcast.

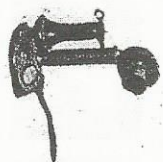
Of course, none of what we do would be possible without the love and support of our families, and I'm especially grateful to my wife Meg, who has at various times over the last decade been a writer, a copy editor, a driver and has at all times been a voice of encouragement and support.

To all of these people — and any others space prevents us from mentioning — we express our deepest thanks for their efforts, which make it possible for us to share these wonderful sounds and stories from the past.

And of course, the reason all of us do what we do on this end is because of you. Your support of this publication and our shows and our other activities make all of this possible — and, as we say at the end of every broadcast, you make it all worthwhile. To you, we offer the biggest thanks of all:

Thanks for listening.

—Steve Darnall



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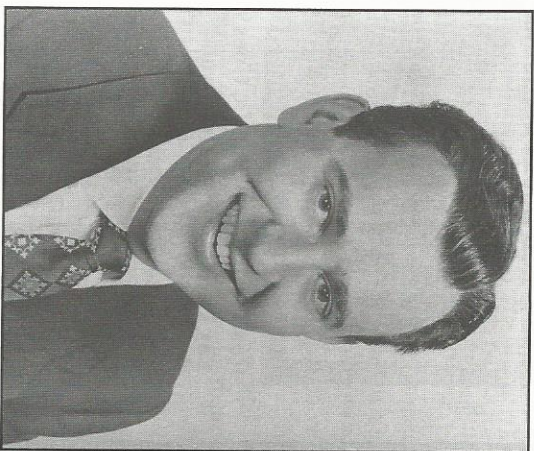
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A few moments with...

CARL REINER

It's hard to think of anyone who has been part of so many epochal moments in comedy as Carl Reiner. In the early days of television, he co-starred on Your Show of Shows; a decade later, he created, wrote and produced The Dick Van Dyke Show and interviewed Mel Brooks' 2,000-Year-Old Man. This year, Reiner wrote about these and other experiences in a new book, I Remember Me. As he explains, this wasn't his first book about his life and career:



I didn't want to write a full biography, and I decided to write little funny anecdotes that I remembered, and I called it *My Anecdotal Life*. And then I realized: "I'm short-changing myself. I have so many things bubbling in my head." [chuckles] I started this a year ago: Every day I walked around the block and something popped into my head. I said, "I've got to put that down." I started remembering these things. [laughs] So the title is honest.

Well, in fact, in the book, you manage to include stories about virtually every aspect of your life and career. It is not a chronological memoir, but you do talk about your work on stage and in movies and on television — and some wonderful stories about your father, who at one time was a professional musician, correct?

Well, yeah, he was an "amateur professional." He was one of these guys... anything he decided to do, he would find a way to do it. When he was three or four years old, he saw his brother taking violin

lessons, and he really wanted to do that. And it took him twenty years. When he came to America, he didn't know how to play a violin; he bought a violin for \$500!

Wow!
That violin is still in the family; my grand-daughter plays it. But he taught himself from a book — he got books from the library, he found out how to transpose and read music, and he played it well enough to play in amateur symphonies. He played in prisons and places like that. [laughter]

And then he did the same thing with the flute. He decided he loved the sound of the flute. And I remember him putting me to bed by playing the flute. I'd say "One more, Papat! One more, Papat!" He was an inventor. Among other things, he could invent himself, over and over again. [laughs]

Did he ever offer any suggestions or guidance or advice concerning your pursuit —

The only advice he gave me was that he wasn't going to teach me to be a watchmaker...my parents loved the idea of my becoming an actor. They loved theatre; they loved reading about the Jewish actors who were on the Jewish stage and became Paul Muni and Edward G. Robinson. They loved comedy. We listened to all the radio comedy shows; they took us to movies every Sunday. No, when I became an actor, my mother was so happy.

On page 68 [of the book], there is a photo of you and your family outside your home in New Rochelle, New York, and the house has a bay window. I can't help but think that bay window turned up later in The Dick Van Dyke Show.

[laughs] Well, there was a bay window on *The Dick Van Dyke Show*. As a matter of fact, *The Dick Van Dyke Show* [house] was on 448 Bonnie Meadow Road; ours was 48 Bonnie Meadow Road. I added the "4"...we sold our house and we didn't want the people to be bothered.

You talked about listening to comedians on the radio, and at one point you talked about [how] you got out of the service in the '40s and you went back to New York to do theatre and — hopefully — some radio. Now, I know you landed work in the theatre, because you replaced Jules Munshin in Call Me Mister, but I never found out if you got to do any radio.

No, the radio I did earlier. When I was 17 years old, I did the Gilmore Theatre, a free theatre for which I got no money. No dollars a week for one year. I worked six days a week and after a year, I got a dollar a week, and Mr. Gilmore said, "Don't tell anybody else in the cast, or I will take it away." Right after that, the NYA Radio Workshop — this was a government-sponsored organization —

for \$22 a month, I played on New York radio. We did plays and concerts, we did announcing work. [chuckles] The government made me an actor. If it weren't for the government, I might not be an actor.

By the way, Chicago is so dear in my memory, because when I did the road company [production] of *Call Me Mister*... we were in Detroit on our way to Chicago — Chicago was the place we hoped to play for six weeks, to make it possible to make enough money for the producers. We ended up being there six months.

What's wonderful about it is that we'd just had a baby, and Robby Reiner — who is now a force of nature in our business — was six weeks old when we got to Chicago. We lived in a little hotel... the New Lawrence Hotel. We had a little room and we lived in that room and ate off a hot plate, but it was the happiest days of our lives.

But I remember it because...somebody had seen the play in New York — Claudia Cassidy, who was the number one critic at that time. And she didn't like the play....She wrote it in the paper and we read it in Cleveland or someplace.

And then she was in the audience [opening night in Chicago], and she gave me a review as if I were Jesus Christ. I'd never read a review like that. She said, "What didn't work in New York worked brilliantly here because of..." and then she gave me a review. You can't get happier than having a new baby and a career that is soaring. It was just a thrilling time for us. ■

Time in to Those Were the Days on October 19 to hear this conversation in its entirety, as Carl Reiner talks about The Dick Van Dyke Show, the inspiration for the 2,000-Year-Old Man, and his unrequited crush on Judy Garland!

MONSTER

MOVIE

MEMORIES

BY DAVID GARIFF

"For one who has not lived even a single lifetime, you are a wise man, Van Helsing."

A great moment in horror films, as the sinister yet suave Count Dracula (played by Bela Lugosi) confronts the weary but shrewd Professor Van Helsing (played by Edward Van Sloan) in one of Universal Studios' best "monster movies."

What is it about those Universal horror films of the '30s and '40s — films that I first saw on television as a young boy growing up in Rochester, New York in the '50s and '60s — which still resonates with me today? Why are films like *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *The Mummy*, *The Bride of Frankenstein*, *Son of Frankenstein*, and *The Wolf Man* so indelibly stamped into my psyche that now, years later, I still get feelings of exhilaration, nostalgia, and a strange comfort whenever I watch them? Everything about those films, from their opening music and credits announcing "The Players," to the moody and rich play

David Gariff is an art historian and senior lecturer at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.



Bela Lugosi in *Dracula* (1931)

of light and shadow (blacks and whites) and exaggerated expressionist sets, speaks to a sensibility deep inside me.

On the surface, and compared to horror films today, films like *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* appear dated, bloodless (in both the literal and figurative senses of the word), tame, sometimes comical, and maybe even a bit sweet. But embedded in the deeper recesses of the films' smart scripts, talented casts, sharp direction

(especially by James Whale), and atmospheric effects are cinematic and human qualities that are hard to describe and even harder to explain.

There is something dignified and poignant about the stories, the plights of the main characters (notably the monsters) and their responses to events, reactions to injustices and to a world around them that is hostile, cruel, and senseless. That is a key element — the films encourage us to identify with the monsters and not with the protagonists who attempt to maintain the order and structures of society. It is one reason why the films are so powerful, resonant, even mythic.

The humanity of these films is realized and conveyed in no small way through the performances of the serious actors, who overcame whatever misgivings they may initially have had about impersonating a lowly monster to embrace and explore the complexities and subtleties of the tortured souls their characters represent. Bela Lugosi, Boris Karloff, and Lon Chaney Jr. committed themselves to the sincerity of their respective creatures — creatures experiencing all the torment and frustration of lives lived in a world beyond their control.

Even as a child, I recognized the conflicts these characters faced. In fact, it wasn't so much the horror effects of these films that moved me (I can't remember actually feeling *frightened* by what I saw) as it was their psychological dimension. Here were bad things happening to good people, noble intentions suffering at the hands of ambition

and hubris, lack of communication and misunderstandings between and among people, monsters, perpetrators and victims; and finally, basic challenges to my as-yet-unformed attitudes regarding nature, science, religion, reason, superstition, good and evil, myth and legend, the real and the imagined.

"The way you walked was thorny, through no fault of your own. But as the rain enters the soil, the river enters the sea, so tears run to a predestined end. Your suffering is over. Now you will find peace for eternity."

Maleva the Gypsy speaks these words of comfort and redemption over the body of the slain Wolf Man as he reassumes his human form of Larry Talbot. Lon Chaney Jr. portrays Talbot who, having earlier



Lon Chaney Jr. in *The Wolf Man* (1941)

UNIVERSAL PICTURES/PHOTOFEST

saved a young woman from an attack by a wolf, was himself bitten, thus beginning his slow and agonizing descent into terror.

“Even the man who’s pure of heart and says his prayers at night / May become a wolf when the wolfbane blooms and the autumn moon is bright.”

Chaney’s performance is worthy of his illustrious father, not because of any tricks of make-up, but due to the pathos of his facial expressions and body language. Chaney makes palpable the panic about his descent into this recurring madness. His dread speaks to our deeper instincts and reminds us of the thin line between our capacity for good and our darker fears.

No portrayal of the tormented soul is better than Boris Karloff’s interpretation of the Frankenstein monster. Assuming a role originally destined for Bela Lugosi after his success in *Dracula*, Karloff transformed the mute character into a *tour*

de force of expressive acting.

Harkening back to the tradition of German Expressionism (the original inspiration for all the Universal horror pictures) and exploiting the make-up designs of Jack Pierce (reminiscent of the heavy white cake make-up of the expressionist tradition), Karloff manages to create a moving portrait of psychological and emotional range and depth.

Of singular importance in the best of the Universal horror pictures was the supporting cast of actors, many of whom appeared in more than one such film. The list is impressive and includes such notables as Basil Rathbone, Claude Rains, Elsa Lanchester, Colin Clive, Evelyn Ankers, and Ralph Bellamy, supplemented by a remarkable array of character actors and unique and eccentric personalities, among them Edward Van Sloan, Dwight Frye, Maria Ouspenskaya, and Una O’Connor.

Here again, it wasn’t the portrayals by the more famous actors that resonated, but the “types” conveyed through the character roles, each one representing a specific societal archetype or psychic state. Dwight Frye as Renfield/Fritz/Karl (in various films) — the dedicated, abused, child-like lab assistant, slightly deranged but loyal; Maria Ouspenskaya as Maleva — gypsy, mother, protectress, and guardian of occult secrets; Una O’Connor — comedic relief and a pure portrait of what it meant to be frightened by the mere mention of ghosts and monsters.

Finally, there was Edward Van Sloan. The Van Sloan characters (he too appeared in multiple films) — acting as father, teacher, mentor and guide — were called upon to solve the mysteries. As Dr. Van Helsing in *Dracula*, Edward Van Sloan encouraged me to pursue a life of learning. There he stood: educated, understated, slightly awkward, a man of books. Rational and worldly, he yet knew that some things cannot be explained by logic and reason alone.

Van Helsing approaches his encounter with the Count coolly, unafraid of his adversary’s powers — of which only he knows the full extent — stands toe to toe with the danger, and ultimately is victorious. I always considered it a triumph when Count Dracula compliments the professor. Van Helsing demonstrated to a young boy from Rochester that knowledge is power. From this late-night monster movie, I came away with one of my most cherished and firmly held beliefs in life.

As a youngster, I had no knowledge of any of these actors, directors, or technical artists; my involvement with the films was personal and hermetic. Initially, I had not even read Bram Stoker or Mary Shelley. Late on a Saturday night, while everyone else in my house was sleeping, I

would sit alone in front of the television, transported from Rochester to the locales portrayed in the films, from England to Egypt to Transylvania and beyond.

It was the look of the Universal films more than anything that first made an impression on me. Dracula’s ruined Carfax Abbey; the futuristic lab of Dr. Frankenstein, with its fantastic electrical equipment; crosses in graveyards silhouetted against a moonlit sky; the ever-present evening fog lying low along the ground, a network of tree limbs swinging threateningly in the breeze, and the moors — always the moors. I was never exactly sure what a moor was; nevertheless, I knew it was dangerous to walk it alone at night.

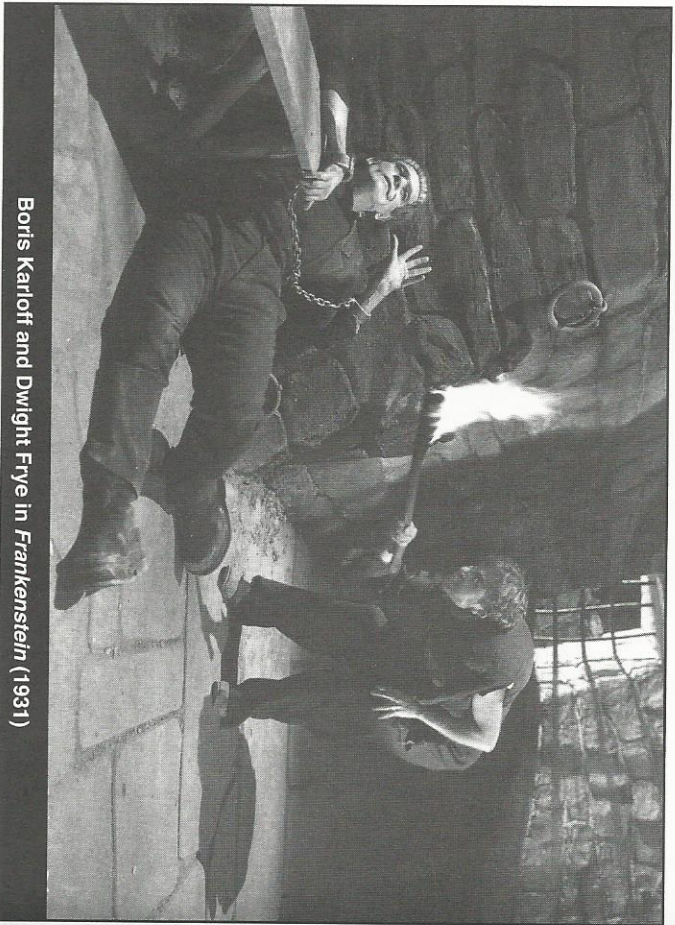
In addition, there was the illumination of the scenes, a never-ending array of lights and darks, creating velvety textures one moment and sharp edges the next. It was a black-and-white world of high contrasts and low contrasts, both real and strangely artificial, but perfect for the stories being told.

It was with these Universal horror films that I first learned about the power of the visual image. I am certain this occurred before my involvement with painting and art history but contemporary with my introduction to classical music (Beethoven) and opera. Later, as a student of art and film history, I discovered the many debts these Universal pictures owed to European traditions of art, music, literature, folklore, and filmmaking.

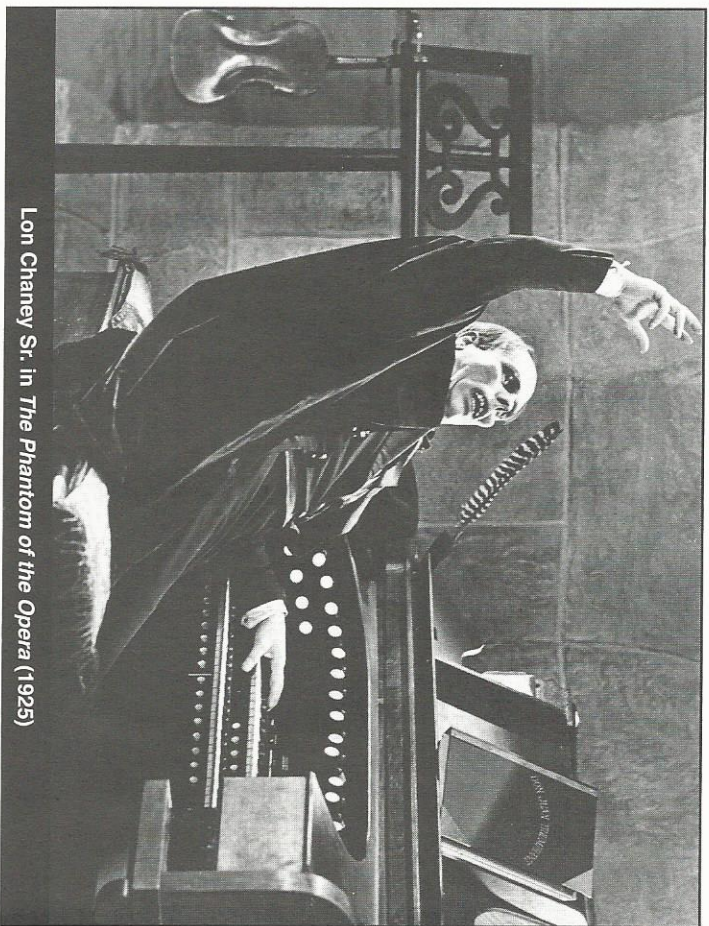
There are those who criticize the plots, character development, dialogue, and acting in these 1930s movies, yet it is the power of the visual images that captured me as an adolescent viewer — and has stayed with me today as a more sophisticated and image-conscious art historian.

This new visual language was

Boris Karloff and Dwight Frye in *Frankenstein* (1931)



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Lon Chaney Sr. in *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925)

UNIVERSAL PICTURES/PHOTOFEST

brought to America from Germany by Carl Laemmle (founder of Universal Studios in 1912) and his son Carl Jr. (who was in charge of the studio's production from 1928-1936).

Born in Germany in 1867, Carl Sr. immigrated to the United States in 1884. His interest and expertise in the rich traditions of German filmmaking are evident in Universal's landmark silent films, 1923's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and 1925's *The Phantom of the Opera*, both starring Lon Chaney Sr. Laemmle's son continued his father's legacy at the studio, where he became the guiding force behind the iconic Universal horror films.

The strength and staying power of the Universal horror films resonate through the remarkable visual achievements in lighting, sets, make-up, and costumes. This unique Universal "look" was created by the cinematography of Arthur

Edeson, Karl Freund, Paul Ivano, George Robinson, and Joseph Valentine; the make-up designs of Jack Pierce; the set designs of Kenneth Strickfaden; and the costume designs of Vera West. The images carried the weight of the stories, and those images imprint themselves and remain in the mind's eye of the viewer long after their original narrative context is lost or forgotten.

