



RETURN WITH US NOW...

RADIO HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION OF
COLORADO

Volume 28, Number 1

January, 2003

RICHARD DIAMOND, PRIVATE DETECTIVE

by Dr. Charles Beckett

The program opens with the orchestra playing "Leave it to Love," with star Dick Powell whistling in accompaniment. Then, after a commercial and some more theme music, the announcer says:

"Now we bring you another transcribed adventure with Richard Diamond, Private Detective-- starring Dick Powell."

This is followed by a smooth baritone voice, saying:

"Hello There. My name's Diamond. And I'm known along the big street as a guy who manages to keep his nose pretty clean and still make a few bucks while I'm doing it. Oh, sure, it gets a little grimy, but you gotta expect that. I'm a shamus, private eye, gumshoe. ...and to some guys, I'm known by a lot of other names... Who hires me? How do I make a living? Well, maybe this will give you an idea."

And so began another episode of an adventure series with a light touch. It featured a happy-go-lucky detective who could be tough when the situation demanded -- but, who answered his office phone with such off-beat and corny jingles as:

"Diamond Detective Agency. You spent the dime, you name the crime, " or, "A pleasant smile, a cheerful rhyme, will help you from doing time."

Even Diamond's girlfriend wasn't above offering him a rhyme -- "If you can't get Sherlock or Perry Mason, for a hundred a day I'll start chasin'" -- to which Diamond's only response was a groan.

Richard Diamond had been a member of the elite Office of Strategic Service (OSS) during World War II. Following that, he served as a highly respected detective with the New York City Police Department for seven years -- until he got the urge to go into

business for himself. In his work, he regularly came into contact with a no-nonsense, but generally cooperative, 5th Precinct police lieutenant named Walt Levenson, (whom Diamond frequently addressed as "fatty"). Although this part had also been played by Alan Reed and Arthur Q. Bryan, Ed Begley is probably best remembered for it. Lt. Levenson was ably assisted by a goodhearted and steady -- but rather slow-witted -- desk sergeant named Otis (Wilms Herbert). Diamond enjoyed heaping frequent sarcasm on Otis, who periodically retreated in

frustration to his lieutenant to complain that the private eye was picking on him. On Occasion, even Lt. Levenson failed to escape Diamond's good-natured kidding.

(Continued on page 3)



RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO

PO BOX 1908, Englewood CO 80150 (303) 761-4139 - Dedicated to the preservation of old-time radio programs,
and to making those programs available to our members

Old-Time Radio is Alive and Well in Colorado!

KEZW 1430 AM	"When Radio Was", with Stan Frieberg	Weekdays, 7:00 - 8:00 PM
KFKA 1310 AM	"Radio Memories" (Greeley)	Sunday, 6:00 - 12:00 PM
KRMA TV Channel 6	Secondary Audio Program (SAP), "Tribute to OTR"	Sunday, 2:00 PM
KUVO 89.3 FM	"Destination Freedom"	9:00 PM

RHAC WEB SITE <http://www.rhac.org>

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Convention Schedules

17th Annual OTR and Nostalgia Convention April 11 – 12, 2003; Contact Bob Burchett, 10280 Gunpowder Rd., Florence, KY 41042 (859) 282-0333 haradio@hotmail.com

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RETURN WITH US NOW...

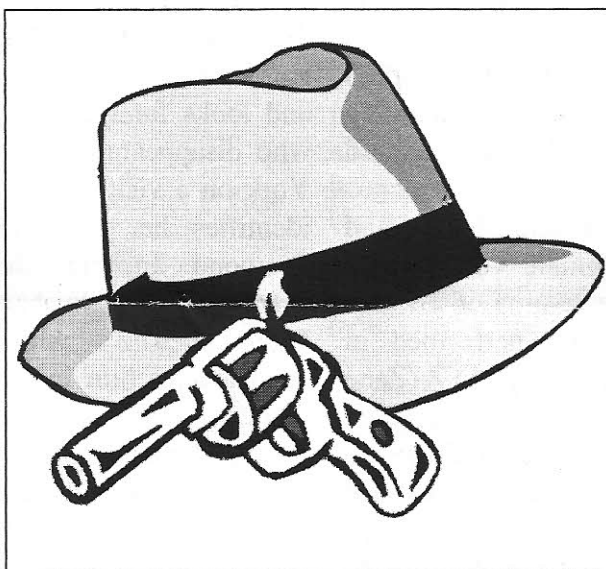
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January, 2003

