



You Can Call Me Barrie? or Barry? and You Can Call Me Crane? or Craig?

By Stewart Wright

In the Old-Time Radio hobby there are lots of mysteries. Some revolve around missing episodes of various series. Others involve the correct name(s) for specific episode(s) of a series. The mystery that is the subject of this article involves the title of a specific series and the name of its title character.



William Gargan starred in a popular radio private detective show on NBC during the early to mid-1950's. Over the years, at least four titles for this NBC series have appeared in various OTR books. They are:

Barrie Craig, Confidential Investigator, Barry Craig, Confidential Investigator, Barrie Crane, Confidential Investigator, and Barry Crane, Confidential Investigator

So which series title is correct? After some research using many period issues of the *New York Times*, an interview, and Gargan's autobiography, "Why Me?" I believe I have found the answer.

Debuting As: A September 21, 1951 *New York Times* article mentions "N.B.C. Signs Gargan As Producer, Star, long-term Contract Covers His Services for TV and Radio on *Barrie Crane Program* . . ." The article mentions the full title of the series as *Barrie Crane, Confidential Investigator*. According the *New York Times* Radio listings and the Library of Congress Sound Online Inventory and Catalog (SONIC) database, the series debuted on October 3, 1951 as *Barrie Crane, Confidential Investigator*.

Also in Print: The title *Barry Craig, Confidential Investigator* does appear in the Radio listings of the *New York Times* several times between Dec 7, 1952 and is Sep 6, 1953. It does not appear in any paid NBC advertisements in the *New York Times*. It does not appear in the SONIC database. In all probability it is a misprint based on typesetter's error or network printed copy error.

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RADIO HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO

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Convention Schedules

20th Annual OTR and Nostalgia Convention, April 21 - 22, 2006; Contact Bob Burchett, 10280 Gunpowder Rd., Florence, KY 41042 (888-477-9112) haradio@hotmail.com

31st Old-time Country and Bluegrass Contest and Festival, Aug 28 - Sep 3, 2006 at Harrison County Fairgrounds in Missouri Valley, Iowa. For information contact Bob Everhart at Box 492, Walnut, IA 51577 (712) 762-4363 bobeverhart@yahoo.com

31st Friends of Old-time Radio Convention, Oct 19 - 22, 2006 at the Holiday Inn, Newark, NJ; For information contact Jay Hickerson, Box 4321, Hamden, CT 06514 (203) 248-2887 JayHick@aol.com or check our web site: <http://www.fotr.net>

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RETURN WITH US NOW...

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January, 2006

Some OTR books list the title of the series as *Barry Crane, Confidential Investigator*. This title *does not* appear in any of the following sources: paid NBC advertisements in the *New York Times*, in the SONIC database, or in the Radio listings of the *New York Times*.

The Most Common Title: The Debut title lasted for less than a month before becoming *Barrie Craig, Confidential Investigator*. This is the title that appears most frequently in both the Library of Congress SONIC database (10 of 12 records) and the *New York Times* Radio listings (first listing October 17, 1951; last listing June 30, 1955.) This is also the series title that appears in at least 3 times in paid NBC program line-up advertisements in the *New York Times*.

Other Evidence: Gargan's 1951 contract with NBC was for 7 years with a total amount of One Million Dollars. It gave him quite a bit of say in his starring roles. Gargan mentioned in an interview that he used the first name of one of his sons for the first name of his character in the *Craig* series. The first name of Gargan's son: Barrie. I verified the spelling of his son's name in Gargan's autobiography, "Why Me?"

CONCLUSION:

While my research was not exhaustive, the preponderance of evidence is in favor of *Barrie Craig, Confidential Investigator*. By inference, the name of the title character is Barrie Craig.

POSTSCRIPT: Gargan as a Detective

If William Gargan seemed to bring an air of authenticity to his roles as a private detective, there were some good very reasons.

His father was a bookmaker, so Gargan learned a lot about the gambling world and met a lot of interesting characters from across the spectrum of society.

The main reason why Gargan was so convincing as a detective was that he was probably the only actor of his time who had actually been a private detective.

He first worked as a credit investigator and collection agent for a clothing firm. Once Gargan was shot at when he attempted to get a deadbeat customer to pay his overdue account.

Next, he worked for about a year as a private detective with a New York agency for "\$10.00 a day and expenses." Gargan did many of the usual

detective jobs: guarding payrolls, tailing possible suspects, conducting stakeouts, and protecting clients with valuables. He was fired when he lost track of a diamond salesman he was supposed to be protecting.

