

# Old Time Radio **DIGEST**

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**JACK  
WEBB**

# Old Time Radio DIGEST

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# Dragnet: Radio's Quintessential Cop Show

by Gary A. Yoggy

*"This is the city — Los Angeles, California. I work here. I'm a cop. It was Wednesday, April 9. It was warm in Los Angeles. We were working the day watch out of Robbery-Homicide Division. The boss is Lt. Ianone. My partner is Officer Frank Smith. My name's Friday."*

Thus opened the most famous cop show in the history of radio — or television. Jack Webb's introduction was quickly followed by George Fenneman's announcement that *"the story you are about to hear is true. Only the names have been changed to protect the innocent."*

Each episode closed with an explanation of the final disposition of the case:

*"On December 28, trial was held in Department 184, Superior Court of the state of California, for the county of Los Angeles. . . The defendant was tried and convicted of armed robbery. He was sentenced to a term of not less than five nor more than 15 years. He is now serving that sentence in state prison, San Quentin, California."*

The man behind broadcasting's quintessential police drama was, of course, Jack Webb, who created, directed, produced and starred in Dragnet. The stories had the ring of reality because they were based on real cases from the files of the Los Angeles Police Department. In fact, Webb was so revered by the LAPD, that when he died in 1982 at the age of 62, flags were flown at half-staff at police headquarters in Parker Center and at stations throughout the city. (It should be noted that a more tangible Webb legacy to the LAPD is the Police Academy Trust Fund to which he donated 6% of the profit he made on the first broadcast of each episode of

Dragnet and later Adam-12. Two major buildings at the academy, where LAPD officers are trained, were built with the proceeds from the fund.)

In the first two years on radio, Dragnet won five awards and was runner-up twice for one of broadcasting's most coveted honors, the Peabody Award. Webb's picture appeared on the cover of Time Magazine in 1954, less than 3 years after a television version of the series had joined its radio counterpart. Ratings in both broadcast media soared: by October 1953, Dragnet had become the second most popular show on television, and was number three in the Nielsen's in 1954 and eighth in 1955. Even today, over 40 years later, it rates 22nd on Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh's list of the most popular shows in television history. Following its original radio and television success, it generated two theatrical films, a series of paperback books, and returned to the air again in 1967 for a new updated three year television run. (A film parody was made in 1987 starring Tom Hanks and Dan Ackroyde.)

This phenomenal success belies the fact of Webb's humble and rather ordinary beginnings. Born John Randolph Webb on April 2, 1920 in Santa Monica, California, he was raised by his mother and maternal grandmother after his parents divorced over religious differences. A serious bout of pneumonia at the age of 11 left Jack with asthma, and his mother felt it necessary to treat him as an invalid thereafter, depriving him of physical activities. This, in turn, led Jack to investigate the Los Angeles Public Library, where he devoured nearly every book he could get his hands on — especially those about air combat in



Jack Webb and Herb Ellis

World War I. (He later tried to become a pilot in the Army Air Corps, but "washed out" after failing his solo attempt to fly a B-26 bomber.)

In high school, young Webb became immersed in art and dramatics. He enjoyed performing in comedy skits and had a knack for drawing cartoons in the school newspaper. His greatest achievement, however, was being elected class president. Following graduation in 1938, he was offered a scholarship to study art at the University of Southern California. Jack aspired to become a caricaturist for Walt Disney, but his family's poverty forced him to take odd jobs, first as a clerk, and then a store

manager. In 1943 he enlisted in the Army where he was permitted to pursue his interest in communications.

When the war ended, Webb decided to try his hand at radio acting. After a stint as a disc jockey and announcer, his first dramatic experience came in an obscure, short-lived program entitled The Man Inside, a fifteen-minute serial broadcast daily over the NBC Blue Network originating from San Francisco's KGO studios. Webb played the alter ego of a meek little man named John Nelson who commented on Nelson's feeble attempts to deal with the daily problems of life.

After the demise of The Man Inside, Webb met a young writer named James

E. Moser. The two worked together on a KGO series entitled One Out of Seven, a program which attempted to imitate the prestigious March of Time by dramatizing a major news story every week. One Out of Seven didn't survive much longer than The Man Inside, but, undaunted, Webb decided to try his luck in a comedy-variety show format called The Jack Webb Show in 1946.

When it became clear that no matter how much Webb might have preferred comedy over straight drama, he simply didn't have the talent for it, he joined another young ex-G.I., Richard L. Breen, to create a hard-boiled detective series called Pat Novak for Hire. Novak was a character right out of the pages of the pulp magazines of the forties — in fact, the show's emphasis on violence and sex often got them into trouble with the ABC censors. The action, however, was fast paced, and the public responded favorably. Because of the controversy over his use of rather "colorful" language, Breen left San Francisco to pursue writing opportunities in Hollywood — and Webb decided to follow him.

Moving in with his mother, Webb found work as a freelance actor on such crime and adventure shows as The Whistler, This Is Your FBI and Escape (in such memorable stories as "A Shipment of Mute Fate" and "The Log of the Evening Star"). By early 1947 Breen and Webb were working together again in a summer replacement series called Johnny Madero, Pier 23. The show was similar to Pat Novak — same locale, same type of character who would do anything (legal, that is) for a few extra bucks and as hard-boiled as ever. This resulted in a brief network revival of Pat Novak for Hire during the 1949 season.

Soon Webb was playing the title role in yet another detective series, Jeff Regan, Investigator, this time for CBS. However Jeff Regan's scripts were written by E. Jack Neuman, and while Regan was every bit as cynical and hard-boiled as Novak and Madero had

been, Neuman didn't have the flair for writing pulp fiction that Breen had. Consequently, Webb abandoned the series after a few months.



