

WJZ & NETWORK

NELSON OLMSTED'S STORY FOR TODAY

PROGRAM #

CONQUEROR'S ISLE

BY

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PERMANENT  
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11:00 - 11:15 A.M. EST

APRIL 7, 1949

THURSDAY

(MUSIC: . . . ORIGINAL THEME . UP, THEN TO B.G. . . .)

OLMSTED: This is Nelson Olmsted, with your Story for Today. Some time ago I told a fantastic narrative by Nelson S. Bond, entitled "Conqueror's Isle." Since then so many of you have written about it, and asked to have it repeated that I think it only right to meet your requests. This is Nelson S. Bond's story of a group of men who came upon the most fantastic island in the world, and it's entitled, "Conqueror's Isle."

(MUSIC: . . . INTERLUDE -- UP AND OUT .)

OLMSTED: "You've got to believe this," said Brady. He spoke with tense, white-knuckled ferocity, his eyes intent on those of the older man. "It sounds utterly impossible, I know. It sounds -- it sounds crazy. That's why I'm here, sir. But it's the truth, and you've got to believe it! Got to -- sir."

Lieutenant Commander Gorham said quietly: "At ease, Lieutenant. I'm here to consult with you as a physician, not order your cure as a superior officer. Suppose we ignore the braid while you tell me about it?"

"Thank you, Doctor. Where would you like me to begin?"

"It's your story. You know what it is you want me to believe. The trouble began, I understand, on your last bombing mission?"

"That's right. Or rather, that's when my troubles began. The thing's been going on for longer than that -- much longer. Years, certainly; perhaps decades. Someone's got to do something, Doctor! Time is racing by, and with every passing day they grow stronger!"

"Suppose you start with that unfortunate last flight."

"Very good, sir. Well, it was this way. We had accomplished our mission and started back to the carrier. We were cruising the South China Sea, roughly off Palawan, between the Philippines and Indo-China. When the tropical typhoon hit us. We were carried way off course -- but finally we spotted an island, and landed on a sandy beach.

(MORE)

OLMSTED:  
(CONTD)

We didn't know whether we'd been carried into friendly or enemy territory. Imagine our pleasure, then, when a few minutes after we'd landed we heard a cheerful hail and looked up to find white men approaching from the wall of tropical foliage that spanned the beach. They were smiling and unarmed and they welcomed us in English with courteous enthusiasm. The head of their party -- a youngish chap who introduced himself as Dr. Grove -- invited us to follow him. There was nothing else to do. Like sheep being led to slaughter -- blindly trusting and without a struggle -- we followed him into a winding jungle path. It was Tom Goeller, my gunner, who first became puzzled about the set-up. He wondered where these people had seen us from, since he hadn't seen a sign of anything that looked like a house from the air. His question was answered shortly. We stopped before a sort of concrete shelter under a sprawling banyan tree; a lean-to sort of business in mottled green and brown -- so perfectly camouflaged to conform with its surroundings that you could hardly see it from ten yards away, much less from the air.

Dr. Grove swung the door open and told us to enter. We must have appeared dubious, for he said, "Don't be alarmed. It's merely an elevator. The entrance is from ground level."

"An elevator!" I exclaimed. "In this jungle? What kind of monkey business is this, anyhow? Do you mean to tell me you live underground?"

(MORE)

OLMSTED: But Dr. Grove firmly insisted that we enter.  
(CONT)

"Oh," I said, "So now you are insisting, eh? And suppose we prefer not to step into your mysterious little parlor? Then what?"

"Then I should be compelled -- most regretfully -- to enforce my request. Would you be kind enough to fire your gun? If you have qualms against killing a man in cold blood, you might fire into the air".

I thought it was a trick to bring help, and told him so, but Grove said, "Wrong, my friend. I need no help. Very well. Since you won't accept my invitation --" He slipped a hand into his breast pocket, and drew out a slender tube about the size and shape of a fountain pen from his breast pocket and pointed it at us and from it suddenly flowed a silver cone of radiance. I started to rush him, shouting something or other, but both shout and movement stopped abruptly as that curious, silvery radiance engulfed me. It wasn't gas but I could neither speak nor move; only my senses functioned. I heard Dr. Grove order his followers to put us in the shaft and I heard the whine of an electric motor and sensed, rather than felt, the motion of our swift descent. Dr. Grove leaned over me and said, "I'm sorry Lieutenant, but you see, firearms won't fire on this island. No explosions of any kind are permitted. We have means of hampering your primitive mechanical devices. That is why your guns did not fire, and why your radio will not operate".