The visual worlds created on screen made a profound and lasting impression. These worlds were full of places and people and events that were strange, mysterious, hypnotic, exotic, and yet somehow relevant to me. I couldn't explain my feelings but I recognized them. My own first attempts at writing short stories revolved around the personalities and scenes from these films. While my mother washed dishes, I sat at the kitchen table and invented tales about burgomasters, abandoned castles, and monsters. My

first attempts at film "analysis" (I guess you might say my first film lectures) were delivered to my friends (especially those whose parents did not allow them to stay up late on Saturday nights) about monster movies. And I cast and directed my own versions of the stories, re-enacting crucial moments, the three major roles being the Frankenstein monster (my role), Dracula, and the Wolf Man (the roles always played by my two closest friends).

A final element at work in these films — often present in any film from the distant past — had to do with their age and condition as I first viewed them on television. The small screen, the muffled soundtracks, disruptive jumps, lighting inconsistencies, and the slowly decaying film stock imbued each movie with a patina of audio and visual textures beyond its original cinematic intention.

I am an advocate and supporter of all

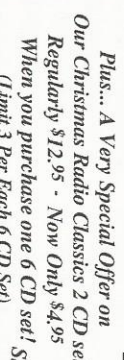
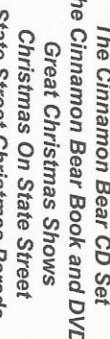
efforts at film preservation, but something beautiful, familiar, and meaningful emerged through those worn and fatigued images — something that continues to speak today to my own organic and synchronous aging process. It is as if we have been partners on an extraordinary journey.

As a young boy, the characters and stories of these films mattered very much to me. But it is the fragility of the film record itself, re-contextualized, re-examined, and re-viewed against the shifting events of my life that remains most deeply embedded. The films are both the same and yet different — just as I am. ■

Time in to Radio's Golden Age on October 27 to hear Boris Karloff on Philco Radio Time and a radio adaptation of Frankenstein.

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OH, KAYE!

After conquering stage and screen...
could the Wonder Man make it on radio?

BY DAVID KOENIG

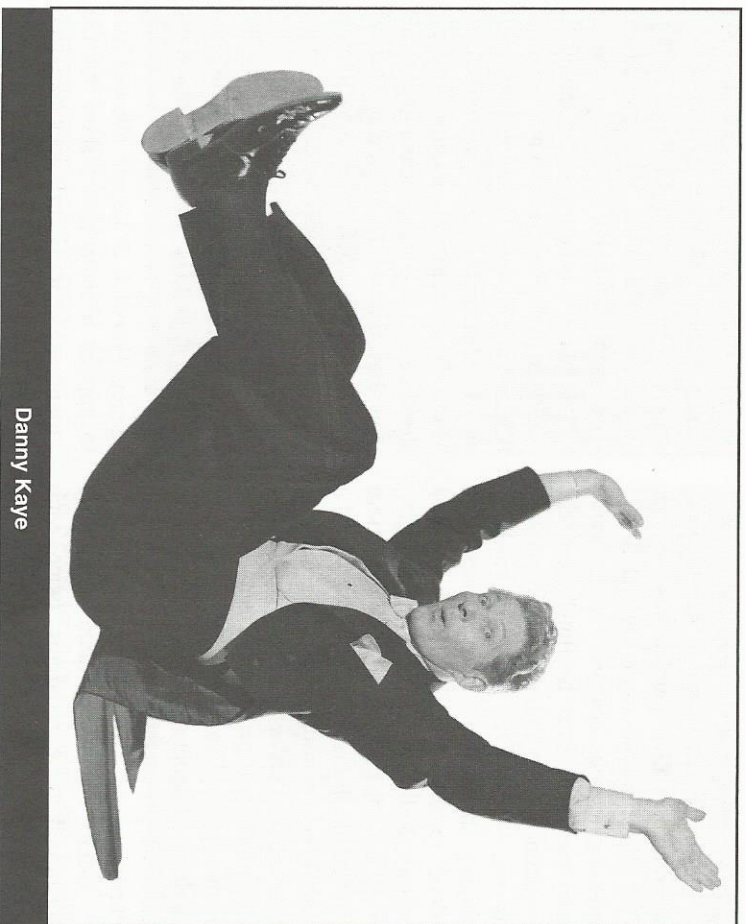
In the 1940s, nearly all the great movie clowns started on their own weekly radio shows. Yet the medium was not an ideal match for Danny Kaye, since it was blind to his facial expressions, body movement, and other physical gifts. Yet in his formative years, Danny was desperate to break into anything, and radio seemed the most achievable medium.

By the time Kaye began work on his film *Wonder Man*, the offers from networks and sponsors were pouring in. The most insistent suitor was brewer Pabst Blue Ribbon, which was quietly looking to replace Groucho Marx as host of CBS's underperforming *Blue Ribbon Town*. (When Groucho discovered his lame-duck status, he asked for—and was granted—an early release.) Danny finally agreed to a three-season pact, provided he and his wife Sylvia were given total creative control. Kaye would receive more than \$16,000 a week, out of which he'd first have to pay his own staff—

including writers, actors and orchestra—then pocket any remainder.

"I'd spend it all to make good on the air," Kaye promised. Sylvia, with the title "supervisor," was put in charge of assembling the creative staff. She initially wanted Phil Rapp, creator of *The Baby Snooks Show* and *The Bickersons*, to ride herd as producer, director and head writer. But Rapp wanted \$3,500 per episode—nearly a quarter of the program's entire budget—and the writer insisted the sum be guaranteed for the run of the series, even if he left after getting it started. Instead, Sylvia retained Groucho's producer, Dick Mack.

Mack concurrently produced Abbott and Costello's radio show, and had their announcer, Ken Niles, work double duty on Danny's show. The sponsor loved Niles because, as he showed with Abbott and Costello, he could be built up into one of the featured performers, making it easier to integrate his extended pitches for Pabst Blue Ribbon beer. To join him, they recruited Danny's deadpan *Let's Face It* co-star Eve Arden, gravel-voiced character actor Lionel Stander, Droopy-sound-alike Bob Jellison, and trumpeter Harry James and his Music Makers. Mack oversaw a staff of about six writers. The best known scribes were



Danny Kaye

Milt Gross, whose Yiddish comic strips had heavily influenced Fishel Goldfarb, and Howard Snyder and Hugh Wedlock Jr., former gag writers for Jack Benny who had spent the last few years writing screenplays for Universal. Sylvia handled Danny's musical arrangements and special material, and during broadcasts accompanied him on the piano.

As a practice run, and to promote the upcoming show on any of the 150 stations willing to carry it, the team wrote a teaser show to perform at 7:00 pm PST on the Saturday prior—December 28, 1944. The script consisted primarily of banter between Kaye and Niles, but also a few minutes of Kaye introducing Arden, James, Stander and Sylvia. Since Sylvia detested public speaking, her brief exchange consisted of one- and two-word responses, culminating in Danny's remark "Talkative wench, isn't she?" In the

preview, Kaye sang "Shoqtatsonvitch's Fifth" and a number Mack and Fine wrote especially for the episode, "Pabst Blues" ("I've got those how-can-it-be-splendid, if it isn't blended blues...").

For the regular show, the format would be a loose one—start with the introductory fanfare from James' theme song, "Ciribiribin," and Kaye git-gat-gitting. Niles introduces Kaye as "33 fine talents, blended into one great comedian." Interplay between the main characters: A musical number by James. A Pabst pitch by Niles, then a longer, often unrelated sketch culminating in a Kaye specialty number. A main objective was to use as many of Danny's vocal talents as possible: the dialects, jokes, singing, scatting, funny noises. The first show was a sign of what was to follow, with Danny playing a half-dozen nationalities, both sexes, and assorted ages, along with a

David Koenig is the author of Danny Kaye: King of Jesters. This excerpt is © 2012 Bonaventure Press and appears here with permission of the author.

large percentage of the animal kingdom.

Although the show's ratings were acceptable, critics panned the writing. The jokes missed more than they hit, episodes rarely carried a cohesive storyline from start to finish, and the program had no recurring characters of its own — since the stars were basically playing themselves. New writers were added to the staff, including Sylvia's brother, Robert Fine, who was trying to break into the business. To provide a more predictable framework, they introduced a handful of repeating characters — Shirley Mitchell as a seductress, Benny Rubin as an Italian music professor — and devised a running storyline that the cast, instead of randomly staging spoofs, would perform them as productions in Danny's Little Playhouse.

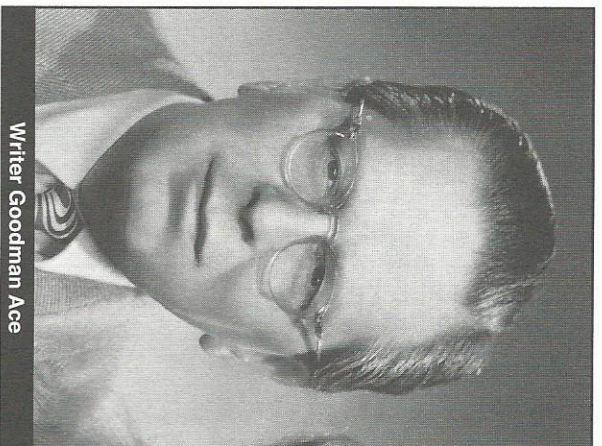
Many of the top-rated radio stars performed their programs twice each evening, three hours apart, so they could

get the same prime-time spot on both coasts. Danny performed his show only once, and his early start time hurt ratings on the West Coast. So CBS moved the show from Saturdays to Fridays, airing at 7:30 pm in Los Angeles and, therefore, 10:30 pm in the East. As a stunt to promote the schedule change, Danny guest-starred on the lead-in *Jimmy Durante-Garry Moore Show*, beginning a comic mystery storyline that was then carried over to his own show, on which Durante and Moore appeared. The switch to Fridays did have one fatality — Stander would not make the move.

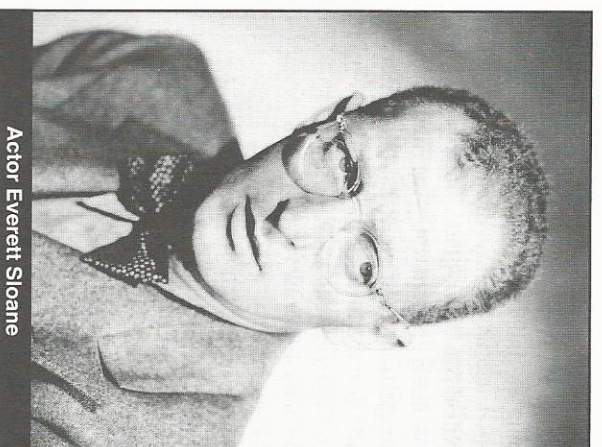
Within days of performing in the season finale, Danny began work on his next film, *The Kid from Brooklyn*. His contract with Pabst's advertising agency, Warwick & Legler, allowed him to appoint a replacement show for the summer, so he let Harry James take over. During the break, *The Danny Kaye Show*



Radio castrates Lionel Stander and Eve Arden surround Kaye and Walter Abel in *The Kid From Brooklyn*



Writer Goodman Ace



Actor Everett Sloane

would be completely retooled. The Kayes wanted someone new in charge.

Back in January, four days after Danny aired the first episode of his radio show, Goodman Ace broadcast the final installment of his long-running situation comedy *Easy Aces*. Ace was renowned for his razor-sharp wit — the quality purported by critics to be most lacking in Kaye's show. So, after entertaining several competing offers, Ace agreed to replace Mack as producer, director and head writer for the second season of *The Danny Kaye Show*. Ace would be paid \$3,500 a week and have the show relocate to New York. He would also replace the entire cast and crew, except for Danny and Sylvia.

In addition to upgrading the quality of the humor, Ace was also concerned about story and character. Sylvia's contributions, in particular, usually appeared to be haphazardly tacked on. Ace wanted to better integrate her work into the show rather than just cut away to one of her specialty numbers — the supply

of which had already been exhausted. So Sylvia took on two assistants to craft longer, more frequent musical pieces — Kaye's former Camp Taminent castmate Lee Brody and the young Herbert Baker. Herbie's style meshed perfectly with Sylvia's, and he became fast, dear friends with the Kayes. Baker would continue to write for Danny, with and without Sylvia, for the next 30 years.

Ace insisted on creating an ensemble cast of characters, rather than just personalities. Danny couldn't take on a fictional personage; he had to play Danny Kaye, the performer who could do anything. So Ace developed characters whom Kaye would constantly run into while putting together his weekly radio show — Jim Backus as Pabst executive Mr. Singleton, Butterfly McQueen as the overzealous president of the Danny Kaye Fan Club, Kenny Delmar as Mr. Average Radio Listener (who heckles Kaye outside the studio), and Ace himself with Everett Sloane as subversive gag writers Al and Joe.

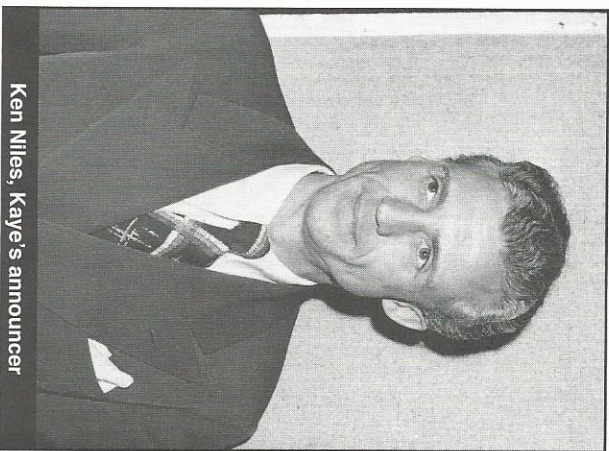
Regular characters also provided a better opportunity to develop catch phrases and running gags. Mack's ideas — such as Danny drawing out, “Ken Niles! Am... I... glad... to... see... you!” — never caught on. Ace had a better suggestion: each week having writers Al and Joe try to sneak in corny old jokes. In their first show, while trying to come up with material for Kaye, Joe suggests, “This is easy for him, Al... no hard words or anything... remember the one where the guy says to another, ‘My sister married an Irishman,’ and the other says, ‘Oh, really?’ and the first guy says, ‘No, O’Riley?’”

Kaye protests: “Oh, really?” “Oh, Riley!” My grandfather told me that joke!” Then, each week thereafter, Al and Joe would try to slip different variations of the joke past Danny (“I am from Russia.” “Oh, really?” “No, Odessa.” Or “I like Russian songs.” “Oh, really?” “No, Olchi Tchorniya.” Or “That’s quite a mop of blond hair you have. Is it unruy?” “No, un-Riley.”). Al and Joe even convince scatterbrained Butterfly McQueen to tell an O’Riley joke, but she inadvertently substitutes the punchline “No, Flanagan.” The “Oh, really?” “Oh, Riley?” writers became the most talked-about feature of the program.

Despite the changes, the show’s ratings remained modest. Worse, Ace bristled at dealing with the authoritative, overprotective Sylvia. For one show, Ace had written exceptionally witty dialogue for guest star Betty Hutton. “If you give her lines like that,” Fine objected, “Danny ought to do something special. Maybe the ‘Tschakowsky’ number.”

Ace responded that while he admired the piece, he thought it had already been overused. “Well, you’ll have to do something!” Miss Fine protested.

“Tell you what,” Ace conceded.



Ken Niles, Kaye’s announcer

“We’ll have the orchestra louse up Hutton’s numbers.”

Hal Kanter, who joined the series’ writing staff a few shows into season two, remembered Danny had recently hired a pianist, Sammy Prager, to accompany him on stage and during USO tours. “Sam traveled with him quite often when Sylvia didn’t,” Kanter said. “Sylvia used to accompany him on his numbers on the radio show, and Sylvia, for some reason, always wore operatic gloves when she played the piano. One week she was ill and could not make the broadcast, and Sammy Prager filled in for her. The next day, Sylvia was talking to Goody Ace and said, ‘How did Sammy do?’ And Goody said, ‘Remarkably well, considering the fact that he plays without wearing gloves.’”

The changes didn’t make Danny much happier with the show, either. The addition of all the colorful new characters increasingly took the spotlight off of him. After one morning read-through, all the cast and crew smiled with satisfaction

—except Kaye. He folded his script and grumbled, “Well, I’m the highest-paid straight man in show business.” Without looking up, Ace retorted, “Jack Benny makes three times the money you do.”

Danny and Sylvia reluctantly had to admit that radio was not the best place for his talents. In addition, being tied to New York was costing him lucrative stage bookings and would conflict with his need to be in Los Angeles in the spring to begin work on his next movie. Ace, Kaye knew, was dead set against relocating to the West Coast. So, in January 1946, Danny asked for an early release from his contract. Warwick & Legler suspected the comic was interested in launching another show, with a new sponsor, and refused.

So, in early March, Kaye headed for Hollywood — and took the show with him. About half the writers made the trip. Ace was not among them. “Goodman Ace didn’t particularly want to live in California. He was quite a wealthy man, and he preferred New York,” recalled Kaye writer Arthur Alsberg.

Although the writers retained the show’s format and characters, the move back to Hollywood did allow them to feature a celebrity guest every week.

Without Goodman Ace, Kaye thought the show suffered. He renewed



efforts to be released from his contract. At the beginning of May, Warwick & Legler finally consented, with the stipulations that over the next year Kaye would be limited to ten guest broadcasts and was prevented from taking on a new sponsor. Pabst would have first dibs on the option of sponsoring four of the appearances, at \$5,000 each.

With the news out that the show was ending, the writers merely rewrote earlier scripts for the final three broadcasts. In the last show, they wrapped up all the running gags. Instead of sniping at Kaye, Mr. Average Radio Listener approached him sobbing: “Friday nights are gonna be a lot different... I’m gonna start listening to the radio again.”

And Danny voluntarily agreed to one last O’Riley joke. “Last month my sister did marry an Irishman,” Kaye told announcer Dick Joy. “Oh, really?” “Just happens to be the fella’s name — Thomas J. O’Really.”

To hear Danny Kaye on radio, tune in to *Those Were the Days on October 5 and to Radio’s Golden Age on November 10 — and to hear our conversation with David Koenig on the March 2013 Nostalgia Digest Podcast, visit us online at <http://www.nostalgia digest.com/podcasts.html>.*

DEPARTURES... AND ARRIVALS

THE MAN WHO PHOTOGRAPHED THE STARS WITHOUT LEAVING MIDWAY AIRPORT

BY CHRISTOPHER LYNCH

Before the jet age, Midway Airport, on Chicago's southwest side, was the place to be for meeting the legendary stars of Hollywood. In an age of piston engine aircraft, a flight from New York to Los Angeles meant a refueling stop in Chicago. And when a star exited the aircraft, photographer Mike Rotunno would be waiting, camera in hand.