*It pays to collect! His collection of old jazz records and a 1920 cornet resulted in the airing of Pete Kelly's Blues.*

During this period, Webb also sought work in films. His early roles were usually as thugs or killers (e.g., The Hollow Triumph, 1948; Dark City, 1950; Appointment With Danger, 1951), although his best screen role came when he drew critical acclaim as the cynical paraplegic in Fred Zinnemann's classic The Men in 1950. Of his film roles, however, none was more important to his future career than He Walked By Night in 1947. Although his role as Lee Jones, an actual LAPD crime lab technician, was small and incidental to the story, the film itself served as the creative impetus for Webb's creation of Dragnet. One day on the set, he idly asked Sergeant Marty Wynn, of the LAPD, a technical advisor on the film, about the

possibility of doing a radio program based on actual police cases. Wynn liked the idea, so Webb collected information about the workings of the police department, developed characters and a format, wrote a script and cut an audition record for NBC officials. (The term Dragnet came from the set of He Walked By Night — the movie concerned a manhunt, otherwise known in police terms, as a dragnet.) NBC decided to give it a summer tryout as a sustaining show (with no sponsor) while The Life of Riley was on hiatus.

Webb immediately went to C.B. Horrall, then chief of the Los Angeles Police Department, and asked for his cooperation. Horrall was pleased, telling Webb that he was "on the right track." By not making heroes of cops, Webb was reflecting the day to day drudgery of police work. Horrall promised Webb the complete cooperation of the LAPD.

The show was launched on Friday, June 3, 1949 at 8 pm from NBC's Los Angeles studios. The reaction of the network's executives, however, was far from enthusiastic. They objected to almost everything about the new show: its underplaying, slow pace, attention to detail, lack of gunplay — those very things that Webb had painstakingly added to make it different from all the other cops-and-robbers shows on the air. Sweeping changes were ordered: "Speed it up! Let's have some action! Get actors who can act!"

Then on June 13, 1949, John Crosby, radio and television critic for the New York Herald Tribune, wrote a column praising Webb's innovative approach:

'Dragnet' is an astonishing cops-and-robbers job simply because nothing very astonishing happens on it. . . the show rings with an authenticity that I found absorbing. . . it's a healthy trend. The police have for years been depicted either as utter nincompoops or as Supermen of monstrous brains capable of taking apart four armed thugs single-handed.

In 'Dragnet' the two detectives are a couple of attractive, intelligent and

very hard-working young men who operate as a team, as detectives usually do. In place of the customary brilliance and derring-do, these two substitute thoroughness, a minute attention to details and enormous patience.

Quite a few crime shows now claim to be based on somebody or other files. Few of them sound as authentic as 'Dragnet.'

National Catholic Magazine, she said:

This is a carefully prepared, well-motivated, excellently produced series. It is serious stuff with a serious purpose.

The aim is to acquaint the listener with the techniques used by modern police departments in apprehending the criminal. Early in each program, we learn of the commission of one or a series of crimes. With the two stock characters, detectives on the L.A. force, we both find the criminal and round out the evidence against him. The reasoning behind the solution of crimes is in no amateur detective masquerade here. This is business. And by logical, relentless steps and much hard work, we get our man. It is not surprising that many police departments throughout the country are making listening to 'Dragnet' either optional or required homework for their detective forces. It is a clear-cut lesson in methodology told through the most effective radio terms — good writing, good acting, good sound and music, and best of all, a good story to touch the heart and sharpen the mind.

A few weeks later Crosby again devoted his column to Dragnet entitling it, "A Couple of Honest Cops in an Honest Show," and referred to the show as "the most honest of the detective programs. . . anywhere on the air" because "the emphasis is not on brilliant deduction," but "on painstaking detection." Crosby concluded his review by pointing out that:

. . . this pair of detectives is refreshingly different from the Fat Man, the Thin Man, the Falcon and the rest of that mob. For one thing, they

have names rather than sobriquets. They are tight-lipped, laconic men, rather more soft-boiled than hard-boiled, and they are given more to conscientiousness than to brilliance. Never, never do they burst into flights of rhetoric. . .

Even the usually super-critical Variety reviewer had something good to say about Dragnet describing the series as "hard-hitting. . . with solid appeal for addicts." He concluded:

The police characters are tough and terse, making up for their lack of sleuthing brilliance by assembly line methods of crime-busting. In this respect, 'Dragnet' probably gives a more authentic picture than the usual crime meller.

In the wake of this flood of critical acclaim the network "experts" decided to rethink their original objections and permitted Webb to make the show his way. The rest of the story of Dragnet, as the cliché goes, is history — covering 8 years on radio (and 8 years on television in its initial version). Still, if the ratings hadn't drastically improved, the show might have died in spite of the critics.

What was truly unique about Dragnet, as the critics correctly perceived, was Webb's emphasis on realism. The stories were based on real cases from LAPD files. Any officer who had an idea for a story could submit it, and if Webb liked the idea, the officer got to work with the writer and make some extra money. The final script was always submitted to the police department for technical corrections. The City Attorney's office then checked for legal implications, and a policeman from the appropriate division stood by during the filming to check on authenticity.

Webb dedicated himself to the role of Joe Friday, studying police techniques and terminology, accompanying detectives and patrolman on their assigned cells and attending classes at the Policy Academy in Elysian Park.

To heighten the show's sense of reality, Webb used real Los Angeles

place names — San Pedro, Echo Park Lake, South Ardmere Avenue — and the names of actual LAPD officers, all of whom spoke in station house jargon: "MO," "APB," "R and I," "drunk tank," "bumper-to-bumper tail," "dust for latent prints," "book him on a 211." Progress through each episode was marked by Webb's narration: "1:10 PM. We returned to the office. . . 2:40 PM. The captain agreed to arrange. . . 7 PM. We briefed. . . 10:30 PM. The stakeout continued."

The most famous line in the show, "just the facts ma'am," captured both the mood of Dragnet and the businesslike personality of Joe Friday, the bachelor, with no past and no personal life — laconic and unflappable.



*A moment of relaxation with the family canine in one hand, and a cool drink in the other, is just the pause that gathers new energy and sends Jack studio bound.*

Webb realized that sound effects were essential to the suspension of disbelief and he employed a crew of five sound effects men, (who were called upon to produce over 300 sound effects in one half-hour show) although the usual number was only two. He instructed them to throw out the assortment of filter microphones, echo chambers, and catalogued machine-gun effects that were standard equipment in large radio studios. Instead his technicians took a tape recorder and went after sound in its native state.

If the script ended for a gun battle on a roof, two men with guns would go to the top of a Los Angeles building and shoot it out for the benefit of the tape recorder and startled pedestrians below. If a telephone conversation was to be overheard, they would plug into an actual circuit set up especially for them. Webb experimented with many technical methods to heighten realism and the height of that technical virtuosity came when a sequence was sustained for almost 3 minutes by



sound effects alone — with no dialogue.