(MORE)

OLMSTED:  
(CONT.)

Then the sensation of movement stopped, the elevator door slid open and we were lifted out and carried through a maze of clean-gleaming metal corridors, until finally I was carried through a doorway and placed tenderly on a cot. Then I realized how weary I was and forgot my troubles in sleep. When I roused, I could move and sprang to the door only to find it locked. I was alone. My cell was Spartan in its simplicity. Four walls of a dull gray metallic substance, a floor of some resilient rubber or plastic composition, a low ceiling of the same material as the walls. A cot, a chair, and a desk were the only furnishings and since we were underground there were no windows. There was illumination, but no lighting fixtures; no jiggery-pokery of indirect lighting, either, and, oddly enough, there were no shadows. I think it was then I started to get frightened -- cold, awed and numb, like. I shouted. The walls should have echoed my voice, being metal, but they absorbed the sound, sopping it up as a sponge absorbs water. Suddenly I heard the faintest sound behind me and whirled. Dr. Grove was stepping through the wall".

Lt. Commander Gorham, despite his training as a psychiatrist, stopped doodling and tossed a swift, anxious frown at the younger man. "Through the wall, Lieutenant? Of course you mean through the door?"

"Through the wall. Through the wall, sir. Grove stepped into my cell through the solid metal wall. It is impossible to us, but to Them, nothing is impossible. Nothing!

(MORE)

OLMSTED: That is why we must act, and act now! Before it is too  
(CONT.) late. This is man's last chance --"

"Perhaps you'd better continue, Lieutenant".

"Well, Dr. Grove stepped through the wall. And strange as it may sound, in that moment my panic ended. I looked on him with awe, knowing him to be as far above and beyond me in the life scale as I am superior to a dog or a beast of burden. We talked -- not as man to man, but as man to a lesser creature. And I was the lesser creature. And he told me many things .....

Has it ever occurred to you, Doctor, that we humans are an egotistic race? Our Darwins and our Huxleys have told us we are the product of a steady, progressive evolution that started in primeval slime and has gradually developed to our present proud and self-proclaimed status as homo sapiens -- intelligent man! But perhaps we are not so intelligent as that. For in our blind folly we have assumed ourselves to be the final and glorious end product of Nature's eternal striving toward perfection! But, there dwells upon earth today a race representing the next step in man's progress. A people to whom our thoughts are as immature and elementary as to us is the prattling of infants. They begin where we leave off. Our vaunted physics and mathematics are their nursery ABC's; the hard-won learning of our best brains is theirs intuitively. They sense what we must study; and what they must study we cannot even begin to grasp. They are the new lords of creation -- homo superior!

(MORE)

OLMSTED: How they came to be, that is one thing even they do not know.  
(CONT.) They -- or the first of them -- were born of normal parents but from the cradle they sensed that they were different. Having a telepathic instinct, they were able to discern their brothers in a crowd -- or even over long distances -- and they banded together. They decided to isolate themselves from us, since they had no more in common with us than we have with our pets. So they sought this secluded island in the Pacific, far from lesser man's civilization. They went underground to escape detection. There they live, study and learn, and wait with infinite patience for the day when they must emerge and take over the world which is theirs by inheritance. They are increasing with each passing year. Some are born on the island; others come from the four corners of the earth, drawn to it by mental rapport. Soon they will be strong enough to accept the responsibility of government of all the earth.

"You mean," I said, "destroy man? And claim the entire world for yourselves"?

Grove answered almost sadly: **How** little you humans understand us. Do you destroy the animals of the field just because they are not your intellectual peers? Our obligation is to keep and protect you; to act as your friendly guardians in a world that will be strange and frightening to you. You did not understand how I passed through a wall that to you seems solid. Not understanding, you feared. Yet there is nothing supernatural or fearful about what I did.

(MORE)

OLMSTED:  
(CONT)

There is no such thing as a solid in a universe wherein all things -- size and dimension and substance--are but relative. We know there is room and we simply make a necessary mental adjustment -- and walk where we will."

"Then what is your plan for man?"

"Your question should be what is Nature's plan for man? And I believe the question answers itself. The answer lies in history. What became of Nature's earlier experiments: the giant reptiles, the anthropoids, the men who dwelt in caves and trees?"

"They died out," I said, "Civilization passed them by. They fell before the onrush of higher life forms."

"Even so, even so. But you have our pledge that we will be kind. We will be kind."

