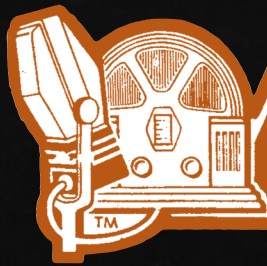


BROADWAY IS MY BEAT • A MAN OF FAITH, INTEGRITY & HONOR • VIRTUAL CONVENTION NEWS

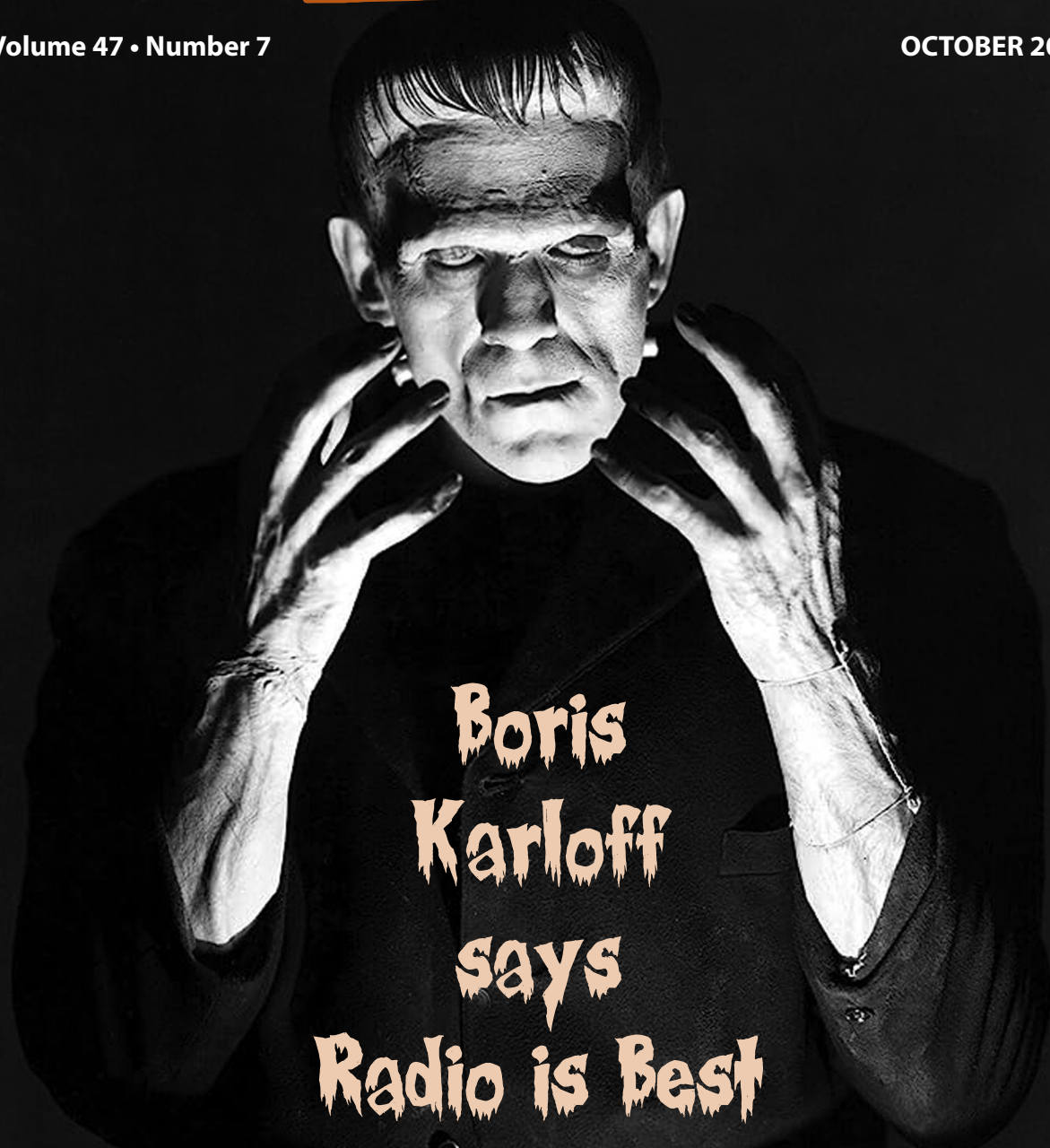


SPERDVAC

RADIOGRAM

Volume 47 • Number 7

OCTOBER 2023



**Boris
Karloff
says
Radio is Best
Medium for Horror Thrills**

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- DOREEN LEAF in memory of Jay Ranellucci... thank you, Grandpa
- JEFFREY J. LEBRUN in memory of all departed voice artists
- ALFRED LUCAS
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- ROBY & JOYCE MCHONE
- ESTHER GEDDES McVEY in memory of my leading man, Tyler McVey
- JAN MERLIN in memory of Frankie Thomas and Mona Bruns Thomas
- MELVIN MOREHOUSE in memory of Brace Beemer
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- JAMES L. MORRISON
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SPERDVAC

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from the president

DEAR SPERDVAC MEMBERS:

OCTOBER IS HERE, and it brings with it a sense of nostalgia and excitement, much like the pages of Ray Bradbury's *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. "First of all, it was October, a rare month for boys," he wrote, and his ability to craft vivid images through words is truly unparalleled. It's no wonder that his talents extended to audio theatre, enriching our world. In the coming days, I'll be working diligently to make as many of Ray Bradbury's shows as possible available in our online digital library. Let's delve into his masterpieces together.

SPERDVAC VIRTUAL CONVENTION

Our very first virtual convention is just around the corner this month. You can find the event schedule in this publication for all the exciting details. We've decided not to charge any fees for attendance. It has been four years since our last event in November 2019, and despite the obstacles, including the ongoing challenges of the pandemic, our desire to bring our members together remains unwavering. This time, no matter where you are, you can join in. We understand that some of our members have limited travel options, and we hope this virtual convention will provide a sense of unity and enjoyment for all. Now, you may wonder, "How can I attend?" It's simple. Just visit our website at www.spervac.com and follow the links. Please help us spread the word and invite your friends, family, and anyone you think might enjoy our event.

RADIOGRAM GOES BI-MONTHLY

The results of our recent membership survey are in, and regarding the publication schedule for *Radiogram*, we have reached a decision. The most favored option among our members is a bi-monthly schedule. I appreciate the input from those who supported other choices, but this schedule will help us manage costs while still delivering a printed publication. The bi-monthly schedule will commence in January 2024. Beyond financial considerations, this change allows us more time for content creation. We are always on the lookout for contributing

writers who want to enrich our publication. If you're interested, please reach out to our esteemed editor, Patrick Lucanio, for more information.