VOTE TODAY - for America's Most Popular Radio Stars
WIN \$10,000 Awards Contest!
(Leaders in Radio-Star Popularity Poll)

KATE SMITH (Singer)
HARRY HORLOCK (Orchestra Leader)
RUTH TETTING (Singer)
PAUL WHITEMAN (Orchestra Leader)

JOHN A. YOUNG (Announcer)
JESSICA DRAGONETTE (Singer)
RUBINFELD (Announcer)
RICHARD GORDON (Singer)

TWO-WAY OPPORTUNITY - FREE TO ALL

1. Help choose America's most popular radio entertainers. You can vote for seven stars, using the ballot below. More ballots may be obtained from any American Bosch dealer.
2. You also can try for the \$2,000 cash first prize or any of the 92 other awards totaling \$10,000. To do this, you merely write a simple 50-word statement telling WHY YOUR FAVORITE RADIO STAR SOUNDS MORE LIFELIKE OVER AN AMERICAN BOSCH VIBRO-POWER RADIO. Official entry forms for this are obtainable only from American Bosch radio dealers.

You can enter ONE or BOTH of these interesting contests

At the left, are a few important facts to help you win an award. The American Bosch dealer gladly will give you further helpful suggestions. He will even arrange for you to hear your favorite radio entertainer over an American Bosch receiver so you can learn, first hand, the lifelike quality of tone made possible by VIBRO-POWER.

See your nearest American Bosch dealer at once. You need not own nor buy an American Bosch Radio to enter either of these contests. They are free to all. And lots of fun! Act now!

AMERICAN BOSCH VIBRO-POWER RADIO

SEND THIS
 All ballots must be sent to Contest Editor, United American Bosch Corp., Springfield, Mass. (Vote in as many classifications as you like)

TEAR THIS BALLOT OUT and MAIL TODAY

KNIGHT CAMPBELL'S
 1617 California REystone 7131

One of the many radio ads, offered by Denver furniture companies, that could be found in the 1932 issues of the Denver Post newspaper.

Kate Smith, Harry Horlock, Ruth Tetting, Paul Whiteman, John Young, Jessica Dragonette, Rubinfeld and Richard Gordon. How many of these early radio personalities do you know?

Old Time Radio Moments of the Century (Part 6)

(The following article by broadcast historian Elizabeth McLeod is reproduced here with her permission.)

Ms. McLeod has listed her "top 100" 20th Century Radio Moments. We will be presenting 10 of her selections in RWUN each month for ten months.

50. The 1936 Olympics 8/36

Thru the crackle of shortwave static, American listeners sit spellbound by the descriptions of Jesse Owens' track and field triumphs in Berlin-- victories that carry significance far beyond the stadium. The announcers are rather circumspect in their descriptions of the events -- reluctant, perhaps, to offend broadcasting authorities in the host country -- but Owens' triumphs speak for themselves.

49. Let's Dance, and the Rise Of Swing Winter 1934-35

Suggesting that swing music began with Benny Goodman will earn you a derisive, deserved sneer from fans of Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, Don Redman and other great Harlem bands of the twenties. But that distinctive span of time we think of as the "Swing Era" did begin with Goodman, and his tenure on the Nabisco "Let's Dance" program. For many listeners, it's their first real exposure to "hot" music -- and the program starts Goodman on the way to being crowned King of Swing. Maybe some people tuned in "Let's Dance" for the mellow melodies of former Clicquot Club Eskimo Kel Murray, or to rhumba with Xavier Cugat -- but it's Goodman's contribution to this three-hours-a-week series that's earned it a place in history.

48. The Metropolitan Opera Begins Its Run 12/24/31

The Met made its radio debut back in the prehistoric DeForest days of 1910 -- but it takes another two decades before a regular series of Metropolitan Opera broadcasts begins, even though individual Met stars were network radio celebrities as early as 1925. But the Met organization makes up for lost time, rapidly building its Saturday afternoon broadcasts into a radio tradition. Part of the tradition is in the packaging -- with the gently-unctuous Milton J. Cross occupying a permanent seat in Box 44, inspiring three generations of listeners with his endearing, wide-eyed love for the music and its performers.

47. The Rise of Experimental Drama 1934-38

Radio goes thru a quantum change between 1931-1933 -- the days of freewheeling experimentation with program formats are replaced, so far as sponsored programs are concerned, by tight advertising agency control. But there is still unsold time to fill -- and the experimenters find a haven in sustaining dramatic programs like the NBC Radio Guild and the Columbia Workshop, as well as the more outre offerings like "Lights Out." During the mid-thirties, people like Vernon Radcliffe, Irving Reis, William N. Robson, Earle McGill, Wyllis Cooper, Arch Oboler and Orson Welles push the envelope of what can be done in radio drama. Though their audiences are small-to-negligible, much of their work retains its power even today.

