



A. J. Alan—A. J. ALAN STORIES—A. V. Laider/Death in the Hand—ABC MYSTERY TIME—Above the World—ACHERON THEATRE—Across the Mendips to Priddy and the Great Haunted Cavern of Wookey—Across the Moors—ADVENTURE INTO FEAR—The Adventure of the German Student—Adventures in Ectoplasm—The Affair at Grover Station—After the Break of Day—Afterward—“Alan Griff” Stories—Alas, Poor Ghost!—Alexander Polson—Alexander Woollcott [Ghost Stories]—Algernon Blackwood [Radio Talks]—Algernon Blackwood [Stories]—ALIENS IN THE MIND—All Hallows—All Souls’ Night—ALL THE DARK CORNERS—Almost Human—The Altar of Hate—Alter Ego—The Alterer—Ambrose Bierce [Stories]—AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON—Ancient Sorceries—And Adam Begot—Another Applicant—APAGUE LA LUZ Y ESCUCHE (1949)—APAGUE LA LUZ Y ESCUCHE (1999)—Appointment at Einion—APPOINTMENT WITH FEAR (1943)—APPOINTMENT WITH FEAR (1976)—Appointment with Mr. Davis—Arsenic and Old Lace—ARTC Halloween Specials—Arthur Machen—AS DARKNESS FALLS—The Ash Tree—At the End of the Passage—At the Mountains of Madness—Atmospherics—Au Telephone—August Heat—Aura—The Author and the Thing—Author’s Own Copy—AUX FRONTIERES DE L’IRREEL—Avalanche—AVENUE X.

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A. J. ALAN

[RADIO APPEARANCES]

A. J. Alan, the microphone *nom-de-plume* of British civil servant Leslie Harrison Lambert, was the premier teller of ghost and “shaggy dog” stories in the earliest days of the BBC. “In his very first broadcast,” noted announcer Stuart Hibberd, “Alan made such a hit that whenever his name appeared in the *Radio Times* thousands of listeners noted the date and time in their diaries.” An A. J. story, whether it concerned a ghost, a murder, or something stranger, was truly an event to anticipate. “Whenever A. J. Alan told one of his preposterous stories in the early days of the wireless,” reminisced *Times* writer Leonard Buckley in 1971, “you always listened. Everybody did.”

The fact that the listening public knew nothing about the man behind the voice only heightened the anticipation. “His name carried an aura of mystery about it,” explained Hibberd. “In fact, A. J. Alan was the mystery man of radio. ‘Tell me, who is this fellow Alan? What does he look like? Is Alan his real name? (How many times had I been asked such questions!)’ *Radio Times* humorist A. A. Thomson remarked, not altogether facetiously, that “the identity of A. J. Alan is one of the major mysteries of the century.” But the true identity of Alan was a closely-guarded secret which was known only to, as Eric Partridge expressed it, “a very narrow circle at Broadcasting House,” and was not revealed until after his death. “He was known to cut even his friends for fear that they might reveal his identity,” remembered Freddy Grisewood. “As it happened, I knew him quite well, but when later I joined the B.B.C. and had the job of announcing him he showed not the faintest sign of recognition.”

But even those who were acquainted with him as Lambert in the 1920s knew next-to-nothing about his earlier years, and reportedly the man himself would close up like a clam whenever the subject was broached. Latter-day research has uncovered the fact that he achieved a modicum of celebrity in his mid-twenties as a professional magician. He was, Eric Partridge revealed, “a member of ‘The Magic Circle’ in its early days and later a polished, very skilful, original performer with Maskelyne at St. George’s Hall...”

George Facer

[According to *The Times*:

[June 10, 1907] "The Belgrave Hospital for Children... Summer Fair and Spanish Market at Prince's Skating Rink, Knightsbridge... Mr. Leslie Lambert gave exhibitions of conjuring."

[June 14, 1907] "The Queen's Fete, at the Mansion-house, organized by the Lord Mayor for the care and treatment of crippled children... The large company assembled in the Egyptian Hall... During the afternoon an entertainment was given in the old ballroom, in which...Mr. Leslie Lambert...took part."

[February 27, 1908] Ad for "MASKELYNE and DEVANT'S MYSTERIES, St. George's-Hall... Mr. Leslie Lambert... Mr. Maskelyne's 'Spectres of the Sanctum'..."

[April 1, 1909] "The Prince and Princess of Wales gave an Afternoon Party in honour of Prince Henry of Wales' birthday... A selection of songs were rendered by the Metropolitan Police Minstrels...and Mr. Leslie Lambert gave an exhibition of conjuring."

[December 3, 1909] "The Duchess of Albany was present yesterday afternoon at an entertainment organized to celebrate the jubilee of the National Hospital for the Paralysed and Epileptic... Among the artists who contributed to it were...Mr. Leslie Lambert."

[July 22, 1913] "Princess Alexander of Teck will be present at a concert at Margate Pavilion in aid of a scholarship fund of the Imperial Service College... The following are giving their services: ...Mr. Leslie Lambert..."

[November 3, 1913] "...at the Coliseum this week... Mr. Lionel Atwill will produce an illusionary sketch, founded by Mr. Cyril Twyford on Mr. H. G. Wells's story, 'The Invisible Man,' the illusions being by Mr. Leslie Lambert."

[November 10, 1913] In a bill that also featured W. C. Fields... Ad: Messrs. Cyril Twyford and Lionel Atwill present..."THE INVISIBLE MAN," a Farce suggested by the Story by H. G. Wells..."

There are missing years in Lambert's chronology during and after the Great War, and it is speculated that he was heavily involved in secret intelligence work for the British government. He had a rank of naval commander and an appointment at the Admiralty.

The saga of the fourteen-year stint of A. J. Alan on the air really began in December of 1923. On the 19th of the month Lambert tuned in to London station 2LO to hear Sir William Bull, a former director of the original B.B.C., Ltd., give a talk entitled "Western Stories in an Eastern Fashion." During the course of his broadcast Sir William decried the death (or, at least, the dearth) of the art of story-telling in the modern age. Lambert was inspired on the spot to rise to the challenge, and the following morning he rang up his next-door neighbor, Rex Palmer, who happened to be the managing director of the London station (as well as being a microphone performer, both as a baritone vocalist and as "Uncle Rex" of the *Childrens' Hour*). Lambert, who was only casually known to Palmer, explained that he had some ideas for stories and would like, if possible, to have an audition to try them out.

"More clearly than anyone else," noted British broadcasting historian Asa Briggs, "Alan realized that radio offered completely new possibilities of communication. He realized also that radio could make a broadcaster into 'a mystery man,' a topic of universal conversation."

HIBBERD: "He took the very greatest care in the presentation and rehearsal of the manuscripts, and having written and timed a story—he was most meticulous about timing—he would record it, play it back to himself, noting where to put in the little asides which always seemed so spontaneous. Then he would ask one or two trusted friends to come to his house to listen and criticize, adding a pause here, altering a downward inflection of the voice there, until he himself was reasonably satisfied."

HIBBERD: "When broadcasting he used to sit on a high stool close to the microphone—originally the old meat-safe magnetophone type—with his manuscript, pasted on to sheets of cardboard, in a pile on his knees. He spoke very quietly at the microphone. (If you fidgeted or creaked your chair you got a black look!)... The idea of the sheets of cardboard was to eliminate any possibility of paper-rustle, which would have destroyed the illusion he was out to create—namely, that he was sitting by his own fireside, relating some incredible adventure that had just happened to him."

GRISEWOOD: "...his mystery stories, ...though rehearsed in such detail that he even pasted his script on cardboard to prevent the paper rustling, always sounded absolutely spontaneous and ended at the perfect psychological moment with such remark as: 'Curious, wasn't it?'"

Alan further fostered this notion of spontaneous storytelling in the preface to his book *Good Evening, Everyone!* "Everything I say over the microphone," he baldly stated, "is taken down in

shorthand and transcribed afterwards...”

[David Wade] “...with his slightly clipped, almost prim speech and calculated intimacy, he sounded like a caricature of The Clubman, deep in his armchair in a hushed and lofty room off Pall Mall, hypnotizing his neighbour with never-ending anecdotes.”

HIBBERD: “Once, in the late nineteen-twenties, he saw in the paper that the lights had gone out while I was reading the News, but that I managed to carry on with the aid of matches and a candle, until the bulletin ended. The next time he came to the studio he insisted on having the candle lit in the reading-lamp beforehand. The electric light did not go out, but the candle did—suddenly with a loud click, for there was only a stump of it—and the spring in the reading-lamp jerked it out, throwing grease all over him, but A. J., unperturbed, carried on as if nothing had happened. After that experience he decided never again to trust B.B.C. candles, but always brought his own candle in a candlestick, and solemnly lit it before he began. ‘No,’ he said, ‘I’m taking *no* chances’.”

GRISEWOOD: “A society conjurer, a naval commander with an appointment at the Admiralty, A. J. Alan, whose real name was Leslie Lambert, enshrouded himself with an air of mystery as effectively as his stories—so much so Everybody knew perfectly well that his name was not really Alan, and consequently many attempts were made to unmask him. One day, while talking to the announcer at the end of a broadcast, he chanced to hear that a battery of Press photographers were waiting outside the studio with this intent; so Alan, a match in cunning for any man, left the studio by another door and brazenly joined the photographers as an interested spectator. In due course the announcer emerged by the correct door—and was immediately photographed in his stead.”

SNAGGE & BARSLEY: “...as one listened it was the voice and the style which mattered as much as the stories themselves: a voice entirely distinctive, defying imitation, with an urbanity which reflected the appearance of the real man.”

HIBBERD: “What was the secret of his art—for art it certainly was? In the first place, I should say that he was a born raconteur, with ideas, imagination and a keen sense of humour, and, being a first-class radio technician, saw in a flash the great possibilities of radio as a medium for his own particular line. He also thoroughly understood the intimate nature of the microphone, and made each listener think that he was telling the story to him, and to him alone; it was done in such a natural, detached and effortless way.”

Times reviewer David Williams held his style up as a standard of horror: “One thinks of A. J. Alan’s broadcast stories long ago—so airy, and yet so chill... A casual, improvisatory ease of manner somehow heightens uncanniness.”

“Another intriguing quality of the stories,” noted Snagge and Barsley in *Those Vintage Years of Radio*, “is that, right from the first one, ‘An Adventure in Jermyn Street,’ they tend to have no real solution, almost like ghost stories –and indeed, the mysterious Captain Lambert, candle and all, has almost a ghost-like quality himself...”

Alan’s 1924 Boxing Day broadcast presented his first full-fledged supernatural tale (probably either “The Hair” or “The Dream”) and in doing so inaugurated an Alan Yuletide tradition of spectral storytelling for many years to come. The following year he told the story of “The Diver” on Christmas night, prefacing his performance with some appropriately facetious jibes at the broadcasting company. “For some reason or other, the B.B.C. are always asking me to tell a ghost story,” he mock-complained. “At least, they don’t ask me, they tell me I’ve got to. I say, ‘What kind of a ghost story?’ and they say, ‘Any kind you like, so long as it’s a personal experience and perfectly true’.”

In 1927 the *Radio Times* declared: “Four years of broadcasting have produced no microphone personality more distinctive than that of Mr. A.J. Alan. His gift defies definition as it frustrates imitation; like the charm of Lily Elsie and the humour of Grock, it is inimitable and unique... [I]t is his way of telling rather than what he tells that counts.”

As an example of Alan’s particular stylistic touch of relating the horrific with a matter-of-fact conversational approach (peppered with sardonic humor), a passage from the story “Cuthbert” will certainly suffice. The narrator has been taken into the confidence of an acquaintance who lives in “a dark, gloomy house which backed on to the Regent’s Canal.” This man, a brilliant mathematician, fears that he may have accidentally killed a tramp while taking a potshot out his back window at a yowling feline. He begins to have horrible nightmares fomented by his belief in his own guilt:

“He dreamt that he was sitting in his study waiting for something to happen. Presently the water-level of the canal began to rise, and it went on rising until his house was completely submerged, right over the roof. None of the water came in, but it made everything dark and cold, and looking out of the window was exactly like looking into a vast tank in an aquarium. Various things were floating about in the dull, greenish light—dirty weeds and dead dogs and so on—and it was all most eerie and unpleasant. The wall at the far end of the garden was just visible through the gloom, and gradually there floated up over it a ghastly shape. This ‘Thing’ swam very slowly and clumsily towards the window, from which, of course, Christopher was quite unable to tear himself away, and when it got near enough he saw that it was a man. He was rather bald and had straggling wisps of grey hair hanging down over his face.... Christopher knew instinctively, as one does in dreams, that this was his victim.

...[Unable] to stir a finger...he was obliged to watch Cuthbert’s ineffectual attempts to open the window. (I’m afraid it was I who christened him Cuthbert, but one had to call him something.) At any rate, he finally drifted away, disappointed, the waters gradually subsided back into the canal, and Christopher woke up feeling like nothing on earth.”

A number of Alan’s best stories have nothing of the supernatural about them (even in dreams), but nevertheless strike a macabre and unsettling note. In “Wottie,” for example, he relates...etc. etc.

The extent to which Alan’s mixture of the macabre and the sardonically understated may have influenced the public persona latterly assumed by Alfred Hitchcock has never really been examined, but certainly there are Alan stories which might very well be labeled Hitchcockian. “The 19 Club”...

[with an unwanted corpse (ala *The Trouble With Harry*) creating an embarrassment for the members of the dining society...]

Toward the end of his life, as war loomed on the European horizon in 1939, Lambert added yet another layer of mystery to his persona as he became part of the top-secret team of codebreakers that were assembled at the MI6 War Station in Bletchley Park, the unit that was eventually responsible for cracking Nazi Germany’s reputedly unbreakable Enigma cipher. The accomplishment of this feat was crucial to Allied victory, according to Michael Smith, author of *Station X: Decoding Nazi Secrets*, and ended up “saving thousands of lives and cutting up to three years off the length of the war.” One of the youngest recruits to the Naval Section of the station was eighteen-year-old Barbara Abernethy, who was astounded when she realized exactly *who* she was working with. “There was this man in the Naval Section called A.J. Alan,” she told Michael Smith. “He was a BBC commentator, his real name was Leslie Lambert... He told funny stories in a very sort of blasé accent... There was nothing I was able to tell my mother [about the station’s operations]. But I said: ‘You’ll never guess who I work with, A.J. Alan.’ From then on my stock went up.”

In the years following his death there has been confusion as to the exact date of Lambert’s final broadcast as “A. J. Alan.” This confusion started immediately post-mortem with the *Times* obituary stating erroneously that his last BBC appearance had been on March 21, 1940. But this author’s research has identified the Christmas Day, 1938 re-telling of “Wottie” as the Alan swansong.

It is entirely possible that he may have been too ill to broadcast after that date—or too absorbed in his MI6 responsibilities. It is known that he had been having medical problems since 193?, when he was off the air for ?? months. In the summer of 1940 he underwent an operation from which he never fully recovered, and eventually he passed away in a Norwich convalescent home on December 14, 1941.

“When he died,” relates Eric Partridge, “there was, even in those dark days, a general wave of regret, a sighed ‘To think that we’ll never hear him again!’”

[*The Times*, Wednesday, December 17, 1941] “...the death of ‘A. J. Alan’ at a Norwich nursing home on Saturday... He broadcast at most five times a year...the last occasion was on March 21, 1940.”

[PHS, “Alan’s Candles”, 1970] “The Alan recordings are frequently revived but devoted listeners may have been surprised to hear Alan stories read recently on Monday mornings on Radio 2 by a skilful but quite different performer, Peter Tuddenham. The reason is that they come from scripts delivered by Alan, but never recorded in those more haphazard days.

“Some half dozen were found by a retired B.B.C. engineer, Norman Duret (an Alan fan like

Tuddenham) in the Norfolk depository of the firm which published some of Alan's stories, and the B.B.C. got Tuddenham to record five."

[David Wade, 1976] "Ian Carmichael has been reading a group of five stories by Alan in the gap left at 8:45 am on Radio 4... Carmichael is no Alan, but it was plain that he had been studying the Alan style with some care."

During his lifetime two collections of his stories were published by Hutchinson & Co.—*Good Evening, Everyone!* (1928) and *A. J. Alan's Second Book* (1932). In 1954 a retrospective *Best of A. J. Alan* pulled together selections from the two earlier books plus a handful of tales which he had related after 1932. Unfortunately, there is currently no collection of his stories still in print, and several of his later stories remain unpublished.

As to his actual broadcasts, there are surviving recordings in the BBC archives, but it is uncertain how many. A 1949 article in the *Radio Times* commented: "Nobody who heard him can forget the subtle voice of A. J. Alan and from time to time listeners express a wish to hear his stories again. Fortunately a great many of them were recorded. Some of the discs show signs of age, for the recording of programmes had not then reached the technical level of today, but the quality is good enough to justify revivals." However, the "great many" appeared to have substantially dwindled somehow by 1970 when a *Times* article declared that "the B.B.C.'s sound archives have five of the original recordings in stock, as well as an account by the veteran announcer Stuart Hibberd of Alan's meticulous methods." In 1976 David Wade said: "I only became aware of A. J. Alan when recordings of him were resurrected for the Corporation's Jubilee." [1972?]

Sir John Reith, the first General Manager of the BBC, wrote in appreciation of Alan: "An old-time story-teller...found his way into the twentieth century from those days before the invention of printing, when the art of story-telling was honoured by court, castle and cotter's ben.... As printing became established in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the art gradually died out, and several centuries have had to pass before Broadcasting has afforded the long-delayed opportunity for a revival. It is no exaggeration to say that A. J. Alan has been a pioneer. No story-teller before him ever had so many listeners: no listeners a better story-teller."

ORIGINATION: 2LO (1924-1930) and National Programme, etc. (1930-1938), London (BBC).

DURATION: January 31, 1924-December 25, 1938 (sporadic appearances during these years).

PERSONNEL: John Cardy (producer—1975, *Good Morning Everyone*), Ian Carmichael (voice of "A. J. Alan"—1975, *Good Morning Everyone*), Freddy Grisewood (announcer), Stuart Hibberd (announcer), Leslie Harrison Lambert (voice of "A. J. Alan"—BBC), Peter Tuddenham (voice of "A. J. Alan"—1970, Radio 2), Ronald Waldman (producer).

An excerpt from "Wottie" was played on the horror retrospective program *The Return of the Man in Black*. A recording of "The Photograph" (catalogued as "My Photograph") resides in the Vincent Voice Library at Michigan State University.

Two recordings exist of a dramatization of "My Adventure in Norfolk," narrated by Sir Ralph Richardson. The first is from its original run as part of the *Theatre Royal* series, and the second from the repeat of this show on the 7/2/58 broadcast of *ABC Mystery Time*.]

[CHRONOLOGY]

A. J. ALAN (2LO, LONDON)

[Thursday—9:40-10:00 PM]

January 31, 1924 "My Adventure in Jermyn Street"

[Wednesday—9:45-10:?? PM]

March 5, 1924 "The Dream" [probably]

[LONDON TIMES: "...Mr. A. J. Alan will answer a few letters and tell a story..."]

[Friday—10:15-10:40 PM]

July 11, 1924

[LONDON TIMES: "...A. J. Alan on 'My Jermyn Street Adventure'..."]

[Thursday—10:00-10:30 PM]

October 30, 1924 "My Adventure on Dartmoor"

[Friday—10:30-10:40 PM]

December 26, 1924 **"The Hair"** [probably]
[LONDON TIMES: "...Christmas Ghost Story..."]

[Wednesday—10:00-10:30 PM]

April 8, 1925 **"A Foggy Evening"**

[Friday—10:30-11:00 PM]

June 12, 1925 **"My Adventure in Jermyn-street"**

[Wednesday—10:15-10:45 PM]

September 9, 1925 **"The B.B.I."**

[Saturday—8:30-9:00 PM]

November 7, 1925 **"A Coincidence"**
[LONDON TIMES: "...Mr. Thorpe Bates...Luvaun and his ukulele...Mr. A. J. Alan in 'A Coincidence'..."]

[Friday—9:35-10:00 PM]

December 25, 1925 **"The Diver"**

[Monday—8:10-8:50 PM]

April 12, 1926
[LONDON TIMES: "...A. J. Alan on the B.B.I...."]

[Tuesday—10:10-10:30 PM]

June 29, 1926 **"The First of April"**

[Friday—10:20-10:40 PM]

October 1, 1926 **"The Voice"**

[Friday—8:25-9:00 PM]

December 24, 1926 **"My Adventure in Norfolk"**

[Friday—8:35-9:00 PM]

April 1, 1927
[LONDON TIMES: "...A. J. Alan; London Radio Dance Band..."]

[Wednesday—9:35-11:00 PM]

April 20, 1927 **"My Programme"**

[Monday—10:10-10:25 PM]

June 13, 1927 **"The Suit-Case"**
[LONDON TIMES: "...Tonight he will tell of some adventures that befell him in connection with a mysterious suit-case in a train..."]

[Saturday—10:15-10:30 PM]

August 27, 1927 **"Charles"**

[Friday—10:20-11:00 PM]

October 7, 1927 **"An Impromptu Dance"**

[Friday—10:20-11:00 PM]

November 18, 1927 **"The Photograph"**
EXTANT RECORDING

[Wednesday—10:35-11:00 PM]

December 21, 1927

“The Visitors’ Book”

[OG-NOTE: The entire text of this unreprinted Alan story can be found [here](#).]

[Wednesday—10:15-11:00 PM]

April 25, 1928

“The B.B.I.”

[Friday—10:25-11:00 PM]

June 1, 1928

[Thursday—10:15-10:35 PM]

November 15, 1928

“Wottie”

[Monday—10:35-10:50 PM]

December 31, 1928

“A Surprise Item”

[Tuesday—10:20-10:40 PM]

March 5, 1929

“A Sea Trip”

[LONDON TIMES: “...A. J. Alan will describe his recent voyage to Central America...”]

[Thursday—10:00-10:30 PM]

June 13, 1929

“The Cabmen’s Shelter”

[Tuesday—10:15-10:35 PM]

September 3, 1929

“The 19 Club”

A. J. ALAN (5GB, DAVENTRY)

[Wednesday—9:55-10:15 PM]

September 4, 1929

“The 19 Club”

A. J. ALAN (2LO, LONDON)

[Wednesday—10:40-11:00 PM]

November 20, 1929

“A Joy Ride”

[Thursday—10:15-10:30 PM]

December 26, 1929

“17:45”

[OG-NOTE: This story was reprinted in *Best of A. J. Alan* (1954) as “The White Bungalow”]

[Wednesday—10:40-11:00 PM]

March 5, 1930

“The Diptych”

A. J. ALAN (NATIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Monday—10:30-10:50 PM]

June 16, 1930

“The Dream”

A. J. ALAN (LONDON REGIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Tuesday—8:30-9:00 PM]

December 2, 1930

“The Well”

[Thursday—8:35-9:05 PM]

May 21, 1931

“Mr. Pappas”

A. J. ALAN (NATIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Tuesday—9:40-10:10 PM]

June 16, 1931 **"My Adventure in Norfolk"**
EXTANT RECORDING

A. J. ALAN (REGIONAL PROGRAMME, LONDON)

[Saturday—8:35-9:00 PM]

June 20, 1931 **"My Adventure in Norfolk"**

A. J. ALAN (NATIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Tuesday—9:20-9:45 PM]

November 24, 1931 **"Wottie"**

A. J. ALAN (LONDON REGIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Saturday—8:35-9:00 PM]

November 28, 1931 **"Wottie"**

[Monday—9:45-10:15 PM]

June 13, 1932 **"My Adventure at Chislehurst"**

A. J. ALAN (NATIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Thursday—10:00-10:30 PM]

June 16, 1932 **"My Adventure at Chislehurst"**

[Tuesday—10:35-11:00 PM]

November 15, 1932 **"The Zoo Tickets"**

[Thursday—8:40-9:00 PM]

March 2, 1933 **"A Joy Ride"**

A. J. ALAN (LONDON REGIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Friday—9:55-10:15 PM]

March 3, 1933 **"A Joy Ride"**

AN EVENING WITH THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION (4QG, BRISBANE)

[Monday— PM]

October 23, 1933 **"My Adventure at Chislehurst"**

[BRISBANE WHATEVER: "...A humorous story...told by A. J. Alan..."]

[OG-NOTE: Alan's recording of his story was broadcast as part of a night of BBC show transcriptions which were run on the Brisbane station.]

A. J. ALAN (NATIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Tuesday—10:00-10:?? PM]

March 6, 1934 **"Settled out of Court"**

A. J. ALAN (EMPIRE SHORTWAVE SERVICE)

[Wednesday—4:45-5:15 PM]

March 7, 1934 **"Settled Out of Court"**

[Broadcast on Empire Transmission 4]

[Tuesday—4:05-4:35 PM]

July 3, 1934 **"Henry"**

[Broadcast on Empire Transmission 4]

A. J. ALAN (NATIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Tuesday—10:05-10:25 PM]

July 3, 1934 **"Henry"**

A CHRISTMAS PARTY (NATIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Tuesday—7:30-9:30 PM]

December 25, 1934

“The Visitors’ Book”

[LONDON TIMES: “...Comedians; dance music; ghost stories; chorus songs; charades and musical games; all kinds of happy-go-lucky entertainment... At some stage of the proceedings someone will tell a ghost story...”]

[MANCHESTER GUARDIAN: “...a programme packed with the best of the broadcasters... A. J. Alan told one of his rare stories...”]

A. J. ALAN (EMPIRE SHORTWAVE SERVICE)

[Wednesday—4:00-4:20 PM]

June 5, 1935

[KINGSTON GLEANER: “...a short story by A.J. Alan.” Broadcast on Empire Transmission 4]

A. J. ALAN (NATIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Wednesday—10:00-10:?? PM]

June 5, 1935

“Fifty to One”

A. J. ALAN (EMPIRE SHORTWAVE SERVICE)

[Tuesday—10:00-10:15 AM]

December 24, 1935

“The Visitors’ Book”

[KINGSTON GLEANER: “...a creepy story, by A.J. Alan, told by the Author.” Broadcast on Empire Transmission—5.]

A. J. ALAN (NATIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Wednesday—9:00-9:25 PM]

July 1, 1936

“Charles”

EXTANT RECORDING

A. J. ALAN (REGIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Friday—9:00-9:20 PM]

May 14, 1937

“The Firebell”

EXTANT RECORDING

[Wednesday—9:20-9:35 PM]

January 5, 1938

“A Talk in the Train”

[Friday—8:00-8:15 PM]

January 7, 1938

“A Talk in the Train”

A. J. ALAN (NATIONAL SERVICE, LONDON)

[Friday—8:10-8:30 PM]

December 23, 1938

“Wottie”

[“...A. J. Alan’s ‘Wottie’ has quite a touch of horror, if you haven’t heard it before... If you cannot hear the story tonight you will have another chance on Christmas Day...”]

EXTANT RECORDING

[Sunday—5:00-5:20 PM]

December 25, 1938

“Wottie”

[“...A. J. Alan will again tell the story of ‘Wottie’ which he first broadcast in 1928...”]

THE BEST OF YESTERDAY (THIRD PROGRAMME)

[Monday—7:10-7:30 PM]

November 25, 1946

“The Firebell”

[**RADIO TIMES:** "...Instead of one of the best talks of past years, the broadcast tonight in this weekly series is a recording of the late A. J. Alan reading... (First broadcast in May, 1937...)"]

THE WEDNESDAY STORY (HOME SERVICE)

[Wednesday—10:25-10:45 PM]

March 26, 1947

"Wottie"

[**RADIO TIMES:** "...One of the many popular short stories specially written for broadcasting by the late A. J. Alan and read by him. (BBC recording)..."]

[Wednesday—10:10-10:30 PM]

May 21, 1947

"Charles"

[**RADIO TIMES:** "...a story by A. J. Alan and read by him (recording)..."]

[Wednesday—10:10-10:35 PM]

November 12, 1947

"Wottie"

[**RADIO TIMES:** "...a story by A. J. Alan (recording)..."]

A. J. ALAN (MIDLAND HOME SERVICE)

[Thursday—10:40-11:00 PM]

August 11, 1949

"The Firebell"

[**RADIO TIMES:** "...Beginning on Thursday with 'The Firebell,' which 'A.J.' broadcast in May 1937, a selection from the BBC's archives will be broadcast weekly on the Midland Home Service wavelength for late-evening listeners. Denis Morris, who directs Midland Regional programmes, is convinced that Alan was the finest storyteller of radio's first twenty-five years..."]

[Wednesday—10:35-11:00 PM]

August 17, 1949

"My Adventure at Chislehurst"

[Tuesday—10:30-10:50 PM]

August 23, 1949

"Charles"

[Tuesday—7:00-7:20 PM]

August 30, 1949

"Wottie"

THE BEST OF YESTERDAY (HOME)

[Monday—4:10-4:25 PM]

May 14, 1956

"The Firebell"

RADIO PORTRAITS (HOME)

[Wednesday—7:00-7:30 PM]

October 1, 1958

"A. J. Alan"

A STORY BY A. J. ALAN (HOME)

[Monday—10:45-10:59 PM]

January 18, 1965

"Wottie"

April 19, 1965

"The White Bungalow"

[Wednesday—9:40-10:00 PM]

June 9, 1965

"My Adventure in Norfolk"

(HOME)

[Saturday—8:50-9:00 PM]

October 1, 1966

"A. J. Alan and Stuart Hibberd: recordings"

STORIES BY A. J. ALAN (RADIO 2)

[Monday thru Friday—10:30-10:45 PM]

July 13, 1970

July 14, 1970

July 15, 1970

July 16, 1970

July 17, 1970

(RADIO 4)

[Thursday—8:45-9:00 AM]

October 14, 1971 **"A Foggy Evening"**

[Friday—8:45-9:00 AM]

October 15, 1971 **"The Suitcase"**

THE RADIO SPELLBINDERS (RADIO 4)

[Sunday—10:10-10:55 PM]

December 24, 1972

["...recordings of J. B. Priestly, A. J. Alan and James Stephens..."]

THE BEST OF A. J. ALAN (RADIO 4)

[Wednesday—10:45-11:00 PM]

December 4, 1974

[NOT CONFIRMED; FOUND ON BBC INDEX CARD]

EARLY MORNING STORY—"GOOD MORNING EVERYONE" (RADIO 4)

[Monday thru Friday—8:45-9:00 AM]

August 25, 1975 **"The 19 Club"**

August 26, 1975 **"My Adventure at Chislehurst"**

August 27, 1975 **"The Dream"**

August 28, 1975 **"My Adventure on Dartmoor"**

August 29, 1975 **"The White Bungalow"**

[RADIO TIMES: "...Five stories from the master of the radio story in the years between the wars, with Ian Carmichael as A. J. Alan..."]

A.M. WITH A. J. (RADIO 4)

[Monday-Friday—8:45-9:00 AM]

February 4, 1976 **"The Zoo Tickets"**

February 5, 1976 **"The Visitors Book"**

February 6, 1976 **"Wottie"**

February 7, 1976 **"My Adventure in Norfolk"**

February 8, 1976 **"A Joy Ride"**

April 19, 1976 **"The Zoo Tickets"**

[OG-NOTE: Notated on the BBC Title Card as "Two Zoo Tickets"]

April 20, 1976 **"Wottie"**

April 21, 1976 **"My Adventure in Norfolk"**

April 22, 1976 **"A Joy Ride"**

April 23, 1976 **"The Visitors' Book"**

(RADIO 4)

[Monday—11:05-11:50 AM]

August 22, 1977 **"Man of Mystery"**

[LONDON TIMES: "...The story of A. J. Alan..."]

[Thursday—8:45-9:30 PM]

August 25, 1977 **"Man of Mystery"**

(RADIO 4)

[Tuesday—4:45-5:00 PM]

February 26, 1980

“My Adventure in Norfolk”

THE ARCHIVES HOUR (RADIO 4)

[Saturday—
???, 200?

“The Return of the Man in Black” [PART 1]

[**OG-NOTE:** An excerpt from the Alan recording of “Wottie” and an actor reading the opening paragraph of “The Diver” were heard on this programme.]

No broadcast dates were found for the following titles:

[printed in *Good Evening, Everyone!* (1928)]

“The Hair”

[printed in *A. J. Alan’s Second Book* (1932)]

“The Necessity of Invention Knows No Law”

“Wandering Minstrels, Limited”

“A Tale of Four Cocktails”

“Mr. Warbeck”

“H2, etc.”

[printed in *Many Mysteries* (ed. E. Phillips Oppenheim, 1933)]

“Cuthbert” (aka “A Shot in the Dark”)

“Private Water”

[**audio**] A. J. Alan tells the story of “The Photograph”

[**audio**] Excerpt from “Wottie” (A. J. Alan)

[**audio**] *ABC Mystery Time*: “My Adventure in Norfolk”

[**audio**] Reading of “The Dream” (Ogden)

[**audio**] Reading of “The Hair” (Ogden)

[**audio**] Reading of “The Diver” (read by M. Ogden)

[**text**] “The Visitors’ Book” by A. J. Alan (from *Radio Pictorial*, 1935)

[SOURCES]

ALAN, A. J. *Good Evening, Everybody*. London: ????????, 1928.

ALAN, A. J. *The Second A. J. Alan Book*

ALAN, A. J. (ed. ??? ???). *The Best of A. J. Alan*

Facer, George. “Listeners Write to the ‘Radio Times’: A. J. Alan—Conjuror.” *Radio Times* (August 26, 1949).

Hett, H. A. “Listeners Write to the ‘Radio Times’: More About A. J. Alan.” *Radio Times* (September 16, 1949).

Lambert, P. “Listeners Write to the ‘Radio Times’: More About A. J. Alan.” *Radio Times* (October 7, 1949).

Partridge, Eric. *The Shaggy Dog Story*

“Radio’s Master Storyteller.” *Radio Times* (August 5, 1949).

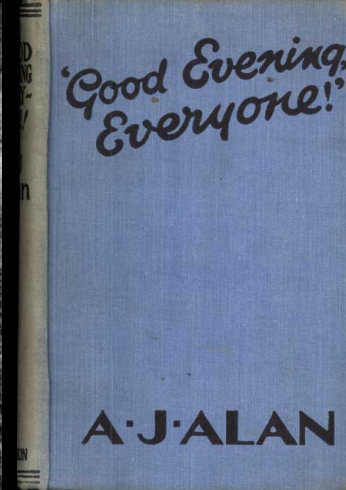
SMITH, MICHAEL. *Station X: Decoding Nazi Secrets*.

PERIODICALS: *The Daily Gleaner* [Kingston]; *The Times* [London]; *Manchester Guardian*; *Radio Times*.

[GALLERY]



Leslie H. Lambert (c. 1909)



Alan's first story collection (1928)



"He hastily put down his fiddle and hung out of the window." ("The Hair")

A. J. ALAN STORIES

[RADIO-SERIES]

Before the BBC started in the late 1940s re-broadcasting what few A. J. Alan recordings they had preserved, the next airwaves manifestation of the Alan personality occurred in Australia, constituting, in effect, an A. J. programme without A. J. Four years after Lambert's death Melbourne station 3AW revived his art of storytelling, with a boost from the original stories themselves. The narrative voice of "A. J." was supplied by announcer John Dease, who was also "The Professor" on the Australian version of *The Quiz Kids*.

[*The Listener In*, June 1945] "A new 15-minute feature, 'A. J. Alan Stories,' will be heard from 3AW each Thursday at 9 p.m. beginning June 21. Stories will be read by John Dease.

"The author, A. J. Alan, first told these stories over the B.B.C. It is said that he never broadcast from scripts, his stories being told spontaneously as he stood before the microphone. They are preserved only because his wife, listening to the broadcasts, noted them in shorthand. For some time the B.B.C. refused to divulge Alan's name, and much publicity was built up about his so-called 'ghost voice'."