SCOTT MAHAN NAMED SECRETARY

I'm delighted to share some great news—after a long search, SPERDVAC has successfully filled the corporate officer position of secretary. Scott Mahan, a remarkable individual with an extensive background in IT and corporate leadership, has graciously volunteered his time and expertise to support our organization. Scott is not only an accomplished professional but also a genuinely good-hearted person. We are fortunate to welcome him aboard as part of our board of directors. Welcome, Scott!

...

I'm eagerly anticipating the virtual convention and the opportunity to connect with you all.

Until next time, stay safe, and stay tuned.📻

Timothy Knofler

SPERDVAC'S FIRST VIRTUAL CONVENTION TO BRING OTR TO DIGITAL AIRWAVES

by Sean Dougherty

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE but the Society to Preserve and Encourage Radio Drama, Variety and Comedy's first-ever virtual classic radio convention is just about upon us—October 27-29, 2023—and ready for delivery straight to your desktop at the low, low cost of free to attend.

There is a lot of excitement spread across the three-day event but let's try to get into what's most exciting about each part.

We've got a great mix of new material, classics from the SPERDVAC vault, modern re-creations of classic scripts, and interviews both with surviving radio performers as well as historians of that era including Leonard Maltin of *Entertainment Tonight*, Joe Webb and Keith Scott of The Suspense Project and James Scully of the Wallbreakers podcast.

For Joe and Keith's *Suspense* presentation we're also reaching into SPERDVAC's video vaults to play one of the greatest re-creations in our 49 years of history: a re-creation from November 13, 1982, of the episode "A World of Darkness," from January 20, 1944, that originally starred Paul Lukas as a blind man who overhears a murder. Unless you were lucky enough to be in the room when it happened, this is a great opportunity to experience these old pros strut their stuff for the first time.

Corinne Orr of *CBS Radio Mystery Theater* will be bringing her memories of the "Hi(man)s and lows" of working on that show that brought so many younger fans into the classic radio hobby in the 1970s. And hey! Maybe we can ask her about the characters she voiced on *Speed Racer* if we have time!

We know from reactions to articles in *Radiogram* that The Lone Ranger continues to be one of the most popular characters and shows in radio history and we've got a real treat lined up for fans of that show. In particular we have three interviews with surviving cast members, actors Dave Parker and Chuck Daugherty along with soundman Paul Carnegie, who also had a brief run as Kato at the end of sister program, *The Green Hornet*. We will definitely ask him about the time he got a canine standing ovation at The Friends of Old Time Radio Convention.

Dave will be known to dedicated readers of this magazine since he has contributed numerous articles on the history of The Lone Ranger and is its most vocal surviving cast member, dedicated to keeping the thrilling days of yesteryear alive now. He'll be able

to talk about how he is working with his son Michael to keep new tributes reaching new audiences even in 2023.

Chuck did a great job remembering the day-to-day life of a radio actor at WXYZ in Detroit on his interview on SPERDVAC Coast-to-Coast last year and for anyone who missed it this is another chance to get that inside look at history from one of its last practitioners.

As a treat for everyone, we're pulling out a *Lone Ranger* episode

to play in advance of Saturday's interviews with Dave and Paul that we chat along with while we listen.

The Project Audion re-creation scheduled for Saturday afternoon will also be a *Lone Ranger* episode so if you are a *Lone Ranger* fan, really no excuse to not be around for all the fun.

And you know that along with Project Audion, with Gregg Oppenheimer and No Soap Radio on board, there will be great new re-creations with all-star casts to enjoy as well.

One area of radio history we don't want to overlook is those great big band sounds that defined the music of the class radio era, and singer Bill Jones (of TV's *Glee*) who fronts the Club '43, a 17-piece Big Band group, will present a re-creation of a remote as well.

We'll also be rebroadcasting a SPERDVAC C interview Walden Hughes conducted with writer Carlton E. Morse of *One Man's Family* and *I Love a Mystery* as one of our buried treasures.

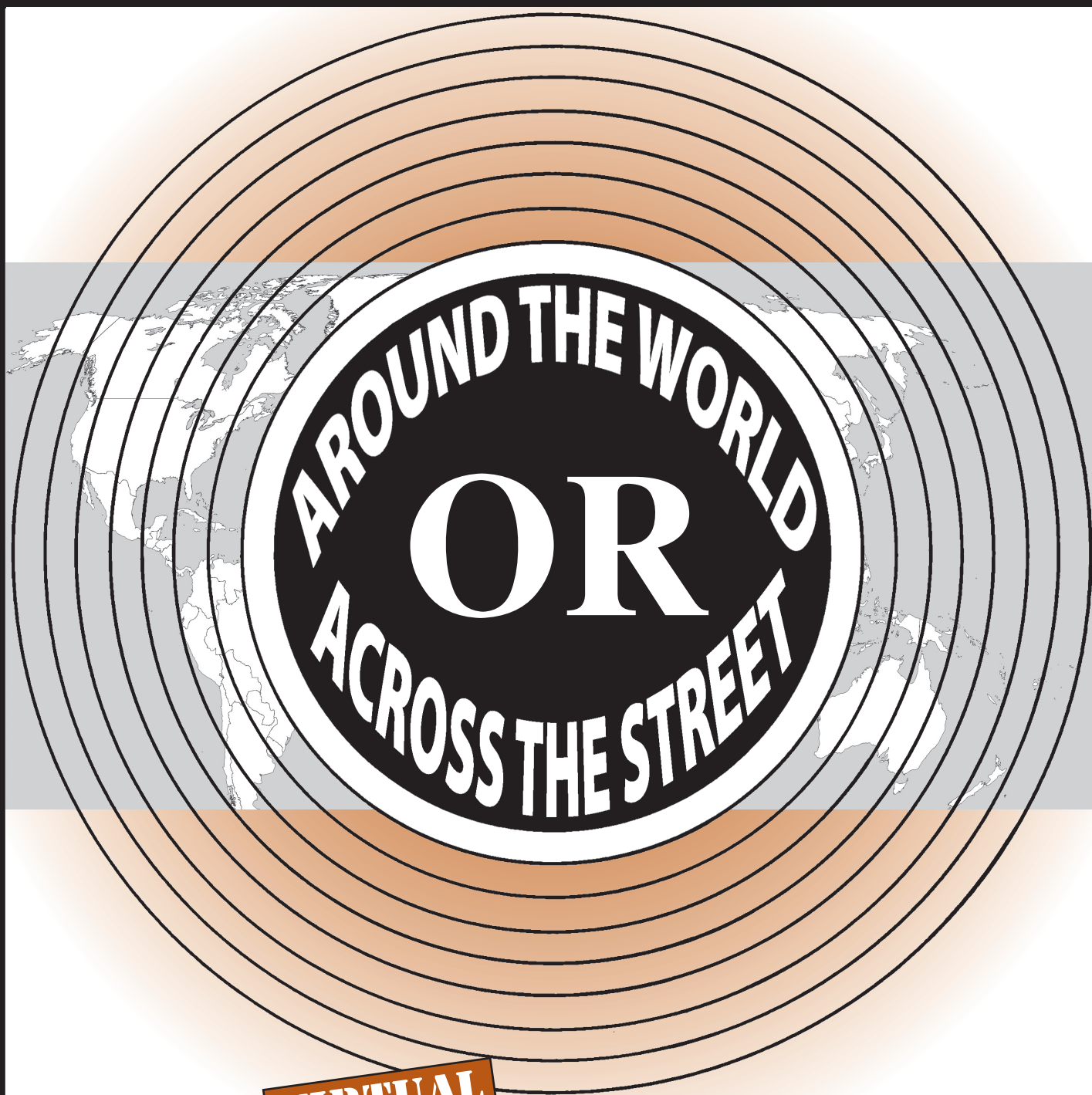
Darrell Lantz of The Buck Benny Podcast will be bringing his unique brand of Benny-fandom to our closing ceremony as we talk to him about what's it been like to carry the flag of Benny Fandom into the digital era and beyond, and how he's helped fans who weren't even born when Jack passed away discover his genius all over again.