46. Coronation of King George VI 5/12/37

All the world is listening as a slender, stammering man known to his friends and family as "Bertie" mounts the throne of the British Empire in the wake of his brother's abdication. Millions of Americans get up early in the morning to follow all the pageantry via shortwave relay, described in meticulous detail by BBC commentators. The response to the broadcast suggests that even a hundred and sixty years after the Revolution, Americans are really still just Colonists at heart.

45. The Lindbergh Baby Tragedy 1932-1936

Radio listeners are glued to their sets in horror on the night of March 1, 1932 as NBC and CBS broadcast a steady stream of bulletins detailing the story: the toddler son of aviator Charles A. Lindbergh has been kidnapped from his New Jersey home. Perhaps the most poignant radio moment in the entire case comes the day after the kidnaping, as NBC staff announcer Ben Grauer reads an urgent message to the kidnapers from Anne Morrow Lindbergh -- giving the recipe for the baby's special formula. The first chapter of the story comes to a tragic conclusion on May 12th, when the child is found dead -- leading to a two-year search for the killer. On September 19, 1934, a German-immigrant carpenter from the Bronx is arrested and charged -- and radio is once again in the thick of coverage, as Bruno Richard Hauptmann is placed on trial for his life -- a trial which, with radio's help, quickly degenerates into a media circus the likes of which wouldn't be seen for another sixty years. Two important radio careers get a boost from this case: disc jockey Martin Block rises to fame over WNEW in Newark as he spins records during breaks in that station's trial coverage; and WOR commentator Gabriel Heatter grabs attention for his nightly summations of action in what truly is the Trial of The Century. The final chapter is written on April 3, 1936, when Heatter reports from outside the New Jersey State Prison at Trenton as, to the chants of an angry mob, Hauptmann goes to the electric chair -- proclaiming his innocence to the very last.

44. Irna Phillips joins NBC 1933

If Correll and Gosden are the Fathers Of the Broadcast Serial, then Irna Phillips is its mother. Joining NBC with "Today's Children," a thinly disguised version of her WGN serial "Painted Dreams," Phillips begins an enduring career as one of the leading creators of network soap opera -- her shows always a cut above the treacly productions of her major competitors, Frank and Anne Hummert. And the Phillips influence is still pervasive in modern-day soaps, with her longest-lived creation, "(The) Guiding Light," still very much alive after sixty-two years.

43. Hollywood Hotel brings movieland to the mike fall 10/4/34



Hollywood and radio were a natural match, and as far back as the late twenties, there had been efforts to bring the two together. Programs like the "Sunkist Musical Cocktail" and "Hollywood On The Air" had featured movieland gossip and celebrity interviews - but these shows were expensive to produce, thanks to the exorbitant AT&T line charges for programs originating on the West Coast. In 1934, columnist Louella Parsons (who had been featured a few years earlier on the Sunkist program) hits upon a solution: she would use her considerable influence to coerce stars into appearing for free on a big-time weekly variety hour. Campbell Soup underwrites the project, and "Hollywood Hotel" is on the air. Unionization eventually brings an end to Parsons' use of free talent, by which time AT&T has changed its rate policy, allowing radio to thunder westward with a vengeance.

42. WSM Barn Dance begins 11/28/25

It all goes back to George D. Hay, one of the great announcers of the mid-twenties. Styling himself "The Solemn Ole Judge," Hay had been one of the movers behind the "WLS Barn Dance" in Chicago, and when he moves on to Nashville in 1925, he brings the idea along with him. By the end of the year, WSM is featuring a block of home-grown melodies every Saturday night, with Hay as announcer and rustic fiddler "Uncle Jimmy" Thompson the best-known attraction. Within two years, the "WSM Barn Dance" takes on a new name -- and the "Grand Ole Opry" is well on its way to becoming one of the true landmarks of twentieth century popular culture.

41. H. V. Kaltenborn covers the Spanish Civil War 9/3-4/36



He doesn't fit the dashing, romantic image of a war correspondent -- a lanky, balding middle-aged man with thick glasses and a scribbly moustache. But Hans von Kaltenborn makes journalism history when he becomes the first American reporter ever to broadcast live from an actual war zone. Crouching between a haystack and a cornfield on a farm in the Spanish town of Irun, his microphone lines clipped onto a farmhouse telephone, Kaltenborn brings CBS listeners the actual sounds of battle -- the whizzing bullets, the chatter of machine guns, the thunder of artillery, all broadcast live -- just three hundred yards from the front lines. Thru it all, this Harvard-trained newspaperman keeps up an extemporaneous commentary which offers a vivid description of the scene and a detailed explanation of what is happening and why. The next day, Kaltenborn's listeners hear the outcome of the battle: the entire town lies in flaming ruins, sacked by Franco's forces. Kaltenborn's gone down in history as a rather self-absorbed, pontifical man -- but there is no questioning his front-line courage.