The light of Diamond's life was his girlfriend Helen Asher, played by Virginia Gregg. She was an attractive -- and wealthy -- Park Avenue redhead, whose repeated attempts to get Diamond to settle down and to the alter continually failed. The conclusion of each show usually found Diamond in Helen's apartment, playing her piano and serenading her with a Broadway ballad or some song from the "good old days." In the early episodes, her butler, Francis, (also played by Wilms Herbert), occasionally intruded upon the couple at less than appropriate moments -- making a hurried and embarrassed retreat from the room.

The show was created by Blake Edwards, and first aired on NBC, April 24, 1949. The series continued on NBC until December 1950. It was heard on ABC during 1951-52. Then, during 1953, it was broadcast on CBS, and included rebroadcasts.

Early in his career, Dick Powell had been thought of primarily as a baby faced crooner, master of ceremonies and light comedian. He was much in demand in movie musicals of the 1930s and 40s. He didn't really come into his own in dramatic roles until he played the tough detective Philip Marlowe in the movie "Murder my Sweet" in 1945. He reprised that role on the "Lux Radio Theatre" show of June 11, 1945. During his



long career, he kept busy as actor, producer and director on radio, TV, and in the movies. His early radio credits included mostly MC'ing, hosting, and performing in musical variety shows such as Maxwell House Coffee Time, and Fitch Band Wagon. Dramatic radio shows on which he appeared included Rogue's Gallery (1945-46) and Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar (audition show only, in 1948).

Powell had long wanted to direct. After Richard Diamond, Private Detective came to the end of its radio run, he formed and headed up an independent telefilm company, Four Star Productions (with Charles Boyer, David Niven and Ida Lupino joining him as partners.) The Company's first television effort was Four Star Playhouse -- with each of the partners rotating as guest stars. Other successful shows followed. These included the Zane Grey

Theatre, which Powell hosted and occasionally starred in; The Dick Powell Show, which received two Emmy nominations; The Rifleman, Wanted Dead or Alive, Burke's Law, The June Allyson Show, and well as some other less well-known shows.

In 1957, Powell produced a TV spin-off version of the Richard Diamond, Private Detective series -- which ran for four seasons. He hand picked David Janssen to play the TV Diamond. Mary Tyler Moore was cast as Diamond's secretary Sam. Only her legs were seen, and her sultry voice heard. Roxanne Brooks replaced Moore when she revealed herself to the public as Sam.

Powell also kept busy in films. Some of his dramatic acting credits included Johnny O'Clock, The Pitfalls, The Tall Target, Cry Danger, and The Bad and the Beautiful. He also directed several

movies, including Split Second, The Conqueror (starring John Wayne), and The Enemy Below.

Richard E. Powell was born November 14, 1904, in Mountain View, Arkansas. He studied voice as a youth and attended Little Rock College. He died January 2, 1963, and is buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery, Glendale, California. His widow is actress June Allyson. In her biography, she remembered him as " ... a joy to live with.

Richard usually acted as if he didn't have a care in the world. He was always whistling."

Ed Begley (Lt. Levenson) was a versatile journeyman character actor of stage, radio, television and films. He began his show business career as a radio announcer in 1931. He later performed on the Broadway stage in such productions as All my Sons, and Inherit the Wind.

Some of Begley's featured radio credits include The Alan Young Show (Papa Dittenfeffer), The Aldrich Family (Homer's father), Charlie Chan (as Chan), The Fat Man (Sergeant O'Hara), and Myrt and Marge (Francis Heyfield.). He also appeared in a variety of other shows, including Escape, The FBI in Peace and War, The Milton Berle Show, Tales of the Texas Rangers; and Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar.