All events and interviews scheduled are subject to change at the discretion of the virtual event producers because you just never know. If anything changes, we have Lum and Abner queued up to jump in and entertain us until we get back on schedule. Hey, for some fans, that's not a bug it's a feature!

We'll be posting updates on Facebook, X (formerly twitter) @sperdvac.com and in the r/otr community page at Reddit throughout the month as more information about signing up becomes available.

We look forward to seeing you in the chat room on Halloween weekend!🎃





VIRTUAL SPERDVAC CONVENTION 2023

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SPERDVAC'S FIRST EVER VIRTUAL CONVENTION BRINGS YOU NEW PERFORMANCES, CELEBRITY INTERVIEWS, AND GREATEST HITS FROM OUR VAULTS TO THE DIGITAL AIRWAVES HALLOWEEN WEEKEND

OCTOBER 27-29 • SPERDVAC.COM



ROADWAY IS MY BEAT

In the bustling, neon-lit heart of Manhattan, where dreams meet reality and stories unfold beneath the city lights, one radio program captured the essence of New York City like no other: Broadway Is My Beat.

by Patrick Lucanio

FOR NEARLY A DECADE, *Broadway Is My Beat*—frequently advertised as *Broadway's My Beat*—brought the sounds, the stories, and the soul of the Big Apple into living rooms across the nation. Launched in February 1949, the crime drama encapsulated the rhythm and pulse of New York City's streets. As created by writers Morton Fine and David Friedkin, the show was a departure from the typical detective series of the time by having its central character, NYPD detective Danny Clover, cleverly embarking on a journey through the underbelly of New York's neighborhoods, capturing the city's diversity, intrigue, and raw emotion.

Commencing and originating in New York, the series featured Anthony Ross as Danny Clover with Lester Gotlieb producing and John Dietz directing. Robert Stringer provided the provocative jazz score. But for reasons unclear, after three months the series moved to Hollywood where on July 7, 1950, the series began anew. This time the series was under the supervision of Elliott Lewis, which was the versatile actor's first series as producer and director. Very little in the series' format was altered, but, according to radio reviewer Lou Larkin (*Inside Radio & TV*; *Los Angeles Mirror* December 26, 1949), Lewis "sparked *Broadway Is My Beat* from a mediocre 'who-dun-it' to a first-class thriller."

Ironically, for a series set in New York City it remains the Hollywood interpretation of that city's personality that most listeners and OTR enthusiasts revere.

With the move to Hollywood came a fresh cast led by CBS announcer-turned-actor Larry Thor as Clover. He was assisted by Charles Calvert as Gino Tartaglia, a somewhat comical sidekick officer, and Jack Kruschen as Muggowen, the city's coroner. Also participating in the cast were radio stalwarts Harry Bartell, Bill Bouchy, Herb Butterfield, Lawrence Dobkin, Mary Jane Croft, Herb Ellis, Sam Edwards, Byron Kane, Ben Wright and

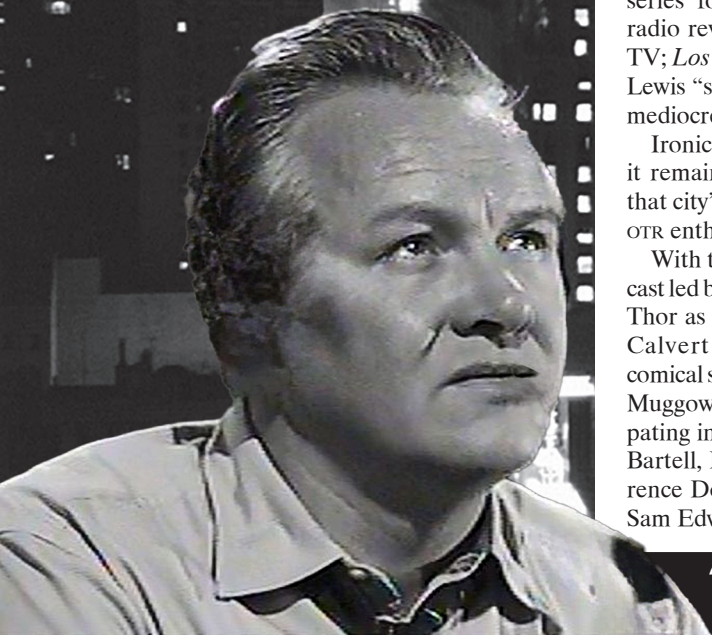
Barney Phillips among many others.

At its core, *Broadway Is My Beat* was one of a few crime series that developed in post-war America that eschewed the role of the loner private detective for that of the haggard police investigator. Known as the police procedural, these works focused more on the dogged determination of police officials whose work was less glamorous than that of the private eye. Although often no less laconic, the police official was more circumscribed than his confidential counterpart in apprehending criminals by adhering to sworn duty and observing civic law; thus, the police official was rigorously constrained in his methods to expose lawlessness in the big city. The epitome of the police procedural is Jack Webb's *Dragnet*, which premiered on radio three months after *Broadway Is My Beat* on June 3, 1949, but one month before the Hollywood broadcast. Others on radio that followed include *The Line Up* (1950-1953), begun by Elliott Lewis and then sustained by Jaime del Valle, and *Twenty-First Precinct* (1953-1956).