The third radio episode marked a milestone in the evolution of Dragnet for two reasons: first, because it brought Webb and writer Jim Moser (who was to author nearly half of Dragnet's radio scripts) back together; and because it was the premier broadcast of Walter Schumann's celebrated signature, "Danger Ahead." Better known as the "Dragnet March," the four opening notes — "dum de dum dum," will forever be identified with Jack Webb and Dragnet. This instrumental theme replaced a more traditional march composed by William Lava. (At one point there was a lawsuit declaring that the four note theme was stolen from the soundtrack of The Killers, 1946, but it was later thrown out of court.)

Gradually Dragnet began to build an audience, and with its rise in the Hooper ratings, Jack Webb's fame also grew. In fact, Webb became an unofficial spokesman for many police organizations. As recently as May, 1992, nearly ten years after Webb's death and 22 years since the last original Dragnet was broadcast, an LA Times writer called the series, "the ultimate symbiosis between the LAPD and the media." (One 1955 episode was devoted entirely to an orientation tour of LAPD headquarters.)

Dragnet cops were also incorruptible — unlike some cops portrayed in more recent TV shows and movies, and they did not abuse their power or their public. They always followed correct police procedure and the tenets of the U.S. Constitution without question. Even violence was minimized on Dragnet. Webb once boasted that in the first 60 episodes, there were only 3 fights and 15 shots fired. In fact, Dragnet was more than mere entertainment. It was also a recruiting tool for the LAPD.

The radio show had become such a success by 1951 that Webb decided "to find out what we can't get away with in television," but Dragnet on television is another story (or article) and does not

concern us here. Tragically, however, just as the show came to TV, Barton Yarborough, who had played Friday's partner, Sgt. Ben Romero, died of a heart tttack at the age of 50. (Webb had the character die of the same cause on the radio version in "The Big Sorrow," which included a touching tribute to Yarborough.) Friday's partner changed over the succeeding months (as played by Barney Phillips, Herb Ellis, Vic Perrin, Martin Milner, Harry Bartell, Ken Peters and Ken Patterson) until Ben Alexander became Officer Frank Smith in September 1952.

One final note of interest to readers: What was Jack Webb's favorite Dragnet case? What excited his interest most? What presented the biggest challenge? After the first 116 cases had been broadcast in January 1955, Webb wrote the following response to these questions in Pageant Magazine:

I think of four candidates. There was the middle-aged woman forger who wrote bum checks — because she wanted to give the money to charity! There was the lady kidnapper, who stole a baby out of her frantic longing for children. There was the twelve-year-old boy who opened his Christmas present — a .22 rifle — one day early and accidentally killed his best friend with it.

You'll note that none of these dealt with "criminals" in the usual sense. There are no deep-eyed villains in the plot. 'Dragnet' crimes are often "petty" in a sense, dealing with small robberies, child neglect, traffic infringements. The best 'Dragnet' shows are good, I believe, because they focus not on the crime, but on the people, and the most fascinating whodunit of all — what motivates people?

My favorite case of all however, is a script we did about two years ago. We called it our "Accident Trilogy." There's no plot, as such. No mystery about who committed the crime. It's a series of vignettes of entirely routine cases, taken from the files of the Accident Investigation Division of the Los

Angeles Police Department. Our object was to show the horror, and the heart-break, which attends a traffic accident, the kind of commonplace murder that happens every day on U.S. highways. . .

Fans of today's cop shows should realize that without Jack Webb's Dragnet, there might have been no NYPD Blue, Homicide, Life on the Streets, or Law and Order. It is surely the standard by which all police dramas will be judged. . . and that's "just the facts, ma'am."

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# Information and Help to the OTR Collector - Part 4

THE LOG: An Essential Tool For The Collector - Revisited (Again)

by Terry G. G. Salomonson

I wrote about logs some years ago, and again in the booklet "A Technical Guide To Collecting Old Time Radio Programs." If you are not new to this world of OTR (Old Time Radio), please forgive me if some of this information may sound a little repetitive. It is designed to help everyone, but at the same time, also be as informative as possible to the brand new collector. Some of these new collectors may have started since this was originally published, hence the title. . . "Revisited (Again)."

Collecting old time radio programs is perhaps one of the best past times and most entertaining and enjoyable hobbies that I know of. Some of us, however, attach mild importance to the degree of seriousness that we go about it. I don't think that any of the readers of this series do, as the reason you more than likely follow these installments is because you are serious about collecting and want to do it right from the beginning. We collect favorite memories from our listening past, or if we are younger, collect our newly "found" favorites of radio's past. Old or young alike, we collect for the same basic reason — for the sheer pleasure of listening to these golden moments of early broadcasting. And while there is nothing wrong with this form of collecting, others of us, myself included, are very serious about preserving these programs as completely and correctly as possible. We are almost driven by the desire to possess everything.

Like all of you, I started collecting some years ago, just for the fun of it. The main idea was so that I could enjoy these programs myself over and over again, and maybe also to play these broadcasts for my children when they

grew older. After all, there is precious little being presented over the airwaves today that they can enjoy, or later that will be looked upon as golden or even classic in broadcasting. How about the 13 episodes of STAR WARS, or the 13 episodes of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK that aired over PBS? Would you consider these in the categories of golden or classic? Probably not. How about Ray Bradbury's BRADBURY 13 that aired, again, over PBS, or Garrison Keillor's A PRAIRIE HOME COMPANION? Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not criticizing these programs, but I think you see my point.

Shortly after starting into this hobby of collecting, I got very caught up in it and have since devoted much more time than I probably should have. Then again, don't we usually spend a lot of time involved in a pursuit we love and are interested in? But I guess my devotion is a little more than the "average collector," if there is such a person. With this background information in mind, let's get into a part of collecting old time radio programs that I think is an important and very helpful tool to any collector — the log.