[*The Listener In*, June ??, 1945, "The A. J. Alan Stories on 3AW"] "The 'A. J. Alan' stories which first made their appearance on the B.B.C. in the middle '30's have belatedly arrived on the Victorian air. 3AW has shown the good sense to introduce this enjoyable feature which represents, I believe, the first attempt to write a series of short stories deliberately for radio. In other words, the stories are written to be listened to, not merely to be read in printed form.

"'A. J. Alan' is a pseudonym, and I understand that in the B.B.C. presentation they were read by the author, whose easy, intimate style contributed greatly to their success. The stories range over the whimsical, ghostly, fantastic and thrilling and should make it worth any listener's while to tune in at 9 on Thursday nights. John Dease reads the stories, and on the whole reads them very well—though perhaps a shade too quickly and with just a little too much heartiness.

"Reading radio stories is an art not fully developed in Australia, and John Dease has both the opportunity and the ability to create a tradition."

ORIGINATION: 3AW-3CV, Melbourne, Victoria.

DURATION: June 21-December 20, 1945.

PERSONNEL: John Dease (voice of "A. J. Alan"), Victor Lloyd (announcer).

EXTANT RECORDINGS: None.

[CHRONOLOGY]

A. J. ALAN STORIES (3AW-3CV, MELBOURNE)

[Thursday—9:00-9:15 PM]

June 21, 1945

"Castle in Wales"

June 28, 1945

"First of April"

July 5, 1945	"The 19 Club"
July 12, 1945	"My Adventure in Norfolk"
July 19, 1945	"Charles"
<i>[Thursday—9:15-9:30 PM]</i>	
July 26, 1945	"The B.B.I."
<i>[Thursday—9:00-9:15 PM]</i>	
August 2, 1945	
August 9, 1945	"The Hair"
August 16, 1945	"The Dream"
August 23, 1945	"The Suitcase"
August 30, 1945	"H2"
September 6, 1945	"Wandering Minstrels"
September 13, 1945	"A Coincidence"
September 20, 1945	"Cabman's Shelter"
September 27, 1945	"An Impromptu Dance"
October 4, 1945	"Mr. Warbeck"
October 11, 1945	"Wottie"
October 18, 1945	"A Joyride"
October 25, 1945	"17:45"
November 1, 1945	"My Adventure on Dartmoor"
November 8, 1945	"Percy the Prawn"
November 15, 1945	"The Picture"
November 22, 1945	"The Zoo Tickets"
November 29, 1945	"The Diptych"
December 6, 1945	"The Diver"
December 13, 1945	"The Sweep"
December 20, 1945	"Cinderella Up to Date"

[SOURCES]

PERIODICALS: *The Argus* [Melbourne];
(Special thanks to Ian Grieve for information supplied.)

[GALLERY]

Have You Heard the...

A. J. ALAN STORIES

Originally told by A. J. Alan the A.B.C. "Ghost" Voice, these stories are about everything and anything, and lose nothing of their charm and thrill when retold in Australia by John Dease.

Listen to the "A. J. Alan Stories" Every Thursday Night at 9 p.m.

— FROM —

3AW—3CV

The Quaint
"A.J. ALAN STORIES"

FIRST TOLD BY B.B.C. "GHOST VOICE"



Related by
JOHN DEASE

THURS. 9 p.m.

A. V. LAIDER / DEATH IN THE HAND

[SHORT-STORY]

[*The Times*] "...based on an idea in *Seven Men*, by Max Beerbohm..."

[BBC Title Card] "Variation of a theme by Max Beerbohm: visitor in a hotel lounge hears horrifying story from another visitor about results of palmistry, only to find afterwards it was all fabrication."

[Classic Horror Movies] "DEATH IN THE HAND (1947) 44mins. BW. UK. Credits: Dir: A. Barr-Smith. From the novel "Seven Men" by Max Beerbohm. Cast: Esme Percy, Ernest Jay. A pianist on board a train predicts the deaths of several passengers by reading their palms. Most notable for it's similarity to DR. TERRORS HOUSE OF HORRORS (1964)."

Douglas Cleverdon adapted from his own radio script. Release date: 1948. A pianist aboard a train reads the palms of passengers and predicts their deaths. Soon those deaths begin to happen.

Cast members included radio actors Carleton Hobbs and Norman Shelley (later famed as the BBC's Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson).

"Cosmo Vaughan, believer in palmistry, is travelling in a train with four other passengers all of whose palms have revealed that their sudden and violent death is imminent. In an attempt to prevent the deaths he pulls the communication cord..."

[Original press book] "Cosmo Vaughan, the palmist, is played by Esme Percy, who created the part in the original radio play in 1939, and has played it on several occasions when it was re-broadcast."

In addition to the stage and films, Esme Percy did extensive work in radio. He was Mephistopheles in a 1932 broadcast of Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (and Piers Gaveston in the playwright's *Edward the Second*), and also performed at the microphone in Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, Shaw's *The Man of Destiny*, and Denis Johnston's *The Moon in the Yellow River*. He starred in several broadcasts of James Hilton's radio adaptation of his novel *Lost Horizon*, and was prominently in Lance Sieveking's original script *Wings of the Morning*, "the story of a fantastic crime committed in the fourth dimension."

He was an actor of precise diction, and an eccentric personality bordering on camp. He knew Shaw well and was entrusted with the production of his last play. He was a friend and admirer of John Gielgud—his famous whispered "Isn't he wonderful?" became a recorded part of Gielgud's definitive performance of Hamlet on the BBC in 1948. And, in another fabled moment on the

stage with Gielgud, his glass eye popped out of its socket during a scene of *The Lady's Not for Burning* and went flying across the stage. The entire play came to a standstill until it was found again.

[“Beerbohm Story To Be Filmed, *The Times*, February 5, 1947] “Sir Max Beerbohm has at last parted with one of his stories to the cinema...his story from *Seven Men* of a man met in a seaside hotel who tells how he read in their palms the fate of his fellow-travellers in a train a few minutes before the accident of which he was the sole survivor.

“In *Seven Men*, published in 1919, this story bears the simple title, ‘A. V. Laider.’ For the purposes of the film this will be changed to *Death in the Hand*, and, inevitably, there will be other changes. But in the engagement of Mr. Douglas Cleverdon to prepare the script there is some assurance that care will be taken to retain much more than the bare outline of the story. Incidentally, Mr. Cleverdon adapted this same story for broadcasting some four years ago. Except for his occasional broadcast talks, Sir Max Beerbohm has fastidiously avoided the complex machinery of the modern world, and knowing this, the small film company to whom he has entrusted Laider’s story values all the more the concession he has made.”

[“Max on the Sinister Side of Palmistry,” *The Times*, November 16, 1955] “‘A. V. Laider’ is the story of a man met in a seaside hotel who tells how he read in their palms the fate of his fellow-travellers in a railway train a few minutes before the accident he had also foreseen; it has not one characteristic Beerbohm ‘twist’ only, but two, and is full of the refinements of macabre comedy... The same story, incidentally, was adapted for broadcasting some 12 years ago by Mr. Douglas Cleverdon, who later also prepared it for the cinema screen under the title of *Death in the Hand*.”

[“Conversation Piece by Max,” *The Times*, December 5, 1955] “‘A. V. Laider’ opens, it will be recalled, in a sleepy hotel by the sea, where for the second year running Max is convalescing from influenza... A correspondence in a magazine Laider has borrowed about faith and reason takes them on to palmistry, and from there to Laider’s bland confession that he is a murderer.”

[John Updike] “A.V. Laider’s “limpness of demeanor” is marked only by an incongruous shock of white hair that gives him a touch of the charlatan; behind his bland reticence he is revealed to be a compulsive story-spinner, a wildly inventive bard.”

[Bernard Levin, *The Times*, November 27, 1974] “The liar I love best, because of the magnificent ingenuity of his lie, is Max Beerbohm’s A. V. Laider... On the spur of the moment, which is of course the test of a really great liar..., Laider invents a tale of being in a railway-carriage with six other people, where—dabbling as he does in palmistry—he is prevailed upon to read their hands, and discovers to his horror that all their life-lines stop abruptly at almost exactly the age they are at that moment, whereupon he realizes, to his deeper horror, that since, as he has learned, some of them are going abroad for many years on the morrow, the simultaneous extinction of all of them must be about to take place, with the crashing of the train. The narrator of the story swallows it whole, and is much put out later to learn that it was only *ben trovato*. On his guard thereafter, he falls into conversation with Laider while they are walking on the beach, and finds him shudder at the thought of the seagulls. Max ends it beautifully. ‘They always remind me of something—rather an awful thing—that once happened to me.’ It was a very awful thing indeed.”

[A. V. LAIDER] “One of the first things I had seen in my own hand, as soon as I had learned to read it, was that at about the age of twenty-six I should have a narrow escape from death—from a violent death.

“There were other people staying there, and at the end of the week we all traveled back to London together. There were six of us in the carriage: Colonel Elbourn and his wife and their daughter, a girl of seventeen; and another married couple, the Bretts.

“The coincidence was curious, very. Here we all were together—here, they and I—I who was narrowly to escape, so soon now, what they, so soon now, were to suffer. Oh, there was an inference to be drawn. Not a sure inference, I told myself. And always I was talking, talking, and the train was swinging and swaying noisily along—to what? It was a fast train. Our carriage was near the engine. “We were near the outskirts of London. The air was gray, thickening; and Dorothy Elbourn had said: ‘Oh, this horrible old London! I suppose there’s the same old fog!’ And presently I heard her father saying something about ‘prevention’ and ‘a short act of Parliament’ and ‘anthracite.’ And I sat and listened and agreed and--”

“Laidler closed his eyes. He passed his hand slowly through the air.

“I had a racking headache. And when I said so, I was told not to talk. I was in bed, and the nurses were always telling me not to talk. I was in a hospital. I knew that; but I didn’t know why I

was there. One day I thought I should like to know why, and so I asked. I was feeling much better now. They told me by degrees that I had had concussion of the brain. I had been brought there unconscious, and had remained unconscious for forty-eight hours. I had been in an accident—a railway-accident. This seemed to me odd. I had arrived quite safely at my uncle's place, and I had no memory of any journey since that. In cases of concussion, you know, it's not uncommon for the patient to forget all that happened just before the accident; there may be a blank for several hours. So it was in my case. One day my uncle was allowed to come and see me. And somehow, suddenly, at sight of him, the blank was filled in. I remembered, in a flash, everything. I was quite calm, though. Or I made myself seem so, for I wanted to know how the collision had happened. My uncle told me that the engine-driver had failed to see a signal because of the fog, and our train had crashed into a goods-train.

"In a way," he said, "your theory was quite right. But--it didn't go far enough. It's not only possible, it's a fact, that I didn't see those signs in those hands. I never examined those hands. They weren't there. I wasn't there. I haven't an uncle in Hampshire, even. I never had."

"I have, alas! a very strong imagination. At ordinary times my imagination allows itself to be governed by my will. My will keeps it in check by constant nagging. But when my will isn't strong enough even to nag, then my imagination stampedes. I become even as a little child. I tell myself the most preposterous fables, and--the trouble is--I can't help telling them to my friends. Until I've thoroughly shaken off influenza, I'm not fit company for any one."

[CHRONOLOGY]

(NATIONAL PROGRAMME, LONDON)

[Tuesday—9:50-10:15 PM]

May 2, 1939

"Death in the Hand"

[Wednesday—3:25-3:50 PM]

May 3, 1939

"Death in the Hand"

PERSONNEL: Douglas Cleverdon (scriptwriter), Michael Goodwin (producer).

CAST: Edward Brandon, John Drummond, Hedley Goodall, George Holloway, Alison Horstmann, Ross Hutchinson, Barry Kendall, Albert Nemes, Esme Percy (Cosmo Vaughan), Phyllis Smale, Jean Wickenden.

(HOME SERVICE)

[Friday—8:00-8:30 PM]

September 4, 1942

"Death in the Hand"

PERSONNEL: Douglas Cleverdon (scriptwriter, producer).

NELSON OLMSTED (

[

July 3, 1943

"A. V. Laider"

(HOME SERVICE)

[Wednesday—9:35-10:10 PM]

August 9, 1944

"At the Cross-in-Hand"

[BBC TITLE CARD: "Cosmo Vaughan staying at Cross-in-Hand tells guests story of train disaster—how, on reading passengers hands he foresaw death etc., so he pulled communication cord and caused following express to crash into them. Story proves to be flight of imagination on his part..."

PERSONNEL: Douglas Cleverdon (scriptwriter, producer).

CAST: Vivienne Chatterton (The countrywoman), Belle Chrystall (Patricia Mottram), Ernest Jay (Jenkins), Julian Orde (Sylvia Thorp), Esme Percy (Cosmo Vaughan), Brian Powley (The business man), Norman Shelley (John Thorp), William Trent (The chairman), Richard Williams (Captain Mottram).

(RADIO 4, LONDON)

[Wednesday—11:30 AM-12:00 NOON]

August 8, 1973

"A. V. Laider"

["...At an Eastbourne hotel, Max sees in the rack a letter he had written to

a fellow guest (A. V. Laider) a year earlier. This reminds him what had happened. The two men had discussed palmistry and A. V. Laider told him he had foreseen the deaths of some companions in a railway accident and felt guilt at not pulling the communication cord, although this might not have prevented the tragedy. The letter disappears from the rack and Max sees A. V. again. He admits that his story had been a fake. He has had flu again and tells of a rather awful thing that happened to him concerning seagulls..."]

PERSONNEL: Benny Green (scriptwriter), Bruce Montague (scriptwriter).

[GALLERY]



Max Beerbohm



Douglas Cleverdon, book publisher & radio writer-producer



Esme Percy

ABC MYSTERY TIME—"MYSTERY CLASSICS"

[RADIO-SERIES]

A conglomeration of shows appeared under this heading between 1953 and 1958. A series of "Mystery Classics," running on Thursday evenings, emphasized the weird and the supernatural.

ORIGINATION: WABC, New York City, New York (ABC)

DURATION: May 3, 1956-September 30, 1957.

PERSONNEL: Clark Andrews (producer), Martin Andrews (producer), Robert A. Arthur (producer), Eleanor Beeson (scriptwriter), Hector Chevigny (scriptwriter), Ronald Dawson (producer), Don Dowd (host), Robert Foster (scriptwriter), Katherine Green (scriptwriter), Joseph Greene (scriptwriter), C. M. Roach (scriptwriter), Howard Rodman (scriptwriter), John Roeburt (scriptwriter), Joseph Ruscoll (scriptwriter), Sidney Slon (scriptwriter), Leonard St. Clair (scriptwriter), Ian Thorne (scriptwriter), John West (scriptwriter).

GUEST STARS (*Theatre Royal* re-runs): Robert Donat, Sir Laurence Olivier, Michael Redgrave, Sir Ralph Richardson, Orson Welles.

CASTS: Peggy Allenby, Ed Begley, Ralph Bell, Frank Butler, Roger de Koven, Ivor Francis, Richard Janover, William Johnstone, Connie Lembcke, Ann Loring, Ian Martin, et al.

EXTANT RECORDINGS: "Half an Hour" (8/2/56), "Death Walked In," "Four Fatal Jugglers," "Four Time Loser," "Murder in Haste," "My Adventure in Norfolk," "No One Will Ever Know," "The Overcoat," "The Picture of Dorian Gray," "Success Story," "The Suicide Club," "The Tale."

[CHRONOLOGY]

ABC MYSTERY TIME—"MYSTERY CLASSICS" (WABC, NEW YORK)

[Thursday—7:30-7:55 PM]

May 3, 1956

"The Queen of Spades"

May 10, 1956

"The Judgment"

May 17, 1956

"Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"

May 24, 1956

"Markheim"

["...Sir Laurence Olivier stars as a man who murders for money, then repents..."]

May 31, 1956

June 7, 1956	"The Suicide Club"	[EXTANT RECORDING]
June 14, 1956		
June 21, 1956		
June 28, 1956		
July 5, 1956		
July 12, 1956		
July 19, 1956		
July 26, 1956		
August 2, 1956	"Half an Hour"	[EXTANT RECORDING]
August 9, 1956		
August 16, 1956	"The Sire de Maltroit's Door"	[EXTANT RECORDING]
August 30, 1956		
September 6, 1956	"The Killing at Lafayette Place"	
September 13, 1956		
September 20, 1956		
September 27, 1956		
October 4, 1956		
October 11, 1956		
October 18, 1956		
October 25, 1956		
November 1, 1956		
November 8, 1956		
November 15, 1956		
November 22, 1956	"The Fall of the House of Usher"	
November 29, 1956		
December 6, 1956		
December 13, 1956		
December 20, 1956		
December 27, 1956		
January 3, 1957		
January 10, 1957		
January 17, 1957		
January 24, 1957		
January 31, 1957		
February 7, 1957		
February 14, 1957		
February 21, 1957		
February 28, 1957		
March 7, 1957	"The Ivory Elephant" ["...concerns strange fate of a group of ivory hunters in a remote part of Africa who have found treasure in an elephant burial ground..."]	
March 14, 1957	"Hunting Trip" ["...Two former college friends and rivals in love go on a hunting trip..."]	
March 21, 1957	"Suspicion" ["...concerns a jealous wife who makes a fateful error on her twentieth wedding anniversary..."]	
March 28, 1957	"The Locomotive Ghost" ["...Two robbers wreck a miners' payroll train and are haunted by one of their victims..."]	
April 4, 1957	["...the story of a mentalist who plots to control a man and force him to kill an unfaithful wife..."]	
April 11, 1957	"Til Death Do Us Part" ["...A couple learns their honeymoon literally means..."]	
April 18, 1957	"The Upper Berth" (F. Marion Crawford) ["...A combined mystery and ghost story begins in a ship's stateroom..."]	

April 25, 1957	"Death Takes First Prize" ["...A street photographer takes a picture of a tenement girl who is later killed..."]
May 2, 1957	"Death Rides the Storm" [EXTANT RECORDING] ["...A dead woman comes back from the grave to prevent her husband's remarrying..."]
May 9, 1957	"The Third Grace" [EXTANT RECORDING] ["...Bret Morrison, the original 'Shadow' on radio, is cast as an unscrupulous art dealer..."]
May 16, 1957	"Shadow of Danger" ["...a young man fights for his sanity in a hospital where he suspects a weird plot against his life..."]
May 23, 1957	"Ski Master" ["...An heiress-hunting ski expert is confronted by his pre-war wife..."]
May 30, 1957	"The Tell-Tale Heart" ["...the gripping story of a man's conscience and his doom..."]
June 6, 1957	"I'll Dance on Your Grave" [EXTANT RECORDING] ["...A fickle girl dancer and the ruthless agent 'eliminate' the girl's husband-partner..."]
June 13, 1957	
June 20, 1957	
<i>[Monday—7:30-8:00 PM]</i>	
June 24, 1957	
July 1, 1957	
July 8, 1957	
July 15, 1957	
July 22, 1957	
July 29, 1957	
August 5, 1957	"The Cask of Amontillado"
August 12, 1957	"The Horla" [EXTANT RECORDING]
August 19, 1957	"The Cask of Amontillado"
August 26, 1957	
September 2, 1957	
September 9, 1957	"The Lily Pond" ["...About an elderly lady who fights town officials and health authorities..."]
September 16, 1957	"The Black Cat" [EXTANT RECORDING] ["...Hector Chevigny's adaptation of a story about a man obsessed by aelurophobia."]
September 23, 1957	"Can Such Things Be?" ["...adapted by C. M. Roach from a story by Robert W. Chambers. The ghost of a French soldier turned traitor in the British-Breton war of 1760 returns to haunt the descendant of the woman who caused his death..."]
September 30, 1957	"The Upper Berth" ["...ghost story set aboard a passenger liner..."]

MYSTERY TIME (AFRTS DISC SERIES)

September 27, 1957	[44] "Death Rides the Storm"
October 4, 1957	[45] "The Sire de Maletroit's Door"
October 11, 1957	[46] "The Third Grace"
October 18, 1957	[47]
October 25, 1957	[48]
November 1, 1957	[49]
November 8, 1957	[50] "I'll Dance on Your Grave"
November 15, 1957	[51] "They'll Never Believe Me"
November 22, 1957	[52]

November 29, 1957	[53]	
December 6, 1957	[54]	
December 13, 1957	[55]	
December 20, 1957	[56]	
December 27, 1957	[57]	
January 3, 1958	[58]	“Collector’s Items”
January 10, 1958	[59]	“The Horla”
January 17, 1958	[60]	
January 24, 1958	[61]	
January 31, 1958	[62]	“The Mysterious Mansion”

Titles without dates:

“Death by Proxy”
“Death Walked In”
“Four Fatal Jugglers”
“Four Time Loser”
“Murder in Haste”
“My Adventure in Norfolk”
“No One Will Ever Know”
“The Overcoat”
“The Picture of Dorian Gray”
“Success Story”
“The Tale”

ABOVE THE WORLD

[SHORT-STORY]

Short story by Ramsey Campbell...

[British Anthology Hell] “Knox returns to the Swan Hotel where he'd honeymooned and where his once wife did likewise when she married for a second time before she and her new husband, Tooley, met their deaths by exposure when they were lost in the mist on one of the hills. Knox is reunited with the pair when he is stranded on a mist shrouded peak. Eerie conclusion, with the slate replicas of his former wife and Tooley closing in on the terrified Knox.”

[CHRONOLOGY]

MORNING STORY (RADIO 4, LONDON)

[Wednesday—10:30-10:45 PM]

November 21, 1984 **“Above the World”**
 [“...by Ramsey Campbell. Read by Sean Barrett...”]

[SOURCES]

CAMPBELL, RAMSEY. *Alone with the Horrors*:

ACHERON THEATRE

[RADIO-SERIES]

This intended series resulted in one completed broadcast and several script adaptations.

ORIGINATION: WFSU, Tallahassee, Florida.

DURATION: October 31, 1974.

PERSONNEL: Michael Ogden (scriptwriter, director; voice of “Feral Banyard”—2009), Daniel Wright (sound engineer—1974).

CAST [1974, “Usher II”]: Brad Linaweaver, Michael Ogden, John Martin Smith, et al.

CASTS [2009]: Semifer Jones, Partington Stoke, Sir Ackley Wristatch.

EXTANT RECORDINGS: The entire series.

[Program log]

ACHERON THEATRE (WFSU, TALLAHASSEE)

[

October 31, 1974 “Usher II”

ACHERON THEATRE (WVFS, TALLAHASSEE)

[

Oct. ??, 2009 “The Cask of Amontillado”
Oct. ??, 2009 “The Statement of Randolph Carter”
Oct. ??, 2009 “The Night Wire”
Oct. ??, 2009 “The Dead”
Oct. 22, 2009 “A Tale of Mere Mischance”

ACROSS THE MENDIPS TO PRIDDY AND THE GREAT HAUNTED CAVERN OF WOOKEY

[RADIO-TALK]

P. E. Barnes gathered his radio talks together in 1931 into the travel book *Unbeaten Tracks*.

[CHRONOLOGY]

(5WA, CARDIFF)

[Saturday—7:00-7:15 PM]

September 1, 1928 “Across the Mendips to Priddy and the Great Haunted Cavern of Wookey”

[SOURCES]

BARNES, P. E. *Unbeaten Tracks*. ?????: ????????, 1931.

ACROSS THE MOORS

[SHORT-STORY]

Oft-reprinted ghost story by W. F. Harvey, initially published in his first collection of short stories, ?????? (19??).

[BBC Title Card] “Ghost story about governess who meets stranger on moors supposed to be haunted. He suggests they walk together—she agrees, being nervous. He tells her of his experience when he met a tramp who attacked him with a knife. He describes his death and she realizes he is the ghost who haunts the moors.”

[CHRONOLOGY]

WEDNESDAY MATINEE (HOME SERVICE)

[Wednesday—4:25-approx.]

July 21, 1948 “Across the Moors”

[BBC TITLE CARD: “...Ghost story about governess who meets stranger on moors supposed to be haunted. He suggests they walk together—she agrees, being nervous. He tells her of his experience when he met a tramp who attacked him with a knife. He describes his death and she realizes he is the ghost who haunts the moors...”]

PERSONNEL: Ben Howe (scriptwriter), C. McClure (producer).

ADVENTURE INTO FEAR

[RADIO-SERIES]

“Remember...none of these things you’ll hear about could possibly happen...to YOU!”

This Australian version of the WOR-Mutual anthology series *The Mysterious Traveler* aired for one season in the mid-’50s. It used the original Robert Arthur-David Kogan scripts and some of the standard introductory remarks, but (inexplicably) omitted the entire atmospheric train opening and the character of the Traveler himself. Compere Tony Roberts exhorted listeners to

follow him “on a personally-conducted tour into the world of the strange, the mysterious, the uncanny, and the unknown.” Later he was succeeded in the emcee spotlight by Moray Powell, who had previously endeared himself to Australian horror lovers by playing Raymond, the host of *Inner Sanctum Mysteries*, on Sydney station 2GB in 1952 and '53.

ORIGINATION: AWA Limited, Sydney, New South Wales (electrical transcriptions).

DURATION: November 16, 1956-November 8, 1957.

[NOTE: These broadcast dates were supplied by Gordon Payton, but the radio listings of the *Sydney Morning Herald* do not confirm them. However, the SFSA does reference what they call “Label of transcription discs from this series; B&TV Nov. 16, 1956 p. 20.”]

PERSONNEL: J. Colin Craigen (producer), James Manley (producer), Moray Powell (compere), Tony Roberts (compere).

EXTANT RECORDINGS: Only the first, second, fifth and sixth episodes are currently in circulation among collectors in the United States. The remaining 48 are accessible only at the archives of ScreenSound Australia in Canberra.]

[CHRONOLOGY]

ADVENTURE INTO FEAR (AWA LIMITED DISC SERIES)

Circa 1956

- [1] “Two of a Kind”
- [2] “The Big Brain”
- [3] “They’ll Never Believe Me”
- [4] “When The Dead Return”
- [5] “The Ghost Makers”
- [6] “They Won’t Escape Me”
- [7] “Death Rides The Storm”
- [8] “The Big Drop”
- [9] “Blind Alley”
- [10] “Destination Death”
- [11] “In the Depths”
- [12] “It’s Later Than You Think”
- [13] “The Mirror of Cagliostro”
- [14] “A Coffin for Charlie”
- [15] “Beyond the Law”
- [16] “Mortal Clay”
- [17] “Death Spins a Web”
- [18] “Killer at Large”
- [19] “The House of Death”
- [20] “Mind Over Murder”
- [21] “They Struck It Rich”
- [22] “Ring Down the Curtain”
- [23] “Murder Makes Music”
- [24] “The Man Who Frightened Himself”
- [25] “Visitors from Infinity”
- [26] “You Only Die Once”
- [27] “Collector’s Item”
- [28] “Vacation from Life”
- [29] “The Cat’s Paw”
- [30] “Death Has Two Faces”
- [31] “Death Must Wait”
- [32] “X Marks the Spot”
- [33] “Nightmare”
- [34] “Death Is in the Wind”
- [35] “Another Man’s Murder”
- [36] “Murder Has a Voice”
- [37] “The Lady in Red”
- [38] “Appointment to Die”
- [39] “Strange Voyage”
- [40] “The Final Hour”

- [41] "The Corpse Comes Home"
- [42] "The Dead Can't Testify"
- [43] "Death in the Swamp"
- [44] "The Man Who Came Back"
- [45] "Murder 50,000 B.C."
- [46] "Murder Must Have a Price"
- [47] "Man of Destiny"
- [48] "The Unexpected"
- [49] "Token of Friendship"
- [50] "Some Only Sleep"
- [51] "The Treasure of Superstition Mountain"
- [52] "The Visiting Corpse"

(DISC SERIES ON 3AW, MELBOURNE)

[Wednesday—7:00-7:30 PM]

December 7, 1961 "They'll Never Believe Me"

ADVENTURE INTO FEAR

[RADIO-SERIES]

Reviewed in the February 12, 1958 issue of *Variety* as part of a package of series offered by New York syndicator Harry S. Goodman.

[*Winnipeg Free Press*, October 29, 1957] "CJOB features two hours of drama, beginning at 8 p.m. The plays to be heard are Peril, The Big Squeeze, Adventure into Fear and Big City."

October 15, 1957 (first show)

November 12, 1957

December 3, 1957

[*Winnipeg Free Press*, January 21, 1958] "CJOB features four mysteries. At 8 p.m. is Peril; at 8:30 p.m. is The Big Squeeze, followed at 9 p.m. by Adventure into Fear, and Big City at 9:30 p.m."

January 28, 1958

February 18, 1958

ORIGINATION: Harry S. Goodman, New York City, New York.

DURATION: Released in 1958.

PERSONNEL: Unknown.

EXTANT RECORDINGS: Unknown.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE GERMAN STUDENT

[SHORT-STORY]

Story by Washington Irving...

"This story, one of a number of tales and sketches collected in *Tales of a Traveller* (1824), is narrated by an old man to a group of listeners. The story concerns a young student from the German university town of Gottingen. The student, Gottfried Wolfgang, is described as a man of good family but also as one given to intense speculation on the dark, mystical side of existence. Indeed, he is shown to have dedicated himself to these studies to such an extent that both his physical health and his imagination have become 'diseased.' As the narrator tells his..."

[CHRONOLOGY]

THE WITCH'S TALE (WOR, NEW YORK)

[Thursday—10:15-10:45 PM]

June 18, 1931

"The Lady of the Guillotine"

PERSONNEL: Alonzo Deen Cole (scriptwriter, director).

CAST: Alonzo Deen Cole, Adelaide Fitz-Allen, Marie O'Flynn, Mark Smith, et al.

[Monday—9:30-10:00 PM]

June 13, 1932

“The Lady of the Guillotine”

TALES OF THE SUPERNATURAL (CJRC, WINNIPEG)

[Wednesday—10:30-11:00 PM]

Circa 1940

“The Lady with the Velvet Collar”

PERSONNEL: Neil LeRoy (producer), Mercer McLeod (narrator),

THE HERMIT'S CAVE (WORLD TRANSCRIPTION)

Circa 1940s

“The Black Band”

[EXTANT RECORDING]

WE KNOW A STORY (WONS, HARTFORD)

[???day—10:00-10:15 PM]

November 14, 1948

“The Lady with the Velvet Collar”

[EXTANT RECORDING]

[RADIOGOLDINDEX: “The program was recorded November 10, 1948.”]

CAST: Guy Hedlund, Dolores Murphy, John Storm.

THE DIAL PLAYERS (WHMA, ANNISTON)

[Tuesday—4:15-4:30 PM]

January 11, 1949

“The Lady with a Velvet Collar”

[“...The Dial Players of the Masque and Wig Guild of Jacksonville State Teachers College will present a series of 15-minute plays... Washington Irving’s supernatural story is set in the time of the French Revolution...”]

PERSONNEL: Lawrence Miles (director).

CAST: John Cathey (The Gendarme), Harry Howell (The Narrator), Pat Whisenant (The Lady).

THE CBS RADIO MYSTERY THEATRE (WRVR, NEW YORK)

[???day—10:07-11:00 PM]

September 17, 1979

“The Guillotine”

[EXTANT RECORDING]

[“...Gottfried, brooding and lonely, turns to his friend Karl for solace. Karl suggests a trip to Paris. Gottfried agrees, arriving there at the start of the Revolution when hundreds of people are being guillotined. In his loneliness, he creates a woman he tells Karl ‘exists only in my mind.’ Nevertheless, he meets her one stormy night—in the flesh—when he is inexplicably drawn to the site of the guillotine. He invites her to his room, but the next morning finds her dead, a victim of the giant blade...”]

PERSONNEL: Himan Brown (producer-director), Elspeth Eric (scriptwriter).

CAST: Paul Hecht (Gottfried), Bryna Raeburn (The Woman), Don Scardino (Karl).

RADIO TALES—“TALES OF AMERICAN MASTERS” (NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO)

October 6, 1998

“The German Student”

PERSONNEL: Winifred Phillips (reader, composer).

EXTANT RECORDING

ADVENTURES IN ECTOPLASM

[RADIO-SCRIPT]

RADIO REPERTORY (CBM, MONTREAL—CBC)

[Thursday—

October 31, 1946

“Adventures in Ectoplasm”

[MONTREAL GAZETTE: “...If you don’t believe in ghosts, Rupert Caplan’s Radio Repertory will attempt to restore your faith with their Thursday broadcast... Their special Hallowe’en offering is called Adventures in Ectoplasm, written by Murray Tate of Toronto, and it deals with ghosts in high places...”]

SCRIPT: Murray Tate.

PERSONNEL: Rupert Caplan (producer).

THE AFFAIR AT GROVER STATION

[SHORT-STORY]

“A ghost story based on a short story by Willa Cather... Terrapin Rodgers recounts to Will Carter the riddle of his friend’s death. Carter becomes involved, and terrified.”

[Wikipedia] “The Affair at Grover Station is a short story by Willa Cather. It was first published in Library in June 1900 in two instalments, and reprinted in the Lincoln Courier one month later.

“The outer narrator meets with his old friend Rodgers by Sterling, Colorado, and asks about the murdered agent at Grover station. Rodgers explains that on the 31st of December there was supposed to be a ball at Cheyenne, Wyoming. His friend Larry asked him to ask Helen if she would be available to go with him. Helen replied that she had told Mr Freymark she would go with him, but she would cancel as Larry took precedence over him. Freymark then went to the station and overheard the two men make arrangements as to sending her flowers, and left saying he had heard what he wanted to hear. Later, Larry didn't turn up and Rodgers went to pick up Helen and told her Larry was late. At the ball, she danced with Rodgers until Freymark showed up and she danced with him. By the end of the night, Larry's spaniel Duke came hurtling at Freymark, who soon disappeared from the place. The next day, Rodgers went about the station and then up to Grover, Colorado. There, he found a blood stain on Larry's bed but thought it must have been nosebleed. During the night however, he got woken up by what looked like Larry's ghost, writing on the chalk board. The next morning, he realised the ghost had written the number of a train, where Larry's body was to be found in Omaha. Upon seeing the body, Rodgers realised the hands were stained by chalk. By then, Freymark had gone, never to be found again. The Division Superintendent did not believe him, after Freymark admitted to drinking brandy that night.”

[CHRONOLOGY]

(RADIO 4, LONDON)

[

December 27, 1997

“The Affair at Grover Station”

[EXTANT RECORDING]

[“..A geological student asks an old friend about the recent murder of a station agent...”]

PERSONNEL: Ross Brown (music? Or sound design?), Jonathan Holloway (scriptwriter), David Hunter (director).

CAST: Nancy Crane, Stuart Milligan, Kerry Shale, Tom Watt.

AFTER THE BREAK OF DAY

[RADIO-SCRIPT]

A romantic ghost story that takes its protagonist back into his own haunted and tragic past, written by William Abney...

“You are invited to a Fancy Dress Party at Measham House. Do come if you can. Masks will be worn until midnight.”

[CHRONOLOGY]

(RADIO 4)

[Saturday—2:00-3:00 PM]

April 29, 1972

“After the Break of Day”

[“...Steve gets an invitation to a fancy dress ball at a country house he doesn’t know. Everyone seems to know him when he gets there, especially a girl called Rose. Memories gradually come back to him and he takes them for granted. He arranges to return to London with Rose but against her wishes leaves her at the house while he goes to get some petrol from the farm pump. He finds the pump rusted. A bad thunderstorm has started and he cannot find his way back to the house

so he sleeps in the car. In the morning, he calls at a cottage to ask the way, only to find that the house had burned down during a great storm 41 years ago and everyone at the party had died.

PERSONNEL: William Abney (scriptwriter), Bridget Marrow (producer).

CAST: Betty Baskomb (Mrs. Parsons), Geoffrey Beevers, Carole Boyd (Rene), William Fox (Andrew), David Gooderson (Jimmy McNeil), Sheila Grant (Mrs. Forsdyke), Leslie Heritage, Michael McClain (Steven Miller), S. Clifford Norgate (Robert), Alexa Romanes (Rose), Peter Tuddenham (Ben Loker), Pauline Wynn (Mary Loker).