It has been argued that the police procedural appeared concomitant with the radical social adjustments occurring in major cities. As more and more people—returning vets—filled the city's streets to over-crowding so came an abundance of antisocial behavior. As media and social critic J. Fred MacDonald noted in *Don't Touch that Dial! Radio Programming in American Life from 1920 to 1960* (1991), and as quoted in Jim Cox's *Radio Crimes Fighters: Over 300 Programs from the Golden Age* (2002): "Listeners could not help reacting to the fearful picture that these detectives presented . . . In their purview, the greatest cities of the country . . . were criminal cesspools with only a cadre of depressed public and private investigations defending them from anarchy."

This hostile environment—poetically described by future writers as *the concrete jungle*—had already been revealed in movie

"From Times Square to Columbus Circle — the gaudiest, the most violent, the loneliest mile in the world."



theatres a year before *Broadway Is My Beat* premiered on radio. Jules Dassin's *The Naked City*, produced by New York journalist Mark Hellinger in documentary style, showed audiences a film background like no other. The location shooting added much to the otherwise typical narrative of police seeking the murderer of a young woman. As such the city itself, augmented by Hellinger's narration, became a character all its own, and seemingly was the force that impelled the detectives, played by Barry Fitzgerald and radio's Howard Duff, to act as they did. As *New York Times* film critic Bosley Crowther wrote, "Thanks to the actuality filming of much of its action in New York, a definite parochial fascination is liberally assured all the way and the seams in a none-too-good whodunnit are rather cleverly concealed."

Like Hellinger's *The Naked City*, *Broadway Is My Beat* was a love letter to New York City, celebrating its vibrant, gritty, and often contradictory character. The show's signature opening, narrated by Clover, set the tone: "From Times Square to Columbus Circle — the gaudiest, the most violent, the loneliest mile in the world." This mile was Broadway, and it served as the backdrop for Danny Clover's relentless pursuit of justice.

The portrayal of detective Clover by Ross and Thor were similar yet distinct. Both actors portrayed Clover as a hard-boiled detective so true to the private eye mold. Ross possessed a New York accent that certainly met the expectations of listeners accustomed to such programs set in the Big Apple. Thor, on the other hand, mellowed his accent as the series progressed. Moreover, Thor's deep and rich yet somewhat gravelly voice exuded a world-weary wisdom that made him both relatable and enigmatic. In Thor's characterization, Clover was a detective who carried the weight of the city on his shoulders, an archetype that, one reviewer noted, resonated with listeners and painted a vivid picture of a city grappling with its demons.

What truly set *Broadway Is My Beat* apart was its innovative use of sound. The show's soundscapes were carefully crafted by three

sound effects specialists, Ralph Cummings, David Light and Ross Murray. As nearly as no other program could do, the sound effects alone transported listeners into the heart of New York City. The clatter of elevated trains, the honking of taxis, and the murmur of the bustling crowds blended seamlessly with an evocative jazz score first realized by Robert Stringer and amplified in Hollywood by Alexander Courage and Wilbur Hatch. The result was described by many reviewers as a *symphony* of sound that brought the city to life.

The music of *Broadway Is My Beat*, moreover, was a character in its own right. Simply put, the jazz-infused compositions underscored the drama and enhanced the show's emotional depth. The use of music wasn't just background, though; it was integral to the storytelling, reflecting the moods and emotions of the characters and the city itself.

While Danny Clover was undoubtedly the central figure, *Broadway Is My Beat* was populated by diverse characters, both heroic and villainous. From the weary beat cop to the sultry lounge singer, the show's ensemble cast composed of radio's greatest while in Hollywood added depth and dimension to the city's narrative.

The stories themselves were varied and captivating, exploring a wide range of crimes, motives, and human frailties. From the murder of a street musician to the kidnapping of a prominent socialite, *Broadway Is My Beat* tackled issues of love, greed, jealousy, and justice with a deft hand. The writing was sharp, the dialogue crisp—the brilliance of Fine and Friedkin—and the narratives often delivered unexpected twists but *Broadway Is My Beat* didn't just entertain; it also provided a window into the social and cultural dynamics of post-war America. The stories often touched on issues of race, class, intolerance, and, in several episodes, anti-Semitism, reflecting the challenges and tensions of a rapidly changing society. Through the lens of Detective Clover's investigations, the show shed light on the struggles of everyday people, whether they were caught up in the criminal underworld or simply trying to make ends meet.

ADVENTURE

with Danny Clover

that tough, but sentimental New York detective whose beat is the most fabulous street in the big town. Played by Anthony Ross.

Each Thursday
8:00 P. M.



BROADWAY IS MY BEAT

Jefferson Standard **WBT** Broadcasting Company

Advertisement in the Charlotte (NC) Observer, July 7, 1949.

In one memorable episode, titled "The Joey Crofton Case," the series tackled the growing issue of juvenile delinquency, exploring the tragic consequences of a troubled youth's choices. Such episodes offered a nuanced portrayal of societal issues and encouraged listeners to reflect on the world around them.

Despite its relatively short run, *Broadway Is My Beat* left an indelible mark on the world of radio drama and storytelling. The show's innovative use of sound, complex characters, and evocative narratives influenced subsequent generations of radio, television, and film creators. Its portrayal of New York City as a living, breathing entity became a template for countless crime dramas set in urban environments.

AND YET *Broadway Is My Beat* seemed more than just a radio program; it was a sonic journey into the heart of New York City through masterclass storytelling that reflected the society it depicted. Through the skillful interplay of sound, character, and narrative, the show captured the essence of the city that never sleeps and the complexities of the human experience.

As we look back on the legacy of *Broadway Is My Beat*, we can't help but marvel at its ability to transport us to a different time and place, to make us feel the heartbeat of a city, and to remind us that beneath the neon lights and the towering skyscrapers there are stories waiting to be told. In fact, to borrow a phrase from Hellinger's *The Naked City*, "there are eight million stories in the naked city," with detectives like Danny Clover ready to unravel them.🎧



LARRY THOR—was born Arnleifur Lawrence Thorsteinson thirty-two years ago in the Icelandic village of Lundar, Manitoba and didn't learn English until he was seven. He became a CBS announcer on his arrival in Hollywood in 1946 and, last summer, got his first major acting job as Danny Clover on Broadway's *My Beat*.

Brief bio in the January 1951 edition of *Radio and Television Mirror*.