You may have a couple of good tape recorders, patch cables, headset or speakers, an amplifier, maybe an equalizer, plenty of blank tape, and have memorized the shortest distance to and from the post office. You might be a semi-serious or a very serious collector. But it just might be that you're still missing one of the basic tools of collecting: the log. If you collect purely just for fun, then a log may not mean a lot to you, otherwise, how can you build a serious collection or collect a particular series if you don't



know what programs were broadcast, when they were broadcast, and in what order they were aired, and how many were done. Also, in the case of a story or script that was repeated, who did it first, second, third and so on. A good example of this is "The Fourth Man" in the ESCAPE series. This was broadcast three times, but the cast credits changed with each broadcast. Another in the same series was "A Shipment of Mute Fate," which was done four times, again with different cast credits. Do you collect only one as an example of the program and ignore the others? I saw one collector who listed the titles to the above broadcasts, and just listed all the dates after the one copy of the script that he collected. Without the cast credits AND a log of the broadcasts, there is just no way of knowing which broadcast he owned, and its correct airing date.

For these and other reasons, logs are important. Can you imagine trying to collect stamps or coins, not knowing what was printed or minted, how many, or when? That part is easy to say. The hard part is finding or authoring the

logs. Clearly not an easy task. Also, you must be aware that sometimes there is a lot of misinformation in logs. I have seen two logs on the SUSPENSE series that were supposed to be put out by CBS, the network that aired the series, and they didn't agree 100% with each other. Some logs are accurate with the information they contain, but they just contain all the information they should. A few titles may be left out here and there, and so on.

In 1985, I released my log on THE LONE RANGER radio broadcasts. There are 3,379 broadcast dates listed, information on 2,603 recorded programs, plus two special LONE RANGER related shows, a synopsis of the first 713 programs, and 2,199 script titles listed with the authors credited for each script, from the first broadcast. At the time, only about 10% of the log remained to be worked on. In addition to the titles and dates of broadcasts, I included broadcast numbers and transcription numbers. I mention all of this not as an advertisement for the log, but to let collectors know that logs are available which have had a lot of time and careful research put into them. During my research, which took over seven years at that time on this particular program, I found misnumbering, skipped numbers, double listings of numbers with different titles and double listings of titles with different numbers, and titles listed in the wrong order of broadcast. There were also special "mini-series" and sequences within the run of the show that were not clearly identified, etc.

I stated above that only about 10% of the log remained to be worked on. That 10% is now complete and it turned out to be the most difficult to do. More on this in the next installment of this series.

All of this takes time to sort out and prove. One of the very best sources of correct information that I had access to was a handwritten log that was kept broadcast by broadcast at WXYZ.

I didn't even know of its existence until I paid a visit to Special Recordings in Detroit, Michigan in 1983. In this old yellowed paper log were titles to programs aired, but that had not even appeared in the copyright listings of the U.S. Copyrights Office. I feel that I have found and put together the most accurate LONE RANGER log so far, but I do realize that there are going to be some errors. There has been a LONE RANGER log circulating for sale that starts in the middle of 1940 and goes through the end of the live broadcasts in 1954. This reflects that the only research done was done in the copyright listings and no other areas were explored beyond that area. It has a lot of errors within its pages, but was a good try. My log starts on January 31, 1933 with the first show, and the copyright listing errors have been eliminated. My update log will also include broadcasts beyond 09/03/54 and several new cross-reference sections.

Can we ever eliminate all the errors in logs? Probably not unless the program was a short run like the 40 shows of FORT LARAMIE or the 41 broadcasts of FRONTIER GENTLEMAN. You may ask why can't we get 100% accurate information? Because with all the people that I have talked to over the years that were producers, directors, announcers,

actors, etc., I have heard the same statement repeatedly made over and over in many different ways, that most of what was done when it was being done wasn't considered to be very important at the time, and who would have thought that it would be in later years? So, records that were kept are very poor in most cases, if any records were kept at all. The importance of the show was today only, while it was on the air, not tomorrow. Just this week's work week and broadcast schedule. That was, and is, a real shame. The only thing worse was all of the programs that were and sometimes are still being destroyed, and in some cases, intentionally. One example is all of the VIC AND SADE broadcasts that were destroyed. If it wasn't for the efforts of collectors, we wouldn't have the ten or so reels of VIC AND SADE that we have today. And some of those can't be dated — NO LOGS!!

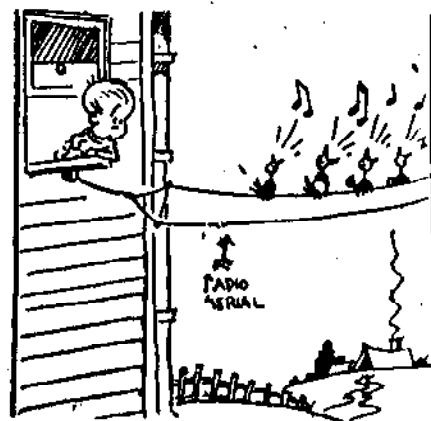
Commonly collected programs like LUX RADIO THEATRE, SUSPENSE, FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY, etc. have complete or fairly complete logs and dating. But as more and more of the lesser known programs are being discovered or released from larger collections, the need really arises for logs. I have 36 programs of THE BLUE BEETLE. As of yet, I haven't found out if there were more than these 36

programs. Also, this series started out as a 30-minute program, and then after the first twelve broadcasts, the stories were broadcast in two 15-minute episodes. Were there more than these 12 two-part stories? So far, I don't know. I know that Frank Lovejoy did the first four shows and another actor took over the role after that. Why? And who was the new voice of THE BLUE BEETLE? I don't know much more information about the series, but I am still looking.

I authored a log on MANHATTAN PATROL, which was first broadcast on June 10, 1932. Now someone might say, who cares? There aren't any programs left, or that are going around. And furthermore, who ever heard of the program? Well, they said "who cares?" about VIC AND SADE and FIBBER MCGEE AND MOLLY and a few other programs about ten to fifteen years ago when there were few of these shows around. But now a lot of collectors have been putting their collections together in order of broadcast. But, they couldn't do a good or thorough job of it if someone hadn't put together a log to start with, especially if one comes across the program information and then doesn't document it. What a waste!