AFTERWARD

[SHORT-STORY]

"It's more along the lines of Henry James' 'The Turn of the Screw'"

[Edith Wharton] "For imaginative handling of the supernatural no one, to my mind, has touched Henry James in 'The Turn of the Screw'..."

Or, rather, Ned answered, in the same strain, "why, amid so much that's ghostly, it can never affirm its separate existence as THE ghost.

She read a "robber-story" during recovery from typhoid fever and it caused a relapse of her illness.

[Edith Wharton] "When I was nine years old I fell ill of typhoid fever, and lay for weeks at the point of death..."

"...with my intense Celtic sense of the supernatural, tales of robbers and ghosts were perilous reading. This one brought on a serious relapse, and again my life was in danger; and when I came to myself, it was to enter a world haunted by formless horrors. I had been naturally a fearless child; now I lived in a state of chronic fear..."

"But how long the traces of my illness lasted may be judged from the fact that, till I was twenty-seven or –eight, I could not sleep in the room with a book containing a ghost story, and that I have frequently had to burn books of this kind, because it frightened me to know that they were downstairs in the library!"

[Alex, blog] "Unlike many other ghost stories, Wharton neatly pivots the genre to directly confront modernity, and in addition, the startling reflections of modernity in the past. "Afterward" is a haunted house story – but this time this haunted house story is built upon the economic basis of the large English country house. In essence, the question the story asks is what suffering were these symbols of wealth built upon?"

" 'Afterward' depicts the Boynes, an middle-aged American couple, who, striking it rich through stock market speculation, now wish to flee their drab origins in Wisconsin and purchase a remote and ancient Elizabethan country house in the South of England. Naturally, the house has its secrets, but so do the Americans. The American couple initially romanticizes the old house, but really as part of their romanticization of themselves. They prefer to believe that their speculations (eventually revealed to be somewhat dubious in precisely the archetypal American fashion) are buried in a now-forgotten past.

"Since the house contains.....an entity that forces the Boynes to confront their own history which they prefer to forget, the reader / viewer also wonders (since the entity has long been whispered about among the house's previous owners) what remains buried in the house's own past. After all, the previous owners of many centuries have seemingly hurriedly decamped for Switzerland....."

"The Public Media Foundation, a tax-exempt, non-profit organization, was founded in 1979. In 1991 the PMF began producing The Radio Play in cooperation with New Voices. This was a series of new plays and dramatizations of classic American literature for broadcast on National Public Radio and on the BBC World Service.

"In 1993 the organizational mission changed and the PMF began producing dramatizations of short stories by American women writers of the 19th and early 20th centuries entitled Scribbling Women - a title taken with intentional irony from a letter a resentful Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote to his publisher in 1855. The plays are distributed nationwide by National Public Radio."

[Scribbling Women] "Edith Wharton's most consistent concern throughout her writing was the plight of women of her time who must somehow find a way to create meaningful lives in a world where their choices, options and movements were so restricted. In her ghost story, "Afterward,"

the heroine, Mary Boyne, lives in a golden cage. She has what looks like a perfect marriage, including uninterrupted intimacy with her husband in a dream house. Yet she is as much like a child as she is a wife for she knows nothing of his life. Her innocence fosters her dependence. The price for being dependent is self deception. the theme of the ghost takes on a larger meaning as we begin to see shadows surface throughout the Boyne's lives."

[CHRONOLOGY]

WEDNESDAY MATINEE (HOME SERVICE, LONDON)

[Wednesday—4:00-4:35 PM]

March 12, 1947

"Afterward"

PERSONNEL: David H. Godfrey (producer), Betty Stafford Robinson (scriptwriter).

CAST: Dora Barton (Trimmle), Heron Carvic (Robert Elwell), Freda Gaye (Alida Stair), Anthony Pelly (Edward Boyne), Eddy Reed (Mr. Parvis), Rita Vale (Mary Boyne).

[Wednesday—4:00-

December 3, 1947

(or 3-12-47?)

"Afterward"

[Note on BBC card: "(this b/c may have been cancelled for fuel cuts)."

PERSONNEL: David Godfery (producer), Betty Stafford Robinson (scriptwriter).

THE HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE (KNX, HOLLYWOOD)

[Thursday—7:00-7:30 PM]

August 5, 1948

"Afterward"

[EXTANT RECORDING]

PERSONNEL: Milton Geiger (scriptwriter—1948, *Hallmark Playhouse*), James Hilton (narrator—1948, *Hallmark Playhouse*), Lyn Murray (music—1948, *Hallmark Playhouse*),

CAST: Robert Bruce, Joseph Kearns, Eric Snowden, Lurene Tuttle, Willard Waterman.

TALES OF MYSTERY AND IMAGINATION (WNYE, NEW YORK)

Circa 1965-66

"Afterward"

[EXTANT RECORDING]

THE CBS RADIO MYSTERY THEATRE (WRVR, NEW YORK)

[???day—10:07-11:00 PM]

March 2, 1976

"Afterward"

[EXTANT RECORDING]

["...Now committed to an insane asylum, Mary Boyne regrets her impetuosity in trying to restore the ghost to the old house in Lyng, England. She and her husband Ted were seeking a ghost that, as the story goes, no one realized was a ghost until after they had encountered it. But Ted found out too late, and Mary is haunted in the aftermath..."]

PERSONNEL: Himan Brown (producer-director), Murray Burnett (scriptwriter).

CAST: Larry Haines (Ned Boyne), Celeste Holm (Mary Boyne), Ian Martin (Mr. Woods), Joan Shay (Alida Stair), Guy Sorel (Mr. Parvis).

THIRTY MINUTE THEATRE (RADIO 4, LONDON)

[???day—11:00-11:30 AM]

September 10, 1985

"Afterward"

CAST: Rosemary Leach, Colin Starkey.

THE RADIO PLAY—"SCRIBBLING WOMEN" (PUBLIC MEDIA FOUNDATION, BOSTON)

Circa 1993

"Afterward"

[EXTANT RECORDING]

PERSONNEL: Donna DiNovelli (scriptwriter), Vince Fairchild (sound effects producer), Martin Jenkins (director), Miles Smith (sound engineer), Tom Tiger (sound engineer).

CAST: Will Le Bow (Ned Boyne/Elwell), Susan McConnell (Agnes, the maid), Tim Sawyer (Parvis), Sandra Shipley (Alida Stair/Mrs. Trimmle), Kristin Wold (Mary Boyne).

THE BLUE RIDGE RADIO PLAYERS (

Circa 1990s

"Afterward"

["...An American wife and her husband—a mining millionaire—buy an old manor house in the English countryside, only to discover that it harbors a ghost—the millionaire's partner..."]

PERSONNEL: William Shuler (scriptwriter).

THE FEMALE GHOST (RADIO 4, LONDON)

[???day—10:02-10:30 AM]

July 10, 1997

"Afterward"

[EXTANT RECORDING]

["...After an unexpected windfall on their American mine, Ned and Mary move to a dream home in England, but their past is catching up with them..."]

PERSONNEL: Marion Nancarrow (producer),

"ALAN GRIFF" STORIES

[SHORT-STORIES]

Various short-story readings by Alan Griff, which was the pseudonym of Donald Suddaby, who—under his own name—wrote juvenile science-fiction in the 1950s and early 60s. (He died in 1964.)

An occasional broadcaster from the Manchester station 2ZY.

["The House of Desolation"] "Lady Merle and her young daughter are invited to attend the sixteenth anniversary celebration of the marriage of her friend to a dabbler in the occult. After arriving at their desolate, oddly-built mansion, Lady Merle and the other guests have trouble sorting the living from the dead."

"A group of visitors arrive at Neath's isolated country house - a glacial hall with mazelike corridors, surrounded by mist. Neath has always had an odd reputation, which he lives up to by appearing then hiding in the depths of the house when his guests arrive. Even before the death of his wife, he had been reclusive and strange. If only his wife had been able to bear him a child..."

[*The Times*, March 20, 1964] "A friend writes: 'Strongly influenced by H. G. Wells, he was a brilliantly inventive storyteller. He could picture the planet Venus ruled by a highly intelligent vegetable life, or a twentieth-century world immobilized through the malicious disintegration of metal; a man from the future travelling back in time to Edwardian Worcestershire [*Village Fanfare*; Magazine version in 1934 was as by Alan Griff], or a group of friends accidentally diminished in size and fighting out a primitive existence with insects on an English hillside."

" 'In everything he wrote...Suddaby showed a distinguished talent for imaginative fantasy.' "

[CHRONOLOGY]

(2ZY, MANCHESTER)

[Tuesday—5:00-5:15 PM]

October 12, 1926

"Scarlet Dragon"

["...a short story written and told by Alan Griff..."]

(2LO, LONDON)

[Saturday—9:15-9:30 PM]

December 3, 1927

"The Castle"

["...Alan Griff—Reading of a short story..."]

(2GB, DAVENTRY)

[Thursday—8:00-8:30 PM]

August 9, 1928

"The Masque of the Red Death" / "The Kingdom"

["...Two short stories, read by Mr. Alan Griff—"The Masque of the Red Death' (Edgar Allen [sic] Poe); 'The Kingdom (Alan Griff)..."]

(MIDLAND REGIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Thursday—6:35-6:55 PM]

December 31, 1931 **"The Masque of the Red Death"**
 ["...Alan Griff reading...Edgar Allen [sic] Poe..."]
[Thursday—8:50-9:05 PM]
 December 31, 1931 **"The Tavern"**
 ["...Alan Griff reading one of his own stories..."]

[Thursday—8:20-8:40 PM]
 February 11, 1932 **"The Kingdom"**
 ["...Alan Griff, reading an original short story, from a studio..."]

[Monday—10:00-10:15 PM]
 July 18, 1932 **"The Horn"**
 ["...Alan Griff reading from his own story..."]

[Thursday—10:05-10:35 PM]
 January 5, 1933 **"The House of Desolation"**
 ["...a ghost story, written and told by Alan Griff..."]

[SOURCES]

GRIFF, ALAN. "The House of Desolation." Book (ed. Dorothy L. Sayers).

PERIODICALS: *The Times* [London].

ALAS, POOR GHOST!

[SPECIAL-PROGRAM]

A unique program of readings of ghost poetry... No, make that two!

[CHRONOLOGY]

(REGIONAL PROGRAMME, LONDON)

[Saturday—8:30-9:00 PM]
 December 24, 1938 **"Alas, Poor Ghost!"**
 ["...an anthology of poems from the works of Thomas Hardy, Walter de la Mare, Edith Sitwell, A. E. Housman, Rudyard Kipling, Christina Rossetti and Thomas Campion..."]
PERSONNEL: Mary Hope Allen (arranger, producer).
READERS: John Abbott, Nancy Brown, Hubert Gregg, Lilian Harrison, David King-Wood.

(HOME SERVICE)

[Friday—10:55-11:10 PM]
 August 1, 1941 **"Alas, Poor Ghost!"**
 ["...A Programme of prose and verse about the supernatural..."]
PERSONNEL: Hugh Stewart (compiler, producer).

ALEXANDER POLSON

[RADIO-TALKS]

"The author had been a teacher in Inverness, Easter & Wester Ross, Lewis, Sutherland and Caithness. It is a delightful collection of fairy, ghost, witch or second sight stories recorded by pupils in his senior classes at that time."

Polson set his knowledge of the lore and the history behind it in two books, *Our Highland Folklore Heritage* (1926) and *Scottish Witchcraft Lore* (1932).

[Polson, Highland] "It is simply a collection of beliefs and stories which the Author has been gathering for many years. He has taught in Inverness, Easter and Wester Ross, Lewis, Sutherland, and Caithness, and much of what is here set down was got in these districts and in the following way. In School, some fairy, ghost, witch, or second sight story was told the pupils in the senior class. They were requested to relate it to any old persons they knew, and ask them for any similar

tale which they heard when they were young. The pupils who succeeded in getting such tales wrote them out a few days later as an English composition.

"The Author's thanks are due to the boys and girls—now grown to manhood and womanhood—who acted as collectors..."

"Much of interest to the folklorist can...still be gleaned in the Highlands where the conditions have been favourable. Wide districts are still untouched by railways, in some parts no motor has even yet been seen, and newspapers have not altogether ousted the social meetings round the winter peat fires, where tales of second-sight, ghosts, water horses and fairies are told. The people are social and live their quiet lives in an environment which must be favourable to the formation of strange beliefs. There are always the lofty mountains which, if not covered with mist, have that hazy blue covering which suggests the mysterious, and in the mysterious Highlanders always revealed... There are many dark sullen tarns and dreary moorlands, across which flits Will o' the Wisp. It is not to be wondered at that such places should in imagination be peopled by creatures having peculiar powers, whose favour the people would do well to court if they could devise no sure means of overcoming them."

[CHRONOLOGY]

(5SC, GLASGOW)

[Tuesday—6:00-6:15 PM]

November 26, 1929 **"Highland Fairies"**
["...from Aberdeen..."]

(2BD, ABERDEEN)

[Tuesday— 6:00-6:15 PM]

December 24, 1929 **"Old-Time Yuletide Highland Customs"**

(ABERDEEN)

[Tuesday—6:00-6:15 PM]

December 23, 1930 **"St. Nicholas"**

[Thursday—3:20-3:40 PM]

July 16, 1931 **"The Characteristics of Gaelic Poetry"**

STRANGE TALES FROM THE WEST (SCOTTISH PROGRAMME)

[Wednesday—7:15-7:30 PM]

April 17, 1935 **"Highland Magicians"**

(SCOTTISH PROGRAMME)

[Friday—9:20-9:30 PM]

January 31, 1936 **"Room 13"**
["...A Ghost Story, told by Alexander Polson..."]

ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT [GHOST STORIES]

[RADIO APPEARANCES]

Actress Helen Gahagan (memorable as *She* in the 1935 movie version of the Haggard novel) called Alexander Woollcott "the best ghost story teller in the world...he can make your hair stand on end." As radio's *Town Crier* Woollcott re-channeled a number of his favorite yarns of vanishing ladies, phantom hitchhikers and hideous premonitions into a kind of mass-media folklore.

[John Mason Brown, "Introduction," *The Portable Woollcott*] "At CBS in New York City they still show you with proper pride the sizable hand-bell which announced the *Town Crier* on the air. This bell is all the introduction Alexander Woollcott needed or now needs. ...Woollcott was a storyteller who could himself ring the bell again and again."

" 'He talks brilliantly, doesn't he?' said Mrs. [Otis] Skinner... 'No wonder he writes so well, he's such a good listener.' "

"He listened out of hunger not politeness. Once his curiosity was aroused, no fictional sleuth in pursuing his quarry could be as undeviating as Woollcott in tracking down a story. He tapped

other minds to fill his own. What he had heard he did not forget. He had the memory of a pachyderm, and a pianola's loyalty to the same tunes.

"He seldom told one story at a time. His anecdotes came not singly but in dynasties. He approached his main story through a labyrinth of lesser ones.

"In spite of its many attempts, the radio has produced no one who could touch Woolcott; no one who had his sense of melodrama and suspense; no one who could bite the language with his precision; no one who could tell a story with his skill."

[Radio] "Billed as The Early Bookworm, Woolcott was first heard on CBS radio in October 1929, reviewing books in various timeslots until 1933. His CBS show The Town Crier, which began July 21, 1933, opened with the ringing of a bell and the cry, "Hear ye, hear ye!", followed by Woolcott's literary observations punctuated with acidic anecdotes. Sponsored by Cream of Wheat (1934-35) and Grainger Tobacco (1937-38), it continued until January 6, 1938. He had no reservations about using this forum to promote his own books, and the continual mentions of his *While Rome Burns* (1934) made it a bestseller.

"From 1929 to 1934 Woolcott wrote a column called "Shouts and Murmurs" for The New Yorker."

[Hilda Cole, 1935] "Each week, through the Sunday quiet of the Columbia Broadcasting System quarters, Alexander Woolcott walks eventfully into his studio...a lordly, owlish man, with a cane, and piercing blue eyes behind spectacles.

"There, without a trace of nervousness, haste, or misgivings, he relaxes before a table microphone, as much at ease as thought it were his own desk in his comfortable, book-lined apartment overlooking the East River... [N]obody on the Town Crier's 'street corner' has the slightest idea what the thoroughly unpredictable Alexander Woolcott will say next."

[Woolcott, on his entry into broadcasting] "Before I knew quite what I was doing, I was mouthing some words before a strange-looking contraption and wondering why the dickens I was so nervous. Later I learned that the strange-looking contraption was just a microphone and that my normally high-pitched voice had all the deep basso qualities of an old-time Shakespearean trouper reciting 'Hamlet' for a square meal."

[Woolcott, "Shouts and Murmurs," *The New Yorker*, August 17, 1929] "...I still feel a deep animosity toward a radio...the sound of one whining insistently in every home I visit..."

[Dialist," *New York Evening Post*, November 23, 1933] "These fifteen-minute meanderings that Alexander Woolcott does twice a week should irritate us. The Woolcott voice is so richly redolent of self-satisfaction. It is so frequently apparent from his tone of voice that even as he speaks, he is telling himself silently, 'There is a phrase nicely turned, a word selected with perfect precision.' Curiously, however, Mr. Woolcott's phrases are so nicely turned and his words so precisely chosen, that we find ourself readily sympathetic with Mr. Woolcott in his satisfaction. We enjoy his niceties of speech as least as much as he does.

"Last night he told a magnificently gruesome story. We had heard the tale before, but by some strange feat of memory in reverse, we had forgotten it. No few radio thrillers, in our times, have come to our ears; but we recommend to kilocycle dramatists that they listen to Alexander Woolcott regularly hereafter for the evenings when he chooses to make our hair stand on end. Without benefit of spectacular sound effects, without any simulated toughness of voice, Mr. Woolcott unfolds his story, adding immeasurably to its fantastic violence by the mincing primness of his delivery."

[*New York Evening Post*, December 11, 1933] "Alexander Woolcott is promising one of his bloodcurdling stories. He is our favorite radio bloodcurdler."

["The Vanishing Lady," *The New Yorker*, July 6, 1929] "Story of the English lady who disappeared from the Paris hotel during the World Exposition. It was discovered that she had died of Black Plague and the hotel management and the police had kept her death a secret so that the visitors to the city would not leave. Continued in issue of July 13."

["The Triple Warning," *The New Yorker*, September 19, 1931] "Tells of girl in Louisiana who had the same dream three successive times. She dreamt that an elaborate hearse drawn by four black horses drew up to her door, and the driver got out and said, 'Are you ready?' She remembered his face long after because it was so hideous. The following winter she was up north shopping in a department store. She was being sucked into the elevator with the crowd when she heard the elevator man say, 'Are you ready?', and she backed away quickly when she saw his face. It was the same as the man in the dream. She backed out, and the door shut in front of her. On that trip the

elevator fell and all the passengers were killed.”

[Walter Winchell, October 7, 1931] “Can’t get that weird Woollcott story out of my mind...The one he penned in that mag a coupla issues ago...One night, it seems, a young girl living in a country house down Louisiana way was startled out of her slumbers by the sound of carriage wheels beneath her window...She looked out and saw a hearse drawn by four horses...The driver with a prominent scar and other spooky features removed his high hat...He walked under her window and said: ‘Are you ready?’...The girl became hysterical on her bed and later she looked out the window to make sure she was dreaming...For three nights the same horrible dream visited her...The following year she was in one of the New York department stores...She tried to enter an elevator which already was crowded with shoppers...The elevator man looked at her—he had the same scar, prominent beak and other ghostly features of that hearse-driver in her dreams!...He said to her: ‘Are you ready?’...She backed away in terror and the door closed...She watched the elevator indicator record the car’s descent. A few moments later she learned that on that trip the elevator fell and all its occupants were killed!...What a facefuzz lifter that is!”

[“Moonlight Sonata,” TNY, October 3, 1931] “Tells of a doctor who went down to visit his friend, Cazalet, who lived in a collapsing manor-house in Kent. He could afford only a doddering couple, and a single gardener, John Scripture, assisted by a lunatic father. When he arrived, he found his friend away, so dined alone and went to bed. He awoke to see someone sitting in a patch of moonlight, embroidering. The doctor thought it a queer gesture for a ghost, but got out of the room. He met his returning host, and together they went to raid the icebox. They fell over the headless body of the cook. Cazalet knew it was the work of the old lunatic. He was in the doctor’s room, the cook’s head between his knees, plucking out the gray hairs one by one.”

[“Postscript,” TNY, October 17, 1931] “Ghost story told at length a few weeks ago, he confesses is really a moving piece of folk-lore which has been going from mouth to mouth for a good many years. Tells of the various letters received from all parts of the country telling him of its true origin. But it is true that the tale is one that knows no creed or frontier. Mentions some of the names and source of people who claim it as their own. One person took it very literally, and wrote in the paper.”

[“Thankfully Received,” TNY, November 14, 1931] “Tells the ghost story of the man who was motoring home late one night over a deserted highway, slowed down for a dangerous intersection, and a girl dressed in evening apparel signaled him to stop, and asked him to take her back to the city. He picked her up, and they drove to the city without further conversation after she gave him her address. Swinging into the street she mentioned, he turned to speak to her, and found that she was no longer in the car. He hadn’t stopped, so knew she hadn’t had a chance to get out. He pulled up at the given number, and an old man invited him in. He told the young man it must be his daughter. She had been killed a year ago at that place; it had happened almost every month.”

[“Weird Story Becomes Even Weirder,” Louis Sobol, April 2, 1954] “The other bedtime I picked up an old book by Alexander Woollcott—‘Long, Long Ago’ is the title—and read again his weird little story of the bride who dreamed repeatedly about a certain house and then one day, honeymooning in France, came across the very house of dreams and when she approached it, everyone fled in wild terror. Then comes the creepy punch line.

“Re-reading this tale, I recalled a session with a famed songwriter of the late 30s and early 40s—Billy Hill, a giant of a man with a fleshy face and tiny eyes, among whose tune-hits had been ‘The Last Round-Up.’ We were seated in the Stork club and Billy mumbled out the story which ran something like this—after an introduction similar to the Woollcott account.

“The girl stopped the car, climbed over the fence, ran across the green field—and there it was—just as in her dream—the purple house. Three times she knocked—knock, knock, knock. (I’m trying to tell it as Billy told it in a slow, hesitant voice.) The door opened and she knew who would be standing there—and he was. The tall old man with the long white beard. And as in her dream, she asked ‘Where am I?’ This time it did not end as in the dream, for the old man with the long white beard was still there and he said, ‘You are nowhere.’ The girl pleaded ‘Please—please tell me. Who are you? What is this purple house? Why am I here?’ and the old man said: ‘No one is here. This is a haunted house. For fifteen years, it has been haunted.’ And the girl whispered: ‘Haunted? By whom?’ The old man said: ‘By you!’

“That was the story told by Billy Hill—and I printed it some years before Woollcott’s book came out with the version I read it over again the other night.

“At any rate, after I had printed this little ghost story, my mail was deluged with protests and

jeers by readers insisting that Hill's tale was an old chestnut. They called my attention to a book by Andre Maurois where it had appeared with slight variations—also, some wrote they had read it in a book by Edwin C. Hill. Others said it was a familiar legend in France and in Germany. A bit annoyed, I went on a search for Songwriter Hill and finally located him one night at 21.

“‘Why,’ I stormed, ‘did you hand me such an old yarn?’ and he stared at me out of his small, glazed eyes and said simply ‘I haven’t seen you in a year.’ Puzzled, I reminded him, we had been together only a week or so before. He repeated dully: ‘You’re mistaken. What is this story you’re talking about?’

“So I told him and he said: ‘O, sure I know that one—but I’ve never told it to a living soul.’ I said: ‘You’re out of your mind—you told it to me last week.’ He shrugged his shoulders. ‘I’ve never told it. How could I? I was the man with the long white beard. I married the girl.’

“I figured the songwriter had been pulling my leg—but good—and I walked away. Two days later, I learned Hill had collapsed and was in the hospital—suffering a nervous breakdown. Weeks later when he was discharged, I met him and again asked him about the story. He looked at me as if I were batty. ‘How,’ he protested ‘could I ever have told you any such fantastic story—especially about me being the man with the long white beard. It’s crazy—the whole thing is crazy.’

“Three weeks later, Songwriter Billy Hill was found dead in a hotel room in Boston.”

[Herbert Jacobs, “He Craves to Read World’s Most Horrifying Story!” *The Capital Times*, March 3, 1950] “‘Dear Sir: Some years ago I heard Alexander Woollcott on his radio program tell about the most horrifying story he had ever read. He said it had such an adverse effect upon him that he devoutly wished he had not done so. He gave the name of the story, hoping at the same time that listeners would not read it for they would be sorry they did. I have never read the story and have since forgotten its name. Do you remember what it is?—at the risk of making me and a lot of other people miserable?’

“I never heard the late Alexander Woollcott broadcast, so I asked August Derleth, Sauk City author and mystery story expert, about the horror story. He replies:

“‘Alexander Woollcott was accustomed to dealing in superlatives. He used to like fantasy and horror, and himself contributed to a good substantial portion of the legend of horror tales.

“In his broadcast, which was certainly not the only one of its kind, he might have been referring to a number of tales—‘Thurnley Abbey,’ by Perceval Landon; ‘The Rats in the Walls,’ by H. P. Lovecraft—or even, and most likely, to a traditional tale which he himself wrote up, ‘The Vanishing Lady,’ which was most currently reprinted in ‘Strange and Fantastic Stories,’ edited by Joseph Margolies, but was originally published in Woollcott’s ‘While Rome Burns.’

“This is the curious and frightening story of a woman’s disappearance from a Paris hotel, and was the essence of Marie Belloc-Lowndes’ novel ‘The End of Her Honeymoon’ (1913) and also in later novel by Lawrence Sanders entitled ‘She Who Was Helena Cass.’ He presented ‘The Vanishing Lady,’ as he did his ‘Full Fathom Five,’ another horror short, as based on fact and simply recast or retold these stories; and he was probably right, since Woollcott was not very original, and whenever he did a puff job like this it was to praise some book with which something he did or one of his friends was connected.’

“I’ve read ‘The Vanishing Lady,’ but without getting any creeps.”

[Paul Harrison, “In New York,” *Dunkirk Evening Observer*, October 30, 1934] “Alexander Woollcott, doted on misty folklore, once told about the ancient house at No 59 Washington Square. Back in 1907, Will Irwin rented an entire floor and from the time he began writing there he was obsessed with the feeling that somebody, or something, continually was watching him. And then at 3 o’clock each morning, he’d awaken with an awful sensation of some clammy and imminent horror. Didn’t see anything, but finally had to move to a hotel to save his nerves.

“Irwin loaned the apartment to James Hopper, another writer, and Hopper had identical experiences. So did Samuel Hopkins Adams, who tried to sleep there two or three nights. Later, two Boston women were given the key for the duration of their New York visit. But they fled the house with the first visitation of the inexplicable terror.

“Not until several years afterward did the persons concerned in the mystery learn an additional fact about the old house. Once, when Washington Square was a Potter’s Field and when a gallows stood where the memorial arch stands now, No. 59 was the city morgue.”

[Jack Stinnett, “New Yorker At Large,” *Galveston Daily News*, August 8, 1937] “And it was Alexander Woollcott who retailed the yarn about the two women who stayed overnight in a deserted house on Cape Cod. One of them saw a ghostly gentleman standing before the fireplace

during the moonlight hours of night and rose with the dawn to find bits of wet seaweed left by the intruder. A New York scientist founds these bits to be fresh seaweed of a variety known only to the African coast. Investigation disclosed that a son of the last tenants of the house had been drowned...off the coast of Africa."

[*Uniontown Morning Herald*, February 8, 1936] "Thanks to the reviving influences of Alexander Woollcott and the movies, ghosts seem likely to come back into popular favor."

[*Kokomo Tribune*, March 18, 1937] "Any Alexander Woollcott fan will tell you that the story of the mysterious hitch-hiking 'ghost of state road 31,' who got into the papers this week, is old stuff. The Town Crier has, upon several different occasions, told the tale over the air and has remarked the curious habit it has of turning up in various parts of the country. As your correspondent recalls Woollcott's version, the 'ghost's' name was Idea, the same name given the girl in Tuesday's U.P. dispatch from Indianapolis. Our private guess, without imputation, is that Charles Sullivan, the young cigar salesman who reported the experience with 'Ida' near Columbus, Ind., is a good Woollcott listener. And that the Indiana bureau of the U.P. is a good gullible bunch of boys."

[CHRONOLOGY]

THE KELLOGG RADIO TOWN CRIER (WOR, NEW YORK)

[Wednesday—7:30-8:00 PM]

October 30, 1929

[“...Huddle close around your radio tonight while Alexander Woollcott, the Kellogg Radio Town Crier, on the eve of Hallowe'en, makes your hair stand on end with true tales of ghosts...”]

THE TOWN CRIER (WABC, NEW YORK)

[Wednesday—9:15-9:30 PM]

November 22, 1933

[“...he told a magnificently gruesome story...”]

[Monday—9:15-9:30 PM]

December 11, 1933

[“...Alexander Woollcott is promising one of his bloodcurdling stories...”]

[SOURCES]

COLE, HILDA. “

JACOBS, HERBERT. “He Craves to Read World’s Most Horrifying Story!” *The Capital Times* (March 3, 1950).

Woollcott, Alexander. “Full Fathom Five.” (*The New Yorker*, June 22, 1929).

WOOLLCOTT, ALEXANDER. “The Vanishing Lady.” (*The New Yorker*, July 6 and 13, 1929).

WOOLLCOTT, ALEXANDER. “The Triple Warning.” (*The New Yorker*, September 19, 1931).

WOOLLCOTT, ALEXANDER. “Moonlight Sonata.” (*The New Yorker*, October 3, 1931).

WOOLLCOTT, ALEXANDER. “Postscript.” (*The New Yorker*, October 17, 1931).

WOOLLCOTT, ALEXANDER. “Thankfully Received.” (*The New Yorker*, November 14, 1931).

ZIEMER, GREGOR. “Friendly Voices in the Dark.” *The Rotarian* (January 1956).

PERIODICALS: *The New York Evening Post*.

[GALLERY]



Alexander Woolcott

ALGERNON BLACKWOOD [RADIO TALKS]

[RADIO APPEARANCES]

One of the premier writers of supernatural horror and fantasy of his generation, Algernon Blackwood first came to radio in 1934. For his initial foray into broadcasting he was supposed to be interviewed on the magazine-format show *In Town To-night*, but instead of submitting to questions, he told the interviewer a ghost story. This marked the beginning of a seventeen-year side-career for Blackwood as the BBC's "Ghost Man"—a stint that only increased his popularity as the years went by, culminating in 1949 with the award for "Outstanding Personality" from the Television Society (for he was, by then, a TV star as well as a radio celebrity).

It was not for want of trying on the part of the BBC that it had taken until '34 to lure the elusive "Pan" (his nickname among his friends) into a broadcasting studio and in front of a microphone. Producer Cecil Madden had been trying since 1928 to persuade him.... It was not reluctance on Blackwood's part but simply an inability to be caught at the right moment. Ever in the throes of wanderlust, he was absent from the country for a good part of the time during the late Twenties and early Thirties—skiing in Switzerland,

Although the spring of 1934 was the earliest that they were able to pin the author down to an actual date on the air, Blackwood's theatrical friend Harcourt Williams had read one of his stories—title, alas, unknown—on the air seven years earlier, in 1927. Curiously, Blackwood himself, before ever uttering a word into a microphone, had been published twice in the BBC's weekly print-organ *Radio Times*—first, in 1927 with his story of a haunted Chinese mirror, "The Land of Green Ginger," which appeared in the magazine's Christmas number, and in 1930 (once again, in the Yuletide issue) with a tale entitled "Revenge," which later became the basis for his radio play, "Told in the Mountains."

Certainly a writer of many facets and interests, Blackwood was nevertheless aware of how his reputation stood with British fiction readers. "The classification of ghost-stories," he noted, "has stuck to me closer than a brother, and even when the B.B.C. ask for a story it must be, preferably, of the 'creepy' kind... My own public, whatever that may mean, expect a queer sort of grim story from me and would be disappointed with an ordinary tale."

Anent the *Queer Stories* broadcast, the *Manchester Guardian* reported that "the B..B.C. rule of manuscripts in advance for all who are to use the microphone will be relaxed in favour of Mr. Algernon Blackwood, the story-writer, who will entertain listeners for twenty minutes from ten o'clock with one or more stories, told extempore..."

Following the broadcast the *Guardian* wireless columnist K.H. reviewed it thusly: "When Mr. Algernon Blackwood came to the microphone in the National programme he told us that he had many stories in his head. He told four or five, all of them dealing with the supernatural. The announcer told us that Mr. Blackwood would endeavour to make the blood run cold, but at present he is not able to do this on the wireless as he can with the printed word. The attention and the interest were held, but a chill was not evoked.

"Mr. Blackwood told the stories without pause in a steady voice, speaking at a fairly fast pace, and it seems probable that though they were not read they were at least memorized. He has a

good dramatic manner and voice, but he has some microphone faults to overcome. Last night his every breath and a curious sound suggesting the closing of lips were audible to the listener."

For all of the fervour which the BBC had devoted to obtaining Blackwood for the airwaves, and for their backing down on reviewing his talk on ??? date, it should also be noted—gleaned from Blackwood's correspondence of the time—that the BBC rejected several scripts which the author submitted to them in 1934 and 1935—"Accessory Before the Fact," "The Locket," "The Dream," and "Lock Your Door," the latter of which he finally did broadcast twelve years later.

In the midst of these sporadic but successful appearances at the microphone, Blackwood also found himself—once again thanks to Cecil Madden—included in the line-up of the very first day of broadcasting by the BBC Television Service. Although his reputation as the telly's "Ghost Man" would not flourish and spread until the post-war years, nevertheless there he was, an omen of things-that-go-bump to come, on Monday, November 2, 1936, spooking it up for the cameras on the premiere edition of the magazine program *Picture Page*. "Our make-up was something fierce," he recalled, "and my bright blue lips and eyelids made me horrifying or fascinating according to taste." He was placed in a separate studio, completely darkened except for the lights spotted on different portions of his face. The *Times* singled him out for the effectiveness of the presentation—"The choice of Mr. Algernon Blackwood last night to tell two of his own inimitable ghost stories was excellent—the lighting especially emphasized the ghostly character of the proceedings..." But some viewers longed for even more atmosphere in the *mise en scene*. "Can't you provide Mr. Blackwood," pleaded avid spook fan ("Ghost stories, please!") P.F. Titchmarsh of Sheffield to the *Radio Times*, "with a studio lit only by flickering firelight, curtains that move where no wind blows, and sudden creakings from beyond the microphone?"

The following month an article by Blackwood, reflecting on his BBC experiences, appeared in the December 11 issue of *Radio Times*. Published under the title "You Can't Tell Ghost Stories on the Radio," it...

Comparison of texts: how Blackwood would alter his text for telling over the air... For example, "The Destruction of Smith"... Blackwood's original text:

"We all stood, staring. The darkness came up closer. The horses ceased their whinnying. For a moment nothing happened. Then Smith turned slowly round and raised his head towards the stars, as though he saw something. 'Hear that?' he whispered. 'It's coming up close. That's what I've bin hearing now, on and off, two days and nights.'"

And the exact wording of his reading on the air:

"We all stood staring, shivering. The horses ceased their whinnying. For a moment nothing happened. Only the quiet stars looked down. Then Smith turned slowly around, lifting his eyes towards those quiet stars, as though he saw or heard something. 'Hear that?' he whispered in a strangled voice. 'Hear that? It's coming closer. That's what I've bin hearing now, on and off, two nights and days. Listen!'"

On June 11, 1949 the BBC Third Programme featured a 25-minute talk by R. H. Ward entitled "Algernon Blackwood: An appreciation of his writings."

[Sydney Morning Herald, July 23, 1950—"At 82, He's Still Master Of Horrors" "From A Staff Correspondent In London"] "For nearly 50 years his name has been synonymous with the uncanny and the supernatural.