**New in the Tape
and CD Libraries**

by Maletha King



It's time for starting the new year with some humor and a bit of drama. The "Hour of Charm" shows are delightful easy listening programs to get us into the right mood for the "Martin & Lewis" and "Abbot and Costello shows. Both of these series are good family entertainment and something light before you sit back and enjoy the "Whistler". The "Whistler" shows are not necessarily mystery shows but are interesting good dramas, and always end with an surprising twist.

We move on to "Lux Radio Theater" which was always very good with a strong base of the best actors of the time and very fine scripts. From Lux we next offer "Short Stories". All of these stories and by well known writers such as John Steinbeck, James M. Cain, Elizabeth Alexander and more. We will be offering more "Short Stories" shows in the future.



**From the officers of RHAC
and the staff of RWUN**

Stomach Remedy is Perfect Sponsor For ABC Drama

"Take *Pepto-Bismol* to soothe it, calm it.... and feel good again." --- Charles Irving

by Danny Goodwin

Stomach UPSET?
Hospital Tests Prove *Pepto-Bismol* works where Soda and Alkalizers Fail!

... Not in the stomach alone--- but also in the many feet of intestines BETWEEN the stomach, where trouble often occurs!

Unlike baking soda and alkalizers that can actually acid to the upset, *Pepto-Bismol* forms protective stomach and intestinal walls with a soothing coating. Guards against biting, burning acids. Helps retard gas formation, calm heartburn, nausea. Even soothes simple diarrhea, without constipating!

WITNESS—For Children's Health your doctor can tell you the safe way in the best way! Give your child gentle, pleasant-tasting *Pepto-Bismol*!

Take HOSPITAL-TESTED **Pepto-Bismol** and feel GOOD again!

A WATSON'S PRODUCT

Lincoln, Me. (DG)---

Radio programs with sponsors had the tendency to stay on the air longer than sustaining programs (radio programs without a sponsor). The ABC drama *THE FAT MAN* began its run as a sustaining program. After its initial season, the program was looking for a sponsor. Not only did the program find a sponsor, it was a product that was tailor made for the program's main character. On Friday, February 14, 1947, *THE FAT MAN* aired its first broadcast for *Pepto-Bismol*.

The program's main character was Brad Runyon (played by J. Scott Smart). Although he was a tough, hard-nosed private detective, Runyon was best known for being overweight (237 lbs. to be exact). Since Runyon had a large stomach, it was

appropriate the program's new sponsor, *Pepto-Bismol*, was a remedy for upset stomach.

When it was time for the commercial, announcer Charles Irving narrated a dramatization when someone had an upset stomach. The regulation upset stomach has been around as long as humans set foot on this planet. In simple terms, it's a penalty suffered from the result of overeating. Being the good egg that it was (and is), the upset stomach didn't discriminate on who could suffer from it. It didn't care if the human was a man, woman, or child--- when humans overate, the stomach became a little testy. To supposedly counteract this problem, some misguided people took antacids. Unfortunately, antacids were made for relieving stomach acid--- not cure its upset. In fact, when antacids were taken for this purpose, it was inclined to upset the stomach even more than before--- that meant, get ready to lose your lunch in a very unpleasant manner! That's where *Pepto-Bismol* comes in. Once it was taken, *Pepto-Bismol's* protective coating calmed down the stomach and intestinal walls, which were the main causes of upset stomach.

Since *Pepto-Bismol* was known for soothing, the conclusion of its radio commercials had a soothing affect. When Irving was about to read the closing, he was accompanied with the soothing music from a harp. In the process, Irving used a soothing tone in his speaking voice. When the commercial concluded, Irving opened up where the story left off by saying a rather unflattering line, "Now, let's catch up with The Fat Man."

Pepto-Bismol would be catching up with *THE FAT MAN* for over 3 ½ years. After the sponsor moved on, other sponsors (*Camel Cigarettes* and *American Chicle*) would sponsor the program for the remainder of its run. While the two sponsors kept the program on the air, neither one fit as perfectly with the program as *Pepto-Bismol* did.

Your editor is hoping to begin a new feature this Spring involving your favorite OTR series. If you have one series that you enjoy above all others, take a few minutes to jot down the name of the series, some of the reasons why you like it, and any interesting bits of information about your series. You can actually write a short article or, if you wish, just send in the basic points, and your RWUN staff will put it into article format. Please E-Mail or send your ideas for "My Favorite OTR Series" to your editor at the addresses listed on page 2.

RETURN WITH US NOW...