Paparazzi is an Italian word which made its debut in popular culture through Federico Fellini's 1960 film *La Dolce Vita*. However, the only thing that Rotunno had in common with the word *Paparazzi* is that both were of Italian origin. A star of the 21st century steps out of their private jet and into a limousine on the restricted side of the airport. In Rotunno's day, if a star like Jimmy Stewart stepped off the plane and saw Mike's camera, he

Christopher Lynch is the author of When Hollywood Landed at Chicago's Midway Airport: The Photos and Stories of Mike Rotunno, published by the History Press (www.historypress.net).

would greet Rotunno warmly, pose for a picture, and then go have a cup of coffee at Marshall Field's famed Cloud Room restaurant.

Before the dominance of television, there were limited venues for promoting a star. There was no *Entertainment Tonight* or *Access Hollywood* programs. Besides radio, newspapers were the primary mode of publicity, and Chicago had several papers, with morning and afternoon editions.

Rotunno would photograph a star like John Wayne, run to his Metro News office (located in Midway's terminal), and develop the film in his dark room. The photo would be treated like a VIP, dispatched to one or more of the nine newspapers in town via taxi. If the photo ran, Rotunno got paid.

One might think it was the newspapers or the Hollywood public relations agents who paid Rotunno for taking the photo; in fact, it was the airlines. Rotunno would get Betty Hutton's curls right in the photo, but more subtly, he always included the logo of the airline that Ms. Hutton had taken into Chicago.

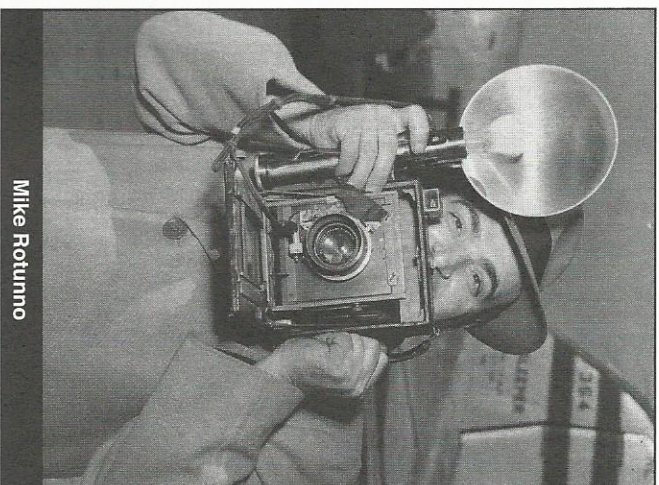
From the 1920s until the end of the 1950s (the heyday for Midway Airport), trains were the dominant mode of travel. Although flying was a faster way to reach one's destination, there were hazards involved. Passengers might bump along in an non-pressurized airplane from Chicago to New York chasing a thunderstorm, compared to the luxurious splendor of the Lake Shore Limited or Broadway Limited.

To overcome this fear, Rotunno's camera was put into action. With every Rotunno photo of a famous star, there was a subconscious message: If John Wayne could fly, so could you.

Rotunno always had a quip to relax a movie star arriving in Chicago, and such patter usually got them to pose for his camera. Another trick was the use of his two daughters, Judy and Mimi, both of whom were as cute as buttons. There are an amazing number of photos of the Rotunno girls posing with the greatest stars of the Golden Age of radio and Hollywood.

And it wasn't just at the airport: When the phone rang at the Rotunno's Berwyn home, one never quite knew who would be on the other line. It might be the gravelly voice of Jimmy Durante asking "Hey kid, is your Dad at home?" It might be Duncan Renaldo (*The Cisco Kid*), a frequent caller to the Rotunno home who often traveled through the airport dressed in his full cowboy regalia, complete with guns — a stunt that would make one of today's TSA agents faint.

Although he would be known throughout his life as the photographer of the stars, Rotunno actually first worked making newsreels for Pathé News. His time there would introduce him to not only the stars of vaudeville, but to the legends of the Golden Age of radio.



Mike Rotunno

ROTONNO FAMILY COLLECTION

Vaudeville was a thriving form of entertainment during the 1920s, and Rotunno would often catch the shows that traveled through town. At the State and Lake Theater, Mike met a very talented vaudeville actor with Chicago roots named Edgar Bergen. Rotunno was working at Pathé News as a cameraman and, as he remembered, "Edgar wanted to get into the movies so he engaged me to make a film of his act. The location was at Northwestern University, and it took about two days to complete the screen test."

A photograph survives from that filming session. In the photograph, Rotunno stands by his camera, his hand resting on the crank on the box camera. Bergen stands next to Rotunno, dressed in a dapper black hat, gray trousers and tails, with spectacles perched on his nose. Bergen's costume is oddly familiar, since he is dressed like his future comedy partner Charlie McCarthy.

Rotunno had been in the fledgling

movie business as long as anybody in those early years, so “knowing that I was in the motion picture business, and knew many of the movie producers,” Rotunno wrote, “Bergen asked me to go to New York to see if I could interest movie producers to view his screen test.”

Rotunno made the trip to New York, hitting the pavement for the talented performer: “I went from one movie mogul to another. I think I contacted about 20 film makers, who all refused to see his [Bergen’s] film.”

Rotunno returned to Chicago, and reported his failure to Bergen. The young performer was disappointed, but Rotunno had one more trick up his sleeve. “I knew Rudy Vallee and he came from New York [to Chicago] en route to Hollywood to do a radio show. I met him at the airport and told him about Bergen and made an appointment for an interview. Rudy was quite receptive and signed Edgar to be on his first broadcast. Bergen was a hit, but Vallee never signed him on as a regular.”

In his autobiography, Vallee wrote about his friends’ comments about the Bergen broadcast: “My God, if you had only signed Edgar Bergen and collected a percentage down through the years, you would have made a fortune.”

Rotunno had many encounters with the stars of radio, from Bob Hope to Don McNeill (*The Breakfast Club*) to Arthur Godfrey, who would always joke with Rotunno when he came to town.

One radio icon was more of a prickly personality. In 1958, Michael Todd, husband of Elizabeth Taylor, was killed when bad weather caused his private plane to crash while flying from Los Angeles to New York. At the funeral in Forest Park, Illinois, Rotunno met Walter Winchell, the famous broadcaster.



Bud Abbott and Lou Costello pose with Mike Rotunno's daughters, Judy and Mimi

ROTUNNO FAMILY COLLECTION

In many ways, Winchell and Rotunno’s careers were very similar. Winchell, who had worked as a young teenager in vaudeville, developed an interest in photography. After learning how to use a 4 x 5 graphic camera, he photographed many of the performers he’d meet backstage. As Rotunno recalled, Winchell “... had the good fortune of making William Randolph Hearst’s picture [as Rotunno had also] and he was so attracted to Walter’s line of chatter that he gave him a job on the Hearst’s paper in New York. Later the managing editor promoted Walter to do a column and in a year’s time, the Walter Winchell column was featured in over 300 newspapers throughout the country.”

As an amateur photographer, it’s possible that Winchell appreciated the picture Rotunno had taken of him departing the Todd funeral with a brunette beauty. The

following day, Rotunno met Winchell prior to his flight at the Cloud Room. Mike remembered that Winchell “was having breakfast and I gave him a copy of the picture and he thanked me and I asked him to stop by as I would like to introduce him to my daughter Judy, who was learning to be a columnist. He stopped by and graciously talked to her.”

Rotunno was so pleased with the advice to Judy from Winchell that he wanted to return the favor. Since Mike knew everyone at the airport, he was going to make arrangements with the American Airlines crew so that Winchell would be assured of a great seat for his flight back to New York. Just as Winchell turned away from talking with Judy, Mike walked over, to inform him about the arrangements for a better seat.

“At that point,” Mike recounted, “the [Winchell] stumps with his right foot and yells ‘You get the hell away from me.’ I guess everybody heard him screaming. I walked away from him as I thought he just went crazy.” Rotunno had met all types in show business and such outbursts were weird, but not atypical. Two weeks later, Rotunno received a letter from Winchell apologizing for his behavior at the restaurant. “I think I’m the only person who has ever gotten an apology from the eccentric Winchell,” Rotunno surmised.

In 1972, Rotunno was honored by the Chicago Club for his 45 years as a photographer at Chicago airports. On April 14, he was the guest of Wally Phillips, who spent 21 years at WGN and for most of those years had the highest-rated program in Chicago radio. “He has a unique job. He’s Chicago’s most famous clicker,” Phillips said when introducing Rotunno, “He photographs celebrities, international leaders, anybody.”

Phillips was nearly speechless as Rotunno opened a package with a return

address of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, and handed Wally photos that he had taken of himself with President and Mrs. Nixon. Phillips was moved by the favor, repeating “Oh wow” several times as he studied the photographs, autographed to Wally personally by President Nixon. As he asked Rotunno how he got them autographed, Mike answered that he told Nixon that “He had to sign them!”

What comes across in this interview is Mike Rotunno’s generosity of spirit. He used his wits and humor to charm countless stars over his decades of work. His charm worked on Katharine Hepburn, Charlie Chaplin, Jimmy Stewart, Wally Phillips and many more — including those of us who can still see, and enjoy, all of his wonderful photographs. ■



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CONFESSIONS OF A COMIC-BOOK COLLECTOR!

BY GEORGE LITTLEFIELD

A comic book is a funny thing. It is, after all, just a collection of colored illustrations, printed on cheap paper and held together by two staples, selling (at least when I was a kid) for a lowly ten cents.

Some kids used to read a comic only once or twice and then discard it. Sometimes a mother would throw out all of a kid's comics while she was giving his room "a good cleaning." Sometimes all of your comics got donated to a wartime paper drive at your school. There were so many ways that comic books could—and did—disappear.

But other kids guarded and lovingly held on to a few of their favorite comics for 50 and even 60 years.

I'm in that second category—I'm a comic collector.

I've still got my original copy of *Uncle Scrooge* #1 that I bought for a dime as a 10-year-old boy in 1952. I still have my original free copy of *Woody Woodpecker in Chevrolet Wonderland*. A kind salesman at Ray O'Connell

George Littlefield is a writer and comic-book collector from Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

Chevrolet (at 4625 W. Madison St. in Chicago) gave it to me in the fall of 1954, when I was 12 years old.

Uncle Scrooge #1 is now 60 years old, and the Woody Woodpecker title is 58, yet they're both still in very good condition, all things considered. I loved and cherished them as a kid, and now take very good care of them as an adult—just as I'm taking very good care of the other hundred-plus vintage comics in the collection I've managed to put together over the past 46 years. Many were expensive, and all were hard to find.

My comics span the subjects of comedy, fantasy, adventure, history, literature, drama, science fiction and horror. Taken together, they make up a fascinating little library, chronicling many of the popular culture trends of the 1940s, '50s and '60s.

I started collecting vintage comic books on a pleasant summer day in 1966, while I was enjoying a lunchtime stroll just north of Chicago's Loop. I happened to pass by a little shop I hadn't seen before, with the word "Nostalgia" stenciled in big letters on its front window. Intrigued, I went in and took a long look around.

I found myself surrounded by a plethora of antiques and collectibles of

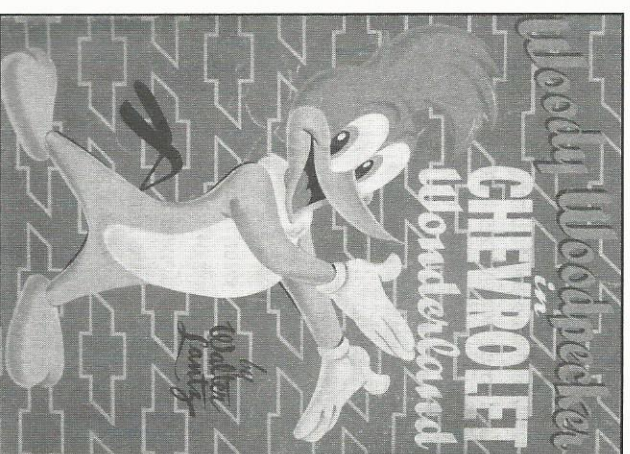


GEORGE LITTLEFIELD COLLECTION

every kind, but my eyes were drawn to a large table in the center of the room, covered with comic books—not new ones, but the vintage comics of my youth. I had no idea that such comics still existed!

I quickly scanned just a few of the titles: *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories*, *Archie*, *Tales From the Crypt*, *Little Lulu*, *Wonder Science*, *Mad Comics*, *Wonder Woman*, *The Fox and the Crow*—they were all there and many more besides, some even going back to the early 1940s! I picked up a *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* issue from 1946 and began to thumb through it. I was amazed to find that I remembered the Donald Duck story inside as one that my Mother had read to me at bedtime when I was just four years old. Talk about meeting a long-lost friend after many, many years!

I walked back to work with that comic book clutched in my hand. I didn't realize it then, but that 1946 comic represented the beginning of a new and wonderful hobby that would keep me interested and



GEORGE LITTLEFIELD COLLECTION

happy for over half a century (so far!).

That 1946 *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* had set me back \$3.00—not an inconsiderable sum in 1966—but to me, it was well worth it. Some of my friends at work just couldn't understand how I could spend \$3.00 on an "old comic book," when I could have bought a brand-new one for just 10 or 15 cents. It was useless for me to try to explain to them the value and emotional worth of a vintage comic book.

To this day, I still run into people who feel that way. It's like trying to explain how a person could spend thousands of dollars on a single bottle of rare wine. You either get it, or you don't. However, it's worth noting that a 1939 mint condition copy of *Action Comics* No. 1 recently sold at auction for nearly \$2.5 million.

For about my first year of comic book collecting, I employed pretty much a scattershot approach: A couple of issues of these, two or three of those, one of this, one of that, and so on. Gradually,

it became clear to me that what I was assembling was not really a collection — it was a conglomeration, with no real point or focus to it. I realized that what I had to do was to zero in on one single title, and collect several years' worth of *that* title alone.

After some thought, I came to the conclusion that from then on, I would concentrate on *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* (also referred to as *WDCS*) — for three good reasons. First, it was the first comic book I ever remember reading; second, it was one of the very finest titles ever produced for children; and third, unlike the superhero and EC horror titles, the prices of *WDCS* issues were (for the most part) not so stratospheric that I couldn't afford them.

So I set out to build up my collection of *WDCS*, while still holding on to a number of other titles I had previously acquired — from *Archie* to *Super Duck* — just for the sake of variety. Specifically, I concentrated on issues from 1946 through

1950. To me, these were the golden era for *WDCS*, and these 60 consecutive issues would make a worthy and notable collection.

I began haunting garage sales, yard sales, estate sales, flea markets, comic stores and comic conventions, always searching for the elusive issues I needed to finish out a given year of *WDCS*. And little by little, I began locating them.

I soon found that the older (and thus rarer) a comic is, the higher its price. Fortunately, I bought most of my 1946 and '47 issues in the early 1960s, when the prices were still relatively low.

The real trick was to find an issue from that far back that was still in fine condition. Then you had to factor in the price the seller was asking — was it fair, or was it out of the question?

In the middle 1960s, Pop Art, Op Art, comic books in general (and *Batman* in particular) were "in." It became a well-known fact that some comics were worth hundreds, or even thousands of dollars,

but most people lacked the know-how to put a realistic value on the comics that they might have had to sell.

You could walk into a yard sale and see a disreputable stack of moldering old comic books — a pile that no collector would look at twice — with the seller asking \$20 or \$30 apiece for his crumbling wrecks. Sadly, some neophyte collectors who didn't know any better might actually have paid that much for a virtually worthless comic.

On the flip side of that coin, I'll never forget the time I walked into a suburban flea market in the late 1960s, and saw something — or some *things* — that changed the whole scope of my collection. There on the floor, next to a card table full of kitsch, were two mint condition issues of *WDCS* from 1945!

I knew that comics that old and that good were probably far out of my price range, but I decided that it wouldn't hurt just to ask how much the seller was asking.

"What do you want for the two Disney's?" I asked, in what I hoped was a disinterested voice.

"Uh, 75 cents apiece," he replied. Seventy-five cents apiece?!? Was I hearing things? For mint-condition 1945

issues?

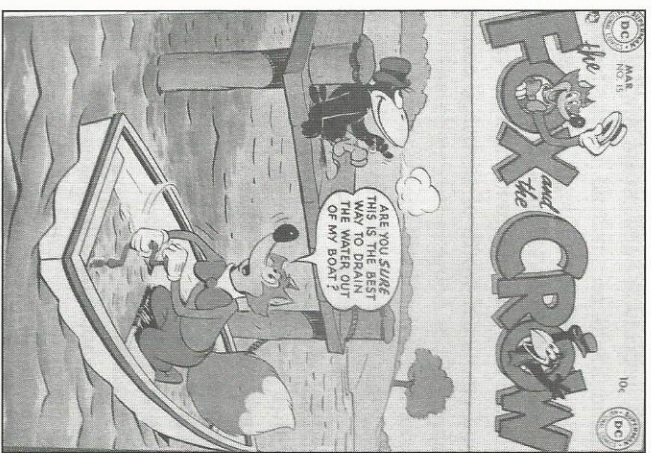
"I'll take 'em!" I replied, and my wallet was out of my back pocket faster than Wyatt Earp could draw his Burntime Special.

This was truly a once-in-a-lifetime bonanza, and because I now owned two 1945 *WDCS* issues, I decided to expand my collection to include all of 1945 — for 72 consecutive issues of *WDCS*.

It's hard to put into words what made *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* so special. For starters, there was the fascinating variety of features and featurettes in every issue.

A typical issue was graced with a beautiful, full-color front cover, usually showing Donald Duck and his three nephews Huey, Dewey and Louie. Many of these front covers of the late '40s were rendered by artist Walt Kelly, who would soon enjoy his own national fame as the creator of *Pogo*.

Opening the front cover, you would find no advertisements inside. Of course, there might be a house ad on the back cover for the latest Disney film, but there were no ads at all in the body of the comic. Dell Comics, the book's publisher, proudly proclaimed, "52 pages — All Comics," and "A Dell Comic is a Good



GEORGE LITTLEFIELD COLLECTION



GEORGE LITTLEFIELD COLLECTION

THE NOSTALGIA DIGEST PODCAST IS HERE!

Now you can take the good old days with you wherever you go, thanks to our new *Nostalgia Digest* Podcast, available any time at www.nostalgia Digest.com or through iTunes! It's a monthly series of free, downloadable programs, hosted by Steve Darnall and devoted to people, performers, topics and shows that we've featured within the pages of *Nostalgia Digest*!

Comic,” and they were right on both counts.

On the first page, one would find an eight-page Donald Duck adventure story by renowned writer/artist Carl Barks. Barks could do more with Donald and his three nephews in eight pages than most other artists could accomplish in a full book-length story. Donald might be plagued by nightmares, chase down a beautiful Axis spy, or blast off for the moon — you just never knew what the irascible duck would be up to next. Whenever Donald’s adventures might take him, you always found that Huey, Dewey and Louie would be on hand to make sure that everything turned out all right.

Donald might also meet up with Daisy Duck, his girl friend; Gladstone Gander, his no-good but extremely lucky cousin; and Donald’s Uncle Scrooge McDuck, the richest (and most miserly) duck in the world.

How I used to love to read those Donald Duck stories — and I still do.