"Horror has fascinated him all his days. As a little boy in knee-breeches he said, 'I love the night, the shadows, empty rooms and haunted woods.'

"Such mysticism delights him now. For him, there is nothing horrific about the vampires, ghosts and things of nameless dread which unfold themselves almost spontaneously from his imagination. Towards them he is benign, benevolent.

"It is the more earthly things that set his spine tingling.

"The secret lies in his childhood. Although the son of an aristocratic family, he was brought up under conditions of such strict puritanism that when he sailed for Canada he had never known the dubious delights of alcohol, cigarettes or theatres. He was, therefore, 'afraid of life.'

"But not of death, or madness, or the bizarre and gruesome. When a poet-mystic he worshipped died insane, he was sorry and sympathetic—but not horrified. The sight of a bed bug made his blood run cold, yet a macabre trail through the underworld of New York after a crazy forger armed with a razor was as matter-of-fact as a stroll through the park.

"For all his self-confessed dread of life, he has tackled it with courage and fortitude. In turn, he:

"Farmed—and went broke—in Canada; licked stamps for an insurance company; became

general factotum of a Methodist magazine; prospected for gold, ran a hotel; sold dried milk; dabbled in journalism; became an author.

"In New York, on his uppers, without money, job or friends, he went hungry and endured agonies sleeping two-in-a-bed at a common lodging house peopled by criminals and degenerates.

"While still doing 'drudgery' on the 'New York Sun' he discovered his faculty for story-telling. In the evenings he would spin yarns for the entertainment of his fellow-lodgers, finding that 'at a moment's notice...I could invent a tale with a beginning, middle and climax.' One of his admirers put the stories on paper and sent them to a publisher. Thus in 1906 was Blackwood's destiny settled.

"He has come a long way since then—nearly 40 novels, short stories by the hundred, scores of weird tales delivered on radio and television.

"In 1949 he was rated the outstanding British radio personality of the previous year. He was in Switzerland, on his annual ski-ing vacation, when the honour was announced. By the time he got back to England another laurel awaited him—a silver medal for the best contribution to British television for 1948.

"Two months ago 20th-Century Fox induced him to sit in a chair at a British studio and give the screen 16 minutes of his face, voice and flair for the eerie. The one-man picture was an outstanding success. Now five more are to be made."

Unfortunately, the only currently-available commercial recording of Blackwood's radio work is "Pistol Against a Ghost," which was included in the BBC's 2007 CD anthology set, *British Writers*. Mike Ashley informs us of what-might-have-been had certain intentions not gone awry 28 years ago: "In 1982 the BBC did plan to issue an audio-cassette of Blackwood reading seven of his stories but finally decided that the quality of the recordings was not of sufficient standard for the market. For the record the intended line-up...was: 'The Woman's Ghost Story,' 'The Curate and the Stockbroker,' 'A Pistol Against a Ghost,' 'A Japanese Literary Cocktail,' 'The Occupant of the Room,' 'The Destruction of Smith,' and 'Disappearance in Texas'."

In 1963 a *Times* correspondent wrote, "Can there ever have been a more vivid and memorable figure than Algernon Blackwood? He was a reincarnation of the Ancient Mariner, his face as old and wrinkled as a turtle's, and in his voice the power to mesmerize us with his tales of the supernatural."

[CHRONOLOGY]

Before Blackwood's first radio appearance:

WRITERS OF TODAY (2LO, LONDON, & 5XX, DAVENTRY—BBC)

[Saturday—9:20-9:35 PM]

August 27, 1927

["...Harcourt Williams, A Story by Algernon Blackwood..."]

Blackwood radio appearances:

IN TOWN TO-NIGHT (NATIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Saturday—7:30-8:00 PM]

April 7, 1934

[ASHLEY: "Blackwood's first radio broadcast in which, rather than an interview, he told a ghost story. No records survive of which tale."]

[Reference to this broadcast is made by BBC staffer J. C. Cannell in his book *In Town To-night*, where he describes getting certain guests to the show. "Edward Crocker, this picturesque old man," he remembered, "has stood at Westminster Bridge for over forty years with his telescope, through which, by paying a penny, you can get an intimate glimpse of the decorative details of Big Ben. Red-faced and white-bearded, Edward Crocker never flinched at the prospect of broadcasting. I remember going to pick him up on the Saturday night in a taxi, accompanied by Algernon Blackwood, author of those classic stories on the unknown. Blackwood, who figured in the same programme, was most intrigued by the old man, who is still thrilled by the recollection of his experience on that night."

READING (LONDON REGIONAL)

[Wednesday—8:00-8:20 PM]

July 11, 1934

“The Blackmailers”

[ASHLEY] “England (London): Alexander is being blackmailed but the blackmailer commits suicide and his ghost helps Alexander.” An original story for radio, its first (and apparently only) appearance in print was in *My Grimmiest Nightmare*, the spin-off anthology from Cecil Madden’s Empire series *Nightmares* (although the story was not actually broadcast as part of the series). The story was originally scheduled for broadcast a month earlier on June 15 in a 9:20-9:40 PM time slot, but was [ASHLEY] “rescheduled due to illness.”

(EMPIRE SHORTWAVE)

[Wednesday—5:18-5:43 AM]

July 18, 1934

“The Blackmailers”

GOSSIP HOUR (EMPIRE PROGRAMME)

[Wednesday—2:30-3:30 PM]

August 1, 1934

[ASHLEY: “Instead of a formal interview Blackwood chose to tell two ghost stories. No record survives.”]

Other guests on the show included the “Horror Man” of stage melodrama, Tod Slaughter, and vaudevillean/racing tipster “Prince” Ras Monolulu of Abyssinia. According to Mike Ashley, “He [Blackwood] enjoyed broadcasting and the BBC found him ideal radio. He endeavoured to create the right atmosphere in his stories as if he were recounting tales at a house party. To sustain this atmosphere, though, Blackwood hoped he could be given a studio on his own. ‘I’m sure you realise how appallingly difficult it was recently to tell a ghost story immediately after bagpipes and a comedy Abyssinian prince!’ he wrote to the BBC.” (Unpublished letter from Blackwood to the B.B.C., August 4, 1934)

PERSONNEL: Cecil Madden (producer, host).



Detail from group photograph taken after the August 1, 1934 broadcast of *Gossip Hour* shows Algernon Blackwood and the “Sweeney Todd” of the barnstormers, Tod Slaughter, standing side by side at the far right. At far left is producer Cecil Madden, an important figure in Blackwood’s radio career.

QUEER STORIES (NATIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Tuesday—10:01-10:20 PM]

August 28, 1934

“Yogi” / “Blank Cartridges” / “Homicidal Dream” / “Evidence in Camera”

[“...Mr. Algernon Blackwood, the story-writer, will entertain listeners for twenty minutes from ten o’clock with one or more stories, told extempore...”]

[ASHLEY: "Four short anecdotes...all presented as unexplained mysteries."]

NIGHTMARES (EMPIRE PROGRAMME)

[Tuesday—7:45-8:00 PM]

September 4, 1934

"The Empty House"

[ASHLEY] "Adapted by the author from 'A Haunted Island.'... Note: the title 'The Empty House' appears on the script with the subtitle 'A Canadian Ghost Story.' The Programme-as-Broadcast sheet lists it simply as 'A Ghost Story'."

["Canada (Ontario): a haunted house on an island, the occupant has a pre-vision of his own murder."]

PERSONNEL: Cecil Madden (producer).

READING: SHORT STORY (NATIONAL PROGRAMME-DAVENTRY)

[Saturday—10:01-10:20 AM]

September 29, 1934

"A Suspicious Gift"

["...a tale of a young writer who, having written a sentence about the powers of imagination and waiting for further inspiration, undergoes a terrifying experience..."]

NIGHTMARES (EMPIRE PROGRAMME)

[Tuesday—8:01-8:17 AM]

October 30, 1934

"By Water"

[ASHLEY] "Egypt (Guebel Haidi): a clairvoyant warns Larsen to beware of water."

PERSONNEL: Cecil Madden (producer).

ALGERNON BLACKWOOD'S SHORT STORIES (GSD, DAVENTRY)

[Friday—3:15-3:30 PM]

November 16, 1934

["...Transmission 4... Sir [sic] Algernon Blackwood's Short Stories..."]

SHORT STORY (REGIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Sunday—9:03-9:24 AM]

July 7, 1935

"First Hate"

[ASHLEY] "Canada (Vancouver): the instinctive survival trait of hate at first sight."

[Sunday—9:00-9:20 AM]

September 1, 1935

"The Chinese Picture"

[ASHLEY] "Adapted by the author from 'The Man Who Was Milligan.'... England (London) & China: a Chinese picture inexplicably transports Milligan from his lodgings to China."

YOUNG IDEAS (NATIONAL PROGRAMME, LONDON)

[Friday—7:30-8:00 PM]

October 4, 1935

"Train Ghost"

October 11, 1935

"Come With Me"

[ASHLEY: "Blackwood relates an incident of two men (a big man and a little man) who are crossing a field. The little man alone hears a voice saying, several times, 'Come with me' and, on the final time, he realizes the big man has disappeared without trace."]

October 18, 1935

"The Wig"

[ASHLEY: "An old lady sleeps in a haunted room where a little gnome-

like ghost steals her wig and places it on top of the wardrobe.”]

November 1, 1935

“Lion in New York City”

[ASHLEY: “Blackwood recalls an incident from his days as a New York reporter when a lion had escaped from a circus.”]

November 29, 1935

“A Backwoods Adventure”

[ASHLEY: “An abridged and freely adapted version of “Mid the Haunts of the Moose’... “Canada (Ontario): a moose-hunting episode in October 1898 and the experiences that lead to the story ‘Skeleton Lake’... ‘Skeleton Lake: An Episode in Camp’ [publ. in Empty House]: “Canada (Quebec backwoods): non-fantasy, tale of a murder.”]

SHORT STORY (NATIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Saturday—8:15-8:32 PM]

June 27, 1936

“King’s Evidence”

[ASHLEY: “freely adapted from ‘Confession’”]

ALGERNON BLACKWOOD (EMPIRE, DAVENTRY)

[Thursday—10:00-10:15 PM]

July 2, 1936

PICTURE PAGE (BBC-TV)

November 2, 1936

ASHLEY: “The first programme to be transmitted on television. Blackwood read two ghost stories but details are not known. They were clearly very short as the ten minute slot also included two other interviews. Blackwood probably related two personal anecdotes.”]

SHORT STORY (NATIONAL PROGRAMME)

[Sunday—2:00-2:25 PM]

September 12, 1937

“The Curse of the Wolf”

[ASHLEY: “Adapted by the author from ‘Running Wolf’.”]

AT THE BLACK DOG (EMPIRE PROGRAMME)

[Wednesday—11:31 AM-12:00 NOON]

August 16, 1939

[ASHLEY: “No script survives. Blackwood was interviewed and told a story.”]

PERSONNEL: Roy Speer (producer).

(HOME SERVICE)

[Sunday—10:01-10:22 PM]

December 17, 1939

“Two of a Kind”

[ASHLEY: “Adapted by the author from ‘The Survivors’... England (London): after an accident, a man meets another only to discover that they are both dead.”]

THREE STORIES BY ALGERNON BLACKWOOD (HOME SERVICE)

[Monday—12:33-1:00 PM]

December 25, 1939

“Transition” / “The Laughter of Courage” / “A Boy and His Bag”

[ASHLEY: “A Boy and His Bag” was adapted by the author from “The Little Beggar.” “...an old man senses the spirit of a son he never had”.]

(HOME SERVICE)

[Thursday—11:20-11:35 AM]

February 29, 1940

“By Proxy”

[ASHLEY: “a thug tricks a little boy into murdering his own mother.”]

[Wednesday—3:50-4:00 PM]

April 17, 1940

“The Voice”

[ASHLEY: “adapted by the author from ‘The Reformation of St. Jules’...
“France (St. Jules): a man invents a machine which projects writing on
the sky together with a booming voice, but the locals feel it is divine
intervention.”]

AT THE BLACK DOG (PROGRAMME FOR THE FORCES)

[Friday—12:30-1:00 PM]

May 3, 1940

[ASHLEY: “Blackwood spoke for six minutes on his experiences in
Canada.”]

(HOME SERVICE)

[Friday—11:00-11:15 PM]

September 6, 1940

“The Destruction of Smith”

[Thursday—11:15-11:25 PM]

September 19, 1940

“The Voice”

[ASHLEY: “broadcast instead of ‘Violence’ as announced”]

[Tuesday—6:45-7:05 PM]

December 24, 1940

“King’s Evidence”

(PROGRAMME FOR THE FORCES)

[Saturday—12:15-12:30 PM]

June 7, 1941

“By Water”

(HOME SERVICE)

[Monday—7:40-7:59 PM]

August 18, 1941

“The Chinese Picture”

(PROGRAMME FOR THE FORCES)

[Thursday—7:15-7:30 PM]

October 23, 1941

“Violence”

[ASHLEY: “England (London club): non-fantasy, subjective study of
insanity.”]

(HOME SERVICE)

[Saturday—7:45-8:00 PM]

August 15, 1942

“Violence”

[Sunday—10:13-10:32 PM]

December 13, 1942

“The Magic Mirror”

[ASHLEY] “France (Monte Carlo): a gambler is given a mirror which
reveals the winning numbers at roulette.

THE WEDNESDAY STORY (HOME SERVICE)

[Wednesday—10:15-10:30 PM]

October 25, 1944

“The Castlebridge Cat”

[ASHLEY: “Original story for radio. England: a traveling salesman
returns to a town where six months earlier he had murdered a
blackmailer, only to find himself betrayed by the victim’s cat.”]

LATE NIGHT SPECIAL (HOME SERVICE)

[Sunday—11:08-11:24 PM]

April 1, 1945

“Transition”

AT THE BOWLER HAT (LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Tuesday—5:30-6:00 PM]

October 16, 1945

[ASHLEY: “Blackwood told how he became an author, his experiences as a New York reporter and his meeting with Angus Hamilton. He then tells a brief ghost story about two pranksters who dress up as ghosts to scare a third man. The third dies of heart failure and the two pranksters suddenly realize there are three of them.”]

FIVE MEN (HOME SERVICE)

[Tuesday—11:03-11:30 PM]

December 25, 1945

“The Curate and the Stockbroker”

[EXTANT RECORDING]

[ASHLEY: “A one-off Christmas special of five men gathered together to tell ‘true tales of high adventure.’ Others present were Michael Graham, Anthony Irwin, Charles Lambe and Peter Scott... Pre-recorded December 19, 1945. Blackwood told the fifth story of ‘The Curate and the Stockbroker.’”]

THE WORLD GOES BY (HOME SERVICE)

[Sunday—4:30-5:00 PM]

April 7, 1946

“The Russian Dentist”

[ASHLEY: “Italy: Blackwood relates an experience when, with toothache, he visited a Russian dentist in Naples who gave him an inexplicable and unorthodox treatment. Pre-recorded March 28, 1946.”]

STORIES OLD AND NEW (HOME SERVICE)

[Monday—4:45-5:00 PM]

May 6, 1946

“Lock Your Door”

[ASHLEY: “Original story for radio. England: after a railway accident an old lady is directed to a desolate house for the night. A voice warns her to lock her door which she does just in time to stop someone entering. She later learns the house is haunted.”]

THE WORLD AND HIS WIFE (LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Monday—6:30-7:00 PM]

September 9, 1946

“Reminiscences as a Crime Reporter”

STORIES OLD AND NEW (HOME SERVICE)

[Monday—4:45-5:00 PM]

October 28, 1946

“Lock Your Door”

THE WORLD AND HIS WIFE (LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Monday—6:15-6:45 PM]

October 28, 1946

“A Queer Story”

[ASHLEY: “Blackwood told ‘A Queer Story’ which he later re-told as ‘A Texas Farm Disappearance’.”]

(THIRD PROGRAMME)

[Tuesday—9:55-10:23 PM]

September 23, 1947

“The Woman’s Ghost Story”

[EXTANT RECORDING]

[ASHLEY: “Pre-recorded August 18, 1947. Originally planned [and announced] for transmission on August 18, 1947, but postponed.”]

(HOME SERVICE)

[Wednesday—6:45-7:00 PM]

October 29, 1947

“The Fear of Heights”

[ASHLEY: "Blackwood relates some personal experiences related to the fear of heights or the total lack of it."]

PERSONNEL: Basil Taylor (producer).

HALLOWE'EN (BBC-TV)

October 31, 1947 **"The Curate and the Stockbroker"**

ASHLEY: "The success of this broadcast led to a regular Saturday Night Story spot."

(THIRD PROGRAMME)

[Wednesday—7:00-7:15 PM]

December 3, 1947

"The Fear of Heights"

[EXTANT RECORDING]

[ASHLEY: "The second broadcast was recorded" [i.e. this one]]

[The recording was re-broadcast on December 30 (Home Service), February 11, 1948 (Trans-Canada, CBC Wednesday Night), July 27, 1950 (Pacific Service, Famous Writers), and September 20, 1950 (Home Service).]

(FAR EASTERN SERVICE)

[Thursday—11:55 AM-12:05 PM]

December 25, 1947

"The Spirit of Christmas"

Blackwood reminisces about Christmases past and then discusses what the holiday is like now in the years following the war. Ashley notes that this talk was recorded beforehand, on December 16, 1947. **[OG]**

(THIRD PROGRAMME)

[Thursday—10:37-11:00 PM]

December 25, 1947

"The Chinese Picture"

[The *Times* announced that the story would be "With Intent to Steal," described [ASHLEY] as "black magic, the disembodied spirit of a dead magician seeks a new body." "The Chinese Picture" noted [ASHLEY] as "pre-recorded December 22, 1947" and broadcast on 12/25/47 (Third), 1/9/48 (West Indies Service), and seven times between 1/29/48 and 1/31/48 (General Overseas Service).]

SATURDAY NIGHT STORY (BBC-TV)

January 24, 1948 **"The Mirror"**

BOOKS AND AUTHORS (LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Saturday—2:00-2:30 PM]

January 31, 1948

"Gooseflesh"

[ASHLEY: "Pre-recorded January 20, 1948... An extensive interview with Blackwood on the subject of 'Gooseflesh.' Blackwood tells what makes him shiver, what makes stories frightening, and of his own feelings when writing 'The Wendigo'."]

PERSONNEL: Arthur Calder-Marshall (host, interviewer).

(HOME SERVICE)

[Wednesday—10:00-10:45 PM]

March 3, 1948

"The Genesis of Ideas" / "The Destruction of Smith"

[EXTANT RECORDING]

["...a talk by Algernon Blackwood, followed by one of his stories..."]

[ASHLEY: "Blackwood looks in general at the origin of ideas for stories, and then specifically in relation to "By Water" and *The Centaur*."

[**NOTE:** The Radio 4 program *Reece Shearsmith's Haunted House* (broadcast on October 29, 2009) played a very brief excerpt of "The Destruction of Smith" from this recording.]

SATURDAY NIGHT STORY (BBC-TV)

March 6, 1948

"The Chinese Picture"

March 27, 1948

"Lock the Door"

STUMP THE STORY-TELLERS (LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Thursday—10:15-10:35 PM]

April 15, 1948

[ASHLEY: “A panel programme in which famous authors are challenged to improvise a story along given lines in a set time. Each author is given a sealed box containing four objects. The author must open the box and then has four minutes in which to tell a story in which all four objects play a part. Blackwood appeared in the first programme of the first series and the third programme of the second series. No recording or transcription of his stories survive.”]

PERSONNEL: Ronald Waldman (host).

ALGERNON BLACKWOOD TELLS A STRANGE STORY (LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Monday—11:15-11:20 PM]

May 10, 1948

“Texas Farm Disappearance”

[EXTANT RECORDING]

[ASHLEY: “Blackwood tells of a boy on a farm in Texas who went to fetch water from a well and was never seen again.”]

[According to Ashley, all of the *Strange Story* segments were pre-recorded on May 7.]

PERSONNEL: Basil Taylor (producer). [Taylor also produced May 11-14.]

[Tuesday—11:00-11:05 PM]

May 11, 1948

“The Holy Man”

[ASHLEY: “An anecdote as witnessed by an English official. An old Indian Holy Man pulls the dead body of a young man from a river. Within minutes the young man rises and left behind is the cast off body of the old man. Earlier related as ‘Yogi’ in the ‘Queer Stories’ sequence.”]

[Wednesday—11:15-11:22 PM]

May 12, 1948

“Pistol Against a Ghost”

[EXTANT RECORDING]

[ASHLEY: “Three men spend a night in a haunted house in Norfolk, one armed with a pistol, and the others play a trick on him. Earlier related as ‘Blank Cartridges’.”]

[Thursday—11:15-11:20 PM]

May 13, 1948

“Japanese Literary Cocktail”

[EXTANT RECORDING]

[ASHLEY: “A fictional anecdote of a painter, a foreigner in Japan, looking for an ideal subject, who meets a creature with no face.”]

[Friday—11:00-11:07 PM]

May 14, 1948

“The Curate and the Stockbroker”

[EXTANT RECORDING]

SATURDAY NIGHT STORY (BBC-TV)

May 15, 1948 “Confession”

NEW BOOKS AND OLD (LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Saturday—2:00-2:30 PM]

June 5, 1948

[ASHLEY: “A series in which invited guests discuss a new book and an old book (still in print) of their choice... Blackwood reviewed *The Fairy Tradition in Britain* by Lewis Spence and *Confessions of an Opium-Eater* by Thomas de Quincey.”]

IT'S GOOD ENGLISH (FAR EASTERN SERVICE)

[Tuesday—12:55-1:10 PM]

June 8, 1948

“The Confessions of an Opium-Eater”

[ASHLEY: “Pre-recorded May 11, 1948... Blackwood selects *The Confessions of an Opium-Eater* by Thomas de Quincey as the book he recommends as good English and a classic of literature.”]

[Presumably Blackwood’s text was at least partially drawn from the talk

he had given three days earlier on *New Books and Old*.]
PERSONNEL: Rex Moorfoot (producer).

ALGERNON BLACKWOOD TELLS A STRANGE STORY (GENERAL OVERSEAS SERVICE)

[Sunday—9:10-9:15 PM]

June 13, 1948

[Tuesday—4:20-4:30 PM]

June 15, 1948

SATURDAY NIGHT STORY (BBC-TV)

June 26, 1948

July 17, 1948

August 21, 1948

(HOME SERVICE)

[Tuesday—8:15-8:29 PM]

August 31, 1948

“Oddities”

[ASHLEY: “Blackwood related four inexplicable personal experiences.”]

LONDON WEST CENTRAL (LONDON CALLING EUROPE)

[Saturday—7:00-7:30 PM]

October 30, 1948

[ASHLEY: “Eric Stenton spoke on Halloween and then introduced a ghost story written and read by Blackwood. No copy of the script survives or details of the story told.”]

SATURDAY NIGHT STORY (BBC-TV)

November 6, 1948

SPEAK FOR YOURSELVES (LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Sunday—2:30-2:56 PM]

November 14, 1948

[ASHLEY: “A series of unscripted discussion programmes for young people with an invited guest, recorded in different towns about Britain... #5 in the series, in Swansea. Pre-recorded November 9, 1948 after a preliminary meeting on October 19. Chairman Douglas Allan and Blackwood discussed three topics with the young people, ‘What is adventure?’, ‘Are possessions necessary?’ and ‘Have we lost the spirit of adventure?’ Blackwood did not have it all his own way in the ensuing discussion with the youngsters challenging him on his way of life.”]

THE STORY-TELLER’S CLUB (HOME SERVICE)

[Tuesday—9:15-9:45 PM]

December 21, 1948

[ASHLEY: “Blackwood served as President (i.e. Chairman) and the panel discussed stories for Christmas... No recording or transcript survives.”]

CALLING THE ISLANDS (PACIFIC SERVICE—RED NETWORK)

[Wednesday—6:15-6:30 AM]

December 22, 1948

“Some Eerie Stories”

[recorded 11/29/48]

[ASHLEY: “Pre-recorded November 29, 1948. Blackwood told ‘Some Eerie Stories’ but no recording or script survives or details of the stories told.”]

FLASH OF BELLS (FAR EASTERN SERVICE)

[Saturday—12:00 NOON-12:12 PM]

December 25, 1948

“The Spirit of Christmas”

[ASHLEY: "Pre-recorded December 2, 1948."]

(THIRD PROGRAMME)

[Saturday—6:48-7:05 PM]

December 25, 1948

"Little People and Co."

[ASHLEY: "Blackwood's belief in fairies and the little people... Pre-recorded December 20, 1948."]

MID-MORNING STORY (LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Monday—11:15-11:30 AM]

January 3, 1949

"A Dangerous Gift"

[ASHLEY: "Adapted by the author from 'A Suspicious Gift'."]

PERSONNEL: Basil Taylor (producer).

SATURDAY NIGHT STORY (BBC-TV)

January 8, 1949 **"No Moss"**

(EASTERN SERVICE)

[Friday—2:30-2:45 PM]

March 11, 1949

"A Dangerous Gift"

PICTURE PAGE (BBC-TV)

March 16, 1949

[ASHLEY: "On his eightieth birthday Blackwood was interviewed for five minutes by Leslie Mitchell on his receipt of the Television Society Award as the year's most Outstanding Personality."]

SATURDAY NIGHT PAGE (BBC-TV)

April 2, 1949 **"The Reformation of St. Jules"**

NEW BOOKS AND OLD (LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Saturday—2:00-2:30 PM]

April 9, 1949

[ASHLEY: "Blackwood reviewed *Haunted Britain* by Elliott O'Donnell and *The Varieties of Religious Experience* by William James."]

SATURDAY NIGHT STORY (BBC-TV)

May 7, 1949

"Earrings"

May 28, 1949

"Accessory before the Fact"

WOMAN'S HOUR (LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Monday—2:01-3:00 PM]

May 30, 1949

"Is Monday Black and the Rest of the Week Uphill?"

[ASHLEY: "Blackwood relates a chat with a window-cleaner about imagining the days of the week pictorially and allocating them colors."]

PERSONNEL: Marguerite Scott (producer).

STUMP THE STORY-TELLERS (LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Thursday—10:15-10:35 PM]

June 23, 1949

[ASHLEY: "Additional requirement that the story be set in North Africa."]

PERSONNEL: Franklin Engelmann (host).

SATURDAY NIGHT STORY (BBC-TV)

June 25, 1949

"Max Hensig"

(HOME SERVICE)

[Wednesday 10:00-10:20 PM]

July 13, 1949

"Two Holidays"

[ASHLEY: "Blackwood recalls his two trips down the Danube providing the inspiration for 'The Willows', and a holiday on a Swedish island which inspired 'The Camp of the Dog'."]

WOMAN'S HOUR (LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Monday—2:00-3:00 PM]

August 29, 1949

"The Little Puzzles"

[ASHLEY: "Blackwood considers a few minor puzzles, such as why, when getting a smut out of your eye, you also always open your mouth."]

PERSONNEL: Marguerite Scott (producer).

<u>SATURDAY NIGHT STORY (BBC-TV)</u>

September 3, 1949

(THIRD PROGRAMME)

[Thursday—8:39-8:50 PM]

September 8, 1949

"Minor Memories"

[ASHLEY: Early memories of childhood, Canadian experiences and how he became a writer."]

PERSONNEL: Julian Hall (producer).

(HOME SERVICE)

[Sunday—9:20-9:35 PM]

September 25, 1949

"On Being Eighty"

[EXTANT RECORDING]

[ASHLEY: "Blackwood reflects on four 'torches' that were his motivators in early life: to be a violinist, a mountaineer, a poet and a holy man."]

PERSONNEL: Eileen Maloney (producer).

<u>SATURDAY NIGHT STORY (BBC-TV)</u>

October 22, 1949

I SPEAK FOR MYSELF (FAR EASTERN SERVICE)

[Saturday—12:13-12:23 PM]

December 3, 1949

[ASHLEY: "Blackwood's early experiences and how he became a writer... Pre-recorded October 27, 1949."]

PERSONNEL: Laurence Staple (producer).

MORNING STORY (LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Tuesday—11:45 PM-12:00 NOON]

November 22, 1949

"Two of a Kind"

(GENERAL OVERSEAS SERVICE)

[EXTANT RECORDING]

[Wednesday—2:00-2:24 AM]

December 21, 1949

"The Occupant of the Room"

[ASHLEY: "Pre-recorded December 14, 1949... Hotel room haunted by the mood of a suicide."]

PERSONNEL: Prudence Smith (producer).

ALGERNON BLACKWOOD READS HIS STORY (HOME SERVICE)

[Sunday—8:30-8:55 PM]

December 25, 1949

"The Occupant of the Room"

ALGERNON BLACKWOOD (HOME SERVICE)

[Thursday—3:05-3:30 PM]

December 29, 1949

"The Occupant of the Room"

THE STORYTELLER (HOME SERVICE)

[Tuesday—6:15-6:30 AM]

February 14, 1950

“Two of a Kind”

[Ashley says 2/14/50 Pacific Service and 2/15/50 General Overseas Service]

SATURDAY NIGHT STORY (BBC-TV)

February 25, 1950

(HOME SERVICE)

[Saturday—7:45-59 PM]

June 10, 1950

“Spiders and Such”

(AKA “Along Came a Spider,” “Algernon Blackwood on Spiders.”)

[ASHLEY: Blackwood describes his fear of spiders together with some particular experiences.”]

PERSONNEL: Eileen Maloney (producer).

SATURDAY NIGHT STORY (BBC-TV)

June 17, 1950 **“By Water”**

WOMAN’S HOUR (LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Tuesday—2:00-3:00 PM]

September 12, 1950

“The Human Touch”

[ASHLEY: “Blackwood tells some of the secrets and some of the pitfalls behind his successful unscripted live television broadcasts.”]

SATURDAY NIGHT STORY (BBC-TV)

September 30, 1950 **“Jewel Thieves at Albert Hall”**

HALLOWE’EN (BBC-TV)

October 30, 1950

[ASHLEY: “Due to Blackwood’s frailty the programme was pre-recorded on October 26th.”]

SUMMER LIGHTNING (LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Sunday—6:30-7:00 PM]

May 6, 1951

“The Human Touch” [excerpt]

[ASHLEY: “1 minute 7 second extract only.”]

TELLER OF TALES (LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Monday—9:45-10:00 PM]

July 2, 1951

“The Destruction of Smith”

THIS IS BRITAIN (PACIFIC SERVICE)

[????]

Circa 1951

[ASHLEY: “Blackwood recorded his contribution on June 25, 1951 but it has not been possible to determine whether it was ever broadcast.”]

(BBC-TV)

October 13, 1951 **“How I Became Interested in Ghosts”**

[ASHLEY: “Blackwood tells of his father’s interest in ghost stories and of his own first investigation of a haunted house. The programme was pre-recorded and the film survives in the BBC film archives.”]

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[OG-NOTE: For any readers who have a special interest in the life and work of Blackwood, the two Mike Ashley volumes are an indispensable part of one's library. They are the be-all and end-all of Blackwood scholarship. The Ashley-edited collection *The Magic Mirror* is also a must-have item, as it contains a number of rare tales and anecdotes that Blackwood utilized in his radio talks, including "The Blackmailers," "The Wig," "King's Evidence," "Lock Your Door," "The Texas Farm Disappearance," "The Holy Man," "Pistol Against a Ghost," "Japanese Literary Cocktail," "The Curate and the Stockbroker," "By Proxy," "The Voice," and the title story.]

[GALLERY]



Algernon Blackwood Blackwood, BBC TV, 1936 Blackwood, BBC TV, 1949

ALGERNON BLACKWOOD [STORIES]

[SHORT-STORIES]

Blackwood's early fiction collection centering around a physician who is also a kind of occult detective...

[Preterite] "The late Sheila Hodgson was a noted author and playwright who wrote extensively for BBC Radio. Of particular interest to genre fans is her series of audio dramas, inspired by M.R. James' fragmentary *Stories I Have Tried to Write*, which feature James himself as protagonist.

"Much less known is her series featuring Algernon Blackwood's supernatural detective, John Silence. I don't know how many of these were produced, and the usual references don't have much info. *Camp of the Dog* is the only audio drama I could find with the same title as one of the original John Silence tales. To further complicate things, the other play I have is based on a Blackwood story which originally had nothing to do with the "physician extraordinary". If anyone could pass along information on other John Silence dramas by Hodgson, I'd be most grateful.

"John Silence would bristle at being labeled an occult detective. He referred to himself as a "psychic doctor", one who tended to the ailments of the spirit instead of that of the flesh. Silence hated the word "occult", and considered what we call the supernatural to be merely an extension of the so-called natural universe. All manner of bogies, from werewolves to ghosts, are merely manifestations of a spiritual illness in Silence's worldview.

"In Hodgson's plays, Silence isn't the hero as much as an observer, an expository character who explains what is happening and why. This is in keeping with the original short stories by Blackwood, in which the "psychic doctor" was involved to various degrees, sometimes as protagonist, sometimes simply as a sympathetic audience to another's tale (as is the case in *Ancient Sorceries*, which was produced as a four-part reading by BBC7). Still, these dramas are spooky fun, and should be of interest to any fan of Hodgson's other works."

[*The Independent*, March 22, 2002—"Sheila Hodgson" Jack Adrian] "Ruth Sheila Hodgson, scriptwriter and dramatist: born Beckenham, Kent 22 December 1921; married 1971 David

Middleton; died South Newton, Wiltshire 25 December 2001.

"Sheila Hodgson was a prolific writer of radio and television dramas at a time, the 1950s to the 1980s, when actually making a living out of such an occupation was rare. She was a pioneer who contributed greatly to the entertainment of the nation... But her most lasting fame came late in life and in a wholly unexpected manner, when she turned her considerable talents to the supernatural.

"In the realm of the wireless she was a purveyor of light fictions: thrillers, tales of adventure, detective stories. On occasion a superior piece of psychological suspense would pass through her typewriter – *This Line is Now Closed* (1978), for example, a chilling old-lady-in-peril tale which was written expressly for the distinguished, and elderly, radio actress Grizelda Hervey (generally agreed by most critics to have had the best, most terror-filled shriek in the business). But in the main Hodgson aimed to quicken the pulse in as diverting a manner as possible, as in *The Long Drive Home* (1967; directed by the legendary Betty Davies), which featured a clever murder plot set in the world of golf-bores with a cast (Timothy West, William Fox, Peter Howell, the inimitable Rolf Lefebvre) you could only have afforded on the radio.

"Towards the end of her own career Hodgson became fascinated by the supernatural, successfully adapting for radio's Midweek Theatre (a showcase series which featured the early work of writers such as Andrew Davies, R.D. Wingfield, Frederic Raphael and N.J. Crisp) several of Algernon Blackwood's "Dr John Silence: psychic detective" stories, with the sinister-voiced Malcolm Hayes in the title role."

[CHRONOLOGY]

WE KNOW A STORY (WONS, HARTFORD)

[???day—10:00-10:15 PM]

September 19, 1948

"The Gypsy's Prophecy"

[EXTANT RECORDING]

[Could this be a re-titling of "By Water"?]

CAST: Sylvia Draper, Guy Hedlund.

(BBC EASTERN SERVICE—PERSIAN TRANSMISSION)

[Friday—4:54-5:12 PM]

April 27, 1951

"The Camp of the Dog"

PERSONNEL: H. M. Baiyuzi (translator, scriptwriter, producer).

CAST: Miss Ansari, H. Darabaghi, A Dehkan, I. Saviz, S. A. Taheri.

MIDWEEK THEATRE (RADIO 4)

[Wednesday—8:15-9:00 PM]

August 28, 1974

"The Camp of the Dog"

[Pre-recorded August 12, 1974... Repeat broadcast of recording on August 29, 1974 (*Afternoon Theatre*, Radio 4), October 16, 1975 (Radio 4), December 28, 1975 (*Radio Theatre*, World Service), March 18, 1976 (*Theatre 45*, SABC), and December 28, 1977 (*Afternoon Theatre*, Radio 4).]