Fifteen years ago someone wrote to me about my quest for a JACK BENNY

log. They asked the same question — "Why should I waste my time? There just aren't that many Bennys going around." Word at that time was that most of the entire JACK BENNY run was coming out, as it now has with more and more programs appearing every year, mostly thanks to the efforts of Don Aston. In 1985, a new JACK BENNY log was released, but more information still needed to be researched for Jack's first four or five years on the air. That way, someday, if someone discovers where all of THE CANADA DRY SHOW, THE CHEVROLET SHOW, and THE GENERAL TIRE PROGRAMS are, we will be able to properly place them in the right broadcast order. In 1990, John and Larry Gassman, with the help of Gary A. Dunn, issued their broadcast log for THE JACK BENNY SHOW. This log was based on the review of the actual Jack Benny Show scripts. Every script, with the exception of one or two, was used to compile this broadcast study of Jack Benny. This is definitely one of the better broadcast log attempts, and if you're interested in Jack Benny at all, a must guide for your collection. This log also contains a broadcast listing of Jack Benny's guest appearances on other programs. What about logs on AMOS 'N' ANDY, or THE FRED ALLEN SHOW? And how about





BOB BARCLAY — AMERICAN AGENT? (I have put together fifty broadcast dates, and the titles to fifty-one programs. Does anyone have any copies of this program?)

So as more shows are uncovered and started around the collector's circuit, it sure is nice to have a log to tell you if the program you have is the first, fifth, or forty-fifth program of the series or at least when it was broadcast. Does anyone have good airing dates for FAVORITE STORY? Probably not, as it was syndicated around the country. I do have some dates from the Radio Guides that I have, but I still need more.

It is hoped that the information in these logs will help everyone out to one degree or another in confirming dates and information you already have, adding information you didn't have, or correcting information you have that is wrong.

One good example of bad information I have seen in one collector's catalog was the listing of the I LOVE A MYSTERY series "Bury Your Dead, Arizona." It was listed as complete in six 30-minute shows, when, in fact, it was aired in fifteen 15-minute shows. Someone before this collector apparently cut all of the openings and closings off and put them together into a 30-minute format. When something like this gets out and is passed on from collector to collector and pyramids out around the country, it is very hard to stop and correct it. And this is when the misinformation starts and is very hard to stop.

If bad information is not stopped early enough, it becomes tomorrow's facts. There have been several new books published in recent years where you can see the same misleading and false information in one book after another. One book listed THE LONE RANGER first taking to the air in 1930. No way! But, without a way of getting this information either corrected or proven wrong in ten years, it's fact. Maybe the authors don't take the time to proofread the galley proofs that

would show the typographical errors, or they are quickly compiling information from other published works. Logs really help you, the collector, in getting through the misinformation that is out there.

In summary, logs help everyone. They help the beginning and even the older and advanced collector. I have run into a few people that have collected for several years who didn't know anything like a log existed. Logs like MANHATTAN PATROL are around in hopes that in the future they will be of value if any of the broadcasts appear. After all, more and more programs are popping up all the time. Even if the programs were never recorded in any form, these logs would, at the very least, help someone in the future to be able to write about and document what really happened in radio's early history. The further, in years, that we move away from what was done, the harder it is to document. It is also a great overview of the early obscure acting careers of many of the great radio personalities of the 1930's and 1940's.

I have compiled logs of the following programs for the last couple of years. Have you ever heard of these programs? Some, maybe, and some, probably not: THE FIREFIGHTERS, ANN WORTH — HOUSEWIFE, OMAR, THE WIZARD OF PERSIA, SI & ELMER, BIRD & VASH, THE ADVENTURES OF DETECTIVE BLACK & BLUE, JUST TWO GIRLS TRYING TO GET ALONG, NED JORDAN — SECRET AGENT, and THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF THE AIR. And does anyone remember THE DIXIE CUP CIRCUS?

I am working on a book of logs. Hopefully, in the future, this book will help collectors with many of the programs that they have collected. I welcome any logs from anyone who may have unusual or seldom seen logs. I especially welcome any information dealing with corrections or more information for logs already circulating. This is one way of all collectors helping

each other.

Jay Hickerson has compiled a massive listing of available circulating programs of OTR. It is updated annually as more programs are released and become available. He depends on information forwarded to him as programs are released, or from collectors that inform him as to the programs they have available or are to be released. This, of course, does not take into account literally thousands of non-released or restricted material that may or may not be released to the general collecting community. But still, even collectors with restricted, non-released material can still utilize the important information a broadcast log can provide.

Don Aston and I have received many thanks from collectors ever since we released our YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR log. This series was a very popular, long running radio series with 889 broadcasts, eight different actors in the lead, and six audition programs.

\*\*\*\*\*

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# Amos 'N' Andy: Racist Or Not?

by George Wagner

I believed that the AMOS 'N' ANDY controversy was settled many years ago. The early 1980s, after all, gave us a marvelous NPR television documentary filled with Afro-American comedians praising the show. But in very recent years I've heard all the old AMOS 'N' ANDY arguments trotted out again, sewn back together (albeit with the stitches badly showing), with a half-hearted attempt to present them as (well, almost) brand new. So the following comments do seem to be in order.

Afro-American humor is either (1) Universal, or else it is (2) Provincial. "Universal" means that it is something for all times and places and seasons, for all the ages and all the people, and, therefore, a world-class quality product. "Provincial" means that it is something for a certain group of people only, and even for this group, funny only for a certain time and place; at the final analysis, it is not really very good.

I totally reject Proposition Two. No white person who has every laughed with Moms Mabley or Bill Cosby or Redd Fox or Dick Gregory or Godfrey Cambridge or Nipsey Russell could possibly give even a micro-second's consideration to it. Afro-American humor is not only Universal, but Universal writ with lightning. But the entire anti-AMOS 'N' ANDY crowd seems to, at least unwittingly, support Proposition Two, since they seem to maintain that Afro-American humor is indeed Provincial (i.e., of no possible business to anyone other than Afro-Americans).

The greatest single observation I've ever heard regarding AMOS 'N' ANDY came from a "Black Power" Afro-American I met on a downtown Cincinnati street corner around 1969. He was amazed, in the course of our conversation, to learn that I had read several books by the black

anthropologist, J.A. Rogers. I was, he claimed, the only white person he'd ever met who had ever *heard* of J.A. Rogers, let alone actually *read* him. (Alas, that particular situation doesn't seem to have changed much in the intervening quarter-century.)

This broke any remaining ice between us, and so I asked him what he thought of AMOS 'N' ANDY.