The Donald Duck lead-off story would be followed by a whimsical piece called “Bucky Bug,” the adventures of a bug named Bucky and his best friend Bo, both of whom always spoke in rhymed couplets. In fact, the whole story was told in rhymed couplets, which could be amusing or frustrating, depending on what kind of a mood you were in when you were reading it.

Each issue would find Bucky and Bo pitting their skills against an evil spider or aiding a lonesome old cricket, and (of course) coming out on top at the end of the story.

Bucky’s rhyming tale would be followed by “The Li’l Bad Wolf,” based on the Big Bad Wolf from Disney’s famous *Three Little Pigs* cartoon. But this wolf (now named Zeke) had a kind-hearted son — who for some reason was

called the Li’l Bad Wolf.

In every issue, Zeke Wolf would find a new way to capture and eat the Three Little Pigs, and every time, the kind-hearted Li’l Bad Wolf came up with some new, ingenious and funny way to save the Pigs from his Dad. A sure-fire hit every time!

Zeke and his good-natured son were followed by several half-page mini-stories (consisting of three or four panels apiece), featuring Donald, Huey, Louie, Dewey, and Mickey Mouse. These mini-stories were really just glorified gags — that’s all that they could accomplish in half a page — but they were funny gags.

About halfway through the mini-stories, in the center of the book, there would be a two-page prose story with a title like “The Schemers,” usually involving Mickey and Minnie Mouse, and Mickey’s nephews, Ferdie and Morty. Each story would be pretty involved (after all, it was two full pages of prose) but always entertaining — a nice story to read to a small child at bedtime.

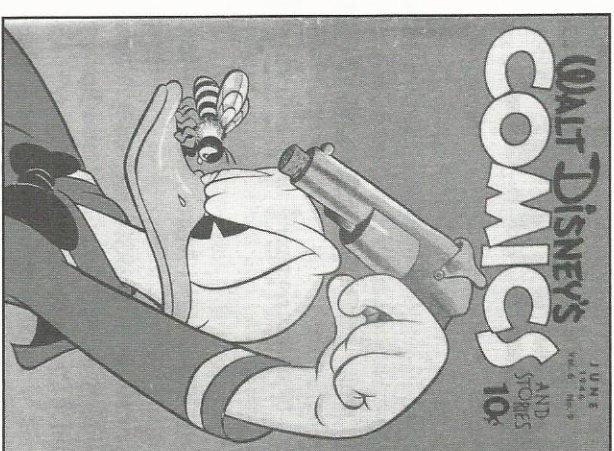
After a few more amusing pages of four-panel gags, we come to the final delicious morsel in the *MDCS* monthly *smorgasbord*: the eight-page Mickey Mouse mystery serial. One of the very best of these continued serials was “Mickey Mouse Outwits the Phantom Blot,” which ran for six issues, from February to July 1949.

This mystery serial Mickey Mouse is not like the childlike Mickey you remember so fondly from cartoons like “Steamboat Willie” and “Clock Cleaners.” This *noir*-ish Mickey Mouse wears long pants, a shirt and tie, and a Fedora.

Somehow, Mickey Mouse has become an adult. Goofy is still an acquaintance and foil, but here Mickey’s best friend seems to be Police Chief O’Hara, whom Mickey aids in solving a



GEORGE LITTELFIELD COLLECTION



GEORGE LITTELFIELD COLLECTION

seemingly endless parade of mysteries.

Sometimes, Mickey even carries a revolver. This is necessary because in every chapter of this serial, Mickey’s life is in real danger from the villain of the piece, the dark and sinister Phantom Blot, who dresses like a black ghost from head to toe, with only his eyes showing.

Of course, the identity of the Phantom Blot remains a secret until the last chapter, when Mickey, after six months of hair-raising adventures, triumphantly unmasks him.

The “Phantom Blot” serial made a real impression on young readers in 1949; there are many today who can still vividly recall reading “Mickey Mouse Outwits the Phantom Blot” as a child.

But who *is* the Phantom Blot? And why does he have it in for Mickey? I know, but I won’t tell. I don’t want to get the Phantom Blot mad at me!

Those were the contents for a typical issue of *Walt Disney’s Comics and Stories*. This description is based mostly upon a

single issue from February 1949. Can you imagine how much joy is involved in reading the other 71 issues?

These days, I have many other titles in my comic collection, including *Plastic Man*, *Sensation Comics* (starring Wonder Woman), *Buster Brown Comics*, the comic book adaptation of *Yellow Submarine*, and *Star Wars*. They date from 1945 to the present. I love them all, and I could write at length about any of them.

But *Walt Disney’s Comics and Stories* is and has always been the title closest to my heart. It’s how and why I got started collecting comics in the first place.

As long as I can still read and remember *Walt Disney’s Comics and Stories*, a part of me will always remain young. And now I have something special and unique and wonderful to pass on to my grandchildren. ■

Time in to Those Were the Days on December 7 to hear Walt Disney and some of his beloved characters on radio.

BEYOND

LAUGHTER

How an unfunny “Comedian” revived Mickey Rooney’s career

BY JAMES MACEachERN

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Mickey Rooney was the number one box office star in the world. The many musicals he made with Judy Garland (including *Babes on Broadway*, *Babes in Arms*, and *Girl Crazy*) were immensely popular, and the *Andy Hardy* films had led many moviegoers to consider Rooney (and Lewis Stone and Fay Holden, who played his parents) to be members of their own family. Rooney was equally good as a dramatic actor in films like *Boys Town*, *National Velvet* and *The Human Comedy*.

But along came World War II, and America was changed by the devastating reality of mass carnage, the Holocaust, and the Atomic Bomb. After the war, there was very little room on the big screens for a pint-sized, baby-faced actor who had specialized in light comedies and musicals.

Rooney tried to adapt, making low-budget action and film noir pictures like *Quicksand*, *Drive A Crooked Road*, and 1957’s excellent *Baby Face Nelson*. But although some of these films have gained critical import in recent decades, they

James MacEachern is a writer and Mickey Rooney fan from Ann Arbor, Michigan.

were flops upon their release. Audiences and critics were just not ready to accept Andy Hardy in an action or gangster movie.

Thankfully, there was a lifeline—the emerging medium of live television drama. Thanks to the popularity of anthology series, Rooney was able to land dramatic parts that he would never get in a theatrical motion picture, and he made the most of those opportunities.

One show that did more than any other to change the public’s perception of Rooney was “The Comedian,” a 1957 production of *Playhouse 90*. Mickey was hardly the first choice for the part; in fact, the role was offered to almost every well-known comedian in the business, but each one ran away from it, fearing the public would think the comedians were playing themselves.

The cast of “The Comedian” boasted an interesting mix of acting styles. Kim Hunter was a graduate of the Actors Studio and studied “The Method” under the tutelage of Lee Strasberg. Mel Tormé had been a child radio actor (appearing on *Little Orphan Annie*, among others) but was better known as a singer and songwriter. Rooney was the ultimate show business veteran, an extraordinarily talented performer who had performed in vaudeville, movies, radio, and now, television.

The tension that suffuses the atmosphere of a live production is a special thing to which audiences respond; they feel that what they see and hear is happening in the present and therefore more real than anything taken and cut and dried, which has the feel of the past.

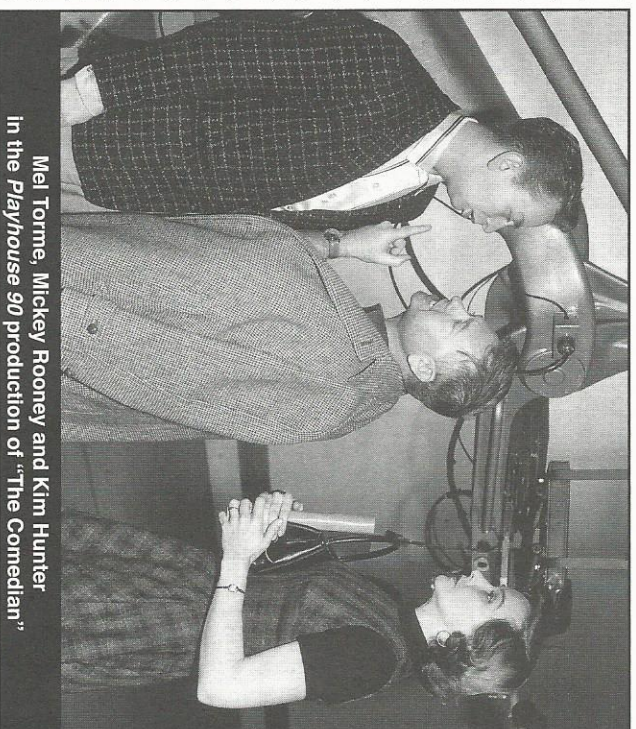
—Gilbert Seldes

In the early days of live drama, the networks specialized in adapting public domain works from great literature and theater. When that well ran dry, producers went looking for young, hungry writers (like Paddy Chayefsky, Horton Foote, and Gore Vidal) and directors (including John Frankenheimer, Sidney Lumet, George Roy Hill, and Arthur Penn) who were eager to experiment with the new medium. One of those young writers was Rod Serling, who wrote the script for “The Comedian.” The script was based on a novella by writer-journalist Ernest Lehman, based on his observations while writing a magazine article about Milton Berle’s *Texaco Star Theater*.

(Tormé), whom he keeps around to serve as a gofer and as the butt of jokes in his weekly monologue. Lester has grown tired of the abuse; rather, his wife Julie (Hunter) has, so much so that she threatens to leave him if he doesn’t stand up for himself. Edmond O’Brien plays Al Preston, the show’s dried-up head writer who—in a desperate effort to infuse life into a script that by midweek was going nowhere—uses the work of a dead colleague. When Lester finds out about the plagiarism, he threatens to take this information to a columnist who is out to get the comedian—unless the jokes at Lester’s expense are dropped from Sammy’s monologue.

The acting of the entire cast is superb, but it’s Rooney who steals the show. His Sammy Hogarth is a despicable human being, but a recognizable one. Sammy is always looking into the mirror in his dressing room. He has a mammoth ego and worries about getting older. There is a sense that Sammy looks on the weekly

“The Comedian” is a scathing portrait of the behind-the-scenes turmoil of putting on a weekly live comedy/variety series. Rooney plays Sammy Hogarth, the beloved star of a hit television show who browbeats everyone around him into submission. His favorite target is his weakling brother Lester



Mel Tormé, Mickey Rooney and Kim Hunter in the *Playhouse 90* production of “The Comedian”

CBS/PHOTOFEST

broadcast as though he's preparing for a championship fight; there's even a scene where he is stripped to the waist and shadow boxing.

As Sammy, Rooney doesn't speak his lines, he bellows them, and he gets in everyone's face when he talks to compensate for his small size. He must invade the space of everyone around him in order to be recognized as someone of stature. He is a big man in show business, saddled with a small man's ego that must always be nurtured. Otherwise, the next time he looks in the mirror he might be staring at a sad little man — and that scares the hell out of him.

Everything about Sammy is excessive. His laughter is a wide-open-mouthed guffaw. It is an angry laugh. When he eats, he stuffs spaghetti down his kisser like a condemned man having his last meal. He devours everything and everyone around him because he can't get what he needs.

When "The Comedian" was rebroadcast in 1981, Frankenhimer recalled that "the problem during two and a half weeks of rehearsal was to keep Mickey Rooney from changing the performance he came in with. He would change it every day. We would have a different performance. It was absolutely incredible to see. And he would start improvising the script and I wouldn't know what he was saying."

Mel Torme mentioned that while everyone in the cast began rehearsals with simple line readings, Rooney "gave a full blown performance every time we rehearsed the material."

Mickey's energy and constant improvising caused some concern for the director: "I recall one day going up to Mickey and saying, 'These lines are not in the script.'" Doing an impression of the actor, Frankenhimer recalls Rooney's response: "Listen, Johnny Boy, the only guy you do line-for-line is ole Billy

Shakespeare." Frankenhimer responded, "Well, Mickey, I'm just a stupid SOB because I got written at the end of this line in the script, 'Close-up Mickey Rooney.'" See it? Unless you say this line there ain't going to be no close-up of Mickey Rooney." He was letter perfect from then on, absolutely letter perfect."

Mickey takes the monster that is Sammy Hogarth and makes him human with little gestures and looks. He gives Lester an anniversary present and is noticeably ill at ease doing it. He is awkward when doing something nice for his brother, and we see in Rooney's face a kind of sadness that this little gesture is so painful for him. When Edmond O'Brien tells him off by speaking the truth, that Sammy's hanger is for something he will never have — love — we see the pain and hurt on Rooney's face, who comes close to tears even while he is screaming at O'Brien.

In the final scene, after the show is over and the set has been stripped down to an empty sound stage, Sammy spots Lester and his wife comforting each other. Sammy looks on in silence and envy for a moment before yelling for Lester to come to his dressing room. Lester slowly and reluctantly moves away from his wife as she reaches out for him, but it's no use: Sammy's hold on his brother is too strong. Sammy wins again, but he will never be happy.

During the 1981 rebroadcast, Rooney recalled getting feedback on his performance the very night it aired, including one from a relative newcomer to Hollywood. "After I had gotten home and gotten several calls from friends and then I received a telegram... a telegram I still have today and it is framed, and the telegram was from Santa Barbara, California and it just simply said: 'Thank you for the acting lesson — Paul Newman.'"

Even though Rooney had been mak-

ing movies for about thirty years by that point, he was only a few years older than Newman, who was about to launch his movie career with *Somebody Up There Likes Me*, based on the life of boxer Rocky Graziano. As for Mickey, he earned an Emmy nomination for "The Comedian." Mickey was a great actor, but his lack of physical stature meant that he would not get the meaty roles that were worthy of his immense talent.

Following the triumph of "The Comedian," Rooney landed several plum supporting roles in feature films, including the Japanese neighbor of Holly Golithely in Blake Edwards' film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. He joined the cast of the 1963 comic extravaganza *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, World* and was remarkably subdued as Mountain Rivera's pathetic cohort in *Requiem For A Heavyweight*.

Rooney went through another long dry spell during the rebellious late 1960s. Hollywood was going through another transformation; once again he didn't fit in.

It would take Rooney another decade and a Broadway play — the 1979 revue *Sugar Babies* — to resurrect his career once again. His performance opposite Ann Miller in *Sugar Babies* earned Mickey a Tony nomination in 1980; that same year, he garnered an Oscar nomination for playing feisty horse trainer Henry Dailey in Carroll Ballard's wonderful film *The Black Stallion*.

But the zenith of his acting career came a year later with his lovely and tenderhearted performance as the mentally handicapped Bill Sacher in *Bill*. Rooney's performance in this made-for-television movie earned him both an Emmy and a Peabody — the only major acting awards Rooney earned in his career.

At this point, most other actors might have retired and rested on their laurels, but not this diminutive dynamo. The man



who has survived the collapse of the studio system, changing tastes, fickle audiences, critics, and an ever-changing world keeps putting on a show, and that attitude has endeared him to show business professionals and audiences alike. Writers Gore Vidal and Tennessee Williams were huge fans. During an appearance on Turner Classic Movies (where he introduced the 1935 Max Reinhardt movie adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Vidal said that Rooney's performance as Puck changed his life by stimulating his love for Shakespeare. Bette Davis, Cary Grant, Anthony Quinn and Laurence Olivier have also spoken highly of Rooney's gifts as a performer.

These actors and writers have made their assessments after examining Rooney's entire body of work. They take him seriously; and so should we. ■

Time in to Radio's Golden Age on October 20 to hear Mickey Rooney on an episode of The Hardy Family.

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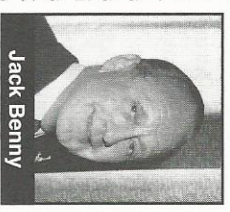
OCTOBER 2013

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5 SPOTLIGHT ON DANNY KAYE

BIOGRAPHY IN SOUND (9-10-57) "Danny Kaye: The Prince of Clowns," narrated by Walter O'Keefe. This documentary features many clips from Kaye's performing career and interviews Danny, his brother Larry, wife Sylvia Fine, Max Liebman, Dinah Shore, Leo Durocher, and many others. Sustaining, NBC. (25 min and 27 min)

MAIL CALL (10-25-44) Mistress of Ceremonies Tallulah Bankhead welcomes Danny Kaye, The Pied Pipers, organist Ethel Smith and singer Georgia Gibbs. Danny performs a soap opera parody, "Hilda Hotchkiss, Girl Woman" and sings "Minnie the Moocher." AFRS. (30 min)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (3-6-55) With Mary Livingstone, Eddie "Fochester" Anderson, Don Wilson, Dennis Day, Mel Blanc, the Sportsmen Quartet, and guests Danny Kaye (who sings "Lily of the Valley") and Jack Warner, who wants to film "The Life of Jack Benny." Lucky Strike Cigarettes, CBS. (26 min)



Jack Benny

SUSPENSE (1-5-50) "I Never Met the Dead Man" starring Danny Kaye as an ex-con who witnesses a street killing and finds himself arrested as a suspect. Cast includes Herb Butterfield, Elliott Lewis, John McIntire, Harlow

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Cast includes John Dehner, Jack Kruschen, Joseph Kearns, Fred MacKaye, Vic Perrin. Sustaining, CBS. (26 min)

SONGS BY SINATRA (3-20-46) From San Francisco, with the Pied Pipers, announcer Marvin Miller, Axel Stordahl and the Orchestra and guest Van Johnson. Frank sings "Personality," "Embraceable You," and "From This Day On". The Pied Pipers sing "Shoo Fly Pie and Apple Pan Dowdy." Van recalls his days as a real estate agent. Old Gold Cigarettes, CBS. (28 min)

BILL STERN SPORTS NEWSREEL (1-13-50) From Los Angeles, with a guest appearance by Boris Karloff. The famous sportscaster tells the story of a strange prophecy involving three prizefighters and talks about the connection between sports and music. Colgate Shave Cream, NBC. (15 min)

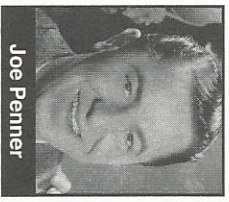
MY FRIEND IRMA (2-16-48) Marie Wilson stars as Irma, with Cathy Lewis as Jane, Hans Conried as Professor Kropotkin, John Brown as Al, Gloria Gordon as Mrs. O'Reilly. The Professor has written a concerto and is looking for a publisher. Cast includes Alan Reed. Swan Soap, CBS. (29 min)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19

FRED ALLEN SHOW (2-24-46) With Portland Hoffa, Kenny Delmar, Minerva Pious, Alan Reed, Parker Fennelley, The DeMarco Sisters, Al Goodman and the Orchestra, and guest Arthur Treacher, who joins Fred for a hilariously sketch. The Allen's Alley question: "Do you believe in hobbies?" AFRS rebroadcast. (31 min)

SPEAKING OF RADIO (2-15-13) Steve Darnall's conversation with actor, writer and director Carl Reiner, who talks about his book *I Remember Me*, and his career in radio and television. Recorded by telephone from Mr. Reiner's home in Los Angeles, California. (38 min) *Read an excerpt from this conversation on page 4.*

JOE PENNER SHOW (12-13-36) With Jimmy Grier and the Orchestra, vocalists Joy Hodges and Gene Austin, announcer Bill Goodwin. Joe and his family, The Park Avenue Penners, plan a trip to Russia. Co-combat, CBS. (29 min)



Joe Penner

THE FALCON (8-20-50) "The Case of the Disappearing Doll," starring Les Damon as Michael Waring (a.k.a. The Falcon), who is hired to find a gangster's moll with \$80,000 in stolen money. Cast includes Mandel Kramer, Joan Alexander, Leon Janney. Sustaining, NBC. (25 min)

JUBILEE #120 (2-12-45) Ernie "Bubbles" Whitman is master of ceremonies, with Billy Eckstine and his Orchestra, Winyu Manone, vocalist Sarah Vaughan, who sings "Mean To Me." The Eckstine band plays "Together" and "Without a Song." AFRS. (30 min)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26 HALLOWEEN WITH ORSON WELLES

THE SHADOW (10-31-37) "The Three Ghosts" starring Orson Welles as Lamont Cranston, with Agnes Moorhead as the lovely Margot Lane. A newlywed couple takes a home in the country that appears to be inhabited by ghosts. The Shadow investigates. Blue Coal, MBS. (29 min)

THE BLACK MUSEUM (1952) Orson Welles narrates "The Spotted Bedsheet," the tale of an object found in Scotland Yard's famous museum of crime. A young woman traveling on a luxury liner disappears from her cabin. Syndicated. (26 min)

SUSPENSE (5-4-44) "The Dark Tower," stars Orson Welles in a story by George S. Kaufman and Alexander Woolcott. An actress recovering from a nervous breakdown suffers another shock when her dead husband appears at her door. Cast includes Hans Conried, John McIntire, Jeanette Nolan. Roma Wines, CBS. (30 min)

MERCURY THEATRE OF THE AIR (10-30-38) "The War of The Worlds," starring Orson Welles in the most famous radio broadcast of all time, the story of an invasion from the planet Mars. Adapted for radio by Howard Koch and John Houseman. With Paul Stewart, Frank Readick, Kenny Delmar, Ray Collins, Carl Frank, Richard Wilson, William Alland, Stefan Schanbel, announcer Dan Seymour. Sustaining, CBS. (40 min and 18 min) *Read the article about this broadcast on page 56.*

Today's show will be heard on our ghost-to-ghost network and over the internet in screaming audio. Don't miss it!