PERSONNEL: Harry Catlin (producer), Sheila Hodgson (scriptwriter).

CAST: Timothy Bateson (Stephen Hubbard), Malcolm Hayes (John Silence), Jane Knowles (Joan Maloney), David March (Reverend Timothy Maloney), Joan Matheson (Mrs. Maloney), David Sinclair (Porter), Peter Whitman (Peter Sangree).

MIDWEEK THEATRE (RADIO 4)

[Wednesday—8:15-9:00 PM]

December 18, 1974

"The Nemesis of Fire"

[Pre-recorded December 12, 1974... Repeat broadcasts of recording on December 19, 1974 (*Afternoon Theatre*, Radio 4), June 13 and 17, 1976 (*Radio Theatre*, World Service), November 25, 1976 (*Theatre 45*, SABC), and June 21, 1981 (*Late Night Theatre*, SABC).]

PERSONNEL: Harry Catlin (producer), Sheila Hodgson (scriptwriter).

CAST: Jack Carr (Porter), Madeleine Cemm (Jane), David Ericsson (Cabby/Waiter), Grizelda Harvey (Ellen Wragge), Malcolm Hayes (John Silence), Fraser Kerr (Stephen

Hubbard), Denis McCarthy (Dr. Corbin), Hector Ross (Colonel Wragge).

MIDWEEK THEATRE (RADIO 4)

[Wednesday—8:15-9:00 PM]

March 19, 1975

“Secret Worship”

[Pre-recorded March 11, 1975... Repeat broadcasts of recording on March 20, 1975 (Afternoon Theatre, Radio 4), October 31, 1975 (Midweek Theatre, Radio 4), June 6, 1976 (Radio Theatre, World Service), August 5, 1976 (Theatre 45, SABC), and October 13, 1980 (Springbok Radio).

PERSONNEL: Harry Catlin (producer), Sheila Hodgson (scriptwriter).

CAST: John Bull (Man in Post Office), Alan Dudley (Bruder Pagel), Roger Gartland (Porter), Malcolm Hayes (John Silence), Fraser Kerr (Stephen Hubbard), Denis McCarthy (Bruder Kalkman), Sion Probert (Priest), Michael Shannon (Cabby), Peter Whitman (Waiter), Michael Wolf (Landlord).

AFTERNOON THEATRE (RADIO 4)

[Thursday—3:05-3:50 PM]

October 2, 1975

“The Empty Sleeve”

[Research: was this a John Silence story, or was the character added by the radio adapter (Sheila Hodgson)? ASHLEY: England (London): transmogrification; the Gilmer brothers collect violins, one of which is craved for by Hyman whose spirit, in the form of a cat, attempts to steal it.”

PERSONNEL: Harry Catlin (producer), Sheila Hodgson (scriptwriter).

CAST: Alan Dudley (William Gilmer), Garard Green (Porter), Malcolm Hayes (John Silence), Haydn Jones (Arthur Gilmer), Fraser Kerr (Stephen Hubbard), Hector Ross (Cabby/Theatre Manager), Peter Woodthorpe (Isadore Hyman).

BOOK AT BEDTIME—“ALGERNON BLACKWOOD GHOST STORIES” (RADIO 4, LONDON)

[Monday-Friday—

July 31, 2006

“The Willows”

[“...Two travelers camped in the wilderness encounter malevolent forces beyond their understanding...”]

PERSONNEL: Clive Brill (director), Fiona McAlpine (abridger), Hugh Ross (reader).

August 1, 2006

“The Empty House”

[“...An aunt and her nephew attempt to spend the night in a haunted house...”]

August 2, 2006

“Ancient Sorceries”

[“...An Englishman staying in a sleepy French town makes a terrifying discovery...”]

August 3, 2006

“Smith: An Episode in a Lodging House”

[“...When his fellow lodger comes to borrow a book, a student is caught up in powerful rituals...”]

August 4, 2006

“The Glamour of the Snow”

[“A tourist at a mountain ski resort becomes captivated by a mysterious young woman...”]

ALIENS IN THE MIND

[RADIO-SERIAL]

Although this is really a science-fiction series (and with a misleading title to boot), it cries out to be mentioned in these pages if only for the fact of it being the only radio pairing (apart from an episode of *The Price of Fear*) of those two legends of horror cinema, Vincent Price and Peter Cushing.

“*Aliens in the Mind* wasn’t created as a vehicle for these two horror giants—it was originally written as an episode of Dr. Who called *Aliens in the Blood* and took place far in the future rather

than in modern times. Robert Holmes, *Alien's* writer, had the Doctor pitted against 'Mark II' humans who protested the placement of the Outer Space Commission of Control offices on their native island by wrecking spacecraft with Uber-ESP. When this idea was rejected, the script was rewritten with the help of Rene Basilico..."

"Holmes submitted this idea on October 22, 1968, shortly after completing work on *The Krotons*. Script editor Terrance Dicks was wary of the proposal, feeling that OSCOC bore similarities to the eponymous facility in *The Wheel in Space*... 'The Aliens in the Blood' was rejected soon thereafter. Years later, however, Holmes was commissioned to write an amended version of the serial—now set in present-day Chile and with the Doctor and his companions replaced by Dr. John Cornelius and Prof. Curtis Lark—for BBC Radio 4. Cowritten with Rene Basilico, it was transmitted in six weekly episodes as *Aliens in the Mind* from January 2, 1977."

ORIGINATION: Radio 4, London (BBC).

DURATION: January 2-February 6, 1977.

PERSONNEL: Rene Basilico (scriptwriter), John Dyre (producer), Robert Holmes (scriptwriter), Chris Jenkins (effects).

CAST: Joan Benom, Fraser Carr, Sandra Clark, Peter Cushing, Shirley Dickson, William Eagle, Michael Harver, Richard Herndle, Joan Matheson, Clifford Norgate, Vincent Price, Andrew Spear, Henry Stamfer, James Thomlinson, Steve Titus, Irene Tucklef.

[CHRONOLOGY]

ALIENS IN THE MIND (RADIO 4, LONDON)

[Sunday—7:02-7:30 PM]

January 2, 1977	[1] " Island Genesis "
January 9, 1977	[2] " Hurried Exodus " ["...Cornelius and Lark try to get Flora off the island of mutants..."]
January 16, 1977	[3] " Unexpected Visitations " ["...Curtis and Lock get more than they bargained for back in London..."]
January 23, 1977	[4] " Official Intercession " ["...How far will certain parties go to conceal Flora's presence?..."]
January 30, 1977	[5] " Genetic Revelation " ["...A colony of mutants exists in the heart of London but the only person with powers to help in the crisis is murdered..."]
February 6, 1977	[6] " Final Tribulation " ["...An MP finds out that he is a mutant being manipulated by an unidentified Controller..."]

[GALLERY]



Peter Cushing & Vincent Price

ALL HALLOWS

[SHORT-STORY]

Story by Walter de la Mare...

[CHRONOLOGY]

THE BLACK MASS (KPFA, BERKELEY)

[Saturday—11:35 PM-12:20 AM]

October 26, 1963

"All Hallows"

["...Not witchcraft, but fiction. Erik Bauersfeld, with technical assistance by John Whiting, reads Walter de la Mare's 'All Hallows,' an account of a cathedral possessed by demonic forces..."]

[Saturday—11:30 PM-12:00 MIDNIGHT]

February 29, 1964

"All Hallows"

ALL SOULS' NIGHT

[STAGE-PLAY]

1949 stage play by Joseph Tomelty...

"Truth to tell, *All Soul's Night* doesn't add up to more than the sum of its parts. In its third act, it goes in a "Twilight Zone" direction it doesn't quite warrant. And yet, this gives director McGlone a chance to deliver a perfectly rendered piece of staging.

[The Times, November 2, 1959] "...A *Shilling for the Evil Day* by Mr. Joseph Tomelty...story of an old woman's meanness and her son's ambition...the atmosphere of All Souls' Night, where the dead walk among the living...the shift of focus from life to after life near the end...ghostly visitation...dour old woman, living from disaster to disaster, saving her money more to commemorate the dead than to help the living, but with feeling for her dead son illuminating her for a brief moment..."

Tomelty worked extensively in radio at the Northern Ireland station, creating and writing umpteen episodes of *The McCooeys*. As a film actor he appeared in classics such as *Odd Man Out* (1949), *Moby Dick* (1956) and *A Night to Remember* (1958), as well as low-budget genre epics like *Devil Girl from Mars* (1954), *The Atomic Man* (1955), and *The Black Torment* (1964).

All Soul's Night was adapted in 1959 for the television series *Armchair Theatre* under the title "A Shilling for the Evil Day."

[Winnipeg Free Press] "Actor-director John Neville...last season, was appointed artistic director for Edmonton's Citadel Theatre... Somewhere in his hectic schedule, Mr. Neville found time to star in a 90-minute CBS radio version of All Souls' Night... The play was originally put on by the Ulster Group Theatre (which Mr. Tomelty helped found) in 1950, and later by Dublin's Abbey Theatre; it was also broadcast by the BBC."

[CHRONOLOGY]

(BBC HOME SERVICE)

[Monday—9:15-10:45 PM]

May 8, 1950

"All Souls' Night"

PERSONNEL: Mollie Greenhalgh (scriptwriter), James Mageean (producer), Havelock Nelson (music).

(NORTHERN IRELAND HOME SERVICE, BELFAST)

[Saturday—8:30-10:00 PM]

October 10, 1964

"All Souls Night"

["...This play is generally regarded as Joseph Tomelty's finest dramatic achievement. A tragedy of greed, it evokes with raw sensitivity the atmosphere of an impoverished Irish fishing village..." The recording of this broadcast was repeated on Radio 4 on November 15 and 17, 1969.]

PERSONNEL: Ronald Mason (producer).

CAST: Derek Bailey, Elizabeth Begley, J. G. Devlin, Katherine Feenan, Harold Goldblatt, John McBride, Maurice O'Callaghan.

EXTANT RECORDING

CBC TUESDAY NIGHT (CBC)

[Tuesday—

November 12, 1974

“All Souls’ Night”

[“...The setting for the play is the home of a County Down fishing family and reveals a social system and a way of life that survive to this day. In the play the eternal verities are illuminated in a conflict between a penny-pinching mother and a son who eventually sacrifices his life for a chance to buy a boat that would make safer and easier...”]

PERSONNEL: Fred Diehl (director).

CAST: John Neville, et al.

SATURDAY NIGHT THEATRE (RADIO 4, BELFAST)

[Saturday—

October 31, 1987

“All Souls Night”

CAST: Michael Duffy, Dan Gordon, Sheilla McGibbon.

[SOURCES]

“Irish Radio Drama.” *Winnipeg Free Press* (November 9, 1974).

PERIODICALS: *Radio Times*, *The Times* [London], *Winnipeg Free Press*.

ALL THE DARK CORNERS

[RADIO-SUBSERIES]

“The first in our chilling series of three plays that explore the darker side of life.”

THE AFTERNOON PLAY—“ALL THE DARK CORNERS” (RADIO 4, LONDON—BBC)

[Tuesday—2:15-3:00 PM]

October 18, 2011

“The Desk”

[**BBC RADIO 4:** “...Davis Finch is a hack TV writer with aspirations to write a novel. In order to be a real writer he feels he needs a proper desk. The one he buys changes his life and he becomes a success—but at what price?...”]

[**BBC RADIO 4:** “...Davis Finch covets a desk he has seen in an antique shop. He feels it will somehow magically help him write his novel. Make him complete. He gets sacked for his TV hack work and sets to write his novel at the new desk. Then he finds a secret drawer...”]

SCRIPT: Andrew Readman.

PERSONNEL: Gary Brown (producer, director).

CAST: Graeme Hawley (Davis Finch), Tim McInnemy (Harrison), Russell Richardson (Shopkeeper), Melissa Jane Sinden (Valerie), Karen West (Rachel), Greg Wood (Morris).

EXTANT RECORDING

[Wednesday—2:15-3:00 PM]

October 19, 2011

“Something in the Water”

[**BBC RADIO 4:** “...In Paul Cornell’s chilling horror, scientist James Woolmer moves to Standlake, famous for its lake monster. He is skeptical, until he sees something in the water...”]

SCRIPT: Paul Cornell.

EXTANT RECORDING

[Thursday—2:15-3:00 PM]

October 20, 2011

“The Dying Wish”

[**BBC RADIO 4:** “...When Fran and Abe are befriended by their elderly neighbour, Joy, they agree to perform an ancient ritual after she dies,

unaware of its terrifying consequences... A quest for eternal life and the living dead permeate this play—a chilling horror story...”]

[**BBC RADIO 4:** “...Fran and her partner Abe are befriended by a lonely old woman, Joy, who lives in the flat above. Joy persuades them to perform an ancient ritual after she’s died. They unwittingly agree without realising the terrifying consequences of their action. A quest for eternal life and the living dead permeate this chilling horror story...”]

SCRIPT: Rosemary Kay.

PERSONNEL: Pauline Harris (director).

CAST: Jonathan Keeble (Abe), Janice McKenzie (Joy), James Quin (Jack), Robert Pickavance (David), Sarah Smart (Fran).

EXTANT RECORDING

ALMOST HUMAN

[**SHORT-STORY**]

Originally published in 1943 in *Fantastic Adventures* under the byline of “Tarleton Fiske” (one of a dozen or so Robert Bloch pseudonyms), “Almost Human” represented Bloch’s successful melding of science-fiction and horror with a Frankenstein-motif. In 1949 he contributed an essay “Why I Selected ‘Almost Human,’ to the anthology *My Best Science Fiction Story*. “It is primarily a story of personality, human and non-human.”

A scientist builds a robot-- “Junior”-- capable of intelligence and consciousness, but the machine is stolen by a criminal who has other ideas for its uses. Junior, however, has plans of his own.

“With a strange cinema noir feel, a robot is controlled by a gangster who teaches the mighty machine evil. As is always expected, the gangster is himself a victim of the robot, after it learns a little about love and wants the gangster’s woman for itself. With direct reference to the Frankenstein Complex but with a neat and unique gangster overlay, this simple story may support less confident students studying the sub-genre of artificial intelligence.”

[**CHRONOLOGY**]

DIMENSION X (WNBC, NEW YORK)

[*Saturday—8:05-8:30 PM*]

May 13, 1950

“Almost Human”

PERSONNEL: George Lefferts (scriptwriter).

CAST: Jack Grimes, Rita Lynn, Santos Ortega, et al.

[**EXTANT RECORDING**]

X MINUS ONE (WRCA, NEW YORK)

[*Thursday—9:05-9:30 PM*]

August 11, 1955

“Almost Human”

[“...a robot created by a scientist but taken over by a gangster...”]

PERSONNEL: George Lefferts (scriptwriter).

CAST: Joan Allison, Lin Cook, Jack Grimes, Joseph Julian, Santos Ortega, Nat Pollen, Guy Repp.

[**EXTANT RECORDING**]

THE ALTAR OF HATE

[**RADIO-SCRIPT**]

Alonzo Deen Cole’s radio script borrows heavily from Balzac’s story “The Executioner,” but transposes the story from the Napoleonic campaigns in Spain to the French Revolution and imposes a supernatural denouement.

Cole himself maintained descent from an aristocratic family that was uprooted by the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror. This motif of revolutionary bloodshed and cruelty informs a number of his scripts, including “The Lady of the Guillotine” and “Physician to the Dead.”

[CHRONOLOGY]

THE WITCH'S TALE (WOR, NEW YORK)

[Wednesday—10:30-11:00 PM]

November 8, 1933

"The Altar"

PERSONNEL: Alonzo Deen Cole (scriptwriter, director).

THE WITCH'S TALE (KHJ, LOS ANGELES)

[Friday—9:30-10:00 PM]

October 11, 1935

"The Altar"

["...A story of the French Revolutionary period... In it you will be told about a son who was given his life but at the expense of becoming his parents' executioner."]

THE WITCH'S TALE (WOR, NEW YORK)

[Thursday—10:30-11:00 PM]

January 13, 1938

"The Altar of Hate"

THE WITCH'S TALE (MACQUARIE, SYDNEY)

Circa 1941

"The Altar of Hate"

[EXTANT RECORDING]

ALTER EGO

[RADIO-SCRIPT]

Arch Oboler's radio play of opposing personalities housed in one body achieved a prominence beyond its initial broadcast on *Lights Out* in 1936.

Interestingly—and perhaps indicative of the short shrift given radio by many entertainment historians—no Davis biography even mentions "Alter Ego"—except for Whitney Stine's *Mother Goddam*, which directly quotes the actress in acknowledging that she "received more acclaim publicly from two of [Oboler's] plays than from many of my films. One was titled *Alter Ego*...the other was *Beloved Friend*... [In *Alter Ego*] I played two characters—and with only the use of my voice this was a tremendous challenge."

The instant fame of the broadcast made it fair game for spoof, as Jack Haley did two weeks later.

Oboler was rather disingenuous about explaining the use of the script on his series in 1939.

[*Capital Times*, 6/18/39] "Arch Oboler, in five years on radio you have smashed idols and defied sacred taboos... You violated the rules and sinned in translating a thoroughly-documented scientific case history into vital human drama. The actress was Hollywood's inimitable Bette Davis and your radio vehicle was 'Alter Ego.' (This was chosen the prize radio play of 1938.)"

For the 1947 holiday season Benny released an commercial record album containing six of his best routines including "Schizophrenia," which was described in advertisements: "an adaptation of a radio drama by Arch Oboler called 'Alter Ego' splits Jack into two Bennys."

[*Time*, September 3, 1945] "Bewitched is a double-personality melodrama with double-medium antecedents. Directed by radio's Arch Oboler, who adapted it from his own 'best original air drama of 1938,' the picture both gains and loses by its crossbreeding... By giving the inner voice (and numerous subsidiary mental voices) unusual expressiveness, Arch Oboler has, at best, achieved cinema's first really effective use of internal monologue. At worst, he goes so far with the trick of building intensity through reiteration that it recalls Fred Allen's parody of Norman Corwin..."]

Variant titles: "Another World," "The Voice Within Me."

PERSONNEL: Bill Bacher (producer—1938, *Texaco Star Theater*), David Broekman (music—1938, *Texaco Star Theater*), Arch Oboler (scriptwriter—1936, *Lights Out*; scriptwriter, director—1939, *Arch Oboler's Plays*; producer—1941, *Bundles for Britain*), Max Reinhardt (director—1938, *Texaco Star Theater*).

CAST [1938, *Texaco Star Theater*]: Bette Davis, et al.

CAST [1939, *Arch Oboler's Plays*]: John Brown, Betty Garde, Frank Lovejoy, Gilbert Mack, Arnold Moss, Hester Sondergaard.

CAST [1945, *The Philco Radio Hall of Fame*]: Mercedes McCambridge, Ann Shepherd.

EXTANT RECORDINGS: "Alter Ego" [audition recording] (*Texaco Star Theater*, 9/28/38), "Alter Ego" (*Texaco Star Theater*, 10/5/38), "Alter Ego" (*Arch Oboler's Plays*, 7/29/39), "Alter Ego" (*The Philco Radio Hall of Fame*, 4/22/45).

[CHRONOLOGY]

LIGHTS OUT (WMAQ, CHICAGO)

[Wednesday—11:30 PM-12:00 MIDNIGHT]

November 18, 1936

“Alter Ego”

[“...A woman with a dual personality, whose lifelong struggle with the negative side in her character ends in defeat as she is led by a strong inner force to commit a horrible crime for which she is sentenced to be electrocuted, is the central character...”]

TEXACO STAR THEATER (KNX, HOLLYWOOD)

[Wednesday—

October 5, 1938

“Alter Ego”

[EXTANT RECORDING]

[“Featured in the sketch with Miss Davis will be Adolphe Menjou, regular emcee of the program, and members of the Max Reinhardt Workshop...”]

THE WONDER SHOW (

[

October 2?, 1938

“Alter Ego” spoof]

[EXTANT RECORDING]

ARCH OBOLER’S PLAYS (WEAF, NEW YORK)

[???day—9:30-10:00 PM]

July 29, 1939

“Alter Ego”

[EXTANT RECORDING]

BUNDLES FOR BRITAIN (KECA, LOS ANGELES)

[Wednesday—

January 1, 1941

“Schizophrenia”

“A group of Hollywood’s leading actors, actresses, comedians and singers will combine their talents in a special New Year’s Day broadcast on NBC to present a full hour of fun and nonsense on behalf of the Bundles for Britain committee. Arch Oboler, leading radio script writer and producer, will write and produce Wednesday’s broadcast... Jack Benny will present his interpretation of Bette Davis’ version of Oboler’s version of ‘Alter Ego.’ Miss Davis will be on hand to introduce Benny to the radio audience...”]

INNER SANCTUM MYSTERIES (WJZ, NEW YORK)

[Sunday—8:30-9:00 PM]

May 9, 1943

“One Must Die”

[“...jarring tale of a girl with a schizophrenic personality who is torn between the forces of good and evil as a result of her psychosis... Anne Seymour stars as the girl’s better nature with Lesley Woods as the evil personality...”]

THE PHILCO RADIO HALL OF FAME (WJZ, NEW YORK)

[

April 22, 1945

“Alter Ego”

[EXTANT RECORDING]

[SOURCES]

Stine, Whitney. *Mother Goddam*.

[GALLERY]



Bette Davis

THE ALTERER

[RADIO-SCRIPT]

Two unlikely cops DI Bob Boxer and DC Shona Doberman probe an academics killing spree. Comedy police drama with Finlay Welsh.

2009

The cops probe a link between the deaths in Glasgow and murders in an idyllic village. Stars Finlay Welsh and Anita Vettesse.

Comedy police drama by Alastair Jessiman

FINLAY WELSH stars as D.I. Boxer in BOXER AND DOBERMAN for BBC Radio 7. He recorded TEA AND SYMMETRY for BBC Radio.

All four episodes of the full-cast BBC Radio 4 comedy police drama written by Alastair Jessiman, originally broadcast in March 2009.

A gloriously gritty Scottish police series featuring the duo of the grizzled Detective Inspector Bob Boxer and his slightly less grizzled sidekick Detective Constable Shona Doberman. Join them in these four episodes as they probe an academic killing spree, investigate a link between the deaths in Glasgow and murders in an idyllic village, have their deepest childhood fears exploited by a sadistic adversary and scrutinise a series of celebrity deaths. Taggart eat your heart out.

Finlay Welsh also starred in The Voyage of the Demeter.

d on 31 March 2009

Show Details

Venue:

[Traverse Theatre](#)

Company:

Traverse Theatre and Òran Mór

Production:

Robert Forrest (scriptwriter), Finlay Welsh (idea for the play), Gavin Harding (Production Manager), Douglas Irvine (Director), Claire Elliott, Renny Robertson, Sarah Scarlett, Mark Sodergren, Andrew Steel (Production (Traverse)), Patrick and Rita McGurn (design), Susannah Armitage (Trainee Producer Òran Mór), David MacLennan (Producer Òran Mór)

Performers:

Finlay Welsh (Walt/Dylan)

Running time:

45mins

David Walters was a man who had everything. He was beloved by his mother, had brains and looks and got the girl, Bella of Belle Isle.

We meet him seated on a park bench surrounded by dead leaves and with the sound of birdsong in the background at what turns out to be the end of his life.

The character's monologue of poetic recitation and reflection, punctuated throughout with him popping pills and washing them down with 'a drop of gold' from his hip flask, becomes a dialogue with what he believes to be the ghost of Dylan Thomas.

Walt, as he came to be known, was a Maths teacher with a love of words, not just the sound of them, but the very shape of them. Now blind, widowed and an alcoholic, he describes his loss of sight as "absence not darkness."

Maybe that's why his psyche has created what he describes as a very material ghost; one he can hear, sense and smell and describes as a "boozy phantom" with whom he is sharing a nightmare?

It is an adult version of the child's imaginary friend who gets blamed for all the naughty things the child does. In Walt's case, it gets as bad as nearly setting the kitchen on fire while making a big fry up. This poetic alter ego turns out to be a guardian angel who oversees Walt's "good death" as he "meets" again his own beloved Bella's "hazel of a gaze".

Finlay Welsh is an actor of wide experience and this was a moving and accomplished performance from him.

AFTERNOON PLAY (RADIO 4, LONDON—BBC)

[Tuesday—2:15-3:00 PM]

November 8, 2011

“The Alterer”

[BBC RADIO 4: “...Atmospheric drama set on the east coast of Scotland in 1791. A watchmaker pours all of his skill and knowledge into making a machine that will alter time and create a different universe; one in which he hopes his desperately ill daughter will be returned to him, fully recovered...”]

SCRIPT: Finlay Welsh.

PERSONNEL: Kirsteen Cameron (producer).

CAST: Liam Brennan (Buchan), Finn den Hertog (William), Pauline Knowles (Mary), Cal MacAninch (Smith).

EXTANT RECORDING

THE AMBER GOD

[RADIO-SERIAL]

Radio serial written by William Clifford...

[CHRONOLOGY]

THE AMBER GOD (KYA, SAN FRANCISCO)

[Tuesday—9:30-10:00 PM]

September 2, 1930	[EP. 1] [“...Dudley Ayers Players...”]
September 9, 1930	No listing
September 16, 1930	No listing
September 23, 1930	[EP.]
September 30, 1930	[EP.]
October 7, 1930	[EP.]
October 14, 1930	????

AMBROSE BIERCE [STORIES]

[SHORT-STORIES]

The misanthropic master of the war and horror story, Bierce was not really discovered by broadcasters until the 1940s.

[HAND] ““An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” first appeared in golden age radio on The Witch’s Tale in an adaptation by Alonzo Deen Cole entitled “The Deserter” (January 23, 1933; revived May 30, 1935). No recording of this adaptation exists, but fortunately several versions of the superb dramatization by the major radio writer-producer William N. Robson do. Robson’s adaptation – loyally entitled “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” – premiered on Escape (December 10, 1947, starring Harry Bartell) and was revived three times on Suspense (December 9, 1956, starring Victor Jory; December 15, 1957, starring Joseph Cotton; and July 19, 1959, starring Vincent Price). Although all three performances ostensibly used the same script, close scrutiny reveals a number of differences between the scripted text and each performance, a result of live broadcasts and the individual stamp given to the central role by actors as diverse but equally accomplished as Joseph Cotton and Vincent Price. Regardless of the peculiar nuances and differences between the various performances, the impact of Bierce’s tale is undiminished. Indeed, the bleak, ironic twist of Bierce’s most famous short story creates a paradigm in radio horror which is repeated, copied, or honored in countless other examples of the genre. The statement in the preamble to the Escape broadcast that “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” is “one of the great short stories in American literature” becomes, by the time it is revived and revised for Suspense, an assertion to the listener that the story is a “true classic,” the great exception in a literary world of short fiction in which “few are memorable, fewer still are classics.”

For one of the “true classics” of fiction, “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” is remarkable for its economy: Bierce’s short story is characterized by its concision (it is considerably less than 4000 words in length) and a quality of honed yet vivid description that is almost imagistic. Like an Imagist poet, Bierce believes in the efficacy of the “hard, clear image,” [4] yet can startlingly shift gear into a descriptive mode which could even be described as impressionistic; for example, “Objects were represented by their colors only; circular horizontal streaks of color.” [5] The economy of the story is not simply with regard to description; it is a simple tale with minimal exposition, its three short sections painting three detailed scenes or three dramatic episodes. The grotesque finale of the story is like a “punch line” to bitter Bierce’s hideous joke. The story reveals, as Cathy N. Davidson writes, “the fatal presumption that war can have a happy ending.” [6] The tale ingenuously exploits the reader’s naiveté in hoping for one. In hindsight, all the clues to the ending are there: the ages it takes Farquhar to awaken after falling into the water and his other deliriums; his impossibly microscopic visions and the fact that his run through the forest “seemed interminable” (312); the haunting “whispers in an unknown tongue” (312). The story is also an exploration of mortality in universal terms: the precision of Farquhar’s vision when he resurfaces from the creek may be mocking irony or it may be a revelation of the return to dust. In other words, the “audible music” (310) of spider’s legs and “the prismatic colors in all the dewdrops upon a million blades of grass” (310) signify that Farquhar is at one with creation. Similarly, with the benefit of hindsight, the story has a mythic connotation. The “Federal scout” (308) is a Grim Reaper, the bringer of death who ultimately visits everyone, while the river of life and escape is really the River Styx, the dizzying “vortex” (311) that represents Farquhar’s journey into oblivion.

Despite such mythic connotations, the fact that the story is set in a Civil War context lends the work, on first reading, the possibility of being real and even anecdotal – a tale of real life adventure and survival – although at the end of the story specific history crumbles and universal horror prevails.

William N. Robson's radio adaptation of Bierce's mythic story presents a highly complex narrative. The radio play broadly shares the same structure – indeed, in one of the broadcasts it is specifically described as having three acts. However, the first act adapts section I of the short story along with some of section III (the breaking of the noose and the beginnings of Farquhar's escape). This is because Robson's adaptation reworks Bierce's tale as a suspense thriller in what was a highly competitive market; radio drama needed to hook the listeners and ensure that they can resist the temptation to retune their radios. Therefore, the first few minutes (approximately four minutes) are highly dramatic and suspenseful: we need to know what will happen and, even if we are familiar with the original tale, we still need to know how the tale will be told. Another important technique employed by Robson is a shift in narrative point of view. We, the listeners, are often implicated: you are Peyton Farquhar; the bullet lodges under "your collar," not "his collar." At the same time, the action is framed – and occasionally interrupted – by an objective account and description of Farquhar. Occasionally, Farquhar becomes a first-person narrator. In the 1959 Suspense version, these moments are given heightened treatment with Vincent Price using a mechanical filter which distorts and distances his voice to emphasize that it is a moment of interior monologue, as well as lending it an uncanny quality. The adaptation also develops a significant amount of exposition and narrative embellishment. Frequently, this is achieved as an expansion on existing Bierce material. For example, the adaptation develops some of the short story into a highly lyrical and even philosophical mode. As Farquhar awaits his execution we hear his thoughts from the brink of death:

Who has come back from the dead to tell what dying is like? I don't recall any childhood memories now. The past does not engulf me in this naked moment. I am only aware of what's here, now: those Yankees lined up on the bank; the captain's tired eyes; that turkey buzzard circling up there, waiting for me . . .

Such material adds dimensions to Farquhar's character. Other expansions have a more expository function, simply making the story clearer and, for a performance in the genre of suspense, more gripping. There is, for instance, a major expansion of the retrospective section II in which the "gray-clad soldier" (307) arrives at the Farquhar plantation. The few, succinct lines of dialogue in the short story are embellished in Robson's adaptation to create a fuller dramatic scene with Farquhar, his wife and, as the adaptation has it, the "confederate corporal" underneath the "magnolia trees" on the plantation. This includes Civil War detail such as a discussion of the war and the corporal describing the Alabama regiment he belongs to (later in the play he is revealed to be a lieutenant in a Massachusetts regiment). The scene concludes with a clear set-up for Farquhar's entrapment, the corporal riding off on his horse after coaxing Farquhar into sabotage with the words "You couldn't do a greater service for your country." The substantial expansion of this scene in the process of adaptation creates a more dramatically gripping episode inasmuch as it develops the sense of conspiracy and covert sabotage in a style similar to the many adventure, espionage, and hardboiled crime dramas of the same period. A scene like this is designed to hold the listener's attention and awaken their curiosity, making one wonder "Will Farquhar see it through? What will go wrong?" and so on.

If the plantation scene is an example of the expansion of original Bierce material, some other scenes are complete additions. Robson adds a scene in which Farquhar is entrapped and summarily tried. This partly serves to reinforce the Civil War setting of the play but it also intensifies the drama, permitting Farquhar's desperate plea for his life in the presence of an officer who sentences the "southern patriot" Farquhar to death for his intended treason. This scene evokes pity for Farquhar (another strategy to hook the attention of the listener), yet the most important addition to the play is morally complex and is condemnatory of Farquhar – a decision which ultimately enables the listener to assuage the shock and horror of Farquhar's grim fate. When Farquhar clammers out of the water, he is assisted by a man on the riverbank fishing

for catfish. The man turns out to be Jethro, Farquhar's former slave. The narrator informs us that Farquhar – or rather “you” – sold Jethro knowing that he was dying of consumption. Farquhar is astonished that Jethro is still alive, but rather than being riddled with remorse, the increasingly unpleasant and egotistical Farquhar believes that Jethro will exact revenge. But Jethro is imbued with altruism and forgiveness, declaring, “I’m free! I’m free at last!” Farquhar’s inner narrative responds with contempt that Jethro has subscribed to Abraham Lincoln’s “traitorous emancipation proclamation.” The fact that the terminally ill Jethro is still alive is a clue to Farquhar’s genuine fate, but Robson promptly steers us away from any further suggestion of the supernatural when the dreaded “gray-clad soldier” returns on horseback looking for the fugitive Farquhar. Jethro helps Farquhar hide, after which the latter swiftly departs, interpreting Jethro’s drawn knife as a sign that “he’s gonna do you in himself” despite the former slave’s assertion that he is merely going to “slit up them catfish.”

The most successful plays in the genre of suspense radio are able to reach an unambiguous climax. The radio listener must be able to comprehend lucidly what is happening in the denouement of the play, no matter how ironic, fantastical, or downright implausible it may be. Robson’s play succeeds in doing this in an inexorable final section that builds from the narrator’s question “How long have you been running down this endless road?,” a line that serves as Robson’s equivalent to Bierce’s “interminable” forest. The listener is cast into absolute darkness which is either night or “blood bursting into your congested eyeballs.” However, a burst of lightning (accompanied by the classic and ever-popular radio sound effect of thunder) reveals a world of fierce Yankee soldiers “aiming at your heart,” Jethro baring his knife and his teeth and, ultimately, nooses swinging from all the branches. The sequence ends in a piercing scream and then the glorious sunshine as Farquhar finds himself in his garden. The moment of reunion with his wife is expanded into a romantic and lyrical scene accompanied by appropriately sentimental music: all the agonies of Farquhar’s journey and fatigue are nothing compared to the “sanctuary of these arms, the security of these lips.” However, Robson is merely deploying a strategy of misdirection. The seemingly happy ending is a technique to heighten the shocking final line: “Peyton Farquhar was dead; his body, with a broken neck, swung gently from side to side beneath the timbers of the Owl Creek bridge.” The line is uttered by the framing narrator and is accompanied by the rhythmically creaking sound of the swinging noose.

The creaking sound of the noose is one of the finest moments in Robson’s elaborate soundscape. The adaptation and the brilliant skills of the live sound effects technicians variously create the sounds of the waters of Owl Creek (varying from a gentle lapping to the frenzy of a whirlpool), the echoing sounds of military commands, the crack of muskets and the boom of cannons, the croaking frogs on the riverbank and even an exact replication of Bierce’s description of “the humming of the gnats” (310). Similarly, the use of orchestral music (once again performed live on air) enhances the production. On *Escape*, the score uses a register that is both lyrical and harmonious, with the interjection of dramatic chords as a punctuational strategy. The music for *Suspense*, however, is more consistently sinister, using eerie dissonances merging with military bugle sounds. In both programs, descriptive music, such as descending scales for Farquhar’s fall into the creek, is used. In *Escape* and all but the final production on *Suspense*, an ingenious dramatic twist makes use of music: the narrative is accompanied by the increasing, rhythmic beating of timpani, which is explained thus: “it’s your heart, of course, you hear, stepping up its cadence, pounding under the forced graft of fear.”