"Those guys weren't racists," he stated. "They were simply two white men who did Afro-American humor. They really *understood* black humor; they must have seen and memorized every Rabbit's Foot vaudeville and minstrel team that ever toured the South. When we listened to the radio years ago, my dad would often comment that 'those boys have got us pegged real good.' When I was *real* little, I believed that AMOS 'N' ANDY were *black*. I was even more impressed with them after I learned that they were white."

He was silent for a moment and then added: "Two of the best black comedians just happened to be born white."

One of the things our "radio was racist" colleagues seem to miss is that radio from the 1920s through the 1950s was a day-by-day, and very nearly an hour-by-hour, audio diary of a nation rising up *OUT* of racism. I find that sound portrait to be a wonderful and beautiful thing indeed, and I treasure it as other people treasure jewels.

Even so, these OTR people are nowhere nearly so objectionable as the non-OTR types who insist that the only reason I like OTR in the first place is because I want to bring back the political and social state of the 1930s and 1940s. That is like telling the fan of Mozart or Bach that his or her only *real* desire is to bring back the eighteenth century!

Several years ago, a politically liberal

friend (former friend, to be precise) was chastising me for collecting AMOS 'N' ANDY. During the course of his lecture (harangue), I went over to my shelves and found a reel of tape I wanted him to hear.

"I'd like you to listen to these skits," I said, "just so I can be certain we are talking about the same things. Then you can tell me specifically what it is that you find so racist."

"Is this AMOS 'N' ANDY or THE TWO BLACK CROWS?," he asked about 30 seconds into the first skit.

"Just listen," I replied. "Let's just concentrate on the *content* for now."

Over the next 30 minutes or so my friend turned so purplish-red that I was worried about the possibility of a stroke.

"Can it be that you really don't see just how damnably racist this all is?" he sputtered at last. "The only reason this filth was created was to demean black people! Listen to how the audience eats this manure up! This is incredibly ugly and evil stuff. And you sit there and attempt to *defend* it?"

"Well, *champion* it, actually, rather than defend," I replied. "What we are listening to, incidentally, isn't AMOS 'N' ANDY, although it is almost identical to the humor they did. We are listening instead to tapes of famous Afro-American comedians doing the real treasures of Afro-American vaudeville and burlesque humor. While the audience is integrated, my guess is that it is at least eighty percent black. In short, we are listening to world-class humor straight from the heart of Black America."

My friend made some weird gurgling noises in his throat.

"So I can only conclude," I continued, "that it is Afro-American humor *ITSELF* that you look upon as filthy and ugly and evil. That is *YOUR* problem, and it strikes *me* as filthy and ugly and evil — let alone unfair — to blame it on AMOS 'N' ANDY!"

His only response was to grab his jacket and cap and to storm out of my apartment door, clip-clopping his way

downstairs to the street. I haven't seen or heard from him since. (And, no, come to think of it, it *wasn't* that much of a loss.)

Isn't there *enough* racism in the world without *desperately* looking for more? *Especially* when no racism was even intended?

I'd like to ask a couple of questions of the anti-AMOS 'N' ANDY crowd. The first one is simply this: If whites are forbidden to perform black humor, shouldn't white symphonic musicians also be forbidden to perform the musical compositions produced by black composers such as the Afro-American William Grant Still and the Afro-Englishman Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (not to be confused with the late eighteenth century poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge)? Or do you perceive black humor as Provincial and black music as Universal? And, if so, how do you explain the dichotomy inherent in your perception?

I have one more question for the entire OTR white-people-should-never-ever-be-permitted-to-do-black-humor crew. Do you really *want* to live in such a racially compartmentalized, straight-jacketed, and super-Apartheid world? If you answer *yes* to this question, please gaze into your bathroom mirror and address this one last question to yourself alone: *WHY?*

I have no more interest in *defending* AMOS 'N' ANDY than I have in defending my mother's honor. However, I will champion them both until the day I die, and then crawl out of my grave to champion them some more.

It didn't occur to me until the last page of the final draft of this article, but I think a good case could be made for the premise that the modern drive towards racial integration began *with* AMOS 'N' ANDY.

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# New Words To Look At

by Terry G. G. Salomonson

A new reference book makes its way into the hands of the Old Time Radio (OTR) hobby this August 1994. Arthur Anderson has written the best reference to the much loved radio program, "Let's Pretend."

The title — "Let's Pretend: A History Of Radio's Best Loved Children's Shows By A Longtime Case Member, Arthur Anderson," is published by McFarland & Company, Inc. The 224-page hardcover book includes a forward by Norman Corwin and many unusual and rare photographs.

Arthur Anderson, who joined the cast in 1936, gives an interesting behind the scenes look at Nila Mack and her forceful directions that made "Let's Pretend" so well remembered. Many personal insights and observations of Nila Mack from a Pretender of over 50 years makes this a must-have book for any OTR collector's library. Such factual information is hard to find as the years continue to distance us from these golden days of radio.

Arthur Anderson gives good biographies of many of the cast members, and from this background information we learn a lot of little facts. One such fact is that Miriam Wolfe, who became a Pretender in 1933, also played Old Nancy on "The Witch's Tale" for four years, starting when she was about 13 years old.

The book covers this series before it was called "Let's Pretend," starting in September of 1929 as "The Adventures Of Helen and Mary" under the direction of Yolanda Langworthy. The real strength of the program only arrived when Nila Mack took over control.

The problems of working with children on network radio is looked at, as well as the ever-changing cast members and those that survived many years worth of broadcasts, the sustaining years, the sponsor (Cream of Wheat), the network, and whatever

happened to all the Pretenders in the years since.

It's all here from someone who was there. Over a hundred script titles listed, original broadcast dates and many other fascinating facts. If you are looking for a good OTR-related reference book to buy this year, this is one of the best. I highly recommend this.

Publishing release is August 1994, and the cost is \$34.50 post paid. For further information contact:

McFarland & Company, Inc.

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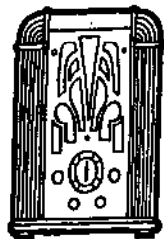
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**WANTED:** 16" transcriptions, for cash or trade. Joe Salerno, Box 1487, Bellaire, Texas 77402.