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NOVEMBER 2013

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2 CHUCK SCHADEN AND THE RADIO HALL OF FAME

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE (1938) An isolated episode of the long-running adventure series, with Shirley Bell as Annie and Allan Baruck as Joe. Shipwrecked on an island, Annie, Joe and Bud Wilcox try to build a radio from the equipment on their boat. Pierre Andre announces. Ovatline, MBS. (15 min) *The Little Orphan Annie show was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame in 1990.*

WALLY PHILLIPS SHOW (12-28-64) An ex-

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experiences with the National Radio Hall of Fame (including his 1993 induction) and talk about his website, speakingofradio.com.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9

GREEN HORNET (10-16-40) "The Highway That Gratt Built" starring Al Hodge as Brit Reid, publisher of the *Daily Sentinel*, with Raymond Toyo as Kato. The Sentinel discovers graft payoffs in connection with the building of a new highway. The Hornet investigates. Syndicated. (30 min)

COMMAND PERFORMANCE #26 (recorded 8-11-42) Walter Pidgeon is master of ceremonies, with The Mills Brothers, Vera Vague, Johnny Weissmuller, The Merry Macs, Mary Martin, and Marlene Dietrich, who plays a carhop in a sketch. The Mills Brothers sing "Tiger Rag". Weissmuller performs his Tarzan yell. AFRS. (29 min) *Read the article about Marlene Dietrich on page 42.*

SCREEN DIRECTORS' PLAYHOUSE (3-1-51) "A Foreign Affair" starring Marlene Dietrich, John Lund, and Lucille Ball. Dietrich and Lund re-create their roles from the 1948 film, about a U.S. captain in occupied Berlin who is torn between a German cafe singer and a visiting Congresswoman. Participating sponsors, NBC. (28 min and 31 min)

INNER SANCTUM (5-7-46) "You Could Die Laughing" starring Santos Ortega and Jackson Beck. A man with a year to live is involved in a hit-and-run accident. Lipton Tea and Soup, CBS. (29 min)

LIFE WITH LUIGI (11-6-51) J. Carroll Nash stars as Luigi Basco, with Alan Reed as Pasquale, Jody Gilbert as Rosa, Hans Conrad as Schultz, Mary Shipp as Miss Spaulding, Joe Forte as Horowitz, Ken Peters as Olsen. Luigi plans to rent a new, larger space for his antique store. Wrigley's Gum, CBS. (30 min)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16

MILTON BERLE SHOW (10-7-47) It's "Uncle Milty" on radio, with Pert Kelton, Jack Albertson, Billy Sands, John Gibson, Frank Milano, Arthur Vinton, singer Dick Varney, Ray Bloch and the Orchestra. It's a "Salute to the Wild West," including an interview with a movie cowboy. Berle recalls paying a visit to Darryl Zanuck's office. Philip Morris Cigarettes, NBC. (27 min)

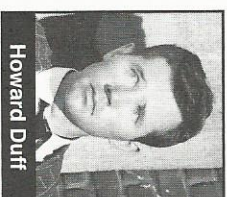
SIX SHOOTER (10-18-53) James Stewart stars as Brit Ponsel, who must intervene when an 11-year-old threatens revenge against the lawman who killed his father. Cast includes Sammy Ogg, Russell Thorson, Tony Barrett. Sustaining, NBC. (30 min)

SPEAKING OF RADIO (8-25-75) Chuck Schaden's conversation with Howard Duff, who talks about his career on radio, movies and television. Recorded at Mr. Duff's home in Malibu, California. (29 min) *Howard Duff was born on November 24, 1913.*

ADVENTURES OF SAM SPADE (11-9-47) "The Bow Window Caper" starring Howard Duff as Sam, Lurene Tuttle as Effie. Spade investigates when a woman is murdered in a doctor's waiting room. Wildroot Cream Oil, CBS. (30 min)

PHILCO RADIO TIME (10-22-47) Bing Crosby stars, with announcer Ken Carpenter, the Rhythmaires, John Scott Trotter and the Orchestra, and guests Clifton Webb and Burl Ives, who duets with Bing on "Sweet Betsy From Pike" and "My Darlin' Clementine." Webb pokes fun at radio detectives as "Clifton Webb, Private Face." Howard Duff makes a cameo appearance as Sam Spade. Philco, ABC. (30 min)

SUSPENSE (5-10-59) "On a Country Road" starring Howard Duff and Ida Lupino, with Jeanette Nolan and Norman Alden. A couple runs out of gas after hearing a news report about an escaped lunatic armed with a meat cleaver. Sustaining, CBS. (19 min)



Howard Duff

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23 ANNUAL THANKSGIVING SHOW

EDDIE CANTOR SHOW (11-21-45) A pre-Thanksgiving broadcast from New York, with Thelma Carpenter, Bert Gordon, Leonard Seuss and the Orchestra, announcer Les Tremayne (substituting for Harry Von Zell), and boxer Billy Conn. Eddie wants to cook a turkey dinner in his room at the Waldorf. Bristol Myers, NBC. (28 min)

HEARTBEAT THEATRE (11-24-63) "John Bull's Thanksgiving" starring Victor Rodman with Bill Idelson. A well-traveled philosopher passes on some thoughts about Thanksgiving. Salvation Army, Syndicated. (25 min) →



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CLAUDIA (11-27-47) Kathryn Bard is Claudia, Paul Crabtree is David in an isolated episode of the series. Claudia and David reluctantly prepare to have Thanksgiving dinner with David's relatives. Joe King announces: Coca-Cola, Syndicated. (15 min)

TWO HOURS OF STARS (11-25-48) Don Ameche hosts this Thanksgiving Day extravaganza, with performances by Jimmy Durante and Garry Moore, The Mills Brothers, Mario Lanza, Vera Vague (Barbara Jo Allen), Andre Previn, impressionist Bob Hopkins, Jack Benny, Artie Auerbach (as Mr. Kitzel), Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, Sara Berner, Frank Nelson, Frances Langford, Red Skelton, Langford and Ameche perform a Bickersons sketch; Skelton

appears as Willy Lump-Lump and Junior, the Mean Little Kid; AFRRS rebroadcast. (28 min & 26 min & 14 min & 18 min & 15 min)

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30
RADIO TO GET INTO
THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT BY**

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (12-1-48) Harold Peary stars as Gildy in the first of four consecutive programs, with Walter Tetley as Leroy, Lillian Randolph as Birdie, Mary Lee Robb as Marjorie, Earle Ross as Judge Hooker, Dick LeGrand as Peavey. With the holidays coming up, Gildy tries to get a job for Leroy. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30 min)

HALLMARK HALL OF FAME (12-20-54) "A Christmas Carol," starring Lionel Barrymore in the legendary story by Charles Dickens, about a curmudgeonly miser who learns about the spirit of Christmas. This rebroadcast of Barrymore's 1953 performance is introduced by Edward Arnold as a "tribute" to the actor, who died on November 15, 1954. Hallmark Cards, CBS. (29 min) *Read the article about Charles Dickens on page 50.*

PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (12-11-53) "Jessica, You're Draggin' Your Net," with Elliott Lewis, Walter Tetley, Mel Blanc, Lee Miller, Herb Butterfield. Phil and Elliott go Christmas shopping and decide to buy Alice a talking crow! The recording includes Phil's pre-show audience warm-up. RCA Victor, NBC. (40 min)

DRAGNET (12-22-49) At Christmas time, the police investigate the disappearance of a nine-year-old boy. With Jack Webb as Sgt. Joe Friday and Barton Yarborough as Ben Romero. Fatima Cigarettes, NBC. (27 min)

LIFE OF RILEY (12-17-44) William Bendix stars as Chester Riley, with Paula Winslowe

as Peg, Conrad Binyon as Junior, Barbara Eiler as Babs, John Brown as Digger O'Dell, Dink Trout as Waldo Binney. A week before Christmas, Riley receives a mysterious package that says "Do Not Open Before Christmas." American Meat Institute, NBC BLUE. (30 min)

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7
RADIO TO PLAN YOUR LIST BY**

SUSPENSE (12-21-50) "A Christmas For Carol" starring Dennis Day, with Joseph Kearns, Shirley Mitchell, Sidney Miller, Jeanette Nolan, Ed Max. At Christmas time, an expectant father needs money to get his wife a full-time nurse. Harlow Wilcox announces. Auto-Lite, CBS. (30 min)

SONGS BY SINATRA (12-19-43) Frank Sinatra stars, with Axel Stordahl's orchestra and the Bobby Tucker Singers. Frank writes a letter to a friend overseas in which he talks about family and Christmas. Songs include "My Ideal" and "White Christmas." CBS. (15 min)

HINDS HALL OF FAME (12-23-34) Walt Disney guests in a salute to his studio's animated stars, with the voices of Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck, the Three Little Pigs, Clara Cluck, and more. The Pigs sing "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" and Minnie presents an "American opera." Hinds Lotion, NBC. (29 min) *Read the article about Walt Disney's Comics and Stories and other comic books on page 22.*

CHRISTMAS DAY IN AMERICA (12-25-46) A special "Hour of Entertainment and Inspiration" for Christmas Day, as the story of the Nativity is woven through episodes of *Life Can Be Beautiful*, *Ma Perkins*, *Pepper Young's Family*, and *The Right To Happiness*. Narrated by Ron Rossen. Proctor and Gamble, NBC. (13 min & 15 min & 16 min & 14 min)

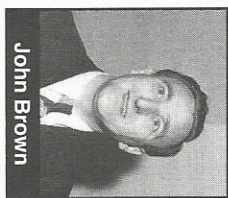
GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (12-8-48) Harold Peary stars as Gildy, with Walter Tetley, Lillian Randolph, Mary Lee Robb, Una Merkel as Adeline Fairchild. Gildy discovers that the Christmas gifts he purchased have disappeared! Second of four consecutive programs. Kraft Foods, NBC. (29 min)

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14
RADIO TO ADDRESS CARDS BY**

CHARLIE MCCARTHY SHOW (12-14-47)

From Los Angeles City College, with Pat Patrick, Anita Gordon, announcer Ken Carpenter, Ray Noble and his Orchestra, and guest Gary Cooper, who agrees to play Santa Claus for the local children. Anita sings "Serenade of the Bells." Chase and Sanborn, NBC. (29 min)

BROADWAY IS MY BEAT (12-22-51) Larry Thor stars as Detective Danny Clover, with Charles Calvert as Sgt. Gino Tartaglia, who dreams about joining Danny on a case and finds himself on the trail of a missing scimitar! Sustaining, CBS. (29 min)



John Brown

DAMON RUNYON THE-ATRE (7-24-49) "Palm Beach Santa Claus" starring John Brown as Broadway, with the story of a fat friend who was recruited to play Santa Claus for a Palm Beach socialite. Syndicated. (26 min)

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (12-15-48) Harold Peary stars as Gildy, with Walter Tetley, Mary Lee Robb, Lillian Randolph, Earle Ross, Dick LeGrand, Una Merkel. Gildy tries to economize at Christmas time. Third of four consecutive programs. Kraft Foods, NBC. (30 min)

AMERICAN WEEKLY (12-21-33) "The Christmas Eve Ghost" tells the story of a ship's parson who dies at sea, but vows to return the following Christmas. Hearst Newspapers, Syndicated. (15 min)

FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY (12-23-47) Jim and Marian Jordan star as the McGees, with Bill Thompson, Gale Gordon, Arthur Q. Bryan, The King's Men, Billy Mills and the Orchestra, announcer Harlow Wilcox. The McGees' Christmas presents are locked in the hall closet, and Fibber has lost the keys in the snow! Teeney (Marian Jordan) and the gang sing "Twas the Night Before Christmas." Johnson Wax, NBC. (30 min)

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21
RADIO TO WRAP, BAKE,
AND DECORATE BY**

GREAT GILDERSLEEVE (12-22-48) Harold Peary stars as Gildy, with Walter Tetley, Mary Lee Robb, Lillian Randolph, Una Merkel, Earle Ross, Dick LeGrand, Arthur Q. Bryan as Floyd Munson. Gildy wants a simple family Christmas. Kraft, NBC. (30 min)



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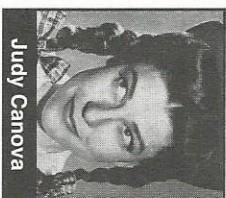
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FIRST NIGHTER (12-22-45) "Little Town of Bethlehem" starring Barbara Luddy and Olan Soule as Mary and Joseph in the show's ninth annual presentation of the Nativity story. With Sidney Ellstrom, Hugh Studebaker, Herbert Butterfield, Willard Waterman, Phillip Lord, Campana Products, MBS. (29 min)



Judy Canova

JUDY CANOVA SHOW (12-21-46) With Mel Blanc, Joe Kearns, Ruby Dandridge, Ruth Perrott, the Sportsmen Quartet, Charles Dart and the Orchestra. Judy and her Aunt Aggie are planning a Christmas party and Judy recalls a typical Christmas Eve back in Cactus Junction. Colgate-Palmolive, NBC. (30 min)

LET'S PRETEND (12-19-53) "The Night Before Christmas" is the story of a mouse family that goes to the North Pole to see what happens on Christmas Eve. "Uncle" Bill Adams hosts. Sustaining, CBS. (23 min)

CHRISTMAS SING WITH BING (12-24-56) Bing Crosby's second annual Christmas Eve special, with Rosemary Clooney, Paul Weston and the Orchestra, the Norman Luboff Choir, announcer Ken Carpenter, and remote appearances from Maurice Chevalier, Sarah Churchill, the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir, and the Vatican Choir. AFRS rebroadcast. (27 min and 28 min)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28 HAPPY NEW YEAR!

OUR MISS BROOKS (1-1-50) Eve Arden stars as Connie Brooks, with Gale Gordon as Osgood Conklin, Jeff Chandler as Mr. Boynton, Richard Crenna as Walter Denton, Jane

Morgan as Mrs. Davis, Gloria McMillan as Harriet Conklin. Miss Brooks accepts an offer to babysit on New Year's Eve from Mr. Conklin. Cast includes Jeffrey Silver, Bob Leonard announces. Colgate-Palmolive, CBS. (30 min)

BIG TOWN (12-28-48) "Dangerous Resolution" starring Edward Pawley as Steve Wilson, editor of the *Illustrated Press*, with Fran Carlton as reporter Lorelei Kilborn. At the end of the year, a young man resolves to quit his job as a truck driver for a gangster. Lifebuoy, NBC. (30 min)

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA (12-31-65 and 1-1-66) From the Pick-Congress Hotel in Chicago with announcer Jerry Mitchell. The Basie band plays "Auld Lang Syne," "All of Me," "Chestnut Street Ramble," "Sometimes I'm Happy," "Sweet Georgia Brown" and others. Sustaining, NBC. (34 min)

SWEENEY AND MARCH SHOW (12-31-47) Bob Sweeney and Hal March star with Hans Conried, Hy Averbach, Jane Morgan, Florence Halop, Tommy Bernard, Lud Gluskin and the Orchestra. Hal and Bob are making plans for a New Year's Eve block party. Sustaining, CBS. (30 min)

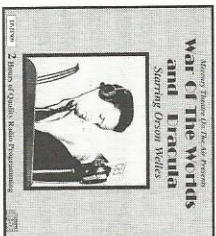
SUSPENSE (12-28-58) "The 32nd of December" starring Frank Lovejoy. A man who wants to cover his gambling debts plans to pawn his wife's ring for cash but finds himself drawn to an unusual antique clock. Cast includes Joan Banks, Barney Phillips, Sam Pierce, Norm Alden. Sustaining, CBS. (19 min)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (12-27-42) From the Vanderbilt Theater in New York City, with Mary Livingstone, Dennis Day, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Don Wilson, the Benny Goodman sextet (in place of Phil Harris' orchestra), and guest Fred Allen, who joins Jack and the gang for their annual New Year's Fantasy, "The New Tenant." (28 min)

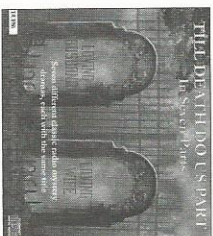
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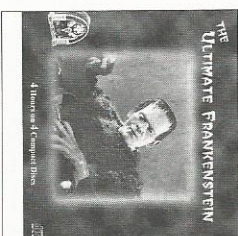
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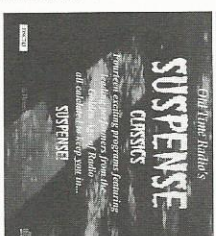
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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6

EDDIE CANTOR SHOW (1-10-45) With Harry Von Zell, Bert Gordon, Nora Martin, Leonard Seuss and the Orchestra, and the Andrews Sisters, who sing "Sonny Boy," Bristol Myers, NBC. **ADVENTURES OF SAM SPADÉ** (6-20-48) "The Death-Bed Caper," starring Howard Duff. A man hires Spade to hear his brother's death-bed confession. Wildroot Cream Oil, CBS.