Despite differences in music, William N. Robson’s adaptation of “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” remains broadly unchanged across *Escape* and *Suspense*. The actors cast as Farquhar all capture and convey a distinct southern accent, although the broadness of dialect may vary. It is, arguably, at its most broad in Harry Bartell’s performance on *Escape*, although, in contrast, Jethro’s accent in the same production is less broad than in the 1950s versions. Probably the least pronounced accent is Vincent Price’s in the 1959 production. Although Price adds considerable southern “drawl” to certain words, such as “writhe” (lengthening the word emphatically). Overall, the lack of heavy accentuation on Price’s part retains the distinctive quality of his own voice: Price was one of the leading stars of golden age radio, not least as the lead star on *The Saint* (1947–51), and in notable horror plays such as “Three Skeleton Key” (several productions on *Suspense* in the

1950s). Any radio producers who secured Price would not want their listeners to be in any doubt as to the identity of the leading actor. In addition to Price's performance, the other notable feature of the final production of "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" on Suspense is that it is considerably shorter. The Escape and other Suspense productions are all around the 25-28 minute range. In contrast, the 1959 Suspense production is around a mere eighteen minutes, very short for the standard "thirty-minute slot." This major reduction primarily dispenses with some of Robson's longer descriptive material and lyrical exposition, although it retains the additional scenes such as the entrapment retrospective and the encounter with Jethro. What this sharper adaptation produces is a succinct, thrilling journey that never lets up its thunderous pace and is perhaps more in keeping with the concision and pace of Bierce's original.

Although the last adaptation of "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" in the golden age of live radio may have aimed for unprecedented concision, the most significant radio adaptation after the golden age could not have been more different. Sam Dann's dramatization of Bierce's tale for the pre-recorded CBS Radio Mystery Theater (June 4, 1974 and repeated on August 24, 1974 and September 15, 1979) is near the forty-five minute mark in duration and turns the story into a full drama with several characters, lengthy exposition, and substantial embellishment. These embroideries reflected the ambitious attempt, during the 1970s, to revive American radio drama: the longer time slot made demands on narrative sweep. The actions of, in this version, "Peyton Forrester" are not part of a cunning entrapment but a calculated collaborative sabotage in which his accomplice is killed. Forrester's attempt fails, but he escapes Union custody and attempts to blow up the bridge again. In another major plot change, the moment that Forrester thinks he has succeeded in blowing up the bridge is the moment he hangs, dead, from Owl Creek Bridge. Dann's adaptation also develops the drama of the Civil War, including the domestic ructions caused by a nation at war ("We've lost, we've lost, Peyton!" says Forrester's wife, disapproving of her husband's terrorist plot). Similarly, Dann uses the development of several other characters to expand the setting and scene of the play. At the start, for example, a Union officer supports a young soldier who declares "I'm gonna be sick!" as the execution is about to occur. However, as laudable and rich as Dann's adaptation is, it does diminish the intensity of Bierce's original tale and the live radio versions. Similarly, although the slightly different ending may be ingenious, it is not as powerful, poignant or disturbing as Bierce's sex (Eros) and death (Thanatos) ending with Farquhar – in the cruellest irony of frustrated desire – dying as he is about to embrace his wife.

[CHRONOLOGY]

STORIES BY OLMSTED (WENR, CHICAGO—NBC-BLUE)

[Monday—9:00-9:15 PM]

October 14, 1940

"The Man and the Snake"

["...story of the man whose belief he could be hypnotized by a snake finally resulted in his death..."]

SCRIPT: Nelson Olmsted.

PERSONNEL: Nelson Olmsted (reader).

EXTANT RECORDING

[Wednesday—

Oct. 30, 1940

"An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" ??????????

NELSON OLMSTED STORY DRAMA (WMAQ, CHICAGO)

[

January 2, 1942

"A Horseman in the Sky"

SCRIPT: Nelson Olmsted.

PERSONNEL: Nelson Olmsted (reader).

EXTANT RECORDING

[Saturday—10:15-10:30 PM]

March 7, 1942

"A Man with Two Lives" / "Roast Pig"

September 9, 1942

"The Man and the Snake"

HORROR INC. (WJZ, NEW YORK—BLUE)

[Tuesday—

February 9, 1943

“The Man and the Snake”

SCRIPT: Mel

PERSONNEL: Eva La Gallienne (host, reader), Rosa Rio (organist).

(HOME SERVICE—BBC)

[

September 2, 1943

“A Horseman in the Sky”

PERSONNEL: J. G. Sarasin (adapter).

APPOINTMENT WITH FEAR (THE LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Thursday—9:40-10:10 PM]

April 27, 1944

“A Watcher by the Dead” (Ambrose Bierce; JDC)

[Thursday—9:30-10:00 PM]

October 12, 1944

“The Devil’s Manuscript” (JDC)

THE WEIRD CIRCLE (NBC TRANSCRIPTION DISC)

Circa 1945

“The Middle Toe of the Right Foot”

APPOINTMENT WITH FEAR (THE LIGHT PROGRAMME, LONDON—BBC)

[Tuesday—9:30-10:00 PM]

October 30, 1945

“He Wasn’t Superstitious”

[BBC TITLE CARD: “Young man comes to blackmail wife of doctor who keeps snakes—he is scornful of the power of snakes to attract—but when he imagines he sees one in his bedroom he is drawn towards it—imagines it strikes him and dies of shock. It was a stuffed voodoo snake put there by native servant.”]

SCRIPT: John Dickson Carr (adapted from the story “The Man and the Snake”).

April 16, 1946

“A Watcher by the Dead”

SCRIPT: John Dickson Carr.

(THIRD PROGRAMME, LONDON—BBC)

[Tuesday—11:35 PM-12:00 AM]

October 15, 1946

“A Watcher by the Dead”

[“...Short story by Ambrose Bierce read by Valentine Dyall...”]

(HOME SERVICE, LONDON—BBC)

[Wednesday—10:30-10:45 PM]

January 15, 1947

“A Horseman in the Sky”

NELSON OLMSTED (WMAQ, CHICAGO—NBC)

[Thursday—8:15-8:30 PM]

September 18, 1947

“The Man and the Snake”

ESCAPE (KNX, HOLLYWOOD—CBS)

[

December 10, 1947

“An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”

CAST: Harry Bartell, William Conrad, William Johnstone, Luis Van Rooten.

(HOME SERVICE, LONDON)

[Friday—10:45-11:00 PM]

January 14, 1949

“The Man and the Snake”

[“...A short story by Ambrose Bierce. Reader, Ronald Simpson...”]

THE MAN IN BLACK (LIGHT PROGRAMME, LONDON)

[Monday—8:30-9:00 PM]

February 14, 1949

“The Middle Toe of the Right Foot”

PERSONNEL: John Keir Cross (scriptwriter).

SUSPENSE (KNX, HOLLYWOOD)

[

December 9, 1956

“An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”

SLEEP NO MORE (WRCA, NEW YORK)

[Wednesday—9:30-10:00 PM]

January 16, 1957

“The Waxwork” / **“The Man and the Snake”**

SUSPENSE (KNX, HOLLYWOOD)

[Sunday—

December 15, 1957

“An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”

CAST: Harry Bartell, William Conrad, Joseph Cotton, Jack Kruschen, Lou Merrill, Ellen Morgan.

AMERICA’S LITERARY HERITAGE (WMCA, NEW YORK)

[Tuesday—10:35-11:00 PM]

June 16, 1959

[“...The career and some of the short stories of Ambrose Bierce, discussed by Prof. Theodore G. Ehrtam...”]

SUSPENSE (KNX, HOLLYWOOD)

[Sunday—

July 19, 1959

“An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”

CAST: Norman Alden, Sam Edwards, Cathy Lewis, Roy Glenn, Barney Phillips, Sam Pierce, Vincent Price.

DREADFUL JOHN AT MIDNIGHT (WKCR, NEW YORK)

[

Circa 1960s

“Oil of Dog”

THE BLACK MASS (

LE THEATRE DE L’ETRANGE (FRANCE INTER AND INTER VARIETES)

[????

July 18, 1965

“La Route au clair de lune”

(THIRD PROGRAMME, LONDON)

[

May 26, 1969

“An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”

PERSONNEL: Christopher Whelan (libretto and music).

STORIES BY AMBROSE BIERCE (THIRD PROGRAMME, LONDON)

[

May 30, 1969

“An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”

THE CBS RADIO MYSTERY THEATER (WRVR, NEW YORK)

[???day—10:07-11:00 PM]

June 4, 1974

“An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”

[“...It’s the fall of 1863 and Peyton Forrester, declared physically unfit for service in the Southern Army, is caught by the Yankees as he unsuccessfully attempts to blow up the railroad bridge over Owl Creek and thus isolate the entire Union army. Union troops catch him in the act. Forrester is convinced that nothing can harm him after the rope wraps around his neck—and the rope miraculously snaps. Forrester now

swims for his life, dodging the bullets of Union troops, and plans another attempt at dynamiting the bridge..."]

CAST: Mildred Clinton (Millicent), Jack Grimes (Woody), Leon Janney (Corporal), William Prince (Peyton Forrester), William Redfield (Robbie Tompkins).

Sam Dann (scriptwriter—1974, *CBS Radio Mystery Theater*).

THE BEST OF BIERCE (RADIO 4, LONDON)

[Saturday—8:45-9:00 AM]

December 31, 1977

[Tuesday-Friday—8:45-9:00 AM]

January 3, 1978

January 4, 1978

January 5, 1978

January 6, 1978

[Tuesday—8:45-9:00 AM]

October 31, 1978

“A Horseman in the Sky”

[Wednesday—8:45-9:00 AM]

November 1, 1978

“An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”

THE CBS RADIO MYSTERY THEATER (WRVR, NEW YORK)

[???day—10:07-11:00 PM]

November 20, 1978

“The Thing at Nolan”

[“...John May, living with his father Charles and mother Elvira in the Ozark Mountains in 1879, is the first member of the family to learn how to read, a skill that causes him to develop some new-fangled notions: that women should not be mistreated and that he doesn't have to help his father seven days a week. The result is a fatherly punch in the face, which John vows his father will soon regret...”]

CAST: Court Benson (Charles May), Russell Horton (John May), Arnold Moss (Harry Odell), Bryna Raeburn (Elvira May).

Arnold Moss (scriptwriter—1978, *CBS Radio Mystery Theater*)

[Tuesday-Friday—8:45-9:00 AM]

September 23, 1980 (1)

September 24, 1980 (2)

September 25, 1980 (3)

September 26, 1980 (4)

AS IT HAPPENS (CBC)

[

September 21, 1990

“An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”

[“...Alan Maitland, as Front Porch Al, reads the story *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*, by Ambrose Bierce. It is a tale of the U.S. Civil War, and when we meet Peyton Farquhar, a civilian citizen of the Confederacy, he is about to meet his fate at the hands of Union soldiers...”]

HISTORIAS (RNE 1, BARCELONA?)

[

Circa 2000

“El Guardian”

Circa 2000

“El funeral de John Mortonson” / “La alucinacion de Stanley Fleming” / “Un habitante de Carcosa”

[SOURCES]

Hand, Richard J. "Reanimating Peyton Farquhar: The Adaptations of Ambrose Bierce's 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge' in American Radio and Television." *The ABP Journal* (Fall 2005).

AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON

[MOTION-PICTURE; RADIO-SERIAL]

"Despite evidence to the contrary," comments British radio drama producer Dirk Maggs, "I try to avoid doing work with a direct filmic equivalent, but I could not refuse the opportunity to rework a classic by one of my favourite movie directors. The fact that John Landis was also enthusiastic to have *An American Werewolf in London* reworked for radio was the key. He was kindness personified and got personally involved to see that we got permission to make this."

"Due to the horror content and some bad language, *An American Werewolf in London* was first broadcast in three-minute segments in a late night BBC Radio 1 slot, again mixed by Paul Deeley in superb Dolby Surround Sound. To create the guttural wolf sounds, a pig and English badger noises were used in the mix. Eric Meyers was recorded using a stereo capsule on a boom so that there would be the feeling of frantic movement."

"We recorded Eric Meyers using a stereo capsule on a boom so he could throw himself around the studio and we could follow - he had no voice and a lot of bruises afterwards."

"This one had nothing to do with the cinematic release of *An American Werewolf in Paris*, that was pure coincidence. Eric Meyers suggested the idea to me very early on, about 1995, but it took two years to clear. The concession to the nature of the beast was that it aired in the Mary Ann Evans (? apologies to the DJ, I can't remember the name) show, late nights weekdays. I do remember I sensed we were coming to the end of our Radio 1 heyday; the people at the show didn't seem crazy about having to play a three-minute episode every night. Later on they warmed up a bit when they heard it. But Matthew Bannister was leaving the network and I had a feeling - which turned out to be correct - that the new regime was going to dump us. Which was a pity because we were one of the good things they had at that time... we were going places, then they stifled us."

"Of the original cast I only ever went for Jenny Agutter, Brian Glover and John Woodvine; they were the important characters and they were accessible. I knew that Eric Meyers and Bill Dufres would play David and Jack really well. Jenny told me she did it only because John Landis told her I was a good bloke, which was sort of reassuring! Jenny was delightful - obviously she's still dead sexy and all that, but she has a great sense of humour and was enormous fun to have around, which isn't true of all actresses who are also big stars. John Woodvine had a very dry sense of humour. One time I apologised for a slightly clumsy line I had written for him and he said, 'Don't worry Dirk, I'm sure I can improve it somehow!' Of course it was Brian Glover's last ever acting job (I believe), he died a couple of months later. He was terrific, sick as he was; he came to the studio on the bus, refusing a car, said he needed the exercise. And he turned in a very powerful performance. I dedicated the Talkie Award we won to him. A lovely man and a truly great actor."

"For the additional scenes I was looking for a backstory for the werewolf. Who was he before he was killed on the Moors? Why were the villagers in The Slaughtered Lamb protecting him? Brian's character was so vehement about protecting the secret. I reasoned he must have a family connection. But at the same time I thought that Dr Hirsch must have some kind of secret knowledge of the situation. He is such an establishment figure, yet believes in werewolves. How could I reconcile those elements? I thought maybe he too came from the area, and I wondered if maybe there could be some kind of Eastern European settlement there - in the style of Transylvanians coming here ... not exactly relatives of Count Dracula, but from the village! And blow me down, as I was starting to write the scripts, on the *Today* programme there was a piece about Eastern European migrants to the North of England in the 18th Century - perfect! So that gave me a link, which I followed up. It was fun to try and tie these element up a bit."

"His updated version of John Landis's *An American Werewolf in London* for BBC Radio 1 won the 1997 Talkie Award for Best TV/Film Adaptation. This was the third year in succession that Dirk won a Talkie; in 1996 his *Independence Day UK* won the 1996 Talkie for Best Production, and his productions of BBC Radio 1's 80-episode (honest!) *Judge Dredd* won the 1995 Talkie for Best Production."

"Like Dirk Maggs' previous Radio 1 dramatisations, the pace and production values are simply terrific." (KEN GARNER, *The Express*, 7 April 1997)

"The beast was brought triumphantly back to life ... thanks to expert direction from Dirk Maggs ..." (STEPHANIE BILLEN, *The Observer*, 13 April 1997)

"The hip language, vivid sound effects, insistent music and Dolby Surround bear witness to Dirk Maggs." (PAUL DONOVAN, *Sunday Times*, 7 April 1997)

"... Dirk Maggs adds new twists and grizzly sounds to John Landis's movie ... Recommended." (RADIO CHOICE, *Daily Mail*, 7 April 1997)

"... an excellent job - congratulations!" (JOHN LANDIS (An American Werewolf In London, The Blues Brothers) April 1997)

[Review by Ty Power] "Eric Meyers (Sargeant Bullock in *Batman: Knightfall*, The Human Torch in *The Amazing Spider-Man*, and David here) went to college in the US with the brother of John Landis (the director of the original 1981 film). He thought it might be a good idea for Dirk Maggs to do the story for radio. Dirk met with John Landis to talk about the project; he was emerging from the Abbey Road studios after recording music and a voice-over for his film *The Stupids*. With him was veteran actor Christopher Lee, and Dirk got to meet them both for the first time. Initially, Dirk was reluctant to take on what was essentially a recycled movie; it wasn't what he considered his Audio Movies to be all about (people still approach him and say, "You do radio versions of films." which is not the case. There has only been one: this one.). A successful meeting changed Dirk's mind, however. Landis was keen for this to go ahead and gave Dirk permission to flesh-out and extend the story with original material, which eventually ran to more than fifteen percent of the running time. Landis also did everything he could topush through clearances.

"The acting talents of Jenny Agutter, Brian Glover and John Woodvine (Woodvine's rich voice would be perfect for audio book narratives, if he hasn't already added that to his repertoire) were secured to reprise their film roles and bring continuity to the project. Also turning in sterling performances as David and Jack, the American backpackers, are Eric Meyers and William Dufriis (Judge Caligula in *Judge Dredd - The Day The Law Died*, and the title character in *The Amazing Spider-Man*) respectively. William Dufriis has made it known that this project is one of his career works he's most proud of.

"As in the film, the best humour comes courtesy of the conversations between David and his dead friend Jack. For example: "It looks like I'll have to get used to entertaining corpses. Take a seat." "I'd better stand. I seem to leave bits of myself behind when I sit." Another example is: "I came to see you." "You've seen me, now go away and decompose somewhere else. I will not be threatened by a walking meatloaf!" In the brand new opening sequence there is a clever exchange between a Inspector Villiers and his subordinates: "There's enough blood. Where's the body?" "Over here. And over there." "Another bit over here, sir." Another powerful moment, particularly because there are no other actors to play off of, is the scene when David is left alone in Alex's flat on the night of his first transformation. He tries out the TV: "ITV - soccer match, BBC1 - insipid documentary, BBC 2 - insipid documentary, Channel 4 - insipid documentary presented by midget transvestites..." And he checks his appearance: "Everything looks the same in the mirror. No insipient werewolf characteristics. Snarl! Growl! Grr!"

"Due to the horror content and some bad language, *An American Werewolf in London* was first broadcast in three-minute segments in a late night BBC Radio 1 slot, again mixed by Paul Deeley in superb Dolby Surround Sound. To create the guttural wolf sounds a pig and English badger noises were used in the mix. Eric Meyers was recorded using a stereo capsule on a boom so that there would be the feeling of frantic movement.

"The dramatisation was released in its 110 minute entirety on cassette and CD later in 1997. Sales were respectable, but feedback was surprisingly quiet. However, the industry obviously appreciated the piece as Dirk's script was nominated for the Writers' Guild Award for Best Dramatisation, and the production won the 1997 Talkie Award for Best TV or Film Adaptation. A slightly truncated version of the complete Audio Movie aired on 13th September 2003 on the BBC World Service as its Play of the Week, during the themed Monster Season. The BBC World Service has a global audience of 150 million.

[SYNOPSIS, from Ty Power review] "When an attendant checks on a new patient at the lunatic asylum, he witnesses the man, Talbot, undergo a horrifying transformation. The attendant is brutally torn apart and Talbot escapes. On the Yorkshire Moors two young American men are backpacking. Hitching a ride to East Proctor, they call at a small pub called The Slaughtered Lamb

where a frosty reception awaits them, especially when they question the pentagram and candles on the wall. Unwelcome, they are dispatched back out on to the Moors with only a single warning to stay on the path. Faced with a seven mile walk to the next town in torrential rain, matters deteriorate further when they hear the sounds of a predatory animal circling them. Jack is attacked by a wolf and David is injured before the special constable, George Hackett, one of the unsociables at the pub, kills the beast with a shotgun. Before falling unconscious David sees that what was a wolf is now a naked man.

“David wakes up in a hospital in London to be told by Doctor Hirsch and Nurse Alex Price that his friend Jack is dead. He is sedated after becoming hysterical, but later contradicts the police report that the attacker was an escaped madman. As far as David is concerned it was definitely a wolf. The police learn that Talbot's real name was Hackett, the same as East Proctor's special constable. Meanwhile, David's parents are on board an aircraft approaching Heathrow Airport when it is taken over by the people's Liberation Front. When his father tries to protest, he is shot. This scene within a scene turns out to be another in a series of nightmares surrounding death which David experiences in the hospital. To make matters worse his dead friend Jack appears to him in a state of decomposition and tells him they were attacked on the Moors by a lycanthrope, a werewolf. Jack explains that he is cursed to walk the Earth in limbo until the bloodline is broken and the last werewolf is destroyed. David is told he is that last werewolf; he must kill himself.

“When David is discharged from hospital, the attractive and sympathetic Nurse Alex gives him a place to stay, and very soon they are a couple. From limbo Jack watches them make love in the shower. He is urged by Larry, one of many undead from the werewolf line, to persuade David to kill himself quickly so that they can pass on. Larry, he discovers, is the werewolf that killed him on the Moors (“I'm really pissed off at you for killing me, Larry!” “I've said I'm sorry, haven't I?”). This time when Jack appears to David, he tells his disturbed friend that the next day at the full moon he will become a werewolf. Needless to say, David thinks he is losing his mind. Intrigued by his ex-patient's werewolf delusions, Dr Hirsch pays a visit to The Slaughtered Lamb pub in East Proctor, where he receives a very cool reception from George Hackett and the other patrons. The urgent warnings of a young villager are abruptly cut off by the special constable.

“Meanwhile, David is left alone while Alex goes to work the nightshift at the hospital. He eventually undergoes a hideous transformation and disappears into the night. Dr Hirsch and Alex, concerned about David's mental state, attempt to contact him without success. That night a series of grisly murders are reported in and around Central London. In East Proctor the patrons of The Slaughtered Lamb press George Hackett into taking action, as the dark secret has now extended beyond their community. David wakes up the next morning naked and in the wolf enclosure at London Zoo. After persuading a little boy to lift a woman's fur coat from a park bench, he makes his way back to Alex's flat. He feels fit and invigorated, like a new man.

“When Dr Hirsch learns that David has returned he instructs Alex to bring him straight to the hospital, but when the taxi driver starts to talk about the brutal killings of the night before David realises he was responsible. He separates himself from Alex, telling her he's not safe to be with. Jack makes a final appearance, beckoning David into a seedy Leicester Square porno cinema. David is introduced to his victims from the night before. One more time they try to persuade him to commit suicide, but the full moon rises causing David to under his metamorphosis. Although the police arrive on the scene, the werewolf David breaks through the barriers created at the cinema and causes havoc through the streets around Piccadilly Circus.

“Dr Hirsch and Alex arrive at the scene half-believing the werewolf story. Apparently, Hirsch's ancestors from Eastern Europe were very big on legend and superstition. It turns out that 200 years before, the people of East Proctor migrated from Eastern Romania. The werewolf David enters a theatre, but is then cornered in an alley by the police. Alex manages to slip through unseen into the alley, where she attempts to protect the beast. However, George Hackett turns up with a shotgun and puts an end to the curse. With Alex at his side, the werewolf turns back into David. He is dead... and free.”

ORIGINATION: Radio 1, London (BBC).

DURATION: April ?-May ??, 1997.

PERSONNEL: Wilfred Acosta (music), Paul Deeley (recording engineer, mixer), Dirk Maggs (adapter, scriptwriter, director).

CAST: Jenny Agutter (Alex Price), David Bannerman (Inspector Villiers), William Dufres (Jack Goodman), Brian Glover (George Hackett), Eve Karpf (Nurse Gallagher), Mark Lowin (The Kid), Eric Meyers (David Kessler), Michael Roberts (Larry Talbot), Mervyn Stutter (Sergeant McManus), John Woodvine (Doctor Hirsch).

EXTANT RECORDINGS: All 40 episodes.

[CHRONOLOGY]

AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON (RADIO 1, LONDON)

[

April ?, 1997

- [1] **"The Sanatorium"**
- [2] **"Beast Hunt"**
- [3] **"Backpacking"**
- [4] **"East Proctor"**
- [5] **"The Slaughtered Lamb"**
- [6] **"No Room at the Inn"**
- [7] **"Beware the Moon"**
- [8] **"Werewolf Attack"**
- [9] **"Rescue"**
- [10] **"Embassy Man"**
- [11] **"The Police"**
- [12] **"I Killed Bambi"**
- [13] **"Feeding Time"**
- [14] **"Visions"**
- [15] **"Nightmare"**
- [16] **"The Murder File"**
- [17] **"Jack's Back"**
- [18] **"The Warning"**
- [19] **"The Flat"**
- [20] **"Night Talk"**
- [21] **"Up North"**
- [22] **"Out You Go"**
- [23] **"I'm Not Hungry"**
- [24] **"Metamorphosis"**
- [25] **"First Victims"**
- [26] **"Suspensions"**
- [27] **"First Night"**
- [28] **"Radio One"**
- [29] **"Balloon Thief"**
- [30] **"Mister Nancy Boy"**
- [31] **"Bad News"**
- [32] **"Arrest Me!"**
- [33] **"Phone Me"**
- [34] **"Blue Movies"**
- [35] **"Kill Yourself"**
- [36] **"Cinema Siege"**
- [37] **"Break Out"**
- [38] **"Cornered Beast"**
- [39] **"Farce Slaughter"**
- [40] **"I Love You, David"**

PLAY OF THE WEEK (WORLD SERVICE, LONDON—BBC)

[

September 13, 2003

"An American Werewolf in London"

[Ty Power] "A slightly truncated version of the complete Audio Movie aired on 13th September 2003 on the BBC World Service as its Play of the Week,"

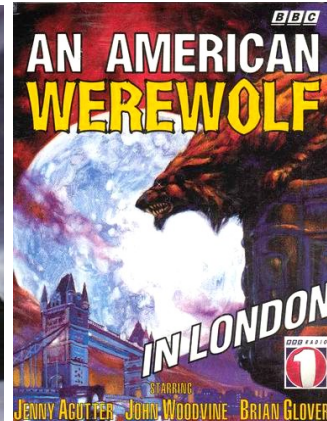
[GALLERY]



Dirk Maggs



Brian Glover, Jenny Agutter and John Woodvine



ANCIENT SORCERIES

[SHORT-STORY]

Story by Algernon Blackwood...

Blackwood: "...that old French town of 'Ancient Sorceries,' where the slinking inhabitants behaved as cats behave, sidling along the pavements with slanting gestures, twitching their sleeky ears and snakey tails, their sharp eyes glinting, all alert and concentrated upon some hidden, secret life of their own while they feigned attention to tourists like ourselves—ourselves just back from climbing in the Dolomites and finding the train so boring on its way from Basle to Boulogne that we hopped out at Laon and spent two days in this witch-ridden atmosphere. The 'Auberge de la Hure' was the name of the Inn, and it was...Laon, a lovely old haunted town where the Cathedral towers stand up against the sunset like cats' ears, the paws running down the dusky streets, the feline body crouched just below the hill. Yet who should guess that so much magic lay within a kilometer of its dull, desolate train station, or that from my little bedroom window I should presently stand enthralled as I looked across the moonlit tiles and towers, jotting down on the backs of envelopes an experience that kept sleep away till dawn."

[CHRONOLOGY]

ESCAPE (KNX, HOLLYWOOD—CBS)

[Sunday—7:00-7:30 PM]

February 15, 1948 **"Ancient Sorceries"**

[Saturday—8:30-9:00 AM]

February 21, 1948 **"Ancient Sorceries"**

PERSONNEL: William Conrad (announcer), Les Crutchfield (scriptwriter), Eddie Dunstedter (organist—2/21/48), Cy Feuer (music), Norman Macdonnell (director), William N. Robson (producer).

CAST: Kaye Brinker (Ilse), William Conrad (Dundreary/The Doctor), Paul Frees (Arthur Llewellyn), Anne Morrison (Madame).

Escape's "Ancient Sorceries" is based on the short story of the same name by [Algernon Blackwood](#), a writer who was famous for his tales of horror and the supernatural. The story was adapted for radio by [Les Crutchfield](#), who changed and abbreviated it considerably to fit within a half-hour program. In the radio version, the main character's name is changed to Arthur Llewellyn, and the setting is a remote part of Wales, rather than France. *Escape's* version is good, but it is worth the time to read the short story. The text of "Ancient

Sorceries" can be found on the [Algernon Blackwood page](http://www.HorrorMasters.com) at www.HorrorMasters.com.

As the episode opens, Mr. Llewellyn is on a train on his way to London. He impulsively decides to get off and spend the night in a small, Welsh village named Malton, despite the warning from his fellow passenger. He takes a room at the local inn, and to his surprise, they seem to have been expecting him. Mr. Llewellyn soon becomes involved with innkeeper's daughter, Ilse, and discovers the strange world of the townspeople and what they do in their secret lives.

THE CBS RADIO MYSTERY THEATER (WRVR, NEW YORK—CBS)

[???day—10:07-11:00 PM]

March 27, 1975

"The Velvet Claws"

["...Vacationing in France, John Latour, a middle-aged bachelor of fixed habits, finds himself inexplicably drawn into a French town where all the inhabitants have feline characteristics and appear to know him. A series of accidents prevent him from leaving, and he falls in love with Ilse, daughter of the innkeeper, the most cat-like of them all. Ilse is convinced Latour is the reincarnation of a long-ago warlock and urges him to join a fiery, demonic celebration of his return..."]

SCRIPT: Murray Burnett.

PERSONNEL: Himan Brown (producer-director).

CAST: Gordon Gould (John Latour), Evelyn Juster (Ilse Duschenes), Gilbert Mack (Driver), Arnold Moss (Dr. Hazard).

ANCIENT SORCERIES (BBC 7, LONDON—BBC)

[Thursday-Tuesday—6:30-7:00 PM]

September 1, 2005

[1]

[BBC 7: "...Timid commuter Arthur Vezin is struck by how the people of a sleepy French village resemble cats, both in looks and behaviour..."]

September 2, 2005

[2]

[BBC 7: "...Vezin realises that despite the townsfolk's apparent indifference, they are watching him closely..."]

September 5, 2005

[3]

[BBC 7: "...Vezin declares his love for Ilse but realizes that he may only have fallen deeper into the clutches of her and her mother..."]

September 6, 2005

[4]

[BBC 7: "...Mother and daughter invite Vezin to join them in the witches' Sabbath but Vezin is suspicious..."]

BOOK AT BEDTIME—"ALGERNON BLACKWOOD GHOST STORIES (RADIO 4, LONDON)

[Wednesday—

August 2, 2006

"Ancient Sorceries"

["...An Englishman staying in a sleepy French town makes a terrifying discovery..."]

SCRIPT: Fiona McAlpine (abridger).

PERSONNEL: Clive Brill (director), Hugh Ross (reader).

THE ANCIENT MARINER

[NARRATIVE-POEM]

It's proper title, of course, is "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"...

JANUARY ?, 1935 (first Tues. in 1935):

[Providence Evening Bulletin—"Radio Flashes"]

"Taking such poems as 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' as the basis, NBC is preparing a special series of radio music-dramas. They will go on under an intermittent schedule, the first having appeared on New Year's Day as 'Morgan Sails the Carribbean.' The next probably will be 'Omar Khayyam.'"

AND ADAM BEGOT

[RADIO-SCRIPT]

A prime example of Arch Oboler's skill in infusing an anti-fascist message into a horror script.

[press release] "The young dramatist expects to face his biggest casting problem in filling the roles of the two Neanderthal men which he has written into 'And Adam Begot.' He wants a voice, he explains, which will instantly suggest a cave-man to the radio listener. With that in mind, he conducted a survey of what people expect in a Neanderthal voice.

"A cross-section of the answers," Oboler says, 'suggests a bass-voiced prizefighter, talking double talk with his mouth full of hot potatoes.'"

It was reprinted in the anthology... and retitled "Neanderthal" for Oboler's 1970 *Lights Out* revival series, *The Devil and Mr. O*.

[CHRONOLOGY]

LIGHTS OUT (WMAQ, CHICAGO—NBC-RED)

[Wednesday—11:30 PM-12:00 MIDNIGHT]

March 31, 1937

"**Homus Primus**"

["...the story of two men and a woman, people of London's upper strata of society, who suddenly through a weird twist are projected back in time 50,000 years and find themselves at the mercy of a tribe of Neanderthals, the pre-men of the third glacial age..."]

PERSONNEL: Arch Oboler (scriptwriter).

ARCH OBOLER'S PLAYS (WEAF, NEW YORK—NBC-RED)

[Saturday—9:30-10:00 PM]

September 9, 1939

"**And Adam Begot**"

["...a powerful social play depicting struggle between force and reason, in a setting of 50,000 years ago... Three moderns—American, French and English—who find themselves whirled back in time and two cavemen are the characters... The drama, presenting contemporary characters moving against a background of Neanderthal men, poses a question old as time itself—that of parenthood. Oboler's fantasy will show that parenthood is neither a duty nor an obligation, but a rare privilege which is abused much too often. It also shows the unending struggle between brute force and ethics..."]

PERSONNEL: Arch Oboler (scriptwriter, director).

EXTANT RECORDING

[OG-NOTE: "And Adam Begot" was scheduled for the October 25, 1940 broadcast of Oboler's *Everyman's Theatre*, with guest stars Walter Huston and Nan Sunderland. Instead, in a last-minute switch, the Hustons appeared in another Oboler script, "Mr. and Mrs. Chump." The original press release for "And Adam Begot" described it as "a story of courage that conquers despair, told in a manner that combines fantasy and realism. The background and incidental music by the NBC Orchestra conducted by Charles Dant will be taken from the score of *Death and Transfiguration* by Strauss."]

THE DEVIL AND MR. O

Circa 1971

"**Neanderthal**"

[**OG-NOTE:** Oboler used the 9/9/39 recording for inclusion in this series.]
EXTANT RECORDING

ANOTHER APPLICANT

[**RADIO-SCRIPT**]

An early radio play by Nick Fisher...

"Fisher's plays are always interesting though sometimes rather macabre." (VRPCC newsletter, 1998)

Over the past twenty-five years Fisher has made a mark for himself in radio horror and mystery, with dramatizations that include a 1982 adaptation of Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado," two scripts for *Fear on Four* ("The Turning of the Tide" and "Chimes of Midnight"), "Playing with Dracula," and his sometimes very macabre "Julie Enfield" detective series.

Once considered a "lost play," this broadcast is now listed as a "found" item by the Vintage Radio Programme Collectors' Circle.

[**CHRONOLOGY**]

AFTERNOON THEATRE (RADIO 4, LONDON—BBC)

[*Tuesday—3:00-4:00 PM*]

February 28, 1984

"Another Applicant"

[**THE TIMES:** "...Cummings is pleased with the way his interview is going. Mr. Wheeler seems to have taken a liking to him—to the extent that the other applicant for the job surely won't stand a chance. But Rowena plays a special role in Cummings's life. This is a strange tale of vampyrism, the business world, and married life..."]

PERSONNEL: Nick Fisher (scriptwriter).

CAST: Peter Baldwin (Mr. Wheeler), Carole Boyd, Sherrie Hewson (Rowena), Clive Panto (Cummings).

EXTANT RECORDING

APAGUE LA LUZ Y ESCUCHE

[**RADIO-SERIES**]

Although the name of the series would make it seem that this is the Mexican version of *Lights Out* (the title translates, literally, as *Extinguish the Lights and Listen*), it would seem to be closer in spirit to *Inner Sanctum Mysteries*.

"With this call to intima the dark, this radioteatro produced by Raul del Campo Jr. Trasmitta by the XEW from mid cincuentas until first sesentas. The carvernous voice of yucateco Arturo Garcia—re-baptized "de Cordova"—by the cinematografica industry and but elegant known as 'the Horseman of Itza'—identifies to the series."

Arturo de Cordova was already an established film star in his native country in diverse romantic adventures—Louella Parsons dubbed him "the Clark Gable of Mexico"—and he had also enjoyed a brief Hollywood career in the mid-Forties, appearing in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *Frenchman's Creek*, and a guest-star appearance as himself in the movie version of the radio comedy *Duffy's Tavern*. His work on *Apague la luz y escuche* quickly established him in the public ear as a master of the sinister, and in 1950 he starred in two films that were clearly influenced by the "Inner Sanctum" horror-noir approach of the series. (One of these films, *El Hombre sin Rostro*, even pre-dates Robert Bloch's *Psycho* in its depiction of the main character as a homicidal maniac who commits murders while dressed as his own mother.)

Pablo O'Farril Marquez: "A day of many, we were making one of the chapters of Turn off the light and listen starring Arturo de Cordova, a tub filled with water, and with some straws did bubbles constantly because the characters were in a submarine, suddenly I slipped and fell inside the tub, the audience in the theater studio laughed a lot, as I left immediately and I kept doing bubbles as if nothing had happened."