**WANTED:** Radio Transcription Discs. Any type, any subject. Gilbert Smith, 248 South 36th St., San Diego, CA 92113-1613

**SCIENCE FICTION RADIO SHOWS** on reg. cassettes. Send for catalog, 25¢ John Ford, 411 Truitt St., Salisbury, MD 21801.

**WANTED:** Amos & Andy radio program items, puzzles & stand-ups. Bob Morgan, 4005 Pitman Rd., College Park, GA 30349.

Steve Doiter, 577 West Locust, Dubuque, Iowa 52001. (319) 556-1188  
200 reels, comedy, mystery, drama, Fred Allen, Jack Benny, Suspense, I Love a Mystery. Interested in books about OTR or OTR performers.

Radio books, parts wanted prior 1950 from radio repair shops. Send price list. Richards, Box 1542-D, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201.

**CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT ITEMS** wanted. DeWayne Nall, P.O. Box 555, Cleburne, TX 76031

Want these Lux shows: Red River, Alice in Wonderland, Paradine Case, Kent Coscarely, 2173 Willester Ave., San Jose, Calif. 95124

**RADIO ITEMS BEFORE 1935,** sets, speakers, tubes, parts, literature & advertising. Schneider, 9511-23 Sunrise Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44133

**WANTED:** To hear from anyone with Baby Snooks programs. Buy, sell or trade. Will buy or exchange catalogs. Lynn Wagar, Box 202 B.C.A., St. Cloud, MN 56301.

**OLD RADIO SHOWS** on cassettes. Rare Big Bands and Vocalists too! The absolute best quality. Free catalog. 2732-R Queensboro Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15226

Tom Monroe, 2055 Elmwood, Lakewood, Ohio 44107/(216) 226-8189 Cassette and reel, mystery, adventure, sci-fi, westerns, drama, some comedy.

Mary Sayer, 801 8th St. F5, Sioux City, IA 51105. Looking for any info on "Uncle" Jim Harkin, Fred Allen's manager.

Wanted: Juvenile adventure serials, Mysterious Traveler, Gangbusters, Fred Allen, 2000 +. Cassettes only. Ken Weigel, 7011 Lennox Ave. #126, Van Nuys, CA 91405

Nelson Eddy and Bing Crosby Research; send data Box 724, Redmond, WA 98073-0724

Old-time Matinee Serials & Westerns on VHS Videocassette! Tom Mix, Buck Jones, Zorro, etc. Free list! Send S.A.S.E.-Series, P.O. Box 173 R Boyertown, PA 19512.

Wanted: 1st Nightbeat program (2-6-50) as well as one where William Conrad appears. Victor Padilla, Jr. 104 Marcy Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11211.

Wanted: Trade or buy Tom Corbett and other SF cassettes. Mark Skullerud, 20110 21st Ave. NW, Seattle, Wash. 98177

**WANTED:** 16" RADIO transcription recordings. All types.—Paul Scriven, 238 West State Street, Niles, OH 44446. my40441

**RADIO TRANSCRIPTION DISCS** wanted. Any size, speed. — Box 724H, Redmond, WA 98052.

EDWARD HAMILTON, 933 Naismith, Pl., Topeka, KS 66606 wants CBS Radio Mystery Theater, prefers cassettes...

ALLAN SHERRY, 5410 Netherland Ave., Riverdale, NY 10471 is trying to locate the last date for Prescott Robinson on the air plus any other information about him.

THOMAS HEATHWOOD, 22 Broadlawn Pk., Chestnut Hill, MA 02167 looking for Portia Faces Life, especially July 1948 and April 1949.

ROBERT SHEPHERD, 129 Highfields Rd., Abington, MA 02351 wants to know: who was the announcer for Suspense after Larry Thor and also during Bill Robson's era as producer.

Harry Goldman, RR6, Box 181, Glens Falls, NY 12801 wants Kraft Music Hall of 12-11-47 (Al Jolson) Jack Benny "The Bee", Fiorello LaGuardia tribute to Nikola Tesla over WNYC on Jan. 10, 1943.

WANTED: Kid Shows, Serials, Big Band Remotes, Transcription Recordings on Reel to Reel only please. Write to Wally Stall, 8408 N.W. 101, Oklahoma City, OK 73132.

Phil Evans, Box 136 Downtown Station, Bakersfield, CA 93302-0136. Looking for any info in the Candlelight Hour Broadcast from NYC in 1931.

WANTED: Masterpiece Radio Theater, other multipart NPR or BBC dramas. Buy or trade cassettes. Howard Lewis, 132 Hutchin Hill Rd., Shady, NY 12409

Don Berhent, 807 Glenhurst Rd., Willwick, OH 44094. The Shadow and movie serials. Books on both also.

Frank Tomaselli, 29-10 Donna Ct., Staten Island, NY 10314 is looking for 11 AM from 1939-1944; also Fred Allen's Town Hall Tonight.

Tom Heathwood, 22 Broadlawn Pl., Chestnut Hill, MA 02167. Shadow programs between 1941-44. Has supplement to his catalog for a S.A.S.E.

Chuck Juzek, 57 Hutton Ave., Nanuet, NY 10954. Green Hornet episode where Reid reveals himself to his father as the Hornet around 1943. Need log from 1936-40.

Oldtime Radio-Show Collector's Association (ORCA) is actively seeking members. You can remain loyal to your own local club and still belong. Write Reg Hubert, 45 Barry St., Sudburg, Ontario, Canada P3B 3H6.

Wanted: "We The People" Broadcast 1-13-50 and any Lum and Abner shows prior to 1941. Willing to trade for anything in my catalog. Steve Ferrante, Box 153, Oakland Mills, PA 17076.

Jim Blythe, 941 Redding Rd., Asheboro, NC 27203. Wants Lum and Abner, Magic Island, Jerry at Fair Oaks.

Van Christo, 91 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02116. Looking for Goldberg's Episode which was called "The Hannukah Bush."

Ronald Waite, 578 Whitney Ave., New Haven, CT 06511. Interested in Jack Benny.

Bob Proctor, Box 362, Saline, MI 48176. Wants Horatio Hornblower shows with Michael Redgrave.

Wanted. Copies of owner's manual for AKAI reel recorders, Models 1722W and GX-215D. Reproduced coies acceptable. Willing to pay reasonable price. Jack Palmer, 145 North 21st Street, Battle Creek, MI 49015

Wanted To Buy: Jack Benny's Christmas Shopping Shows from 12-8-48, 12-18-49, and 12-2-51. Must have perfect sound. Thanks. John Moran, 6351 Beck Road, Canton, MI 48187

Spiros Koliopoulos, 149 Autumn Ridge Drive, Montgomery, IL 60538. Interested in news bulletins on radio such as Pearl Harbor, Hindenburg Disaster; also broadcast before and during WWII.