I could go on for hours relating what I heard and saw during the three weeks I was prisoner in the subterranean refuge of the new men. I'll only tell you a few things, because I can see you -- like all the others -- think I am mad. But there are some things you should know. Those metal cells hold more than two hundred humans like you and me, men and women who have stumbled by accident upon the hideaway island and have been restrained there lest they go back and tell the world of the conquest to come. I could quote names that would amaze you.

(MORE)



OLMSTED:  
(CONT)

A famous author and traveler whose ship disappeared some years ago in the Pacific -- a big game hunter supposedly killed -- an aviatrix for whom a dozen fleets sought in vain. They are there. And they, the new men, are here among us already, paving the way for their bloodless conquest, and they will strike soon. When they do, that will be our end as the rulers of earth, for they cannot fall in anything they try. That is why you've got to make yourself believe me, no matter how crazy this sounds, Doctor. As a member of my race, I do not want to fall before a higher culture, no matter how superior. I want to live, and if we want to live, they must die! Their island must be destroyed. An atomic bomb might do it."

Dr. Gorham interrupted. "You have called them wise with the wisdom of demigods. Yet you escaped from their island without outside help. Is that proof of their superhuman intelligence?"

"It is proof of my animal cunning and of their great kindness. They cannot wilfully cause any creature pain. Knowing this, I begged Grove to take me to the surface so I could get something out of the plane one day; personal belongings I told him.

He was careless and I was desperate. He turned to look when I cried out and pointed to something behind him; he never knew what hit him.

(MORE)

OLMSTED:  
(CONT)

I don't know whether my rock killed him or not. The plane, of course, was useless, but there were self-inflating life rafts. I launched one and paddled from that devil's shore with the strength of a madman. You know the rest: How my food and water ran out. How they found me raving deliriously days or maybe weeks later."

Dr. Gorham nodded and quietly closed his memo book in which he had scratched only doodles. He said quietly: "Yes. It must have been a terrible experience. Well, Lieutenant --"

"You don't believe me, either. Do you?"

"It's been a pleasure listening to your story, Brady. I'll make a report to my superiors. Please be patient and try not to worry. Good day, Lieutenant."

Lieutenant Brady stared at the Doctor with hopeless eyes. The doctor stiffened for an instant, shrugged and left the narrow chamber. Outside another medical officer greeted him.

"Ah, there, Gorham! You've talked with him? What's the verdict?"

"A clear case of persecution mania -- an amazing form. I've never heard a tale so complete and logical, but -- Do what you can for him. I'm afraid he's going to be here for a long time -- perhaps for as long as he lives. Turned loose, he might be dangerous."

(MORE)

OLMSTED: The other medical officer shook his head. "Tough! A nice  
(CONT) boy, too. But it does nasty things to a man, floating for  
weeks in a life raft. He was the only one of his crew  
to survive. Well, Doctor -- will you lunch with me?

"No, thanks. I've got to run along and turn in a report  
and recommendation on this case."

"Of course. See you later then."

The other medico disappeared down the spotless corridor of  
the mental ward. Gorham pondered briefly. He was in the  
west wing of the hospital, facing the street. His car stood  
at the curb just outside. He was very busy. There was so  
much work to be done; so much. And if he walked through  
the anteroom some fool was sure to delay him with a  
long-winded discussion. He didn't feel a bit like talking.  
He wanted to get out of this place and forward his report--  
his report that the Brady case was closed. That there would  
be no more trouble from that source. He glanced swiftly  
up and down the corridor. There was no one in sight.  
His sense told him the street was also deserted. There  
was no danger of his being seen. So --

So, Dr. Gorham turned and walked quietly through the wall.

(MUSIC: -- THIN, WEIRD MUSIC BUILDING TO A SCREAM AS SHOCK SETS IN..)

ANNCR: You have heard a short story by Nelson S. Bond, entitled "Conqueror's Isle." Now, here is Nelson Olmsted with a closing word:

OLMSTED: Nelson S. Bond's latest collection of stories is due to appear any day now. It's entitled, "The Thirty-first of February," and is published by Gnome Press. His story I told today appeared in his last book, "Mr. Mergenthwirker's Lobbies and Other Fantastic Tales." Tomorrow, we present our last program of this series, and for the occasion I thought you would like "A Letter to Mr. Priest," by Margaret Cousins. Until tomorrow then, this is Nelson Olmsted saying good-bye and good reading.

(MUSIC: -- THEME: ..UP THEN OUT..)

ANNCR: ABC has presented Nelson Olmsted with Your Story for Today. This is ABC..the American Broadcasting Company.

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3/31/49  
1:30 pm