HORROR IN T



THE AIR

“All sheerest horror is in sound,” says Boris Karloff, who thinks radio is the best medium for horror thrills

by Gladys Hall

WHAT HORROR SHOULD I FIND, I wondered, as I ascended the crooked stone steps of the *haunted House* of Boris Karloff, hidden away in remote Cold Water Canyon on the outskirts of Beverly Hills.

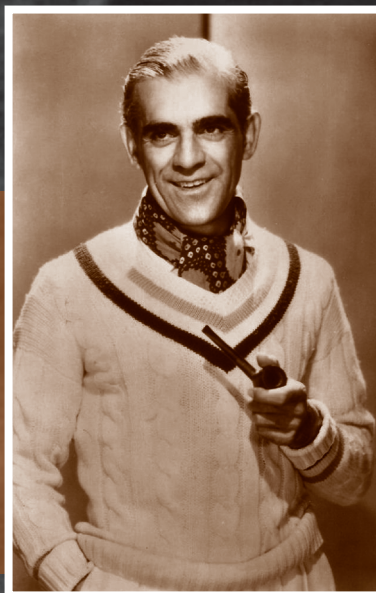
The house is low and rambling and hidden from human eyes by trees and foliage and vast clumps of geranium gone mad. No photograph can be taken of it from the lonely road it faces.

It is the famous *Haunted House of Hepburn*. It is the house which, when Kate lived there, she claimed was haunted, infested with spirits, whose chairs rocked and crept empty, whose doors and windows one could hear opening and closing without the touch of human hands. There was, she is reported to have said, one room in particular into which her dogs could not go without strange and eerie howls issuing from their throats, the hair on their backs rising and bristling. On more than one occasion Kate's agents were summoned hastily, in the dead o' night, to come up and save their client from *ha'nt hysteria!*

Boris Karloff bought this house, with its two-and-a-half acres of untamed land, with, at the garden's end, two ancient pillars bearing the legendary words *Quinta Nirvana*. Neither the original owners nor Miss Hepburn ever were able to explain from whence those marble shafts had come, who had put them there, or who had inscribed the fatalistic words. Mr. Karloff had them removed.

I wondered, as I entered the green-shaded garden, greeted by five dogs, what strange company *Frankenstein* and the ha'nts of Hepburn might make here, screened from the outer world.

Mr. Karloff received me in the living-room. Sun-flooded it was at this bright noon hour. The whitewashed brick walls, the rafted



Boris Karloff, portrayer of the Frankenstein monster and America's leading horror man, sat down with Gladys Hall of *Radio Stars* magazine in June 1936 to assert that horror is best evoked by sound than by pictures; hence, Karloff considered radio the best medium for spine-chilling thrills. Article contributed by Alan Irving.



How appropriate that Boris Karloff, portrayer of Frankenstein's monster and star of a thousand horror roles, should "inherent" a haunted house. Although attractive and appealing, this house where the interview with Karloff was conducted was reportedly haunted. The previous tenant, no less a personage than Katharine Hepburn, reported that the place was "infested with spirits, whose chairs rocked and crept empty, whose doors and windows one could hear opening and closing without the touch of human hands."

ceiling, the red chintzes, the books and smoking equipment, the sprays of golden acacia, the substantial bulk of the Karloff luggage, ready to be moved in route to England—the whole gently casual effect of the place seemed, I thought, an unlikely haven for ghosts. A ping pong table occupied the low sealed gallery running the length of the living room. Sunny canaries chirped and trilled in their cages. The stiff-patterned lace of olive trees brushed the roof. A radio hummed in a distant room.

Rather precipitately I said to Mr. Karloff: "Is the house haunted? Do you believe in ghosts?"

"If you should ask me, really," Boris Karloff was saying, his pipe clamped comfortably between his teeth. "I would say that the most authentic ghosts, possibly the only ghosts of today, are the ghosts released by science to roam the earth and the ether. The voices which come, bodiless over stations KFI and KHJ and others. If one can believe in the radio . . . if one realizes that one is listening to the chimes of Westminster, to the voice of Mahatma Gandhi in India, to the voice of Mussolini in Italy then one easily should be able to believe that even the next world can communicate with us *if we have the properly sensitized receiving apparatus, if*

our channels are clear and open. . . .

"One of the future developments of radio," said Boris Karloff gravely, "*may be to establish long-wave contact with the world 'beyond.'*"

Mr. Karloff has been on the Shell Hour. He has been on the Fleischman Hour [and] Rudy Vallee. But has turned down more radio offers than he has accepted because, to him, radio is the most far-reaching, the most penetrating, the most vitally important medium in the world. And he will do nothing unless he feels that what he does is right for him. He will not appear *gratis*, on any of the social hours. He is the one star in Hollywood who dared to turn down a well-known columnist when she invited him to appear on her guest's hour program. He said: "I had a very good reason for refusing. I do not believe that an artist who works for his living should be expected to perform *gratis* for the sake of doing so. If it is for charity that is different.



And here is the strangest of strange things: Boris Karloff, who has scared half of the human race into hair-raising hysteria, is himself terrified of the microphone.



Movie masters of menace, Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi, share the stage with radio personalities Harriet and Ozzie Nelson. Unlike Karloff, Lugosi once stated that he disliked radio and tried to avoid appearances in front of the microphone.

Otherwise—no.”

On the Shell and Fleishman hours Mr. Karloff has done scenes from *Death Takes a Holiday* and *Jekyll and Hyde* and other famous plays. He first did *Death Takes a Holiday* on the Shell hour and when Rudy Vallee heard it he was so impressed with the Karloff voice and rendition that he asked him to do the same scenes on his hour.

And here is the strangest of strange things: Boris Karloff, who has scared half of the human race into hair-raising hysteria, is himself terrified of the microphone.

He said: “I ran away from home, in England, when I was very young. I’ve worked on farms in Canada. I’ve trouped all over the world. I’ve been hungry and friendless and forlorn. I’ve played in horror plays, although I like to get away from the word ‘horror’ as much as I can. I’ve about run the gamut of human experience. I suppose the very names of the plays I’ve done, on the screen and over the air—*The Walking Dead* and *The Invisible Ray* being the last screenplays—are calculated to strike terror to the human heart. But only one thing in my life has ever struck terror to my heart and that

one thing is the microphone in a broadcasting station!

“I’m plain scared of radio’s monster! Fine thing for Frankenstein to admit, isn’t it? But it’s the truth. When I have to spend 10 minutes on the air they are the longest, the most fraught-with-terror 10 minutes I’ve ever known. Talk about ‘invisible rays’—why,” laughed Mr. Karloff grimly, “when I am on the air and when I begin to send my voice out into invisible space I can hear The Raven croaking ‘Nevermore!’ And I know what that croaking means—that nevermore can I recall it . . . nevermore . . .