A few of his multitude of television appearances

included the Fugitive, Dr. Kildare, The Dick Powell Show, and Inherit the Wind. Movie credits included Sorry, Wrong Number; The Great Gatsby, 12 Angry Men, and Sweet Bird of Youth -- for which he won the Best Supporting Actor Oscar in 1962.

Edward James Begley was born March 25, 1901 in Hartford Connecticut, and died in 1970.

Virginia Gregg (Helen Asher) was undoubtedly one of the busiest and most respected performers in radio. (See the August and September 2002 Return With Us Now Newsletters for more about her). She had long and distinguished careers in radio, television, and the movies. She also was an accomplished musician; having played bass viol with NBC's Singing Strings and the Pasadena Symphony Orchestra.

Her acting credits are far too numerous to list here. To mention just a few of her radio roles, she was Miss Wong on Have Gun, Will Travel; Nurse Parker on Dr. Kildare, and Betty Carter on One Man's Family. In addition, she played countless supporting roles in a variety of shows, including Gunsmoke, Escape, Dragnet, The Halls of Ivy, and Frontier Gentleman.

Gregg was a master of dialects and accents, and could provide practically any female voice called for. She also had an impressive resume of TV and movie credits. On television, she performed in everything from A (The Addams Family), to Z (Zane Grey Theater). Her countless movie roles included two Alfred Hitchcock films, Notorious, and Psycho (as the unseen and unaccredited voice of Norman Bates mother.)

Virginia Gregg was married to and divorced from Jaime del Valle, one of the Richard Diamond radio series producers/directors. She was born March 6, 1916, in Harrisburg, Illinois, and died September 15, 1986, in Encino, California.

Wilms Herbert (Sergeant Otis, Francis the butler), although not as well known as the other cast members, performed credibly in recurring roles on Jeff Regan, Investigator (Anthony J. Lyon), and the soap opera Today's Children (Keith). He also had supporting parts on "The Adventures of Philip Marlowe", "Escape", "Nightbeat", "Presenting Charles Boyer", and "Tales of the Texas Rangers".

Richard Diamond's stellar supporting cast of Hollywood actors included such dependable and accomplished performers as Jim Backus, Parley Baer, Joan Banks, Jean Bates, Herb Butterfield, Ted DeCorsia, Herb Ellis, Betty Lou Gerson, Bob

Griffin, Mary Jane Kroft, Peter Leeds, Howard McNear, Betty Moran, and Benny Rubin -- and many others.

Blake Edwards not only was the creator of the Richard Diamond, Private Detective radio series, but also wrote the early shows and produced and directed several episodes. In addition, he was a writer on The Lineup; and Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar radio shows. He created the "Peter Gunn", "Mr. Lucky", and "Dante's Inferno" TV series; and directed the Pink Panther movies, as well as "Breakfast at Tiffany's", "Day's of Wine and Roses", "Darling Lili", and "10," among others. He was born July 26, 1922, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and was married for many years to Julie Andrews.

Although the Richard Diamond, Private Detective show had its share of serious moments, it was known for its relaxed style and wasn't above making fun of itself now and then. One example is the October 4, 1950 show -- Mrs. X Loses Her Husband. A woman who Diamond thinks is cute, and looks familiar, hires him to find her husband, who disappeared shortly after their arrival in New York on a visit. She refuses to give her name, and identifies her husband only as Richard, giving Diamond an old photograph for identification purposes. The husband also looks familiar to Diamond, who -- with Lt. Levenson's assistance -- soon locates him in a sanitarium. But Mrs. X gets there first and whisks her husband away before Diamond arrives. Mixing fiction with reality, as Mrs. X and her husband are on their way to the airport to return to California, she stops by Diamond's Office -- leaving her husband in the taxi -- and gives Diamond an envelope containing his fee and a note. Then she hurriedly departs. Diamond reads the note, which explains that she had visited a doctor that morning, and found out that she was going to have a baby. When she told her husband that she had decided not to go back to work until after the baby was born, the shock was too much for him. Realizing that he would have to be the couple's sole support for a year, he developed temporary amnesia and wandered off. Fortunately, he quickly recovers upon seeing his wife again. When Diamond reads the signature at the end of the note -- June Allyson -- he exclaims "Ohhhhh," and faints.