YOUR HIT PARADE (11-6-43) It's the top tunes of the week, as performed by Frank Sinatra, Bea Wain, Mark Warrow and the Hit Parade Orchestra. AFRRS rebroadcast.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13

I WAS A COMMUNIST FOR THE FBI (4-30-52) "I Can't Sleep," starring Dana Andrews as undercover agent Matt Cvetic, who must meet with a high official of the Party. Syndicated.

PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (10-24-48) When Alice wants to economize on food, Frankie Remley (Elliott Lewis) suggests buying beef in quantity. Rexall, NBC.

BROADWAY IS MY BEAT (7-24-50) Larry Thor stars as Detective Danny Clover, who receives a call from a man whose young girlfriend has disappeared. Sustaining, CBS.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20

COMMAND PERFORMANCE #126 (recorded 6-24-44) It's an "All Western" show, with Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, Carol Landis, Roy Rogers, The Andrews Sisters and the Sons of the Pioneers. AFRRS.

INNER SANCTUM (12-18-45) "The Undead" starring Anne Seymour. The wife of an actor fears that her husband is actually a vampire. Lipton Tea and Soup, CBS.

HARDY FAMILY (1-10-52) Mickey Rooney, Lewis Stone and Fay Holden are the Hardys, re-creating the roles they played in the MGM movies. Andy must host a visiting skiing cham-

pion. Syndicated. *Read the article about Mickey Rooney on page 28.*

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27

BOSTON BLACKIE (5-28-47) Dick Kollmar stars as Blackie, who picks up a female hitchhiker, only to be told later that the girl actually died three years earlier! Syndicated.

PHILCO RADIO TIME (10-29-47) Bing Crosby stars, with guests Victor Moore and Boris Karloff. Bing is making plans for Halloween, ABC. **WEIRD CIRCLE** (2-20-44) "Frankenstein," based on the classic story by Mary Shelley, about a scientist who is working on a unique experiment in his laboratory. Syndicated.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3

GOOD NEWS OF 1939 (4-13-39) Robert Young is master of ceremonies, with Fanny Brice, Hanley Stafford, Frank Morgan, and guests Melvyn Douglas and Virginia Bruce, who perform a sketch, "I'll Be Singing You." Maxwell House Coffee, NBC.

COUNTERSPY (4-4-50) "Case of the Magic Murderer" starring Don McLaughlin as David Harding, Mandel Kramer as Harry Peters. Harding must locate a brain surgeon after Peters is shot. Peps-Cola, NBC.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10

DANNY KAYE SHOW (2-17-45) With Eve Arden, Lionel Stander, Harry James and the Orchestra. Danny gets kicked out of his apartment. Pabst, CBS. *Read the article about The Danny Kaye Show on page 6.*

CASEY, CRIME PHOTOGRAPHER (7-17-47) "The Self-Made Hero" stars Staats Cotsworth as Casey, with Jan Miner as Anne Williams. A young man who has staged a crime to impress a girl. Anchor Hocking Glass, CBS.

ADVENTURES OF MAISIE (1-12-50) Ann Southern stars as Maisie, who teams up with a

trained dog for a vaudeville act. Cast includes Sam Hearn, Hans Conried, Harry Bartell, Marvin Miller, Sheldon Leonard. Syndicated.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17

CRIME DOES NOT PAY (11-14-49) "Body of the Crime" starring Parker Fennelly as a farmer who is suspected of murdering two women for their land. Syndicated.

BURNS AND ALLEN SHOW (8-22-44) George and Gracie welcome Van Johnson, with Bill Goodwin, Elvia Allman. Gracie is scheduled to perform at Carnegie Hall. AFRRS rebroadcast.

X MINUS ONE (8-7-56) "The Last Martian" starring Santos Ortega, Elliott Reid. A newspaper reporter is sent to meet a man who claims he is from the planet Mars. Sustaining, NBC.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24

FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY (11-19-40) Jim and Marian Jordan as the McGees, who are invited to visit Molly's Uncle Dennis over Thanksgiving. Johnson's Wax, NBC.

SUSPENSE (11-25-48) "The Screaming Woman" stars Margaret O'Brien as a young girl who hears the screams of a woman buried alive. Auto-Lite, CBS.

BIRDS EYE OPEN HOUSE (11-22-45) Dinah Shore stars, with guest Groucho Marx, who has brought a live turkey to Dinah's house for Thanksgiving. Harry Von Zell announces. Birds Eye Frozen Foods, NBC.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1

LUX RADIO THEATRE (12-20-37) "The Song of Songs" starring Marlene Dietrich and Douglas Fairbanks Jr. in a radio version of the 1933 film about the romance between a sculptor and his model. Lux Soap, CBS. *Read the article about Marlene Dietrich on page 42.*

OUR MISS BROOKS (12-17-50) Eve Arden stars as Connie Brooks, who has been put in charge of Madison High School's Christmas clothing drive. Colgate-Palmolive, CBS.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8

CAVALCADE OF AMERICA (12-9-36) "The Story of the Christmas Seal" tells the story of Emily Bissell and "the growth of a magnificent campaign for the better health of this country." DuPont, CBS.

DUFFY'S TAVERN (12-18-46) Ed Gardner

stars as Archie the Manager, who wants guest Joan Bennett to take part in a raffle to benefit needy families at Christmas. Bristol Myers, NBC.

THEATRE OF ROMANCE (12-25-45) "The Messiah" starring Edward Arnold. The story of how George Frederick Handel came to write *The Messiah*. Cast includes Cathy Lewis, Lou Merrill, Colgate, CBS.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (12-17-50) With Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris, Dennis Day, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Don Wilson, Jack and Mary go Christmas shopping. Lucky Strike, CBS.

SIX SHOOTER (12-20-53) James Stewart stars as Britt Ponset, who encounters a runaway boy and tells him a western version of *A Christmas Carol*. Sustaining, NBC.

HENRY MORGAN SHOW (12-23-49) Morgan tells the story of how a group of children went to Washington to make every day Christmas. With Pert Kelton, Arnold Stang, John Gibson. Sustaining, NBC.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22

THEATRE GUILD ON THE AIR (12-24-50) "David Copperfield," starring Richard Burton, Boris Karloff, and Cyril Ritchard in a radio adaptation of the story by Charles Dickens, about a young boy who is sent to London after the death of his mother. U.S. Steel, NBC. *Read the article about Charles Dickens on page 50.*

AMERICAN MELODY HOUR (12-24-47) A program of Christmas music, with Bob Hannon, Evelyn MacGregor, The Knightsbridge Chorus, The American Melody Orchestra, violinist Raimo Bolognini, announcer Howard Clarney, Bayer, Lyons Toothpaste, CBS.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29

PHILCO RADIO HALL OF FAME (12-26-43) Host Deems Taylor welcomes Fred Allen, Lauritz Melchior, Helen Forrest, Lou Holtz, Raymond Edward Johnson and Paul Whiteman and the Orchestra, who offer a symphonic arrangement of "Auld Lang Syne." Philco, NBC BLUE.

LIFE OF RILEY (12-31-44) William Bendix stars as Chester Riley, with Paula Winslowe as Peg. Riley plans a New Year's Eve party and plans to invite a serviceman. American Meat Institute, NBC BLUE.

Bili Marlene

Entertaining the troops one day,
planning to kill Adolf Hitler the next...

MARLENE DIETRICH GOES TO WAR!

BY CHARLOTTE CHANDLER

"Marlene Dietrich was aware of the danger of 'Hitler and his gang,' as she called them, long before anyone else,"

Douglas Fairbanks Jr. told me. "She was very upset by the idea that [British prime minister Neville] Chamberlain had gone to meet Hitler to try and appease him and get along. She was enraged. 'How could he believe Hitler?' she asked me."

"Well, I don't think he did," I said. "I'm only speculating, but I don't think he believed Hitler. My guess is that he was just playing for time. A lot of people think war is inevitable, and he was stalling to get England better armed and in hopes of the United States entering the war."

"Marlene seemed persuaded. 'You have such wonderful British connections, Douglas dear,' she said. I started to explain I didn't really have special knowledge, it was just my guess, but then, I

thought, I usually say too much. I decided to just leave well enough alone.

"We met one day to have lunch. I'd missed breakfast, my own fault, by sleeping late, so I was starving. But when I saw Marlene, I forgot all about food. She was wearing a filmy ecru frock in sheer layers. There was the illusion that you could see through the dress. You couldn't. I can vouch for that, because I looked. But the illusion was there, and that was exciting enough. As though that weren't enough, she was sitting there with those beautiful legs crossed. The skirt wasn't short, but because of the way the layers fell, one could see a great deal of leg.

"She wasn't often early or even on time for social meetings, though she was extremely punctual for the set, whenever she was working. I made it a practice to be a little early whenever we met, because

Charlotte Chandler is the author of Marlene: A Personal Biography, published by Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, an imprint of Hal Leonard Performing Arts Publishing Group. This excerpt is reprinted here with permission of the publisher.



PHOTOFEET

it seemed to be the correct way, for the gentleman to arrive first. This time, I'd miscalculated.

"I turned out she was early because she had something to tell me. She began speaking after just a quick peck of a kiss. She said, 'Douglas, I've an idea.'

"That wasn't unusual. She had a very active mind. She had ideas within ideas. And she was full of surprises. I was never surprised anymore. I would only have been surprised if I hadn't been surprised.

"She leaned close and almost whis-

pered in that glorious voice of hers: 'I want to kill Hitler.'

"Don't we all,' I said. Hitler was running rampant over Europe.

"I've been thinking about it, and I feel I must do something. The thing is I think I can do it or at least I can make a good try.'

"I said, 'How would you get close enough to Hitler? No one can do that.'

"She said, 'I know how to get close to a man. I've heard that Hitler likes me. Leni Riefenstahl has been telling it to

people. Goebbels and his cronies are always wanting to get me back, with their promises. I have to agree only to do one film until I see whether I want to do more, and they are offering me the world. "The Queen of UFA" is a phrase they like. I could say I'm ready, but a condition of it is I want to be alone with the father. It would be the condition of my return. I would explain that it's because I admire him so much, "worship him," I would say. I would go so far, gushing over how I feel about him, intimating that I am desperately in love with him. I would make it very clear that my staying in Germany to make UFA films is conditioned on my simple personal request to be with him. I'm certain that Hitler would agree.'

"I said, 'But you would be searched. Hitler must be unbelievably well-guarded. There will be guards who want to search you very thoroughly to protect Hitler, and because they would enjoy searching you!'"

"She said, 'If necessary, I would go in and visit him naked. I mean, I would be naked.'

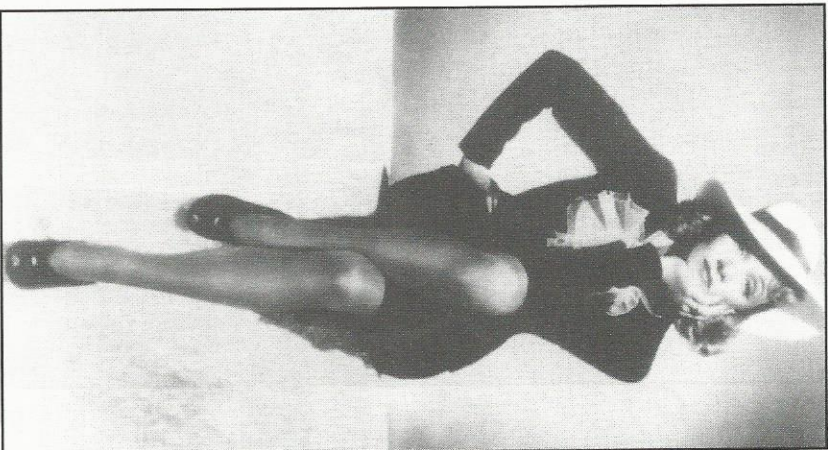
"That should get you in,' I said. 'But how would you kill him?'"

"I wouldn't have any trouble killing him. It would be a pleasure. It's like war. I think killing him would save thousands of lives, even millions.'

"But what murder weapon would you use and how could you get away? They'd never let you escape.'

"I would not expect to escape. I would go there prepared to die. I don't want to die. I want to live. Life is wonderful. But to kill Hitler would be wonderful. We all have to die sometime, and that would be something to die for!"

Bette Davis invited Marlene to participate in the Hollywood Canteen, an organization founded by Davis and John Garfield. It was affiliated with the USO



(United Service Organizations), which was created to provide a center for off-duty servicemen away from home. Besides offering a congenial atmosphere, there were meals and dances and other recreational activities. The Hollywood Canteen was the most famous USO center because Hollywood stars appeared there. Besides performing, some of the actors waited on tables while the most glamorous actresses danced with the servicemen and acted as hostesses.

Immediately, Marlene said yes. Orson Welles, who liked to perform his magic act for the servicemen, asked Marlene if he could saw her in half, and she was delighted, as was the enthusiastic and appreciative audience.

"Orson said, 'Don't be afraid. If I

make a mistake, we know how to put you back together.'" Marlene said, "Orson was a very skillful magician, because here I am with no seams."

She also played her musical saw for the troops, as well as volunteering to cook, clean, and wash dishes, tasks which Marlene and Hedy Lamarr especially sought out. Marlene remembered hearing Bette call out to someone, "Get those two Krauts out of the kitchen!"

"Miss Dietrich really impressed me," Bette Davis told me. "When I called her to ask her if she would participate in organizing the Hollywood USO, she accepted in that call, and never needed to be reminded about the importance of what we were doing. The servicemen loved being served by a beautiful Hollywood actress, sitting and eating a sandwich with a Hollywood star, and especially dancing with one of their dream girls."

"But the most striking image of Miss Dietrich was one I saw regularly. She would be wearing her hairnet, and she would be down on her hands and knees scrubbing the floor of the kitchen."

"She never worried about dishpan hands or scrubbing-floor knees. She really worked with elbow grease. When she wasn't working on a film, she never missed. I have a lot of admira-

tion for Marlene Dietrich."

Marlene, however, wanted to do more. After *Kismet* wrapped, she left Hollywood believing that she could make a more substantial contribution to the war effort elsewhere.

"I come from a military family," Marlene said, "but I have no illusions about the glories of war. I lived through one terrible war, and I knew that this one was far worse."

"I looked around wartime America, protected from these horrors by two wide oceans, and I saw complacency. People didn't really understand what we were sending our boys out to face."

"I couldn't do much, but I had to do something."



"Here I am with no seams": Marlene joins Orson Welles' magic act for the 1944 film *Follow the Boys*

UNIVERSAL PICTURES/PHOTOFEST

When Marlene left Hollywood to make a contribution to the war effort, she sold nearly all of her possessions, keeping only her jewelry, the most valuable pieces going into safe deposit boxes. A few paintings had been given to her by Erich Maria Remarque. Her best paintings were safely stored "for the duration," a frequently-heard phrase during World War II.

Marlene went to the USO headquarters in New York and volunteered her services. A USO show was formed around her that toured the United States and then flew to Casablanca by way of Greenland and the Azores. One of the members of her troupe was a young Danny Thomas.

Marlene learned that her regular thirty-six pieces of Vuitton and Hermès luggage would have to be replaced by a total of no more than fifty-six pounds of luggage. She said, "That is no problem." She took dozens of sets of false fingernails from Woolworth's with her. "I would never have parted with my fingernails. I could more easily have parted with my own real fingernails because the Woolworth nails were more dependable. I had to buy whole sets, because fingernails are not interchangeable, and I never could know which of them I might damage. Fortunately, false fingernails don't weigh very much, and I could have carried all of them myself, and would have."

"I was in Africa, Sicily, Paris," Marlene recalled. "We were in Anzio waiting for the breakthrough into Rome. Americans, if they weren't there in the armed forces, didn't realize how fierce the fighting was in Italy."

In Bari, Marlene was taken to a base hospital with viral pneumonia. There was concern that her illness could be fatal. She was told, and believed, that penicillin saved her life. Penicillin was new at that time.

Marlene's hands and feet were frozen

in the Ardennes. "It was very cold and rainy," Marlene remembered. "Unforgettable, and my hands and feet remind me. Once you have had severe frostbite, your hands and feet always remember and let you know. Many soldiers lost toes and fingers, but I was lucky."

The worst lingering injury that Marlene endured as a reminder of her World War II experiences with the U.S. troops at the front was flashback memories of what she had seen. "Those horrors recur and run in my mind. I've never been able to rid myself of them."

When U.S. troops arrived in Paris, Marlene was with them. She appeared at the Hermès store on the Faubourg Saint-Honoré dressed in a bespoke American officer's uniform. She signed autographs until she wore out the shop's small supply of scarce pencils. Then she signed using her lipstick, until it, too, ran down.

As the American forces moved through France, large numbers of German soldiers surrendered. Marlene said that she wanted to entertain the German prisoners as well as the Allied troops. She explained that most of the soldiers were not Nazis and that very few of them wanted to do what they were forced to do. "These boys aren't hardened Nazis. Many of them are only children."

When she performed for them, there were some who were hostile to her, but usually only among the officers, some of whom were committed to the Nazi ideology. After she sang "Lili Marleen," a favorite song of both sides, one of the young German soldiers came up to her and said, "You are Lili Marleen!"

She was asked by the U.S. military what she might be able to learn from the German prisoners that could help them at that stage of the war. She said that the very young and very old enlisted men had no secrets to divulge. "It had all been a se-

cret from them. But it was different with the officers. Some of them understood the war was over for them, anyway, and they really felt no allegiance to the Nazis."

She said she felt proud that she was able to bring back some useful information. "Many of the officers came to be comfortable with me when they thought about it, and German was, after all, my first language, and most important, I could understand what they told me."

"I remember when we were surrounded. I was pretty happy to see General Gavin arrive with his paratroopers."

As the end of the war drew near and it became clear that Germany would not be victorious, Himmler announced that Germans who were not faithful to the cause, especially any military who were considering deserting, would not only face their own deaths when caught, but their families would also pay the price. There was no need to elaborate on what the price was.

Marlene was in Germany and hoped

to be allowed to enter Berlin with the first U.S. forces. She was desperately anxious to find her mother, and she was extremely fearful about her mother's fate. Not only would her mother have had to endure the terrible conditions in Berlin — bombing, hunger, street warfare, and finally a pall of sadness — but Marlene understood that everyone knew that Josephine was her mother. When Marlene became "an enemy of the state," it meant that by the Nazi standard her mother was as guilty as she.

Marlene feared not only that her mother might have suffered through misery and even died in the bombing, but she was tortured by the thought that she personally might have contributed to her mother's suffering and even caused her death.

Marlene did not receive letters from her mother during the war, even before America entered. She did not write either because she felt her mother might be endangered by receiving mail from a daughter who was deemed a traitor by the Third Reich.