“I know, then, what ghosts are . . . the bodiless, voiceless, invisible but terribly potent ghosts of all the radio listeners. . .

“There is something so final about radio. There can be no retakes. An error made is an error made and cannot be recalled.

“I always insist on having soft music

Movies and radio mix in the delightful comedy *You’ll Find Out*, with Kay Kyser and his College of Musical Knowledge mixing up melody, mirth and mystery with Boris Karloff, Peter Lorre and Bela Lugosi. From the November 28, 1940, edition of the Harrisburg (PA) *Telegraph*.



Mystery, Music in Kyser Film

Maestro of Radio Clicks Again in Senate's Show

By GEORGE E. SHELLEY

A different brand of music, mystery and comedy was unfolded yesterday on the screen of the Senate Theatre, where Kay Kyser's latest flicker had opening day audiences howling at "You'll Find Out."

Kyser again plays himself and his orchestra, including Ginny Simms, Harry Babbitt, Ish Kabibble, Sully Mason and Ish Kabibble are all on hand.

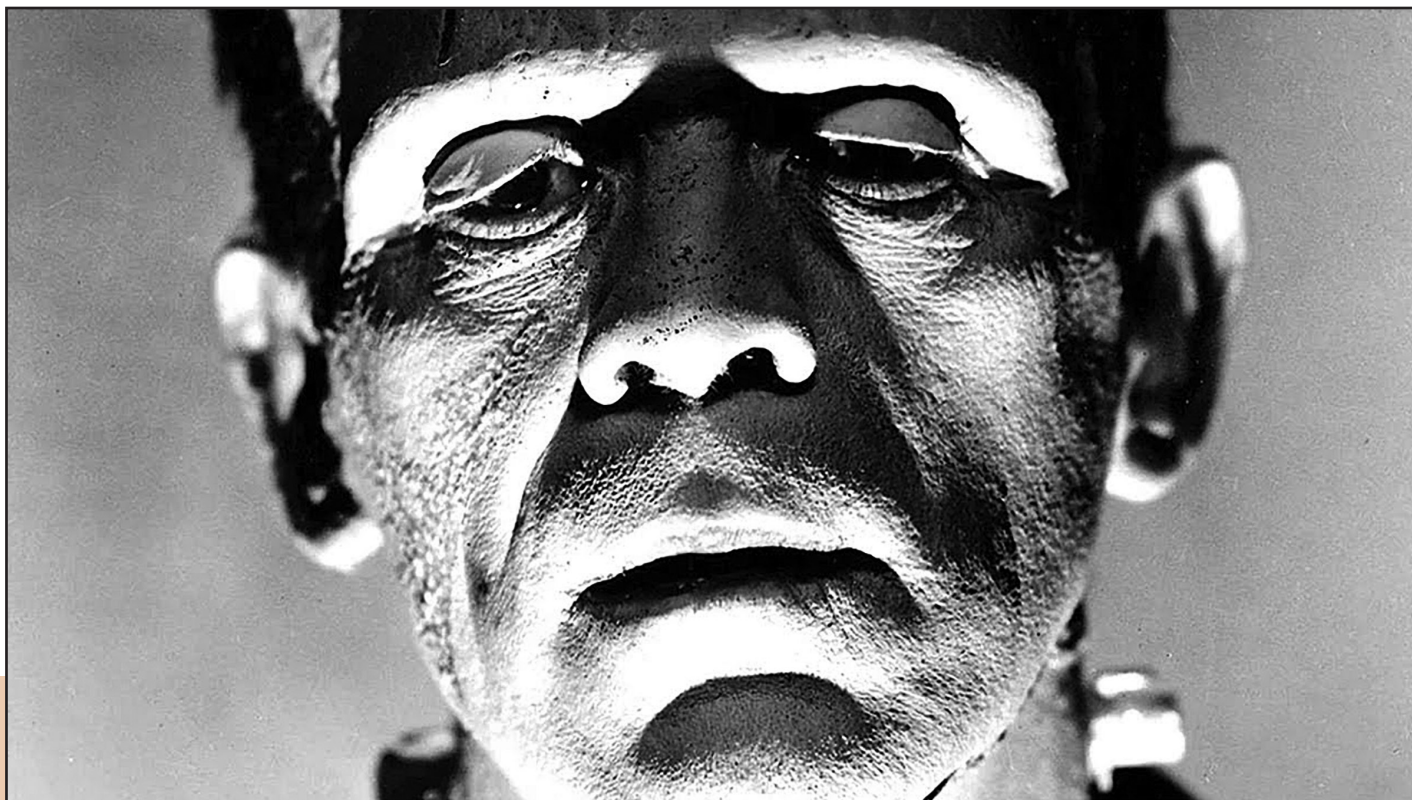
Hollywood is represented by a trio of the screen's most outstanding horror men, Boris Karloff, Peter Lorre and Bela Lugosi. In addition to these, the film capital is represented by Dennis O'Keefe, Helen Parrish and Alma Kruger.

First of all, you'll find out that "You'll Find Out" offers everything that could be desired in the way of music. You'll also find out that the picture is filled with chills as the mystery unfolds. You'll find out, too, that there is enough comedy to keep you laughing from start to finish.

Kay and his "College of Musical Knowledge" get into trouble when they accept an engagement for a birthday party. Secret panels and spiritualism give Kay plenty of trouble, but the audience plenty of laughs.

Among the songs are "What Are You Goin' Do About It," "I'd Know You Anywhere," "The Bad Humor Man," and others. Bringing comment from first-day crowds was the use of the Sonophone which brings Babbitt's voice out in various musical instruments.

Don't miss "You'll Find Out," or you'll find out that you missed a swell dish of entertainment.



"Horror need not be housed in a distorted body. Even when I played in *Frankenstein*, the most grotesque and horrible of any makeup I have ever used, the main reaction I got from my fans was—*sympathy*. Not horror, not fright, but sympathy for me and most of my Frankenstein fans are children and their letters told me how sorry they felt for 'the poor old thing.'

played while I am broadcasting. Submerged music which does not detract from the voice but which seems to provide a curtain between me and my radio audiences. A soft blanket or blur of protectiveness behind which I can hide. . . ."

Frankenstein hiding behind soft music!

I said: "Do you believe that horror can be done on the air? I mean, as effectively, as chillingly done as the thrills and spine-shudders you give us on the screen?"