The Richard Diamond, Private Detective radio series had action, drama, humor, romance, and singing. And the listener soon learned to expect the unexpected.

OTR Characters' New Year's Resolutions

"I resolve to find out why Clark spends so much time in phone booths, but never seems to CALL anyone." - *Ms. Lois Lane*, Metropolis

"I resolve to be more patient with my husband's many 'projects' this year." - *Mrs. Belle Jones*, USA

"I resolve to get Luigi to propose." - *Miss Rosa Pasquale*, NYC

"I resolve to stick to ONE lady friend for the entire year!" - *Mr. Throckmorton Gildersleeve*, Summerfield

"I resolve that I will ignore any and all provocation from that gumshoe, Richard Diamond, and that he will NOT get my goat this year." - *Sgt. Otis*, 5th Precinct Police Station

"Me, too!" - *Lt. Walt Levinson*, 5th Precinct Police Station

"I resolve to spend more time at the tavern this year, and to give Archie some time off." - *Duffy*, Duffy's Tavern

"I resolve to try my best not to accidentally injure, annoy, or provoke my principal, Osgood Conklin, this year." - *Miss Connie Brooks*, Madison High

"I resolve that this year I really WILL clean out that hall closet." - *Mr. Fibber McGee*, 79 Wistful Vista

On The OTR Bookshelf. . .

"Radio Crime Fighters - Over 300 Programs from the Golden Age"

A book review by Stewart Wright

While audiences during the Golden Age of Radio enjoyed comedy, drama, and variety series, they were also great fans of series that dealt with crime and the exploits of heroes and heroines who fought evil and upheld law and order. Many fans' fondest memories of radio are of crime fighting series such as: *The Adventures of Sam Spade*, *Dragnet*, *I Love a Mystery*, *Gunsmoke*, *Jack Armstrong - The All-American Boy*, *The Lone Ranger*, *The Shadow*, and *Yours Truly Johnny Dollar*.

I have always bemoaned the fact that there was no single, comprehensive source of information on crime fighter radio series. No longer! With the publication of "Radio Crime Fighters," author Jim Cox has now filled that void with a highly informative and entertaining book that identifies and discusses 309 series, famous and obscure, whose primary characters fought crime on a frequent basis.

To be included in Jim's book, a series must have included one or more characters who regularly appeared in occupations or avocations that fought against criminal activities such as espionage, theft, or murder. Each entry includes: the series title (and alternate titles if any), air dates and times, network affiliations, sponsors,

Number of known available episodes, crew and cast information (such as the directors, writers, composers, sound effects artists, announcers, lead actors and supporting actors), and a brief series synopsis. At least 40 favorite series receive multi-page coverage.

For some fans, factual information might be enough. However, Jim didn't stop with supplying the reader with "Just the facts!"

Throughout "Radio Crime Fighters," the reader is treated to much additional information that makes the memories flow and the series and their heroines and heroes come alive. Many entertaining anecdotes from cast and crew members are included. There are numerous biographical sketches of actors and crew members. Also, Jim has provided much information that connects various radio series to their antecedents and progenies in comics, pulp fiction, literature, motion pictures, television, and the theater. There is even an appendix in which the series are grouped by character and genre types.

The end result is that "Radio Crime Fighters" manages to not only be consistently informative, but also invariably entertaining. Jim Cox has written another fine contribution to the body of literature on the Golden Age of Radio. This is a book that is well-worth reading and will find its place as a frequently consulted source in the libraries of Old-Time Radio fans.