WANTED: Radio Nostalgia & Collectibles. Books, Premiums, Photos, Advertising, Autographs, Magazines, Anything. Duffy, 625 Lost Pine Way, Absecon, NJ 08201

Large Collection — Open Reel — VG-EX sound. Will trade for nice sound. Catalog available. Jim Blythe, 941 Redding Rd., Asheboro, NC 27203

Want the following Abbot & Costello Shows: All 1945: April 05-26; May 03-17-24-31; June 14-21; October 04-11-18-25; November 08-15-22-29; December 13-27. Phil Evans, Box 10507, Stockdale Station, Bakersfield, CA 93389-0507.

Alan Ropchan, 8923 84th Avenue, Edmonton Alta, Canada T6C1E3 (403) 466-2761. Have 2500 Reel of OTR for Trading.

George Olson, Craven Community College, Box 885, New Bern, NC 28563. Wants We The People 11/25/37 and Hobby 9/20/39.

WANTED: Sergeant Preston LP records and VHS videos. Write Lee Weber, 468 E. Metz Rd., Columbiana, Ohio 44408

WANTED: Sergeant Preston or Challenge of Yukon tapes. Also records and videos. Dick Weber, 468 E. Metz Rd., Columbiana, Ohio 44408

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Trade Fibber McGee and Molly Cassettes VG/EX only. Offer 10 shows. Exchange list. Bill Oliver, 516 Third St. North East, Massillon, Ohio 44646.

Coming up on its 50th anniversary, CARE is looking for any relevant radio material from October '45 onward. Wanted: any programs or commercials mentioning CARE and/or CARE packages. Also, if you received or sent a CARE package, we'd like to hear from you. Contact: Scott Thigpen, CARE, 151 Ellis St., Atlanta, GA 30303. (404) 681-2552.

AMERICANA AND COLLECTIBLES. Radio/Cereal Premiums. Jack Benny, Capt. Midnight, Lone Ranger, Hoppy, Howdy Doody, Little Orphan Annie, Sgt. Preston. Also Comic Books, Magazines, TV/Western Heroes. Send SASE for FREE Sales List. Richard Buchanan, 23 Jones St., NY, NY 10014.

WANT TO TRADE: Jack Benny, Amos & Andy, Aldrich Family. Robert E. Cohen, 763 Oaks Edge Dr., Gahanna, OH 43230-5081

Kitty Kallen is looking for radio and TV shows that she appeared on. She sang with Harry James, Jimmy Dorsey, and others. She worked on the Danny Kay radio show, David Rose shows, and her own show called Kitty Kallen Kalling. Contact Walden Hughes at (714) 545-0318 or write 2527 Duke Place, Costa Mesa, CA 92626.

Wanted: Space Patrol - Tom Corbett, Capt. Video, old radio cereal giveaways, gum cards, pep pins, nostalgia, comic character items 1930's-1950's. Joseph Fair, 10 Crestwood-R.D., New Castle, PA 16101 (35)

WANTED: Kid Shows, Serials, Big Band Remotes, Transcription Recordings on Reel to Reel only please. Write to Wally Stall, 8408 N.W. 101 Oklahoma City, OK 73132.

Wanted: 1950 Summer Replacement Show "Somebody Knows" by Jack Johnstone. (8 show run) Dick Olday, 100 Harvey Dr., Lancaster, NY 14080.

GILBERT HUEY, 90 W. Triple Tree Dr., Carrollton, GA 30017 is writing an article on Flash Gordon and needs much information on the radio and tv show.

Pam Nemeo, 1424 Heatherton Dr., Naperville, IL 60563 is looking for program listings of old radio stations of the 30's and 40's especially WJZ, KMMJ, KMA, KFNF and KFEQ.

WANTED: Aldrich Family radio programs on cassettes, as well as information. Kenneth Barker, 874 27th Street East, Owen Sound, ON N4K 6P3

WILLIAM OSOVSKY, 2501 Ivy St., Chattanooga, TN 37404. Collector of Ralston Tom Mix premiums, green 20 Grand Ale bottles with neck and paper labels intact. Octagon soap premium kites. Alaga syrup tins.

Would like: Mysterious Traveler, Whistler, Pat Novak For Hire on cassette. I have a lot to trade. Write to: Victor D. Padilla, Jr., 104 Marcy Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11211

Wanted: Amos and Andy, Roy Rogers, and Gunsmoke. Will buy or have shows to trade in X Minus One, Dimension X, Sgt. Preston, Captain Midnight, Suspense, Escape, others. Phil Nelson, 221 Scioto, Chillicothe, OH 45601.

WANTED: The Adventures of Frank Merriwell. Herb Brandenburg, 4114 Montgomery Road, Cincinnati, Ohio.

WANTED: Aldrich Family, Ozzie & Harriet in VG/EX sound. Comedy nut; have thousands to trade. Still looking for Baby Snooks. Will buy/sell, but prefer to trade. Write Lynn Wagar, B.C.A., 43 Joymar Dr., St. Cloud, MN 56301-9460.

WANTED TO BUY: Cassettes in the following categories: comedy, general, concert music, musical variety, light music, comedy talk programs, daytime concert music. Would appreciate sending me your catalogs and list of what you have available. Send your replies and information to Mr. Richard Browskie, 10 Reid St., Amsterdam, NY 12010

MISSING DAUGHTER MATTER: Looking to contact Bob Bailey's daughter about possible "Johnny Dollar" article. Frank Dattilo, 3350 Wiscasset Road, Dearborn, MI 48120 (313) 271-8339.

WANTED: STRANGE AS IT SEEMS, CBS radio network program. Will meet your price for a copy of the specific episode dramatizing the Cahuenga Pass Treasure legend. Probably broadcast in November or December of 1939. Call collect. Joshua Alper (818) 789-5875.

WANTED: NBC RADIO MONITOR. I would like to buy some copies of the NBC weekend show, Monitor '55 thru Monitor '65. Warren Gerbe, 46-21 Colden Street, Flushing, New York 11355.

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