"More effectively," said Mr. Karloff emphatically. "Why not? For isn't horror really more horrible as an audible sensation, really? I mean, if you only hear a thing—a cry in the night, a moan, a scream, a wail—isn't it more horrible than if you can see what is making the moan or the wail or the scream?"

"Even in the matter of this 'haunted' house . . . what really is supposed to haunt it is sound or sounds. Miss Hepburn never declared, so far as I know, that she saw anything. All of the horror came through

the medium of her ears. She heard strange sounds. She heard doors creaking and windows rattling. She heard the dogs whine and howl when they entered that certain room.

"All sheerest horror is in sound. The wail of the banshee . . . the sepulchral 'voice from the tomb' . . . the moan in the night when the ancestral ghost haunts the corridor of an ancient castle . . . the spirit voices of Uncle Henry and Aunt Mehitabel, conjured by a spirit medium . . . *all sound*.

"And so the radio, the invisible ether, is undoubtedly the best medium for giving real horror thrills. For when we can see a thing, no matter how misshapen and hideous the thing may be,

we know the worst of it. We know beyond any grisly doubt, what it is we have to deal with. The mystery has become manifest and one can deal with what one can see.

"But the Unseen, the ghastly scream out of nowhere, the cry in the dark . . . if we do not know, through our eyes *what bodies these sounds wear*, we are helpless and being helpless, a thousand times more terrified.

"Horror need not be housed in a distorted body. Even when I played in *Frankenstein*, the most grotesque and horrible of any makeup I have ever used, the main reaction I got from my fans was—*sympathy*. Not horror, not fright, but sympathy for me and most of my Frankenstein fans are



"No, horror, real horror is in the situation. There must be the situation, implicit with dread potentialities before there can be horror."

children and their letters told me how sorry they felt for 'the poor old thing.'

"No, horror, real horror *is in the situation*. There must be the situation, implicit with dread potentialities before there can be horror. Certainly many a mild-mannered, very normal looking man can be a murderer. Distorted bodies, ugly faces do not necessarily harbor evil spirits. Some of the most expert purveyors of horror on the screen—well, take Peter Lorre, for example. Peter plays his roles without benefit of grotesque makeup. He in real-life, is a rosy-cheeked, wholesome looking chap. But place him in a situation sinister enough and he will freeze the blood in your veins.

"Take the police calls which come over the air: '*Calling Car 9999 . . . Calling Car 4878 . . .*' there is nothing horrible about men who are broadcasting hurry calls. They are probably good, honest Irish policemen. But we can't see them and the situations they conjure up send shivers down our spines . . . a woman being murdered on such and such street . . . suspicious looking characters seen entering a deserted house . . . unnatural sounds emanating from an upper window . . . the *situations* are implicit with horror. And, in radio, the situation is the thing.

"Naturally when we have visual means, it helps. But if we haven't it—as in radio—then there must be the situation conceived by a mind adept at giving audible thrills. And as for the actor he must let the situation seep into his mind and impregnate the timbre of his voice until that voice goes out over the air saturated with horror and foreboding and dread.

"I have been offered many a radio script and have read it and turned it down, saying: 'This will be no good on the air; the requirements are too visual. The situations must be seen.' In *Death Takes a Holiday*, which was not horror, by the way, but beauty—the situation is there, ready-made. Death visiting the earth . . . that's all radio audiences needed to know to feel the full portent of the thing. It was infinitely more macabre not to be able to see Death . . . one disembodied voice gave a finer illustration than any man of flesh and blood playing Death on stage or screen. That is a perfect example of how much more authentic horror can be made on the air than by any other medium.



The cherubic Peter Lorre whom Boris Karloff said played his roles without benefit of grotesque makeup. Karloff added: "He in real-life, is a rosy-cheeked, wholesome looking chap. But place him in a situation sinister enough and he will freeze the blood in your veins."

"In *Jekyll and Hyde*, on the other hand, the entire effect is up to the actor and the control and manipulation of his voice. I had to let evil seep into my voice when I played Hyde and I had to change the whole timbre and tone-quality of my voice when I was the kindly Jekyll.

"Horror on the air can be more chilling than horror placed in any other medium because the air is the natural element of horror. Two things are necessary—horror must be implicit in the situation and the actor must have such perfect control of his voice that he can run the gamut

of good and evil, of the natural and the supernatural."

I rose to go. The luggage was being removed from the living room. Mr. Karloff was in route to England to make *The Man Who Lived Again* for Gaumont-British. The canaries sang. The dogs nuzzled the kind hand of their master.

Mr. Karloff said: "I hope, one of these days, to be able to give you the shudder of your life, over the air . . . and, who knows, the day may come when actors long dead and gone will be talking to you from a world reached, entered . . . by radio." 🗣️



A Man of Faith, Integrity and Honor

JULY'S SPECIAL Lone Ranger Anniversary issue, by all accounts, garnered a considerable amount of interest. It captured my attention even though the Mysterious Traveler was on hiatus that month. In reading my copy of July's *Radiogram* I was reminded of an elusive title that had long been absent from my bookshelves: *His Typewriter Grew Spurs*, a biography of Fran Striker written by Striker's son, Fran Striker Jr. The Lone Ranger issue kickstarted a renewed search for that missing title and I soon located a copy. When it arrived, I quickly devoured every word.

The volume is a short but intimate and at times a poignant glimpse at the famous man seated behind the typewriter. For this reader, the focus of the biography is on the character of Fran Striker, which in turn defined Striker's writing. A few random examples drawn from the personal side rather than the professional side seem in order to make my point.

One mark of Fran Striker's character was the real-life story of Fiction Farm. The farm was an 80-acre property near Arcade, NY. Long abandoned, Fiction Farm was purchased by Striker in 1937. It would serve as a summer retreat for the family. Beyond that, however, Fiction Farm became something of a refuge for relatives who found themselves displaced and out of work because of the Great Depression. According to Fran Jr., his father was not only taking in these relatives but also paying for storage of their furniture and belongings. Fran oversaw improvements to the farmhouse and land. Furniture was brought out of storage. Each summer everyone would join the trek to Fiction Farm. According to Fran Jr., the older relatives were inclined to stay at the farm year-round. To provide for those who stayed behind, Striker constructed a large chicken coop and stocked it with chickens. Proceeds from the sales of eggs supplied pin money for those individuals.

Fran Striker seems to have been in many respects what once would have been described as a gentleman of the old school. By which was meant someone of such attributes as faith, courtesy, integrity and honor. There came a time in the 1940s when Striker asked his boss, George Trendle, for a raise. Trendle not only refused the raise but fired Striker. Fran told the family only that he had an agreement with the station that he could write from home. Trendle was eventually

forced to re-hire Striker when the sponsor complained about the declining quality of the scripts. Fran never told his family of the firing. The Striker Family only learned about Fran's termination after reading the account in Dick Osgood's *WYXIE Wonderland*, nearly 20-years after Fran's death.