ORIGINATION: XEW, Mexico, D.F.

DURATION: 1949-ca. 1960s.

PERSONNEL: Raul del Campo Jr. (producer), Arturo de Cordova (host, narrator), El Ciudadano Martinez (scriptwriter), Pablo O'Farril Marquez (sound effects).

CASTS: Manuel Bauche Alcalde, Pedro D'Aguillon, Antonio Gonzalez, Carlos Lopez Moctezuma, Carmen Madrigal, Omar Sanchez, et al.

EXTANT RECORDINGS: One on the 2-LP set.

[OG-NOTE: This episode was included in a 2-LP set of classic Mexican horror and police shows which was released in 1988 by the Museo Nacional de las Culturas Populares.]

[GALLERY]



Arturo de Cordova

APAGUE LA LUZ Y ESCUCHE

[RADIO-SERIES]

In 1999 XEW premiered a two-hour program hosted by Ruben Garcia which bore the same name as their hit shudder show of the Fifties. This new series was not primarily dramatic, though, instead following very faithfully in the *mano* tradition started by XEDF's *La Mano Peluda*, and featuring phone-in calls by people relating supposedly true ghost stories that had happened to them. During the second part of each broadcast, however, an episode of the original *Apague la luz y escuche* was aired (albeit, according to some reports, in an abridged format).

ORIGINATION: XEW, Mexico, D.F.

DURATION: 1999-?.

PERSONNEL: Ruben Garcia (host).

EXTANT RECORDINGS: Unknown.

APPOINTMENT AT EINION

[RADIO-SCRIPT]

"An odd assortment of people travelling from London to Cardiff in the same carriage as 'The Great Diavolo' who appears to be known as Prince. He tells them he has an appointment at Einion with a person, and electrifies them by revealing the sins of their past lives. At Einion Bridge the train crashes and the Prince's identity is no longer in doubt as he waits for the soul which is to be his." **[BBC TITLE CARD]**

[CHRONOLOGY]

(HOME SERVICE)

[Saturday—2:45-3:30 PM]

June 4, 1955

"Appointment at Einion"

PERSONNEL: H. B. Fortune (producer), Edward Hyams (scriptwriter).

APPOINTMENT WITH FEAR

[RADIO-SERIES]

"This is your storyteller, The Man in Black, here again to tell you a story that may divert...soothe...or—who knows?...even disturb you."

Transposed bodily from the scripts and concepts created by John Dickson Carr in 1942 for the CBS show *Suspense*, this anthology series was a deliberate attempt by Carr and flamboyant BBC producer Val Gielgud (the older brother of Sir John) to create a thriller program "in the American manner."

"Carr was unequalled," writes his biographer Douglas Greene, "in creating an eerie atmosphere by careful choice of emotive words, and many passages of his novels and short stories are especially effective when read aloud. This ability transferred easily into the preparation of radio dramas."

"In spite of his many appearances on stage, screen, and radio, people still tend to look on him, he once told us, as 'The Man in Black.' 'I have even been stopped in the street and told by a man that I had frightened his wife, and that if I continued with the series there'd be trouble.'"

Valentine Dyal: "It was a tremendous success... It was an empty jackpot which one hit... I don't know whether it was a bad thing or a good thing... The listening figures were only very slightly under that of ITMA, so you'd imagine that people rather listened to it. And they were awfully good stories..."

[London Times, November 1, 1945] "At an inquest at Birmingham yesterday on the body of Brian Howard Phillips, 13, of Egghill Lane, Northfields, Birmingham, who was found hanging in the bathroom at his home, it was suggested by Mr. Roderick Baker, representing the school authorities, that the boy tried out on himself Dr. Ley's method of committing suicide after listening to the B.B.C. feature 'Appointment with Fear'."

Although it owed its genesis and inspiration to Carr, *Appointment With Fear* didn't become a full-fledged horror series until after he had left the show. Carr confessed (in a letter to Frederic Dannay, one-half of the *nom de plume* "Ellery Queen") that he lacked the temperament to delve into the pure supernatural. "I can't write a straight ghost story," he admitted. "For my own soul's comfort I must have an explanation. It seems untidy, it seems dodging a writer's real responsibility, to say, 'Oh, that was a ghost.'"

In 1946 Martyn Webster became sole producer of the series and began placing a greater emphasis on horror. Classics of supernatural menace, such as E. F. Benson's vampire story "Mrs. Amworth," were done, and also tales of physical and mental torture, including a play from the London *Grand Guignol*, "The Nutcracker Suite," in which adulterous lovers are crushed to death in a room with inwardly-moving walls while the revengeful husband plays their favorite Tchaikovsky piece on the gramophone.

A northern station in the late Forties frolicked with a comedy-variety hour called *Appointment with Cheer*. And in 1953 *Appointment with Weir* was a platter-spinning series in which, the *Radio Times* announced, "Frank Weir invites you to listen to his selection of gramophone records."

Valentine Dyal's sinister narrator finally got his own program in this 1949 series.

Dyal was sometimes at pains to separate the reality of his own personality and interests from the dark predilections of his *vox persona*, but he did so with grisly good humour. "A rumour started," he wrote in 1954, "with my weekly broadcasts as 'The Man in Black'—that my appetite for mystery and horror was acquired at six years of age, when Christmas parcels got mixed up and I received *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe* instead of *Mother Goose*. It is absolutely untrue. I was only five... There are many other cruel falsehoods—that I keep puff-adders as pets, rear *Belladonna* in my window-box and dress like a certain advertisement for a well-known port. The truth is that I have no *penchant* for the macabre—only, like Kipling's baby elephant, an 'insatiable curiosity', a fatal fascination for 'the sealed room'. I cannot resist an unsolved mystery, and if it happens to involve 'buckets of blood'—well, that's no deterrent."

[*Adelaide Mail*, February 2, 1952—"Radio Round-up—"Ghosts" by John Quinn] "Anyone who enjoys being scared stiff by ghosties and things that go bump in the night will be captivated by 'The Man in Black.'"

"It is heard from 5CL on Monday at 9 p.m.

"This is another of those excellent BBC transcriptions that seem to be the backbone of the ABC.

"It is a series of stories described as tales of imagination, mystery, and fear.

"This is something of an understatement for the two I have heard were both calculated to make ever [sic] Dracula look under his bier before tucking himself into his coffin of a night.

“The rich, smoothly ominous voice of the Man in Black, who is the narrator, is an ideal vehicle for these macabre tales.

“Last Monday’s offering was called ‘Whistle, and I’ll Come to You, My Lad.’

“It told of a harmless professor on holidays—and of the fearful visitor who came when he blew a little whistle he found in the ruins of a Knights Templar church.”

ORIGINATION: Home Service (1943-1944), Manchester (BBC); The Light Programme (1945-1957), London (BBC).

DURATION: September 11-November 18, 1943 (first series), January 6-February 10, 1944 (second series), April 13-May 18, 1944 (third series), October 5-December 28, 1944 (fourth series), September 11-October 16, 1945 (fifth series), October 30-December 4, 1945 (sixth series), March 26-June 11, 1946 (seventh series), December 25, 1946 (Christmas special), February 25-April 29, 1947 (eighth series), December 4, 1947 (Command Performance), January 31-March 21, 1949 (*The Man in Black* series), July 26-August 30, 1955 (ninth series), August 12-September 16, 1957 (repeat broadcasts of the 1955 series).

PERSONNEL: Laidman Browne (scriptwriter), John Dickson Carr (scriptwriter, producer), John Keir Cross (scriptwriter—1949, *The Man in Black*), Franklin Dyall (voice of “The Man In Black”—second series; April 20, 1944), Valentine Dyall (voice of “The Man In Black”—1943-1957), Cleland Finn (producer—1949, *The Man in Black*), Val Gielgud (producer, 1943), David H. Godfrey (producer—1949, *The Man in Black*; 1955), Walter Goehr (music, 1944), Charles Hatton (scriptwriter), Monckton Hoffe (scriptwriter), Miles Horton (scriptwriter), Lester Powell (scriptwriter), T. J. Waldron (scriptwriter), Martyn C. Webster (producer, 1943-1955).

CAST [9/11/43, “Cabin B-13”]:

CASTS: Laidman Browne, Heron Carvic, Vivienne Chatterton, Belle Chrystall, Frank Cochrane, Ann Codrington, Anne Cullen, Constance Cummings, John Dodsworth, Graham Doody, Franklin Dyall, Valentine Dyall, Richard George, Marius Goring, Stanley Groome, Grizelda Herve, Basil Jones, P. Leaver, Eric Lugg, W. Lloyd, Duncan McIntyre, Harry Morris, Esme Percy, Eric Portman, Hartley Power, Molly Rankin, Eddy Reed, Arthur Ridley, Sehri Saklatvala, Alexander Sarnier, John Slater, Gladys Spencer, Marian Spencer, Ronald Squire, J. Stone, Lewis Stringer, William Trent, Ralph Truman, Rita Vale, Harry Welchman, Marjorie Westbury, Richard Williams, et al.

EXTANT RECORDINGS: “The Pit And The Pendulum” (9/18/43), “Into Thin Air” (9/21/43), “The Speaking Clock” (4/13/44), “The Clock Strikes Eight” (5/18/44), “And The Deep Shuddered” (11/20/45).

[OG-NOTE: The Lester Powell-scripted “The Bell Room” (based on Edgar Allan Poe’s “Ligeia”), which originally ran on *Appointment With Fear* on March 25, 1947, is extant from a January 2, 1957 broadcast on the BBC program *Thirty Minute Theatre*. Also extant from a September 17, 1959 broadcast of the same series is the Laidman Browne-scripted version of Poe’s “The Cask Of Amontillado,” which aired originally on *Appointment With Fear* on April 9, 1946.

The National Sound Archive has episode no. 18 from the series *BBC Close Up* which was broadcast on September 29, 1943, the title “How a Radio Play Is Produced.” This show has an re-enactment of a rehearsal session for “Cabin B-13,” the first play performed on *Appointment With Fear*, with Val Gielgud giving direction to Belle Chrystal and Laidman Browne. An excerpt from this “rehearsal” was included in the BBC’s radio horror retrospective *The Return of the Man in Black*.]

Recordings of some of the episodes of *The Man in Black* were re-broadcast on Washington station WOL in 1949 and on Australian radio station 2FC in Sydney from January 20 to ????, 1952.]

[CHRONOLOGY]

APPOINTMENT WITH FEAR (HOME SERVICE)

[Saturday—10:30-11:00 PM]

September 11, 1943

“Cabin B-13”

SCRIPT: John Dickson Carr.

CAST: Laidman Browne, Belle Chrystal, et al.

September 18, 1943

“The Pit and the Pendulum”

SCRIPT: John Dickson Carr (adapted from the story by Edgar Allan Poe).

CAST: Marius Goring, et al.

EXTANT RECORDING

[Tuesday—10:30-11:00 PM]

September 21, 1943

“Into Thin Air” (JDC)

SCRIPT: John Dickson Carr.

EXTANT RECORDING

B.B.C. CLOSE-UP (HOME SERVICE)

[Wednesday—9:25-9:40 PM]

September 29, 1943

“How a Radio Play Is Produced”

[“...No. 18 in a series of programmes showing various aspects of the

B.B.C. at war..."]

EXTANT RECORDING—NSA

[OG-NOTE: An archival copy of this program is held by the National Sound Archive.]

APPOINTMENT WITH FEAR (HOME SERVICE)

[Thursday—10:30-11:00 PM]

September 30, 1943 "The Body Snatchers" (JDC)
October 7, 1943 "The Customers Like Murder" (JDC)
October 14, 1943 "Will You Make a Bet with Death?" (JDC)
October 21, 1943 "The Devil's Saint" (JDC)
October 28, 1943 "Fire Burn and Cauldron Bubble" (JDC)
November 4, 1943 "The Phantom Archer" (JDC)

[Thursday—9:40-10:10 PM]

November 11, 1943 "The Man Who Died Twice" (JDC)
November 18, 1943 "Menace in Wax" (JDC)

[Thursday—9:35-10:05 PM]

January 6, 1944 "Vex Not His Ghost" (JDC)
January 13, 1944 "The Tell-Tale Heart" (Edgar Allan Poe; JDC)

[Thursday—9:40-10:10 PM]

January 20, 1944 "The Room of the Suicides" (JDC)
January 27, 1944 "The Sire de Malatroit's Door" (Robert Louis Stevenson; JDC)
February 3, 1944 "The Dragon in the Pool"
[BBC TITLE CARD: "Father kills himself with glass knife and makes it look like murder so his children get insurance money—told how to by his son. Daughter suspects and puts the knife in swimming pool where the brother dives on it and gets killed."]

SCRIPT: John Dickson Carr.

February 10, 1944 "The Man Who Was Afraid of Dentists" (JDC)

April 13, 1944 "The Speaking Clock" (JDC)

EXTANT RECORDING

April 20, 1944 "Death Flies Blind" (JDC)
April 27, 1944 "A Watcher by the Dead" (Ambrose Bierce; JDC)
May 4, 1944 "The Pit and the Pendulum" (Edgar Allan Poe; JDC)
May 11, 1944 "Vampire Tower" (JDC)
May 18, 1944 "The Clock Strikes Eight" (JDC)

EXTANT RECORDING

[Thursday—9:30-10:00 PM]

October 5, 1944 "I Never Suspected" (JDC)
October 12, 1944 "The Devil's Manuscript" (JDC)
October 19, 1944 "Death Has Four Faces" (JDC)
October 26, 1944 "The Purple Wig" (G. K. Chesterton; JDC)
November 2, 1944 "He Who Whispers"

[BBC TITLE CARD: "Young man is haunted by mysterious voice which threatens and an attempt was made on his life one night by gassing him. Father pooh-poohs his story—he goes to police who meet them in Victorian music-hall. Turns out father had hired ventriloquist to frighten boy in Whispering Gallery of St. Paul's—the rest his nerves supplied—he tried the gas himself. Father kills himself by dashing on to stage with blind folded knife thrower. He was only step-father and wanted boy's money."]

SCRIPT: John Dickson Carr.

November 9, 1944 "The Curse of the Bronze Lamp" (JDC)
November 16, 1944 "The Great Cypher" (Melville Davisson Post, JDC)

November 30, 1944	"Vex Not His Ghost" (JDC)
December 7, 1944	"The Curse of the Bronze Lamp" (JDC)
December 14, 1944	"The Gong Cried Murder" (JDC)
December 21, 1944	"Lair of the Devil Fish" (JDC)
December 28, 1944	"The Oath of Rolling Thunder" (JDC)

APPOINTMENT WITH FEAR (THE LIGHT PROGRAMME)

[Tuesday—9:30-10:00 PM]

September 11, 1945	"Into Thin Air" (JDC)
September 18, 1945	"Fire Burn and Cauldron Bubble" (JDC)
September 25, 1945	"The Man Who Died Twice" (JDC)
October 2, 1945	"The Clock Strikes Eight" (JDC)
October 9, 1945	"Cabin B-13" (JDC)
October 16, 1945	"Will You Make a Bet with Death?" (JDC)

October 30, 1945	"He Wasn't Superstitious" [BBC TITLE CARD: "Young man comes to blackmail wife of doctor who keeps snakes—he is scornful of the power of snakes to attract—but when he imagines he sees one in his bedroom he is drawn towards it—imagines it strikes him and dies of shock. It was a stuffed voodoo snake put there by native servant."] SCRIPT: John Dickson Carr (adapted from the story "The Man and the Snake" by Ambrose Bierce).
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November 6, 1945	"The Man with Two Heads" (JDC)
November 13, 1945	"The Case of the Five Canaries" (JDC)
November 20, 1945	"And the Deep Shuddered" (Moncton Hoffe) SCRIPT: Moncton Hoffe.

EXTANT RECORDING

November 27, 1945	"The Case" SCRIPT: John Slater, Roy Plomley.
December 4, 1945	"Death at Midnight" (Robert Barr)

March 26, 1946	"The Nutcracker Suite" (E. Crawshay-Williams; J. Leslie Dodd)
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April 2, 1946	"Black Mamba" (Hugh Barnes, A. R. Ramsden)
April 9, 1946	"The Cask of Amontillado" (Edgar Allan Poe; Laidman Browne)

April 16, 1946	"A Watcher by the Dead" (Ambrose Bierce; JDC)
April 23, 1946	"The Man Who Knew How" (Dorothy Sayers; Robert Cunliffe)

April 30, 1946	"Dead Men's Teeth" (Richard Fisher; Charles Hatton)
May 7, 1946	"Experiment with Death" ["...A doctor experimenting with hypnosis and 'astral wandering' sends his subject—a young medical student—to see into the Unknown. He sees curious people there who won't let him come back. He nearly dies, and is told to tell the doctor never to try again, for he has been dabbling with the Evil One..."]

SCRIPT: Harry Bunton.

May 14, 1946	"Death Takes a Honeymoon" (Miles Horton, W. L. Catchpole) "Renovations at Merret's" (Honore de Balzac; Rankine Good)
May 21, 1946	"The Monkey's Paw" (W. W. Jacobs; Louis N. Parker)
May 28, 1946	"Cottage for Sale" (T. J. Waldron)
June 4, 1946	"A Mind in Shadow" (Kenneth Morgan)
June 11, 1946	

[Wednesday—9:00-9:30 PM]

December 25, 1946	"Escape to Death"
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[Tuesday—9:30-10:00 PM]

February 25, 1947 “Mrs. Amworth” (E. F. Benson;)

March 4, 1947 “Sink or Swim Together”

March 11, 1947 “The Last Pilgrimage” (T. J. Waldron)

March 25, 1947 “The Bell Room” (Edgar Allan Poe; Lester Powell)

April 1, 1947 “The Diary of William Carpenter” (John Atkins; Patrick Dickinson)

April 8, 1947 “The Treasures” (Gilbert Frankau; Charles Hatton)

April 22, 1947 “The Hands of Nekamen”

[BBC TITLE CARD: “Hilary Talbot, an Egyptologist, steals the 3000-years-old mummified Hands of Nekamen from a secret Egyptian temple. The priest places a curse on him; and, 40 years later, the hands leave their casket in Talbot’s private museum, come into his bedroom through the fanlight over the door, and kill him.”]

SCRIPT: Lester Powell (adapted from a story by Kathleen Hyatt).

[OG-NOTE: Spelling on BBC card is “Hyett.”]

[Monday—9:30-10:00 PM]

April 28, 1947 “All Cats May Snarl”

SCRIPT: J. Vernon Basley.

[Friday—4:15-4:45 PM]

July 4, 1947 “The Hands of Nekamen”

APPOINTMENT WITH FEAR (HOME SERVICE)

[Thursday—9:45-10:15 PM]

December 4, 1947 “The Clock Strikes Eight” (JDC)

[“...When the King and Queen visit Broadcasting House this evening they will spend over two hours inspecting the activities of the B.B.C.... The King and Queen will hear the news read at 9:00 and afterwards they will attend a performance of *The Clock Strikes Eight*, a play in the ‘Appointment with Fear’ series...”]

January 14, 1948 “The Clock Strikes Eight” (JDC)

THE MAN IN BLACK (THE LIGHT PROGRAMME, LONDON)

[Monday—8:30-9:00 PM]

January 31, 1949 “Markheim” (Robert Louis Stevenson)

February 7, 1949 “Oh, Whistle, and I’ll Come To You, My Lad” (M.R. James)

February 14, 1949 “The Middle Toe of the Right Foot” (Ambrose Bierce)

February 21, 1949 “Our Feathered Friends” / “Thus I Refute Beelzy” (John Collier)

February 28, 1949 “The Judge’s House” (Bram Stoker)

March 7, 1949 “The Yellow Wallpaper” (Charlotte Perkins Gillman)

March 14, 1949 “The Beast with Five Fingers” (W.F. Harvey)

March 21, 1949 “The Little House”

(LIGHT PROGRAMME, LONDON)

[

December 27, 1949 “The Night of the Twenty Seventh”

[“...A real special, featuring the BBC’s most popular detectives in one big show, first broadcast as a Christmas special in 1949...”]

From the almost legendary Pat Hetherington scrapbooks, here is her (typed) transcription of this radio oddity: no recordings of this radio

show seem to have survived, but her marvellous efforts allow us another glimpse into the Golden Age of BBC Radio Thrillers!

As always, I have not attempted to edit Pat's work to any degree, apart from obvious typing errors.

THE NIGHT OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

Dr. and Mrs. Dale are sitting over the fire at their home at Virginia Lodge, Parkwood Hill, London, when there is a knock at the front door.

Dr. Dale gets up to answer it; a man comes into the room.

"My name is Walter Leesham", he says, "and I represent a well-known firm of solicitors, Messrs. Croxford, Croxford, Featherdale & Croxford. I am here to carry out a will of a Mr. Silas Ephraim, who died a month ago."

"How can we help?" asks Dr. Dale, "We have never even heard of the man."

"Ah, but he has heard of you", continues the visitor, "you see, he was a keen radio fan and one of his wishes is to hold a dinner party in his memory, and that you and Mrs. Dale should be host and hostess."

The party has to be held on the night of the 27th at Hallows Court, the home of the late Silas Ephraim."

"Who are going to be invited?" asks Mrs. Dale.

"Let me see", answers Leesham, "there are Dick Barton, Paul and Steve Temple, P.C.49 and Joan Carr, Philip Odell and Heather Macmara, the Man In Black and Miss Dangerfield. Each guest will receive £500 for attending, and you and Dr. Dale will receive £750 for being host and hostess."

On the night of the 27th, the Man In Black is walking along the road in the direction of Hallows Court, when a car pulls up and the driver offers him a lift; it turns out to be none other than Paul Temple who, with Steve, is on his way to the party.

They are greeted by Dr. and Mrs. Dale - just then, they hear a noise in the sky: looking up, they see a helicopter which gradually loses height until it comes to a stop on the lawn.

"There is only one person who would come like that!" says Steve.

Yes, it is Dick Barton, Special Agent.

"Why did you choose that kind of transport?" asks Paul, curiously.

"Well, my car broke down," answers Dick, "and as there are no buses in this part of the country, I thought a helicopter was the next best thing. I used to play around here when I was young - that is how I know the country so well".

As they are talking, a police car comes up the drive; it is driven by P.C.49.

"Good evening, all", he greets them.

"Where did you get the car?" asks the Man In Black.

"I borrowed it from Inspector Wilson", answers P.C.49.

"It's a pity he wouldn't give you any promotion", says Paul.

"Oh, I don't know," says P.C.49, "'The Adventures Of Chief Inspector Berkley-Willoughby' wouldn't sound right, would it?"

"No." agree the others.

"Well, I think we are all here now," says Mrs. Dale, as she leads the way into the front room. As they approach it, they hear strains of the 'Harry Lime Theme' from 'The Third Man' being played on a gramophone.

"That is the four hundredth time I have heard that," sighs Steve.

"Good evening, everyone," says Philip Odell, switching off the gramophone.

"There is a telegram from Miss Dangerfield, saying she can't come," says Dr. Dale, presently.

"Was there anything peculiar on the telegram?" asks Paul.

"Oh, don't start now, dear," pleads Steve.

"Yes, there was," says Dr. Dale, "and it rather puzzled me: it was 'Be careful, the Borgias were always having dinner parties, too'."

It is then that Dick realises that the Borgias were used to finding poison in drinks and food...

"Talking of drinks, what about handing some round?" says Dr. Dale, "I'll make sure that they aren't poisoned first."

"Yes, I could fancy a drop of scotch," says Philip, "and I'll bet Paul and Steve have a gin and tonic."

"How do you know that?" asks Paul.

"In all your adventures, you always have a gin and tonic!" answers Philip.

"Do you realise, Steve," says Paul, "he must be one of our fans!"

"Why didn't you bring Snowey and Jock, Dick?" asks P.C.49.

"Well there was only room in the helicopter for one, and if I had brought Jock, Snowey would have sulked, and if I had brought Snowey, Jock would have sulked, so I left them both at home," replies Dick.

"What is the matter with your face, Dick?" asks Philip, "it's all scratched."

"That's what I got from the tiger I met on the way." says Dick.

"I'll bet the tiger's face is ten times worse!" laughs Paul.

"You know," says Dick, turning to Philip, "I suggest we all say what we are thinking."

"I always do say what I think," says Philip, "that's why nobody loves me."

"But, seriously," says Dick, "why, for example, didn't you bring Heather?"

"For the same reason that P.C.49 didn't bring Joan, I suppose," says Philip, "I guess we suspected danger."

"I expect you are wondering why I brought Steve, under those circumstances," interrupts Paul. "After all, Steve is my wife; P.C.49 isn't married to Joan and neither is Philip married to Heather, but Steve would not stay at home when she received the invitation."

"As you know, I am familiar with this part of the country," says Dick, "and I knew that this house had been bought two months ago, by a Mr. Brown. I checked up about Silas Ephraim and discovered that nobody has died in this house for years and, what is more, the firm of Croxford, Croxford, Featherdale & Croxford do not employ a clerk named Walter Leesham."

Just then, a servant comes into the room with some coffee.

"I should watch that coffee, sir" he says, "all the other food is home-made, but the coffee was supplied by someone else."

He leaves the room and Dick notices that the coffee has a funny smell. "Who is going to prove that it is poisoned?" says Philip.

"By Jove, it is prussic acid!" exclaims Dr. Dale.

"Now who would want to poison us?" queries Philip.

"I don't think Inspector Wilson is very fond of me, but I don't think he'd try to poison me," says P.C.49.

"Perhaps J. Arthur Rank is trying to make some money out of us." says Dick.

"It's more likely that somebody is angry with us for not listening to 'Faust' on the Third Programme," says Philip.

"I feel awful about this," says Mrs. Dale, "we asked you to come."
"It isn't your fault," Paul assures her.

"Generally, we have work before play," says Philip, "but this time things are reversed: we've had our play - what about doing a spot of work?"

"That's just what I was thinking," says Dick. "Come on, let's see what is going on in the kitchen."

They all enter the kitchen and find it empty; as they are about to go into the hall, they discover that someone has locked them in.

"Has anyone got a pack of cards?" asks Philip.

"Stop wasting time," says Dick, irritably.

"It's better than doing it," argues Philip.

They then hear for the first time the voice: "I am Silas Ephraim and I am not dead, but very much alive. I propose to kill you all, but first there will be some fun and games. I am going to enjoy this. I am talking through a hidden loudspeaker and I can hear every word you say; YOU are now the slaves to the loudspeakers, just as I have been for years."

Mrs. Dale begins to cry: "Oh, Jim!" she sobs.

"Never mind, Mary, love," says Dr. Dale, trying to comfort her.

"We'll have to get out of here," says Dick, picking up a chair with the intention of breaking down the door.

"It's no good doing that," says the voice, "the door is barred with steel."

"I never saw such a guy as you, Barton," scolds Philip, "you are always wanting to break something."

"Anyway," says Paul, "it's Silas Ephraim's neck you want to break, not his chair."

"Anyone want a game of pontoon?" says P.C.49.

"You can escape by pressing the ornamental panelling round the fireplace," says the voice.

"I wish you'd send up a bottle of scotch, or send it down, as the case may be. You don't drink, do you, Barton?"

"No, I don't," answers Dick.

"You don't know what you're missing," says Philip.

"At each corner of the ceiling, some vapour is escaping," continues the voice, "you'll have to press the panelling."

"Come on, Dick," says the Man In Black, "this is more in your line."

After a quick search, "I have discovered the secret," says Dick, "it is a wooden carving of a lion's head on the right of the fireplace."

"Press it," says Silas Ephraim.

Dick presses it and the door opens; at the same time, the machinery pulls the trigger of a gun: a hail of bullets is fired but no one is hurt, as the bullets go into the ceiling. They then proceed into the hall and walk towards the stairs.

"Mind the stairs, and remember your 'Bulldog Drummond'," warns the voice.

They rack their brains and finally recall an incident when someone had to climb stairs: on one step, something came out of the wall and hits them for six.

"We'll have to get up there," says Barton.

"Don't go and commit suicide, Barton" warns Philip, "a hole in the Light Programme from 6.45 to 7pm would be ghastly!"

Under Dick's orders, they leave Paul Temple downstairs with Steve and Mrs. Dale and make their way up by way of the stair rail; when they arrive at the top they throw down a flowerpot, which rolls down the stairs, step by step. When it touches the fifth stair from the top, the trap works as they expected.

"There are times when your methods pay dividends," says Philip, admiringly.

They warn Paul, Steve and Mrs. Dale to come up, avoiding the fifth step from the top.

When they have safely travelled upstairs, everyone goes into the first room; they find a corpse in a chair, which Dr. Dale recognises as Walter Leesham.

"He died of heart failure," assures Ephraim.

Suddenly, they discover they are locked in again; Dick, noticing no steel grill on the window, breaks it, hoping to escape onto the balcony.

"You needn't have done that," says Philip, "the window wasn't locked!"

Just as Dick gets on to the balcony, it gives way under him, but he manages to hold on to the window frame and get back into the room.

"This is my lucky day," says Dick, "first, I find a half crown in the turn-up of my trousers, and then I manage to save myself going with the balcony."

They then find a coil of rope in the room, which Paul throws out of the window and climbs down.

"Goodbye, Steve, and don't forget to tell your mother that my last thoughts were for her!" he shouts to his wife.

Steve goes to the rope, with the intention of joining her husband.
"I am used to this kind of thing, as I used to do a lot of mountaineering," says Steve.

"I bet you found a corpse in every crevice," says the Man In Black.

Suddenly, Paul sees some wolves coming near to the house. He manages to give the alarm and Steve manages to get out of the way.

Philip takes out his pistol and, after assuring P.C.49 that he has a licence, shoots the wolves.

"I wouldn't have liked Paul to be the wolves' Christmas dinner. Why don't you carry a pistol, Barton? They're very useful," says Philip.

"I am expected to do everything with my fists," replies Dick.

"I wonder what will happen next week... I mean, next?" sobs Mrs. Dale, "and when is it going to end?"

"I don't think the author himself is sure," says Philip.

Suddenly, snakes appear down the chimney! The voice very kindly pushes a button, opening another door; they are confronted by a lift gate, but, before they can open it, a rat scuttles past and is killed when it touches the gate.

"I'm afraid one of your relations has been killed by your electric fence," shouts P.C.49 to Ephraim.

"The Light Programme is closing down as far as you are concerned," shouts Paul, who has just had an idea.

"If we all keep quiet, Ephraim may stop playing cat and mouse with us," says Paul in a whisper, and they all proceed to speak in hushed tones.

Suddenly, they see the shadow of a man with a gun, but this proves to be only a dummy, which they ignore; however, Philip suddenly raises the alarm: "His trigger finger is moving!" he yells.

"Get down, all of you!" shouts Dick, and they dive to the floor, managing to avoid all the bullets from the mechanical dummy.

Dick sees a gap in the wall at the top of another flight of stairs: it is a door from which the reflection of a light shines.

"This looks like the finale," says the Man In Black.

"That is where Ephraim is hiding," says P.C.49.

"Don't come in, or you will be sorry," warns Ephraim.

They ignore this remark and Philip threatens him with his pistol.

"I hate you all," says Silas Ephraim, "for years I have been chained to my radio, craving to know what would happen next, but I always had to wait until next week. I broke my radio, only to discover that I can't live without you! For all I care, you can go to hell, all of you!"

He screams hysterically and then bursts into evil laughter as he pulls a lever: the whole house blows up, but, somehow, everyone except Silas Ephraim is thrown to safety.

Their explanation is: "We are immortals!"

Then they see the damage: "My car," says Paul; "My helicopter," says Dick; "My diary," says Mrs. Dale; "My Sunday helmet," says P.C.49.

As always, the final word comes from the Man In Black: "Villains may come and villains may go - we go on forever. Goodnight."

"The Night Of The Twenty Seventh" was written by Edward J. Mason and produced by Martyn C. Webster; it was first broadcast on 27th December 1949 on the Light Programme, between 8.30 and 9.30pm. It was repeated in the 'Curtain Up' series at 8.30pm on 22.3.50.

SCRIPT: Edward J. Mason.

PERSONNEL: Martyn C. Webster (producer).

CAST: Max Adrian (Walter Leesham), Robert Beatty (Philip Odell), Douglas Burbridge (Dr. Dale), Duncan Carse (Dick Barton), Valentine Dyll (The Man in Black), Malcolm Hayes (Servant), Kim Peacock (Paul Temple), Ellis Powell (Mrs. Dale), Leon Quartermane (Silas Ephraim), Brian Reece (P.C. 49), Marjorie Westbury (Steve Temple).

[OG-NOTE: There was a recorded repeat of this show on *Curtain Up*, broadcast on March 22, 1950.]

APPOINTMENT WITH FEAR (THE LIGHT PROGRAMME, LONDON)

[Wednesday—9:00-9:30 PM]

December 24, 1952 **"Cabin B-13"**

[Tuesday—8:45-9:15 PM]

July 26, 1955

"The Man Who Couldn't Be Photographed" (JDC)

["...Why should the screen idol of millions be prevented from seeing the prints of a photograph he has had taken?..."]

CAST: Beth Boyd (Francine), Peter Cloughton (Mullis), George Hagan (Tom Sherwood), Roderick Lovell (Bruce Ransom), Annabel Maule (Nita Valdez), John Serret (Monsieur du Lac), Gladys Spencer (Madame Vernet).

August 2, 1955

"White Tiger Passage" (JDC)

["...How a number scrawled on the wall of a Brighton telephone kiosk led to the arrest of a murderer, and the promotion of a junior reporter..."]

CAST: Margaret Butt (Jenny Holden), George Hagan (Derwent), Douglas Hayes (Bill Stacey), Sarah Leigh (Mavis), Annabel Maule (Stella), Bryan Powley (Monsieur Henri Duchene), James Thomason (Johnson).

August 9, 1955

"The Dead Man's Knock" (JDC)

["...The portrait of a beautiful lady... a strange meeting and the re-enactment of a murder in a vast house called Widestairs... Harpsichord played by Clifton Helliwell..."]

CAST: Terence Brook (Jack Lacy), Elizabeth London (Margery Kynaston), James Thomason (The Rev. Frank Richards), John Turnbull (Doctor Marshall), Manning Wilson (Edward Kynaston).

August 16, 1955

"The Sleuth of Seven Dials" (JDC)

["...A visit to a lawyer by a strange Eastern gentleman...a seemingly impossible murder, and an innocent man on the run from the police..."]

CAST: Allan Cuthbertson (James Vaughan), Edwin Ellis (Thompson), George Hagan (Inspector Hammond), Sarah Leigh (Eleanor Prentice), Geoffrey Matthews (Bellboy/Hassan El Moulk), Rudolf Offenbach (Schultz), Manning Wilson (George Prentice).

August 23, 1955

"The Villa of the Damned" (JDC)

["...A honeymoon couple find adventure—and terror—in a mysterious villa in Italy..."]

CAST: Peter Cloughton (Guard), Gordon Davies (Alan Stannard), Glen Farmer (American tourist), Joan Hart (Angela Stannard), Megan Latimer (Bianca da Carpi), Marjorie Mars (Brenda Stannard), Allan McClelland (Pietro), Edgar Norfolk (The Rev. Septimus Goodlaw).

August 30, 1955

"Till the Great Armadas Come" (JDC)

["...But for revelations given by Special Prisoner 24 the Fuhrer's plot to stamp his mark for ever on London would have materialized..."]

Harmonica played by Reg Damley...”]

CAST: Peter Cloughton (Jones), Peter Howell (Captain Nichols), David King-Wood (Colonel Fielding), Rolf Lefebvre (Trevis), Edgar Norfolk (Sir Guy Worth), Christopher Rhodes (Charlie Siebold), Catherine Salkeld (Laura Sheldon), John Turnbull (Lord Glenarvon).