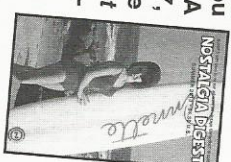
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"During the early days of World War II," Marlene said, "I was able to hear about my mother from refugees pouring out of Berlin. Then they didn't pour out anymore because they were barely able to get out with their lives, so I had no news for a long time."

At the end of World War II, through her military connections, Marlene learned that her mother had been found alive in Berlin, and that she would be able to be with her.

During World War I, in Germany, young Marlene had noted that it was a woman's world. There were women everywhere. One rarely saw a man, only boys and old men. As the war ended, crippled and blind young men appeared in the streets.

When she returned to Berlin at the end of World War II to reunite with her mother, Berlin was again a city of women, as Germany was a country of women. Another generation of young men had been killed and crippled. Vivid memories of her own youth in Germany during World War I came back to her. She remembered the death of her stepfather, an army officer, and how sad her mother had been.

Marlene was horrified at seeing the total devastation of the German capital. She was able to ask Josephine how she felt about what she, Marlene, had done during the war. Did her mother feel she had betrayed their country?

Marlene's mother told her she understood and that what Marlene had done was right. Her mother told her that she had not been arrested, but that she had been questioned by the police, and a great deal of the time she felt she was under surveillance. She told her daughter that she began to go out less because of this feeling she had that she was being followed. She wasn't certain. She said she

would have preferred knowing to wondering. She began to think it could be only in her mind. She couldn't talk about it with her neighbors because no one would dare discuss anything even remotely political. Your neighbors might report you. They would be afraid you might report them. Even if they weren't in sympathy with the Nazis, they wouldn't want to be seen with anyone who was under suspicion of something.

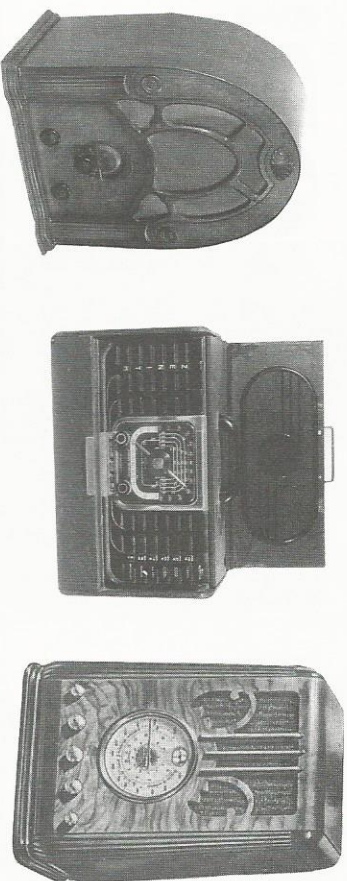
"I was so happy to see my mother, to know that she had lived through the horrors of the war, that she had endured it all, and survived. I was desperate to apologize to her for what I had put her through. I had placed her life in jeopardy. I had made her an outcast, a pariah, for all of those in Berlin who believed I was a traitor to my homeland, and there were a good many of those. I think, however, there were more of them in the early days when Germany seemed to be winning than when the bombs were falling and so many young men were not returning from the Eastern Front.

"I didn't know what my mother would say to me. I wanted to be forgiven for putting her at risk. But it was better than that. It wasn't a matter of forgiveness. My mother said, 'I am proud of what you did. You did the right thing.'

"She didn't live long after that, but she had given me a gift. I could hear her speaking those words to me in my head, and I know I always would for all the years of my life, as long as I live, I shall be able to call on that voice in my head. That was the best Medal of Honor I ever received." ■

To hear Marlene Dietrich on radio, tune in to Those Were the Days on November 9 and to Radio's Golden Age on December 1.

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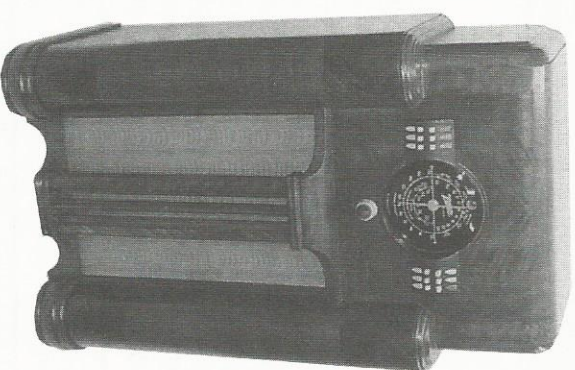


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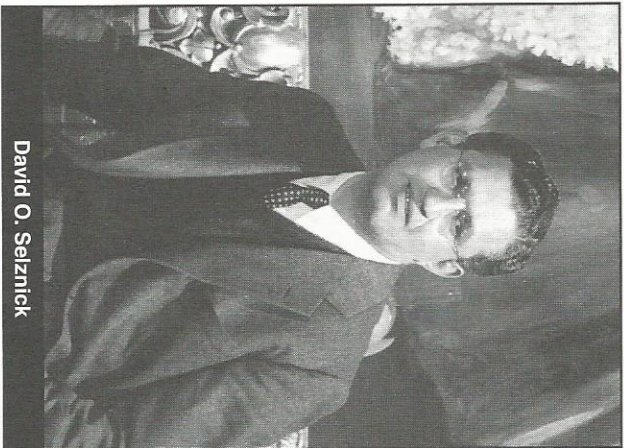
The challenges — and the rewards — of bringing the quintessential English author to the silver screen

BY SCOTT SENTINELLA

In 1935, 34-year-old producer David O. Selznick was ensconced at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Hollywood's most prestigious film studio. Selznick's father-in-law was none other than Louis B. Mayer himself — the Mayer in the title, and the head of the company. By this time, Selznick had already discovered Katharine Hepburn and produced such classic films as *King Kong*, *Viva Villa*, *Dinner at Eight* and *Little Women*.

The rousing critical and financial success of *Little Women* inspired Selznick to bring another famous novel to the screen — Charles Dickens' 1849 classic *David Copperfield*. Of all the stories he wrote, Dickens had always described *Copperfield* as his own personal favorite, probably because it was his most explicitly autobiographical. The problem was that *Copperfield* was a gigantic 900-page slab

Scott Sentinella is a freelance writer from Carson, California.



David O. Selznick

MGM/PHOTOFEST

of a novel, and therefore more difficult to adapt into a film than such comparatively slim Dickens tomes as *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, or his legendary short story, *A Christmas Carol*. *Copperfield* was eventually turned

into a screenplay by writer and actor Hugh Walpole, who managed to pack the highlights of the novel into a 130-minute film — pretty lengthy for the mid-1930s.

To those who've read *David Copperfield*, the resulting film admittedly comes off like a movie version of the book's Cliff Notes. But what Cliff Notes they are. Some eighty years later, *David Copperfield* still stands as one of the two or three best film versions of a Dickens story, due in no small part to its casting. The all-star lineup of actors seems to have stepped right out of the novel, and *Copperfield* is crammed with

memorably "Dickensian" characters — providing the kind of meaty parts into which actors love to sink their teeth.

First, there's Freddie Bartholomew, making his film debut, as young David. (Jackie Cooper was actually Mayer's first choice.) Bartholomew is simply perfect as the abused orphan who is mistreated by his stepfather, Mr. Murdstone (a magnificent Basil Rathbone) and saved by the kindly Mr. Micawber, played by W.C. Fields, who — in an unusual but wonderful bit of casting against type — replaced Charles Laughton after shooting began.

The long, rambling, circuitous plot finds the adult David (Frank Lawton, who



W.C. Fields and Freddie Bartholomew in *David Copperfield* (1935)

MGM/PHOTOFEST

is outshone by Bartholomew) married to the beautiful but silly Dora Spenlow (Maureen O'Sullivan); however, their marriage proves to be a complicated one.

Given how difficult it is to synopsize the plot of *David Copperfield*, it's quite amazing that the film plays as well as it does. The movie provides a never-ending flow of marvelous character actors (not all of them British) who make at least the first half of the film absolutely magical. (The movie's second half is not as compelling as its first, but the same thing can be said about the book.) Among them are Jessie Ralph (*San Francisco*) as Peggotty, the *Copperfields'* loyal maid; Lionel

Barrymore as her avuncular brother; Violet Kemble-Cooper as the hateful Miss Murdstone; Edna May Oliver (*Drums*)

Along the Mohawk, stealing the film as David's crusty but loving Aunt Betsy; Lewis Stone (Mickey Rooney's father in MGM's *Andy Hardy* films) as Mr. Wickfield; and future *Topper* star Roland Young — like Fields, cast against type — as the sniveling Uriah Heep. There's also Lennox Pawle (*Sylvia Scarlett*) as Aunt Betsy's apparently simple-minded companion Mr. Dick, Elizabeth Allan (*A Woman Rebels*) as David's naive mother, Madge Evans (*Dinner at Eight*) as Agnes Wickfield — who loves David from afar, Hugh Williams as David's lifelong friend Steerforth, Jean Cadell as Mrs. Micawber and Herbert Munday (*The Adventures of Robin Hood*) as Mr. Barkis, who has designs on Peggy. The film is crammed with such an embarrassment of riches in the casting department that some quite distinguished personalities (including

Elsa Lanchester, Una O'Connor and Arthur Treacher) are trotted on and off screen all too quickly.

With that much talent at his disposal, legendary director George Cukor displays his usual mastery at bringing great literature to the screen. As an example of the streamlined efficiency of the old studio system, *David Copperfield* started shooting in September of 1934. Principal photography was finished by Thanksgiving, and the film was in theaters on January 18, 1935.

The film, which cost a then-hefty \$1 million to make, grossed some \$6 million worldwide, making it one of the top earners of the year. After several unpopular Dickens adaptations of the era — including Universal Studios' now-forgotten versions of *Oliver Twist* (1933), *Great Expectations* (1934), and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1935) — the popularity of *David Copperfield* proved that audiences would show up to see films

based on classic literature. The movie received an Oscar nomination for the Best Picture of 1935, although it lost to another MGM epic, *Martyr on the Bounty*.

Buoyed by *Copperfield*'s success, Selznick decided to transfer another Dickens perennial to the screen, 1859's *A Tale of Two Cities*. A much shorter book than *David Copperfield*, Dickens' *Two Cities* also has a considerably more linear plot. Unfortunately, it lacks the sort of rich "Dickensian" characters and sense of humor that *Copperfield* had in abundance. Even Dickens noted the differences between the tones of each book, telling friends that *Great Expectations* — the follow-up novel to *Tale of Two Cities* — would have more light-hearted moments.

Set against the French Revolution, *A Tale of Two Cities* swirls around the actions of drunken, dissolute attorney Sydney Carton (played by Ronald Colman, one of the few big stars of the time not under contract to a film studio). Although Carton has fallen in love with Lucie Manette (Elizabeth Allan again), complications arise when she becomes engaged to his good friend Charles Darnay (Donald Woods). Unfortunately, it turns out that Darnay is related to the notorious Marquis St. Evermonde (Basil Rathbone, in another villainous role), who once committed a terrible injustice against the late sister of the furiously knitting Madame DeFarge (Blanche Yurka).

When the Revolution takes off in earnest, DeFarge is hell-bent on gaining revenge on *all* of the Evermondes, including Darnay and his young daughter. This leads Carton to make the ultimate sacrifice, climaxing in one of the most famous closing lines in all of literature: "It is a far, far better thing that I do... than I have ever done..."

Of course, *A Tale of Two Cities* also has one of the most famous opening lines

in all of British literature ("It was the best of times; it was the worst of times"). This lavish film version features some of the best moments in any Selznick production — as well as, if not some of the worst, some of the silliest, thanks to the decisions of director Jack Conway.

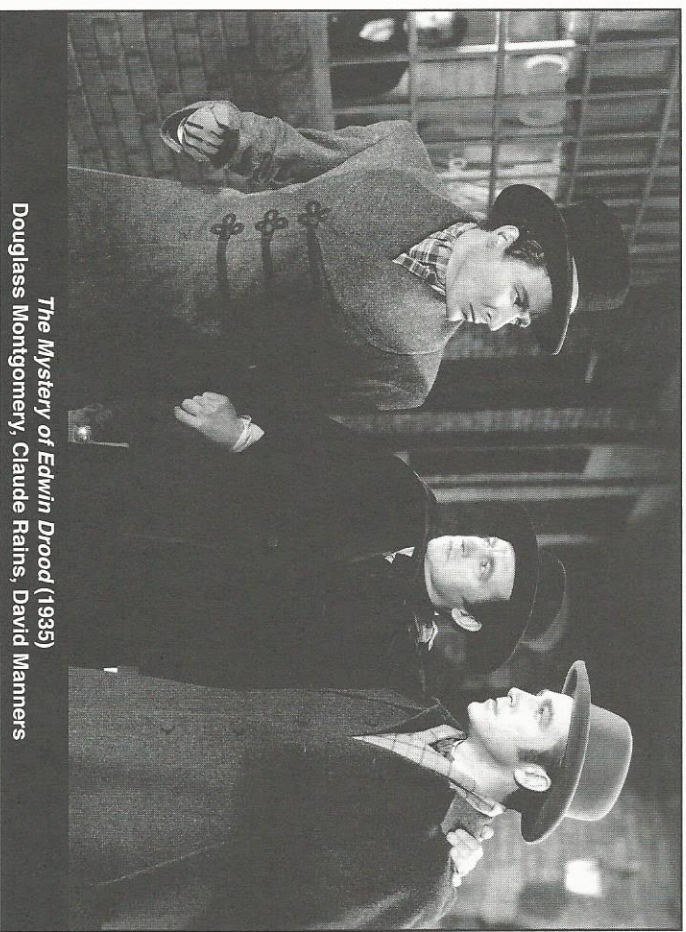
If his name doesn't ring a bell, there's a reason for that. Conway was an old MGM stalwart, churning out dozens of movies over the decades. Virtually all of them — except for *Two Cities* and the 1936 screwball comedy *Libeled Lady* — are rather forgettable.

Although *Two Cities* was released some 11 months after *David Copperfield*, it often seems like a much older film. The use of disconcerting sped-up footage during some of the action sequences recalls, of all things, *The Little Rascals*, and Selznick's insistence on super-imposed silent-movie-style intertitles on the screen ("Blood, Blood, BLOOD!") too often comes off as cheesy.

Still, in its best moments *A Tale of Two Cities* is a stirring, epic production, with some astounding scenes (like the storming of the Bastille), most of which were produced by Val Lewton (who later produced *Cat People* and several other classic horror films for RKO) and directed by Jacques Tourneur.

Like *David Copperfield*, Selznick's production of *A Tale of Two Cities* was nominated for two Oscars — Best Editing (for Claude Ravig) and Best Picture — and like *Copperfield*, the *Two Cities* movie lost the Best Picture honors to another MGM spectacular, their three-hour musical *The Great Ziegfeld*.

A Tale of Two Cities differs from *Copperfield* in that it is not stuffed with memorable star turns, although Ronald Colman (minus his usual mustache) is impressive. The best performance in the movie may well be the terrifying



The Mystery of Edwin Drood (1935)
Douglass Montgomery, Claude Rains, David Manners

UNIVERSAL PICTURES/PHOTOFEST

Lucile LaVerne as the appropriately named Vengeance, a hideous old hag who befriends Madame DeFarge. If LaVerne's cackle sounds familiar, it's because she was the voice and (at least partially) the model for the wicked witch in Walt Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Isabel Jewell (*Lost Horizon*) also has a moving turn as a terrified aristocrat who finds comfort with Carton in their last moments together. This scene, of course, leads to the unforgettable finale, where the camera (in what was probably an optical effect, since crane shots were pretty rare before *Gone*



A Tale of Two Cities (1935)
Isabel Jewell, Ronald Colman

MGM/PHOTOFEST

With the Wind's legendary "street of dying men" sequence) tracks upward above the gallows, above the streets of Paris and into the heavens, as we hear Colman recite the novel's final line. It's truly as moving as it is in the book.

The success of *David Copperfield* and *A Tale of Two Cities* (combined with the success of *Anna Karenina*, starring Greta Garbo) probably convinced Selznick to leave MGM and establish Selznick International Studios in 1936, where he produced *Nothing Sacred*, *Portrait of Jennie* and *Gone With the Wind*. But

those landmark movies might never have happened without Selznick's successful Dickens productions — movies which proved that the British weren't the only ones who could turn their classic literature into memorable motion pictures.

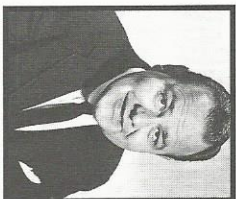
Hollywood did Dickens proud. ■
To hear the writings of Charles Dickens as adapted for radio, tune in to Those Were the Days on November 30 and to Radio's Golden Age on December 22.



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"I've done for the most part pretty much what I intended — I ended up doing comedy, writing and painting. I've had a ball. And as I get older, I just become an older kid."

— Jonathan Winters



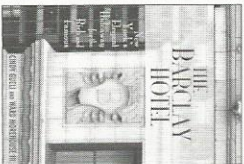
Jonathan Winters
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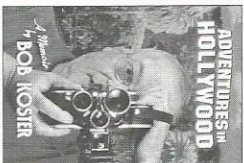
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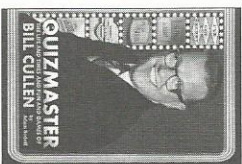
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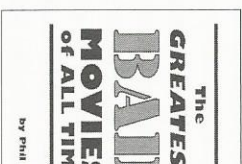
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THAT AMBER GLOW...

75 years ago, the Martians landed in New Jersey.

What followed was the scariest radio show of all time.

BY TIM WELDON

Picture an October evening in an America seventy-five years ago — a nation between the wars, with families enjoying the nightfall, huddled around a cathedral-shaped box from which ethereal voices flowed and whose signal was a solitary orb of light. Anxious and innocent, all await a thrill on this eve of All Hallows' Eve — and they would be thrilled as the autumnal listening habits of millions of listeners landed on the scheme of a twenty-three-year-old prankster: Orson Welles' dramatized, modified rendition of H.G. Wells' 40-year-old novel *The War of the Worlds* would forever brand the young actor/director as the entertainment world's top flimflam man.

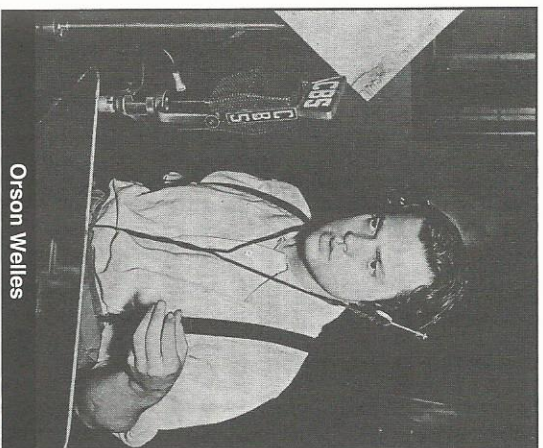
It would also make this night the scariest in American radio history.

The United States of the 1930s was a country of radios and radio listeners. Eight million radios alone were sold in 1936; by 1939, more than three out of four households owned one. Radio brought Americans the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby, President Roosevelt's "fireside chats," the tragic Hindenburg crash, and the alarming news from Nazi Germany.