Striker's relationship with Trendle must have been complicated

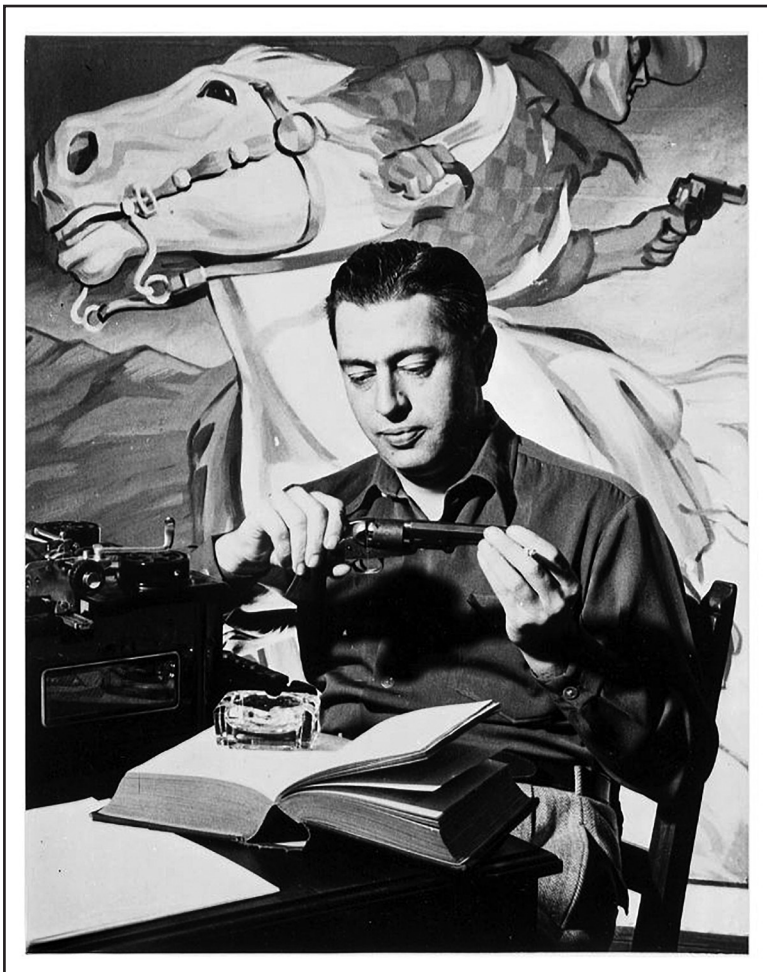
at times. A case in point was Fran's appearance on the TV program, *To Tell the Truth*, on September 8, 1960. He concluded his sworn affidavit by asserting that he was the creator of the Lone Ranger. Trendle fired off a letter to Striker demanding a retraction. Since Fran had retained an extensive collection of material throughout his writing career including many items from his work on *The Lone Ranger* he simply responded with copies of letters and memos from WXYZ attesting to his creation of the Lone Ranger character. Trendle responded with silence. Fran's appearance on *To Tell the Truth* is available on Youtube for anyone interested in this aspect of the story.

Two years later, following Striker's death in an automobile accident, *Time* covered the story of Fran's passing and credited him with creating the Lone Ranger. Trendle contacted *Time* claiming otherwise. When the magazine sought comment from the Striker Family, *Time* received copies of the same material

Fran had sent to Trendle two years before. That apparently settled the matter as far as *Time* was concerned.

Underscoring the contradictory relationship that seemed to surround Striker and Trendle was a story Janet Striker recounted to her son years later. Trendle was scheduled to undergo surgery and requested Fran to be there when Trendle was anesthetized and in attendance when he awakened. Trendle didn't want either his wife or son at the hospital, only Striker, explaining that Fran was his only true friend.

Anyone wanting to understand the character of the Lone Ranger need look no further than the character of Fran Striker who put the words in the mouth of the masked man. As Fran Jr. said of his father at the start, "The integrity and principles that he gave to his fictional characters were an extension of his own beliefs. To me, his life was proof that hard work and fair play will yield benefits beyond expectation."❦





OLD NEWS IS GOOD NEWS

COURTESY: CLAIR SCHULZ



THE LAST LETTER OF DR. BRONSON featured Walter Kingsford, Harold Huber, Laird Cregar (soon to be seen in the 20th Century-Fox motion picture *The Lodger*), George Coulouris, Helen Vinson and Ian Wolfe in a tale calculated to keep you in *Suspense*.

A distinguished Hollywood cast thrilled radio audiences on July 27, 1943, when *Suspense* presented "The Last Letter of Dr. Bronson," the first of three versions of the story to be presented on *Suspense*. As scripted by Leonard St. Clair from a story by Richard Kreyke, the Man in Black tells us that a certain Dr. Bronson (Laird

Cregar) is convinced that there were only five fundamental reasons why a man would not and could not murder his fellow man. To prove his theory he offers a fabulous sum to each of five hand-picked "murderers" who would have sufficient reason to kill him. So confident is he of his theory that he sets himself up as the victim.!

CORRECTION

STRYKER 3 YER OUT! It's nice to know that at least one reader does actually read "The Editor Has His Say" column, and that the reader answered the editor's plea for writers. The reader wrote not an article but to correct the lowly columnist's spelling. Yes, it is Fran Striker not Stryker. The bane of all editors—names!



...
LIKE FATHER LIKE SONS! Another reader wondered how we could have published an article about Parkyakarkus without once mentioning his talented offspring, Bob Einstein (aka Super Dave Osborne) and Albert Brooks. The fault lay not with the author but with the editor—every writer's bane—who trimmed and trimmed to meet space requirements only to incur the wrath of not just the author but a reader as well. It's lonely at the bottom.

...
And a reminder that our next issue is our combined year-end issue and will be out at the end of November.



BEFORE COMPUTERS THERE WAS RADIO!

And the best place to learn all about the golden age of radio is *Radiogram*. Don't miss a single issue of *Radiogram*. Check the back of your *Radiogram* for your membership number and renewal date. You can also give this to your friends who

don't use a computer so they can join. New Members can just write the word **NEW** in the Member Number area. You can always renew your basic membership at www.sperdvac.com using PayPal, but you don't need a computer to be a member of SPERDVAC. Use this form and mail a check to SPERDVAC for \$20.00 to:

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