Jim is the author of several other Old-Time Radio books including "Say Goodnight, Gracie", "The Great Radio Audience Participation Shows," and "The Great Radio Soap Operas."

"Radio Crime Fighters - Over 300 Programs from the Golden Age" By Jim Cox ISBN: 0-7864-1390-5
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"Aw... Relax, Archie! Re-laxx!"

By Hal (Harlan) Stone

A book review by Stewart Wright

2002 was a pretty good year for books about Old-Time Radio with several that have found favor with OTR fans. Most have dealt with various specific aspects of Radio's Golden Age. One book, however, is a personal reminiscence by a performer and it is a joy to read. The book is "Aw... Relax, Archie! Re-laxx!" by Hal (Harlan) Stone. This book is far too much fun to call it an autobiography. Have you ever heard of an autobiography with a sub-title like, "When radio was 'king,' I was once a 'prince', But ended up a 'Jughead'"?

Hal's book provides an always entertaining look at his 20-year career as a child model, stage performer, and radio actor while growing up during the Golden Age of Radio. He has written his book in a lively, conversational style that is both informative and entertaining. It's the only book I have ever read that I hear the author reading the words to me. (Maybe, that's because I have met Hal.) I haven't had so much fun reading a book in ages.

The reader gets the opportunity to view Show Business through the eyes of a young man who grew up in it. Interspersed throughout the book are numerous, wonderful vignettes about the people with whom Hal worked. There are many humorous anecdotes and stories about his professional and personal life. Hal gives the reader an in-depth, behind-the-scenes look at a long-running radio series *The Adventures of Archie Andrews* as could only be told by his radio persona, Jughead Jones.

Many books claim to be "profusely illustrated." Hal's book definitely is; there are nearly 250 of them. Well over half of the pages contain at least one photograph, cartoon, drawing or some other sort of illustration. Several drawings were done by Hal, who is also an accomplished artist. The pictures, drawings and other illustrations add so much to the book. Many of them allow readers to associate faces with many familiar radio actors from the Golden Age.

"Aw... Relax, Archie! Re-laxx!" is a wonderful recounting of a performer's early life and a valuable addition to the body of Old-Time Radio literature. Thanks, Hal for sharing your experiences and memories with us.

"Aw... Relax, Archie! Re-laxx!" By Hal (Harlan) Stone
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Local Members Celebrate The Holidays Together



On December 14th RHAC members got together for the annual Christmas dinner. We'd like to particularly thank **Bill McCracken** for arranging to have his condo complex clubhouse available to us, **Malettha King** and **Dorothy Weide** for doing all the shopping and setting up the "all trimmings" turkey dinner buffet and **John Licht** for entertaining us with his wonderful recitations of poetry.



New in the Tape Library

by Dick and Malettha King

This month we've entered over 40 new CDs into the library. We start with "Frontier Gentleman", consisting of two new shows and an audition program. All of these shows are network editions - not AFRS. We continue on to "Space Patrol" shows for members who like to imagine they're in a future period of time.

We are asking members who order CDs to please list plenty of alternatives to help Ron fill your orders quicker if your preferred selections are in short supply.

From all of the RHAC officers and RWUN staff, we want to wish all RHAC members and their families a ...

Wonderfully Happy and Healthy New Year!

9/1/2003
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From the Editor's Desk...

Welcome to the first issue of RWUN for 2003. I hope all of you enjoyed a wonderful Christmas and ushered in the New Year with all the appropriate fanfare and celebration. Now, as we all face reality shock (the Christmas bills) and post-holiday letdown, let's take a few minutes to relax and spend time with some of our OTR favorites.

How many of the OTR characters listed will actually be able to keep their resolutions? Not very many would be my guess. If you would like to send comments or additions, please feel free to do so.

I would like to thank all of you who do send or e-mail comments and contributions to the newsletter. This is OUR newsletter, and ideas and suggestions from our members are always most welcome, so please keep them coming.

Good listening to everyone!

Carol