Tim Weldon is a professor of Philosophy at the University of St. Francis in Joliet, Illinois.

On the evening of October 30, 1938, some 32 million Americans were listening to the radio. An estimated six million listened to one of the medium's newer programs: *The Mercury Theatre on the Air*. The show starred Orson Welles, familiar to Americans from his recent appearance on the cover of *Time* magazine — and even more familiar as the secretive Lamont Cranston of radio's signature mystery, *The Shadow* (the show's theme music, Camille Saint Saens' haunting "Omphale's Spinning Wheel," is memorable enough in itself). Welles' *Mercury Theatre* series debuted in July 1938 with an eerie but literate version of *Dracula*. On this pre-Halloween night, Welles decided to deliver a sustained frisson by offering the next best thing to a vampire: a Martian.

Only a week prior to the broadcast, script writer Howard Koch (who would win an Oscar in 1944 for the screenplay of *Casablanca*) was given the mission of transforming *War of the Worlds* into an hour-long radio drama. The subject matter — a Martian invasion of England — was great fodder for fight. Science fiction master Ray Bradbury wrote that "*The War of the Worlds* is a nightmare vision of humanity's conquest — one that inspired paranoia in all its forms throughout the twentieth century." The opening sentences of Wells' novel confirms as much:



No one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own; that as men busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinised and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinise the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water.

It was a paranoiac's relay, from Wells' literary invasion to Welles' dramatized invasion of America's eastern coast. Even the legal department at CBS called Welles' project too believable and demanded changes in the pre-broadcast script. Clearly, there weren't enough — in fact, within minutes after going on the air the scene was set for All Hallows havoc — literally — on this night and for years to come.

October 30, 1938 was to be just another Sunday night in front of the radio. Upon this notion Welles set his stratagem of creative contrast: spend but a few minutes to lull the audience into the normalcy

of what they expected from a broadcast, then lower the boom.

While a majority of the radio audience listened to the beloved comedy of Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, Welles' broadcast began with ho-hum entertainment befitting the time, as an unnamed announcer (actually Dan Seymour) invited listeners to "the Meridian room in the Park Plaza in New York City, we bring you the music of Ramon Raquello and his orchestra."

In fact, Welles' fabricated band and leader (actually musical director Bernard Herrmann) didn't even get to finish their second song, the ever popular "Star Dust." The remote was interrupted a number of times for "breaking news," culminating in the announcement that all Red Planet hell had broken loose in the form of a "meteor" landing in the rural town of Grovers Mill. Koch chose the destination by closing his eyes and letting a pencil drop on a map of New Jersey. The announcement prepared the audience for Welles' character, the "noted" and "world famous Professor" Richard Pierson of the "Princeton Observatory" — who guaranteed the audience that the chance of life on Mars was "a thousand to one."

Hence, all ears were on the "live broadcasts" from Grovers Mill, wherein the voices of sham country folk and newscaster Carl Phillips (Frank Readick, who studied Herb Morrison's account of the Hindenburg explosion) sold the audience the contagion of credulity. Lo and behold, the announcer informed us, this was no meteor but some sort of Martian craft. The show continued to climb the ladder of tension with further revelations, from "the curious humming sound coming from inside the object," to Phillips' proclamations "good heavens, something's wriggling out of the shadows," and "Ladies and Gentlemen, it's indescrutable. I can

hardly force myself to keep looking at it.” He did. Emerging, the Martians were as horrifying — “eyes black and bee-shaped, mouths dripping saliva” — as their lethal intentions. All who approached them met with an earth-scorching “heat ray.” With the wonderful effect of intermittent dead air, the casualties began to mount and Martian mayhem spread: Buffalo, St. Louis and Chicago were also being invaded.

The broadcast teetered from “Professor” in his “emergency observation post” to various crisis figures, a “Brigadier General” and the “Secretary of the Interior” (actor Kenny Delmar, who was coached by Welles to sound like President Roosevelt). The “urgent need for calm” amidst “the vanguard of an invading army from Mars” was followed by the suggestion to don gas masks.

As scares go, it didn’t get any better. The broadcast turns on the image of a desolate New York City, save for “Professor” Pierson, a shell-shocked, knife-wielding soldier, and Martians! Welles was at his melodramatic best when strolling and soliloquizing through the Holland Tunnel, Canal Street, and Times Square: “My wife, my colleagues, my students, my books, my observatory, my... my world... where are they? Did they ever exist? Am I Richard Pierson?”

By the time our host makes his way to Central Park, the gruesome finale unfolds as otherwise harmless blackbirds were now feeding on the carrion of our erstwhile invaders. No apocalyptic battles were necessary, only the subtlety of divine intervention: The Martians were vulnerable to simple bacteria. Thus, the most frightening broadcast in radio history ended — at least on the air — in the most sedate manner. Welles’ spoiler of an epilogue followed as he assured the audience that the broadcast had “no further

significance than as a holiday offering... if your doorbell rings and nobody’s there, that was no Martian... it’s Halloween.”

For some, it was a listening treat unlike any other, for the more innocent (and perhaps gullible), it was the dirtiest of tricks.

That Welles’ broadcast could have — and should have — been received as any thing other than mere entertainment is a mystery. From the outset, CBS radio announced that the show for the night was just that: a radio show. Even taking into consideration that an estimated fifty percent of *The Mercury Theatre’s* listening audience tuned in late, a brief intermission (which included the reminder that this was a performance), Welles’ qualifying epilogue and the final CBS radio sign-off should have been cold water enough. It wasn’t.

In his 1940 book, *Invasion from Mars: a Study in the Psychology of Panic*, Hadley Cantril (a real Princeton University professor) estimated that at least 1.7 million listeners to *War of the Worlds* believed it to be real, while slightly more than a million others “panicked mildly” at some time during the broadcast.

Examples of both groups abounded nationwide. Next day headlines from two New York City newspapers read “Fake Radio Wars Stir Terror through the U.S.” and “Radio Listeners in Panic, Taking War Drama as Fact.” A Chicago newspaper ran a photo of a woman with a broken arm — the result of her attempt to flee on foot from the Martians. Coast-to-coast and into Canada, public authorities and the media were burdened with urgent calls and desperate queries.

Authors Brian Holmsten and Alex Lubertozzi described the general frenzy: “Women wept in front of their radios; so did their husbands. Everywhere, people ran into the streets, unsure where to go

or what to do. Many took to their cars, speeding around like mad and covering their faces with wet towels to protect themselves from the gas.”

No city experienced this more than Grovers Mill: “Some of the Grovers Mill locals actually fired shots at what they believed to be one of the Martians rising up on its giant metal legs.” The “Martian” turned out to be a windmill. George H. Earle, the governor of neighboring Pennsylvania, even volunteered to send troops to New Jersey to defeat the invading Martians.

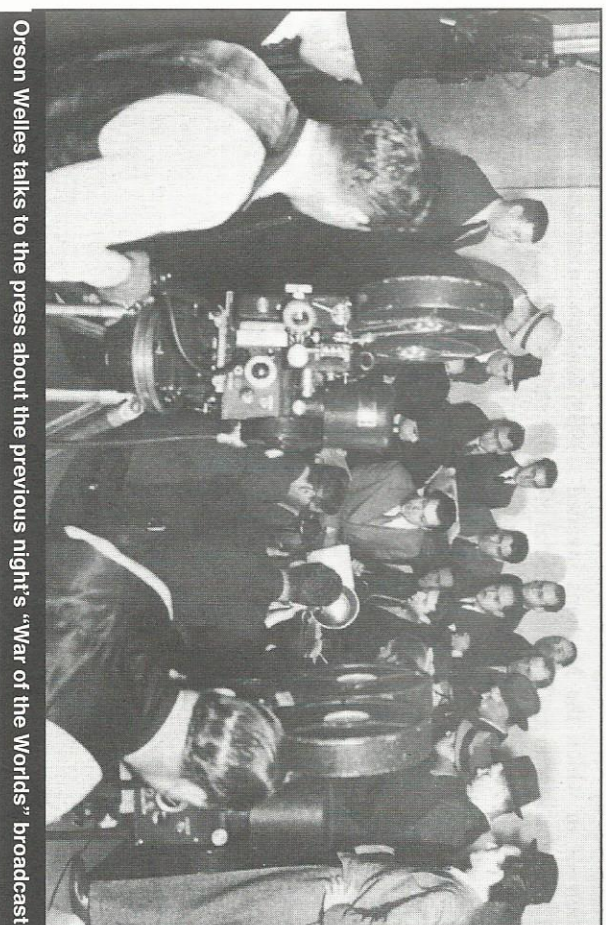
In actuality, some hospitals did treat people for shock and the police did have to field questions and control crowds, but in the end not a single life was lost — and there was no significant property damage. Privately, the now-infamous Welles did have to fork over for a pair of shoes, following a complaint from peeved listener George Bates of Massachusetts:

When those things landed, I thought the best thing to do was go away, so I

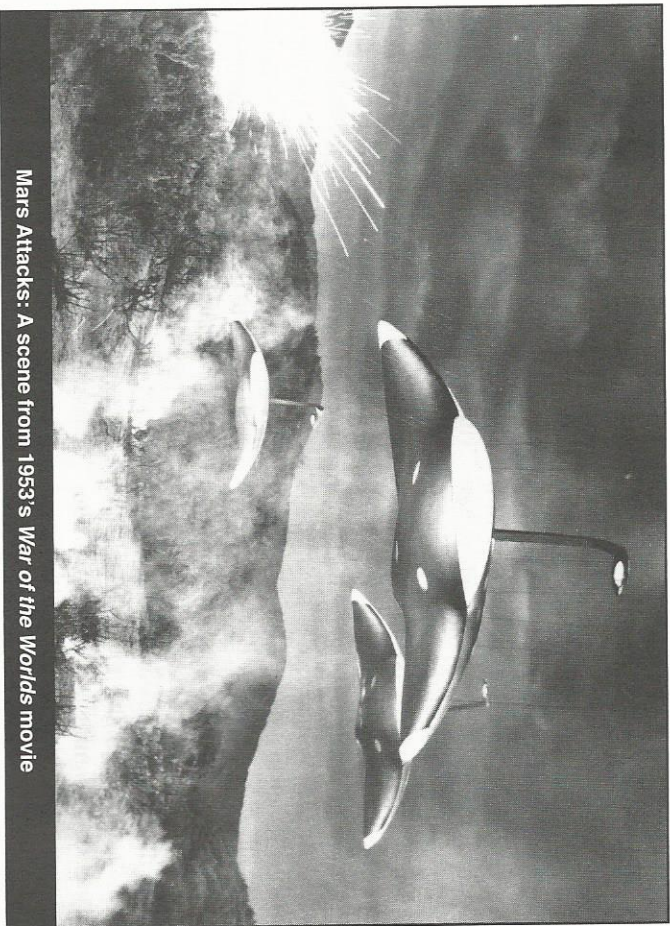
took \$3.25 out of my savings and bought a ticket. After I had gone sixty miles I heard it was a play. Now I don’t have any money left for the shoes I was saving up for. Would you please have someone send me a pair of black shoes, size 9-B?

In the years that followed, copycat broadcasts and modified versions of *War of the Worlds* produced a range of civil unrest, at home and abroad. A 1944 broadcast in Santiago, Chile caused mass panic. Five years later, as many as twenty people died and more than \$300,000 in property damage resulted in Quito, Ecuador after a radio presentation of a fake Martian invasion. In 1968, Buffalo, New York police and radio stations answered some four thousand phone calls on Halloween night during an “updated” broadcast of *War of the Worlds*, while the Canadian National Guard sent units to protect three different bridges.

Of course, not every version ended in chaos. In 1964, a radio station in Portland, Oregon, re-broadcast Howard Koch’s



Orson Welles talks to the press about the previous night’s “War of the Worlds” broadcast



Mars Attacks: A scene from 1953's *War of the Worlds* movie

PARAMOUNT PICTURES/PHOTOFEST

original script without incident; ten years later, a radio station in Providence, Rhode Island, presented a similar radio show with little residual panic.

From radio, *War of the Worlds* went to the big screen. George Pal's 1953 version — in which the Martians invaded California — won an Oscar for special effects. In 2005, Steven Spielberg produced an edgier interpretation, as the Martians invaded Bayonne, New Jersey. Television made two tries at *War of the Worlds*, a teleplay in 1957 and a short-lived series in 1988.

Rest assured, there will be more cinematic adaptations of Wells' novel, both on screen and DVD, but they won't — because they can't — match the fright and fun of Welles' broadcast.

Nearly three thousand years ago, long before the Zenith box, Homer's tales by the bonfire exposed society to the regal path between the listening ear and the mind's eye. This is especially true when

the subject is frightful. How much more fun it is to listen. How easy it is to admit that the imagination is matchless in its power to conjure, create, and entertain.

One could only wish to have been eight years old on that autumn night in 1938, looking up at the round, lit dial of the radio to experience the precious and haunting sounds, all coming from that amber glow. ■

Time in to Those Were the Days on October 26 to hear an afternoon of Orson Welles on radio — including the Mercury Theater on the Air production of "The War of the Worlds."

This fall, TWTD host Steve Darnall will present "Lights Out, Everybody: Mystery and Horror During the Golden Age of Radio" at a number of locations in the Chicagoland area. For a complete schedule of these presentations, visit www.nostalgia Digest.com or join the Nostalgia Digest group on Facebook!

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power of the imagination that radio unleashed.)

LINDEN, INDIANA — Thank you for an absolutely wonderful magazine. Even though my current subscription does not expire until March 2014, please continue/extend my enjoyment of your fine writing and creative articles for an additional two years.

Also... *Sports Illustrated* has nothing on *Nostalgia Digest* when it comes to classic, and classy, Swimsuit Issue. Your Summer 2013 issue was tops.

—LINDSAY D. CASPER

NEW HYDE PARK, NEW YORK — I enjoy your magazine very much!

—GARRY WILLBUR

FACEBOOK — Working on reading my Summer issue of the *Digest* and I must say that it is one of the best I've read! The night before my *Digest* came in the mail, I decided to watch an episode of the TV *Suspense* via YouTube. The first episode that popped up was "Dead Ernest" from 1949, I think. Maybe I am spoiled by how far TV has come or the high standards of movies in the 1940s, or maybe I was expecting it to be like *The Twilight Zone*, but it was horrible — mostly due to the primitive technology and methods. Anyway, I loved reading Wayne Klatt's article about the television version of *Suspense* the next day. A great coincidence to see the article.

—HENRY TCHOP

(ED. NOTE — More than one radio show learned the hard way that it was difficult to re-create that magic on television. Such is the

LAKEWOOD, COLORADO — I just found your publication at my local book store and I must say I love the layout. The size is just great. I'm sorry I didn't find this gem sooner; these types of magazine are very hard to find in this day and age. Thanks and I look forward to reading in the future.

—NED DEROSE

BRICK, NEW JERSEY — Love your magazine — keep up the good work!

—VIN MALONEY

TEMPE, ARIZONA — I believe this makes 30 years with the *Digest* and *Those Were the Days*. Still enjoy both after being in Arizona 20 years. Keep up the good work!

—FRANK BRAUN

WARRENVILLE, IL — What other magazine can you read cover to cover?!

—CHRIS HEDIN

CHICAGO — Enjoyed your interview with Patty McCormack [TWTD, March 30]. I remember her in the summer replacement show in the 1950s called *Peck's Bad Girl*. It was the first time I saw a show made on video tape, and I saw at the time it was live because it was so clean and clear. Marsha Hunt played her mother and I remember perhaps MacDonal Carey played her father. She was adorable! Every show is great — well-prepared and FUN. A joy to listen to — thanks for so many

And if you're on Facebook....

Please take a moment and join our *Nostalgia Digest* group! It's a chance to meet some like-minded listeners and get up-to-date news and information about *Those Were the Days* and *Nostalgia Digest*.

wonderful Saturdays.

—NICK NARDELLA

(ED. NOTE — According to the Internet Movie Database, *Peck's Bad Girl* ran for 14 episodes in 1959, with Wendell Corey as father Steve Peck.)

MOUNT PROSPECT, IL — My thanks for a most wonderful afternoon of jazz from the early years [TWTJD, May 25]. The four hours didn't miss a beat. Then the two hours of *Midwest Ballroom* made my day! It summed up a perfect program about the bands and vocalists of the past. Couldn't have been finer.

—DOROTHY BOTT

E-MAIL — Back in February, I wrote to you asking for a *Grand Central Station* show to celebrate the terminal's centenary. I'm very grateful that you not only granted my wish today [TWTJD, June 8], but played the show that was heard the week I was born.

As an aside, I have to tell you that for a good while after you took over TWTJD, my wife and I still referred to it as "Chuck's show." But last year I noticed that we were saying things to each other like, "What's on Steve's show today?" In our household, at least, you've officially arrived.

—JERRY STEMNOCK

CHICAGO — One of my favorite parts of listening to *Those Were the Days* every Saturday afternoon is when Ken Alexander reads the newspaper from bygone happy days. He hit upon two treasured memories of mine on June 15 when he mentioned The Forum cafeteria and the movie *The Thing From Another World*.

Mom, my brother Marvin and I always enjoyed going downtown to see the movies with stage shows, mostly at the Chicago Theatre. Mom would always treat us to lunch at the Forum before attending the shows. Ken read about their breakfasts, but they had great hot lunches. We loved the mashed potatoes and meat smothered in the most delicious gravy I've ever tasted. Years later, I worked with a gentleman who told me he worked at the Forum and their gravy was a secret recipe. I can believe that.

Regarding *The Thing*: Marvin and I couldn't wait to see this movie, wondering what "The Thing" was? We traveled downtown on the Addison bus, which took us down Sheridan Road to downtown Chicago and the Chicago Theater. If I remember correctly, "The Thing"

was actually a giant vegetable man, who I later found out was played by James Arness of *Gunsmoke* fame. In 1951, we didn't really know James Arness. I will never forget the excitement and anticipation of seeing the movie — and of course, there will never be another Forum Cafeteria. DELICIOUS!

Thanks for keeping my Saturdays so enjoyable and bringing me back to wonderful memories.

—ELVIRA K. CASTILLO

FACEBOOK — On my way home from work yesterday I listened to the June *Nostalgia Digest* Podcast featuring Bob and Ray. Another great job, Steve. Just a couple of nights before, my wife and I were watching an old episode of *Newhart* where Bob Elliott played Bob Newhart's dad — which is interesting because in real life Bob Elliott is only seven years older than Bob Newhart.

—TERRY BAKER

NOSTALGIA DIGEST

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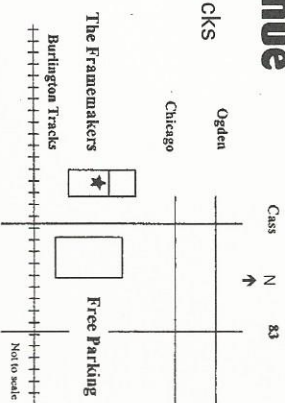
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