[Monday—7:30-8:00 PM]

August 12, 1957

“The Man Who Couldn’t Be Photographed”

August 19, 1957

“White Tiger Passage”

August 26, 1957

“Dead Man’s Knock”

September 2, 1957

“The Sleuth of Seven Dials”

September 9, 1957

“The Villa of the Damned”

September 16, 1957

“Till the Great Armadas Come”

[Gallery]



John Dickson Carr



Franklin Dyall



Valentine Dyall



Val Gielgud



BBCSHOP.COM description: “Four chilling episodes from the famous 1940s BBC radio series, introduced by Valentine Dyall, AKA The Man in Black. These are the four sole surviving episodes from the BBC archive: : ‘The Pit and the Pendulum’ by Edgar Allan Poe (18/9/1943); ‘The Speaking Clock’ by John Dickson Carr (13/4/1944); ‘The Clock Strikes Eight’ by John Dickson Carr(18/5/1944); ‘And The Deep Shuddered’ by Monckton Hoffe (20/11/1945) . Amongst the cast are Marjorie Westbury, Marius Goring and Gladys Spencer.

APPOINTMENT WITH FEAR

[RADIO-SERIES]

The BBC World Service revived the series in the mid-Seventies, but (inexcusably) did not re-instate Valentine Dyall as “The Man In Black,” despite the fact that he was still alive and actively performing at that time (including several appearances on the *Doctor Who* television series).

The show made less-than-inspired use of music originally composed by Bernard Herrmann for the films of Alfred Hitchcock, opening each show with music heard just after the shower murder in *Psycho* and signing off with music from *Marnie*.

ORIGINATION: World Service, London (BBC).

DURATION: December 4, 1976-January 18, 1977.

PERSONNEL: Derek Haganoff (producer, director), Keith Perrin (technical presentation), Michael Robson (scriptwriter), Bryan Stevens (technical presentation).

CASTS: Christopher Cantaloveve, Ursula Howells, Terence Longden, et al.

EXTANT RECORDINGS: “My Fate Cries Out” (12/4/76), “I’ll See You Next Friday” (12/11/76), “Target” (12/18/76), “A Fine And Private Place” (12/25/76), “Morning Glory” (1/1/77), “Identikill” (1/8/77), “Dogs” (1/18/77).

[CHRONOLOGY]

APPOINTMENT WITH FEAR (WORLD SERVICE, LONDON—BBC)

[Saturday—

December 4, 1976	“My Fate Cries Out”	[EXTANT RECORDING]
December 11, 1976	“I’ll See You Next Friday”	[EXTANT RECORDING]
December 18, 1976	“Target”	[EXTANT RECORDING]
December 25, 1976	“A Fine and Private Place”	[EXTANT RECORDING]
January 1, 1977	“Morning Glory”	[EXTANT RECORDING]
January 8, 1977	“Identikill”	[EXTANT RECORDING]
January 18, 1977 ?	“Dogs”	[EXTANT RECORDING]

APPOINTMENT WITH FEAR

[RADIO-SPECIAL]

[*Radio Drama Reviews Online*: “This light-hearted look at the place of horror in contemporary culture was recorded at London’s Sutton House (reputedly one of the capital’s oldest haunted properties), and took the form of a discussion involving presenter Reeve Shearsmith and guests Vic Reeves, Mark Gatiss and Yvette Fielding.”

(RADIO 4, LONDON—BBC)

[

October 29, 2009	“Appointment with Fear”
[RADIO DRAMA REVIEWS ONLINE: “... <i>Appointment with Fear</i> proved a pleasant surprise: the panel was quite candid about the ways in which horror affected them...and the discussion was punctuated with clips from a variety of programmes including <i>The Man in Black</i> with Valentine Dyall, Griselda Harvey delivering a venomous laugh, an adaptation of Stephen King’s <i>Pet Cemetery</i> , Enid Blyton’s Famous Five (particularly horrifying for young children) and <i>Ghosthunters</i> , a reality television show presented by Michael Parkinson. The conclusions reached were far from original (that horror not only has the power to shock but can appeal to all types of viewer and/or listener, regardless of class, race or gender). The panellists also suggested that horror has a certain cathartic quality, which proved an interesting point: I wonder how we might differentiate horror from tragedy in this respect?...”]	

APPOINTMENT WITH MR. DAVIS

[RADIO-SCRIPT]

“Dr. Symes, a Consultant Psychologist, rings for the next patient. The door opens and the nurse shows in Mr. Davis, whose face seems vaguely familiar to Dr. Symes, just as the clock strikes three. Mr. Davis is consulting Dr. Symes about strange hallucinations and dreams about Time. The dreams begin and end with the opening of a door, each door and dream leading to the next stage in a sequence. Mr. Davis says he has been led in this way to Dr. Symes’ consulting room. The Psychologist advises him not to worry, and to come back again the next day. The nurse shows Mr. Davis out through the door, and after a few moments Dr. Symes rings for the next patient. The door opens and the nurse shows in Mr. Davis, whose face seems vaguely familiar to Dr. Symes, just as the clock strikes three...” [BBC TITLE CARD]

[CHRONOLOGY]

(NORTH ENGLAND HOME SERVICE)

[Monday—10:25-10:45 PM]

November 10, 1958

“Appointment with Mr. Davis”

PERSONNEL: C. S. Abraham (scriptwriter), Vivian Daniels (producer).

ARCH OBOLER’S PLAYS

[RADIO-SERIES]

Although not by any means a horror program per se, this series was what NBC gave in and ceded to Oboler when he decided in the fall of 1938 not to return to *Lights Out*, which he had scripted for the two previous years. Consisting of both new scripts and a smattering of stories from his previous gig, it proves conclusively that although Oboler may have thought he was done with horror, it was clear that horror was not done with him.

The main purpose of this entry is to straighten out, once and for all, which of Oboler’s scripts appeared first on *Lights Out* and which appeared first on *Arch Oboler’s Plays*. Oboler started all the confusion by re-using scripts from AOP on his 1942-43 revival of *Lights Out*. And he later mixed recordings from both *Lights Out* and *Arch Oboler’s Plays* into his 1970 series *The Devil and Mr. O*. Over the years nameless collectors have spliced *Lights Out* openings onto AOP shows (even AOP shows like “Nobody Died” that were never redone on LO, and in the Nineties OTR company Metacom, in cooperation with Oboler, did the same thing on a larger scale.

Another reason for this entry is to highlight the handful of scripts that are relevant to this book but which were never repeated by Oboler on *Lights Out* or anywhere else: “Crazytown,” “Nobody Died,” etc.

[Paul K. Damai, *Hammond Times*] “Oboler is overrated—or at least thus run our sentiments. Occasionally he socks the carillon, but even when he clicks his writings have a monotony. A demi-moribund air pervades too thickly not only the confines of his whole works but hangs heavy in the subdivisions comprising the individual MSS. Such lack of versatility earns criticism.

“The first in this new series, ‘The Ugliest Man in the World,’ was one of Oboler’s better efforts. Not only that, it had a happy ending which is surprising for a psychological study where a suicide seemed to be the only hackneyed but expected solution. ‘Not romantic, but psychological,’ said Author Arch after the play, describing the aims and modus operandi of the series. Oboler betrayed an excellent mike delivery, and displayed that which gave us a vague notion that here might be better actor than playwright.

“The series is of a very high type and decidedly an addition to the enrichment of the air, if the present form is maintained.

“Oboler’s Play for this week is ‘The Mirage,’ a drama with only two characters...these will be enacted by Joan Blaine (Mary Marlin) and Raymond Johnson (who played to the hilt last Saturday’s ‘Ugliest Man’).”

[Lima News] “Boris Karloff, Frankenstein monster of the screen, was the inspiration for ‘The Ugliest Man in the World,’ premiere production of Arch Oboler’s Plays, new series of original dramas of the fantastic and of the imagination to be produced by NBC.

“Two years ago Karloff and Oboler were drawn together in NBC’s Midnight thrillers, ‘Lights Out.’ Karloff was starring in the spintingling productions and Oboler was then writing them. One day the two sat down at lunch and discussed the many distorted-faced characters Karloff had portrayed on the screen.

“ ‘That was the beginning of ‘The Ugliest Man in the World,’ Oboler explained. ‘But don’t misunderstand me. Boris himself is one of the handsomest men in the world in a virile way, but these ugly monster roles set me thinking. What would happen to the man who was so ugly that children would scream in fright when they saw him, who was such a shocking spectacle that even his mother’s life became unbearably unhappy? How would such a man react to people and to love? What childhood would he have?’”

They’ll center on fantasy and

Imagination emotional conflict.

Not thrills and Romance.

ORIGINATION: WEA, New York City, New York (NBC-RED).

DURATION: March 25, 1939-March 23, 1940.

PERSONNEL: Arch Oboler (scriptwriter), Edwin Whitney (director).

[CHRONOLOGY]

ARCH OBOLER’S PLAYS (WEA, NEW YORK)

[Saturday—10:00-10:30 PM]

March 25, 1939

“The Ugliest Man in the World”

[EXTANT RECORDING]

[First appearance of this script. Repeated on same series on July 22, and redone on *Lights Out* on June 1, 1943. Re-broadcast on *The Devil and Mr. O* as “Mr. Freak.”]

CAST: Raymond Edward Johnson, et al.

April 1, 1939

“Mirage”

[EXTANT RECORDING]

[“...Arch Oboler will portray the entire action of a radio drama through the medium of only two characters in ‘Mirage’... The two characters of the novel drama are Linda and Carl, two society sophisticates, who desert a party to stroll on a nearby beach. Linda’s only interest in life is society and Carl’s is business. The viewpoints of both change completely, however, after watching an old man writing in the sands on the beach. The two difficult roles will be enacted by the popular stars, Joan Blaine and Ray Johnson. These two actors are among the group of players Edwin Whitney, production director, plans to use frequently to interpret the highly imaginative Oboler dramas. Others in this group are Ann Shepherd, Betty Caine, and Frank Lovejoy....”]

[First appearance of this script. Repeated on same series on November 25 (a abridged version), and redone on *Lights Out* on September 21, 1943.

CAST: Joan Blaine, Raymond Edward Johnson.

April 8, 1939

“The Truth”

[“...Ray Collins will be starred in the difficult role of a scientist who endeavors to determine whether the universe has an independent, material existence or whether it is just an idea in the mind of God...”]

[Repeated in the 1945 revival of *Arch Oboler’s Plays*. Never a *Lights Out* broadcast, but certainly a “far-out” script. Man dreams of his soul flying out and expanding into the universe; turns out it’s a dream leading into the man’s actual death.]

CAST: Ray Collins, et al.

April 15, 1939

“The Ways of Men, Past, Present and

[EXTANT RECORDING]

Future: Memoriam, Sole Survivors, The Laughing Man”

[“...Arch Oboler, who presented a psychological study, a fantasy and a philosophical drama as the first three of his new series of plays over

	WEAF will turn to stark realism for his fourth broadcast, with three short sketches on the general theme of war and peace. The first, 'Sole Survivors,' will have a contemporary setting. The second, called 'Memoriam,' is to treat of a past conflict. 'Hail Victory,' the third, will dip far into the future in an endeavor to show where present trends may lead the human race..."]
	CAST: Curt Conway, Raymond Edward Johnson, et al.
April 22, 1939	"Mr. Important"
	CAST: Martin Gabel, et al.
April 29, 1939	"The Cliff" [EXTANT RECORDING] [First appearance of this script. Redone on <i>Lights Out</i> on July 6, 1943.]
	CAST: Frank Lovejoy, et al.
May 6, 1939	"The Engulfed Cathedral" [EXTANT RECORDING] [Must hear this: is it the same as "The Sea"???
	CAST: Raymond Edward Johnson, et al.
May 13, 1939	"Baby"
	CAST: Ireene Wicker, et al.
May 20, 1939	"Crazytown" [EXTANT RECORDING]
	CAST: Edmond O'Brien, Paul Stewart, et al.
May 27, 1939	"The Word" ["...a stream-of-consciousness drama dealing with the strange obsession of a woman... Under severe emotional strain, the woman begins to believe that if she can hear the last words of persons passing from this life she will be able to understand the mysteries of immortality. An unusual psychological reaction brings about a surprising climax to the drama..."]
June 3, 1939	"Dark World" / "Steel" / "Humbug" ["...Three short works of widely contrasting character will be heard... 'Steel' and 'Humbug' will be heard with Raymond Edward Johnson in the roles he originally made famous. The third, 'Dark World,' will star Joan Blaine. 'Steel' is an impressionistic picture of the life of a metal worker. 'Humbug' is a fantasy in which a man of the year 21939 comes across a history book written in the 20th century. 'Dark World' is a story of the supernatural in which a woman who has just died attempts to reply to remarks being made about her past by doctors and nurses in the hospital..."]
June 10, 1939	"Nero's Wife" [EXTANT RECORDING]
June 17, 1939	"The Immortal Gentleman" [EXTANT RECORDING]
	CAST: Edmond O'Brien, et al.
June 24, 1939	"The Luck of Mark Street"
	CAST: Raymond Edward Johnson.
July 1, 1939	"Visitor from Hades"
	CAST: Frank Lovejoy, et al.
[Saturday—9:30-10:00 PM]	
July 8, 1939	"The Ivory Tower" [EXTANT RECORDING]
	CAST: Alla Nazimova, et al.
July 15, 1939	"The Shooting Star" / "Talisman" / "Eigerwund"
	CAST: Raymond Edward Johnson, et al.
July 22, 1939	"The Ugliest Man in the World"
July 29, 1939	"Alter Ego" [EXTANT RECORDING]
	CAST: Betty Garde, et al.
August 5, 1939	"Mr. Pip" / "Man to Hate" / "Rich Kid"
August 12, 1939	"History of a Mug"
August 19, 1939	"Efficiency Island" ["...The industrial scene of the future will be treated in realistic dramatic fashion... Betty Caine will have the leading role in the drama, which

August 26, 1939	attempts to forecast working conditions in the days when straightline factory production methods will have been carried to perfection..."] "This Lonely Heart" CAST: Alla Nazimova, et al.	
September 2, 1939	"Love Story Ltd." / "The Trail" / "Mungahra" ["Mungahra" is a shortened version of "Death Prayer," which ran on <i>Lights Out</i> on November 4, 1936. It was redone on <i>Lights Out</i> on October 27, 1942 CAST: Santos Ortega, et al.	
September 9, 1939	"And Adam Begot"	
September 16, 1939	"Suffer Little Children" / "Finale" / "I Do" CAST: Frank Lovejoy, et al.	
September 23, 1939	"Mr. Whiskers" CAST: Morris Carnovsky, et al.	
September 30, 1939	"Holiday 1939" CAST: Raymond Edward Johnson, et al.	
October 7, 1939	"The Machine" / "Happy Year" / "Autumn Flower"	
October 14, 1939	"The Word" CAST: Edmond O'Brien, et al.	
October 21, 1939	"Perfect Party" CAST: Lurene Tuttle, et al.	
October 28, 1939	"Profits Unlimited"	
November 4, 1939	"Young Mr. Trouble" CAST: Billy Halop, et al.	
November 11, 1939	"I'll Tell My Husband" CAST: Gale Sondergard, et al.	
November 18, 1939	"Bathysphere" CAST: George Zucco, et al.	
November 25, 1939	"Mirage" / "Miss American" CAST: Katharine Hepburn, Burgess Meredith, et al. [2nd half (Miss American) only. Followed by 9 minute interview with Arch Oboler commenting on the series.]	[EXTANT RECORDING]
December 2, 1939	"State Executioner" / "Danse Macabre"	
December 9, 1939	"Hometown" / "New World"	
December 16, 1939	"Nobody Died" CAST: Jay Novello, et al.	[EXTANT RECORDING]
December 23, 1939	"These Are Your Brothers"	
December 30, 1939	"This Precious Freedom"	[EXTANT RECORDING]
January 6, 1940	"Money, Money, Money"	
January 13, 1940	"The Truth" CAST: Hans Conried, Lou Merrill, Lurene Tuttle.	[EXTANT RECORDING]
January 20, 1940	"The Sensitive Mr. Ginsberg"	
January 27, 1940	"Three Stories—With Tongue-in-Cheek: Back to the Indians / The Day the Earth Exploded / Laughing Man"	[EXTANT RECORDING]
February 3, 1940	"A Hollywood Special" CAST: Geraldine Page, et al.	
February 10, 1940	"Memoriam" / "Dark World"	
February 17, 1940	"Genghis Khan"	
February 24, 1940	"The Women Stayed at Home" CAST: Elsa Lanchester, et al.	
March 2, 1940	"Baby" CAST: Joan Crawford, et al.	
March 9, 1940	"Johnny Got His Gun" CAST: James Cagney, et al.	[EXTANT RECORDING]
March 16, 1940	"The Most Dangerous Game" CAST: Ronald Colman, et al.	[EXTANT RECORDING]

March 23, 1940

“The Ivory Tower”

CAST: Alla Nazimova, et al.

ARSENIC AND OLD LACE

[STAGE-PLAY]

Various radio versions of Joseph Kesselring’s stage play...

[Wikipedia] “The ‘murderous old lady’ plot line may also have been inspired by actual events that occurred in a house in Windsor, Connecticut, where an older woman took in boarders and allegedly poisoned them for their pensions. Kesselring originally conceived the play as a heavy drama, but a friend, reading the half-finished play, convinced him it would be much more effective as a comedy.”

[Brooks Atkinson] “They did not write the original text but the performance had the crack-brained exuberance of the Lindsay-Crouse style.”

[Skinner] “They were given that name [‘The Beamish Ones’] by Boris Karloff when he was appearing in their production of Arsenic and Old Lace. This absurdly gruesome yet gloriously funny comedy (it ran in New York for 1444 performances and in London for 1337, the longest in the British capital for any American play) came about when Joseph Kesselring sent the Lindsays a copy.

“The two went to work as soon as they had made their agreement with Kesselring. They all but rewrote everything, changing many of the situations and introducing some new characters. But they were careful to give full credit at all times to Kesselring.”

The 1971 broadcast re-united several cast members from the 1966 London stage production: Dame Sybil Thorndike, Athene Seyler, and Desmond Walter-Ellis.

[CHRONOLOGY]

LADY ESTHER SCREEN GUILD THEATRE (KNX, HOLLYWOOD—CBS)

[

November 25, 1946

“Arsenic and Old Lace”

CAST: Eddie Albert (Mortimer Brewster), Verna Felton, Boris Karloff (Jonathan Brewster), Jane Morgan.

EXTANT RECORDING

FORD THEATRE (W???, NEW YORK—NBC)

[Sunday—5:00-6:00 PM]

January 25, 1948

“Arsenic and Old Lace”

[ST. PETERSBURG TIMES: “...Four members of the original Broadway cast of ‘Arsenic and Old Lace’ will join the ‘Ford Theatre’...to present a full-hour broadcast of the play. Josephine Hull and Jean Adair will portray Abby and Martha Brewster, the sisters who see nothing wrong with putting a dash of arsenic into after-dinner wine. John Alexander will be cast as ‘Teddy’ Brewster, who is quite convinced that he is Teddy Roosevelt and is digging the Panama canal down in the cellar. Edgar Stehli will be heard as Dr. Einstein, an unlicensed surgeon who likes his strong drink without arsenic and serves as the Brewsters’ aide...”]

CAST: Jean Adair (Martha Brewster), John Alexander (Teddy Brewster), Josephine Hull (Abby Brewster), Edgar Stehli (Dr. Einstein), et al.

BEST PLAYS (W???, NEW YORK—NBC)

[

July 6, 1952

“Arsenic and Old Lace”

SCRIPT: Ernest Kinoy.

PERSONNEL: John Chapman (host), Fred Collins (announcer), Edward King (director), William Welch (production supervisor).

CAST: Jean Adair (Martha Brewster), Donald Cook (Mortimer Brewster), Boris Karloff (Jonathan Brewster), Wendell Holmes, Ed Latimer, Arthur Matlin, Ted Osborne, Edgar Stehli (Dr. Einstein), Joan Tompkins, Evelyn Varden.

EXTANT RECORDING

SATURDAY NIGHT THEATRE (HOME SERVICE, LONDON)

[Saturday—9:15-10:35 PM]

June 5, 1954

“Arsenic and Old Lace”

SCRIPT: Charles Lefaux.

PERSONNEL: Charles Lefaux (producer).

SATURDAY NIGHT THEATRE (RADIO 4, LONDON)

[Saturday—8:30-9:58 PM]

May 29, 1971

“Arsenic and Old Lace”

PERSONNEL: Graham Gault (producer).

CAST: Dinsdale Landen, Prunella Scales, Athene Seyler (Martha Brewster), Dame Sybil Thorndike (Abby Brewster), Desmond Walter-Ellis (Teddy Brewster), et al.

EXTANT RECORDING—BBC

(RADIO 4, LONDON)

[Saturday—3:05-4:35 PM]

October 9, 1976

“Arsenic and Old Lace”

[SOURCES]

Skinner, Cornelia Otis. *Life with Lindsay & Crouse*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976.

ARTC HALLOWEEN SPECIALS

[RADIO-SPECIALS]

Amazingly, for a performing group that has specialized in horror, the Atlanta Radio Theatre Company has never had a full-fledged horror series. These Halloween specials come the closest.

[Program information]

ORIGINATION: W???, Atlanta (Peach State Public Radio).

DURATION: October 31, 1994-October 31, 1997.

PERSONNEL: Henry Howard (producer).

CASTS:

EXTANT RECORDINGS:

[Program log]

ARTC HALLOWEEN SPECIALS (W???, ATLANTA)

[

October 31, 1994

“The Island of Dr. Moreau” (live)

October 31, 1995

“Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde” (live) / **“The Island of Dr. Moreau”**
(tape)

October 31, 1996

“All Hallow’s Moon” (live)

October 31, 1997

“Brides of Dracula” / **“Stanhope”**

ARTHUR MACHEN

Welsh writer that has been little-adapted for radio (or any other mass medium)...

[Frank Wilson, “The writer of fiction is no mere copyist,” June 2, 2009, When Falls the Coliseum]

“Among the many pleasures reading fiction can afford, perhaps the greatest and most lasting has to do with the people one encounters there... [They] can seem more real than the people one meets in the street, perhaps because, through the exercise of our imagination, we have helped bring them to life. But how like the people we meet in real life are they really?

“Welsh writer Arthur Machen, best known for that very strange book *The Hill of Dreams*, thought they weren’t “lifelike” at all. In a talk he gave on BBC radio in 1937 (available in a three-CD set called *The Spoken Word: British Writers*), Machen said that “the supreme artists have no interest in lifelike characters and don’t depict them save in casual moments of fatigue and depression ... the artist creates what neither he nor anybody else has ever seen in life or ever will

see in actual life.” According to Machen, it is “the artificer, the secondary man,” who “copies and compounds from the life about him.”

“The point of departure for Machen’s talk was a remark of G.K. Chesterton’s about the difference between Dickens and Thackeray: “You admired Mr. Micawber but scarcely expected to meet him ... you admired Major Pendennis, but so far from not meeting him, the trouble was to avoid meeting him.” What this demonstrates, Machen said, is that “Dickens is an infinitely greater artist than Thackeray,” the reason being that “Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller went about ... invisible to all eyes save those of Charles Dickens.”

[CHRONOLOGY]

Radio appearances of Machen:

(PROGRAMME)

[

???????? ??, 1937 [talk included in British Writers]

Radio presentations of Machen’s writings:

FANTASTIC TALES (BBC 7)

[Thursday—6:30- PM]

November ?, 2007

“The White People”

[“...The nature of good and evil and the origins of sin are explored in this intriguing tale...”]

PERSONNEL: Louise Collins (reader), Ioan Meredith (reader).

AS DARKNESS FALLS

[RADIO-SERIES]

Trailer for AS DARKNESS FALLS..., a radio anthology series in the tradition of 'Inner Sanctum' and 'CBS Radio Mystery Theatre'. The actors include Adrienne Wilkinson, Daamen Krall, Dana Hayes, John C. Alsedek, Netahly Leddel, Roque Cerda, and host Tucker Smallwood. The show is written, directed & produced by Blue Hours Productions.

Formed by Dana Perry-Hayes and John C. Alsedek, Blue Hours Productions started with little more than a couple of fun ideas. Today, it includes a marvelously talented & diverse group of actors, musicians and artists, including Adrienne Wilkinson ('Xena'), Daamen Krall ('The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari'), Tucker Smallwood ('Star Trek: Enterprise'), and Bernard Yin (The Fuzztones).

Currently, we are producing *AS DARKNESS FALLS...*, a horror anthology series in the tradition of classic Old Time Radio shows as 'Inner Sanctum' and 'CBS Radio Mystery Theatre'. We're also pitching three potential TV/web series: the 'Catwoman-meets-Cthulhu'-esque *9 Lives*, the 'Thin Man'-inspired *Mysteries Most Macabre*, and the mishmash that is *Winky Starfish: Agent of I.I.I.I.I.*

Hosted by the inimitable Tucker Smallwood, AS DARKNESS FALLS... is a throwback to such programs from the 'Golden Age of Radio' as 'Lights Out!' and 'Inner Sanctum'. Each 24-minute episode eschews cheap scares in favor of skillful acting, character development and strong plotting.

AS DARKNESS FALLS... will be released this fall by Speaking Volumes (www.speaking-volumes.com). It will be available as individual MP3 downloads, audiobooks, and in national radio syndication.

Should you want to get hold of us for any reason, please feel free to drop us a line at...

info@bluehoursproductions.com

THE ASH TREE

[SHORT-STORY]

Story by M. R. James....

[CHRONOLOGY]

THE BLACK MASS (KPFA, BERKELEY—PACIFICA)

[Saturday—11:45 PM-12:25 AM]

December 21, 1963

“The Ash Tree”

[“...M. R. James’ ‘The Ash Tree,’ adapted and performed by Erik Bauersfeld, with Marian Winch as Mrs. Chiddock...”]

THE GRAVEYARD SHIFT (KPFK, LOS ANGELES—PACIFICA)

Circa 1978

“The Ash Tree”

AT THE END OF THE PASSAGE

[SHORT-STORY]

“He has employed the grotesque, the horrible, and very often the eerie in his plots, looking with anxious but never credulous eyes at what may be distinguished or imagined ‘at the end of the passage,’ in the half-world betwixt fact and dream.”

Ghost story by Rudyard Kipling...

“First published in the United States on 20 July 1890 in the *Boston Herald*... Collected in 1891 in an authorized volume *Mine Own People* and in *Life’s Handicap* (1891) in the United Kingdom.

“Four young men, a doctor, a civil servant, a surveyor, and an engineer, get together each week in the engineer’s house in a remote station, to dine and chat. It is the summer season, and there is no escape from the heat and dust, and little to entertain them. Hummil, the engineer, is near the end of his tether, arguing stridently with the others, in a vile temper. He has not slept properly for days, and when he does drop off, he is afflicted by fearful dreams. He has put a spur in his bed to stop himself drifting into the shallow sleep of nightmares.

“The doctor, Spurstow, unloads Hummil’s gun, lest he shoot himself, and gives him bromide to help him sleep deeply. But when they return a week later, they find him dead. There are images of horror in the dead eyes.

“See Philip Mason (p. 101) for an examination of this story—he believes Kipling himself may have experienced similar unspeakable fear coming in dreams.”

“[JMS Tompkins (p. 205): I cannot be sure that ‘the blind face that cries and can’t wipe its eyes,’ which appears with horrible facetiousness in ‘La Nuit Blanche’ in Departmental Ditties and as pure horror in (this story) rose in Kipling’s own dreams, but he himself has told us in ‘Brazilian Sketches’ that once in a child’s dream he wandered into a Fifth Quarter of the world and ‘found everything different from all previous knowledge,’ and the memory of that dream must have provided the groundwork for George Cottar’s wanderings in ‘The Brushwood Boy’...”

“Braybooke (Kipling’s Soldiers) regards this as a study of a man driven mad by three elementals: ‘The sense of being alone, the force of the pitiless sun...and the curse of being unable to sleep... Something robs Hummil of sleep and his mind slowly but surely goes.’”

[CHRONOLOGY]

RETOLD TALES (WJZ, NEW YORK—NBC-BLUE)

[Sunday—6:30-7:00 PM]

September 15, 1929

“At the End of the Passage”

SCRIPT: Finis Farr (adapted from the story by Rudyard Kipling).

CAST: John Brewster (Hummil), George Graham (Spurstow), William Johnstone (Mottran), Horace Sinclair (Lowndes).

TALES OF THE TITANS (WJZ, NEW YORK—NBC-BLUE)

[Monday—7:30-8:00 PM]

May 29, 1933

“At the End of the Passage”

SCRIPT: Finis Farr.

(HOME SERVICE, LONDON—BBC)

[Sunday—8:30-9:15 PM]

October 21, 1962

“At the End of the Passage”

PERSONNEL: Mollie Hardwick (producer).

TALES OF THE SUPERNATURAL (HOME SERVICE, LONDON—BBC)

[Friday—5:25-5:55 PM]

December 23, 1966

“At the End of the Passage”

[BBC TITLE CARD: “Hummil, the engineer in charge of a new Gaudhari State Railway line, invites the only other three Englishmen within 100 miles to his bungalow every Sunday. They play cards, complain of the heat and conditions etc. but anything is better for them than loneliness. On this Sunday, Hummil behaves rather oddly and admits to not having slept for some time. One of the men, a doctor, stays with him that night when the others leave. It is obvious that Hummil is terrified. After an injection Hummil sleeps and next morning seems normal. When the friends call a week later, he is dead with a look of stark terror on his face.”]

SCRIPT: A. R. Rawlinson.

PERSONNEL: David Davis (producer).

EXTANT RECORDING

THE CBS RADIO MYSTERY THEATER (WRVR, NEW YORK—CBS)

[???day—10:07-11:00 PM]

October 10, 1979

“At the End of the Passage”

[“...A British engineer in charge of building a railroad in the hot, disease-ridden interior of India faces an adventure of a lifetime. The unrelenting heat was debilitating. Life was temporary and cheap. To the credit of the British, they worked hard to improve the lot of the natives, at the same time trying to cling to their own more civilized ways. Sometimes they cracked up...”]

SCRIPT: Roy Winsor.

PERSONNEL: Himan Brown (producer-director).

CAST: John Beal (Hummil), Court Benson (Spurstow), Earl Hammond (Lowndes).

[EXTANT RECORDING]

AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS

[NOVEL]

[Sean Branney] “‘At the Mountains of Madness’ is a terrific story, but to tell it well as a movie, we would need a whole lot more money than we have. So, we thought once again we’d turn to the technologies of Lovecraft’s age. Part of what works so well with the novella is the spectacular images which you imagine as you read it. In a radio drama, we could provide sound effects and music that would be evocative, but the listener would still have the experience of conjuring these powerful images in their imaginations. We’ve been very gratified that so many of our customers

who never listened to old radio shows have found ATMOM (and radio drama) to be a very exciting way to experience a story.”

“Dark Adventure Radio Theatre: At the Mountains of Madness brings Lovecraft’s tale to life as it might have been adapted for radio during his lifetime. In the style of *The War of the Worlds* and *The Shadow*, Dark Adventure Radio Theatre dramatizes HPL’s story with a cast of professional actors, exciting sound effects and original music by Troy Sterling Nies (composer for *The Call of Cthulhu*). Relive the excitement of 1930s radio with one of HP Lovecraft’s most exciting and fascinating stories: At the Mountains of Madness.

[Lausch Rausch] By processing the HPLovecraft Hörspiel classic MOUNTAINS of madness, realized the young Hörspiel Publisher Lausch RAUSCH its first publication.

“Mountains of madness (original title At the Mountains of Madness) is a horror story by HP Lovecraft, which in 1936 in Astounding magazine was first published. It builds on the Cthulhu mythology to Love Crafts.

Interview with Gerd Naumann, reprinted in Gothic Magazine # 60 published in May 2008

[CHRONOLOGY]

(ATLANTA RADIO THEATRE, ATLANTA)

??? ??, 19??

“At the Mountains of Madness”

EXTANT RECORDING

DARK ADVENTURE RADIO THEATRE (THE H. P. LOVECRAFT HISTORICAL SOCIETY)

Circa 2006

“At the Mountains of Madness”

PERSONNEL: Sean Branney (director), Troy Sterling Nies (composer).

EXTANT RECORDING

(LAUSCH RAUSCH, BERLIN)

October 2006

“Berge des Wahnsinns”

[“...In the form of a diary is characterized first-person narrator William Dyer the course of an expedition to Antarctica after. First search he and his team of exceptional and Mesozoic rocks, like chalk slate. But then they come to a cave in which they are fossils of an unknown man, half plant and half-animal race to discover. Soon, they met with the ancient cities of a superior civilization and see that the prehistory of the Earth was very different than the science accepts....”]

SCRIPT: Gerd Naumann.

PERSONNEL: Gerd Naumann (director), Akki Schulz (music).

CAST: Herbert Fux (Pabodie), Lutz Harder (William Dyer), Michael Jackenkroll (Moulton), David Nathan (Danforth), Jan Pröhl (Douglas), Christian Rode (Lake), Friedrich Schoenfelder (Professor).

EXTANT RECORDING

AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS (RADIO 7, LONDON—BBC)

[Monday-Friday—6:00-6:30 PM]

November 1, 2010

[EP. 1]

[RADIO 4 EXTRA NEWSLETTER: “...A professor of geology attempts to stop an expedition to a remote mountain range in Antarctica—having himself experienced the terrors that await the unsuspecting traveller. Richard Coyle reads HP Lovecraft’s chilling tale, directed by Neil Gardner...”]

[BBC RADIO: “...High in the Antarctic, a team of scientists make an unexpected discovery...”]

November 2, 2010

[EP. 2]

[BBC RADIO: “...A grisly discovery at Professor Lake’s camp sparks a perilous two-man flight over monstrous mountains...”]

November 3, 2010

[EP. 3]

[BBC RADIO: “...Dyer and student geologist Danforth discover sprawling evidence of an incredible ancient civilization...”]

- November 4, 2010 [EP. 4]
[BBC RADIO: "...Investigating fantastic ancient structures high in the Antarctic, Dyer and Danforth face pure terror..."]
- November 5, 2010 [EP. 5]
[BBC RADIO: "...Battling in the Antarctic, can Dyer and Danforth escape with their lives? Richard Coyle concludes HP Lovecraft's tale of terror..."]
SCRIPT: Paul Kent (abridger).
PERSONNEL: Richard Coyle (reader), Neil Gardner (producer).

ATMOSPHERICS

[RADIO-SCRIPT]

This original play for radio by Lord Dunsany, broadcast in 1937, starred Ernest Thesiger as an escaped lunatic. Thesiger's character is not a garden-variety looney—he's radio-crazy, convinced that his brain is a receiving set for vagrant airwaves, particularly those emanating from bloodthirsty Himalayan deities.

["Listener", *Manchester Guardian*] "...the author...knows how to get the full dramatic possibilities out of a situation..."

[*Cincinnati Enquirer*, October 24, 1926] "'Radio hallucination' is a new malady which has made its appearance in England and is puzzling doctors. There have been at least a dozen cases in the last six months.

"Sufferers from it imagine they are human receiving sets and are able to receive radio messages through their ears and mouths.

"A variation of this malady is the claim of other sufferers that their sensitiveness is so keen they can hear the throbbing of orchestras and the sound of strange far-away voices."

Described as "the most eccentric gay actor around in the 1930s," Ernest Thesiger was also one of the most memorable screen villains, creating indelible characterizations in James Whales' *The Old Dark House* and *Bride of Frankenstein*, and as a serial-killer in *They Drive by Night* (1938). He also enjoyed a long stage career, much of it in light comedy, but he also excelled in the sinister parts, playing everything from Captain Hook in *Peter Pan* to Mephistopheles in *Doctor Faustus*.

As a radio personality Thesiger was frequently heard on the BBC, most memorably as the airwaves-crazed lunatic of Lord Dunsany's radio original, *Atmospherics* (1938).

[Kent] "Ernest Thesiger's first wireless appearance (23 August 1923 'Aunt Elija') was soon followed by: 29 January 1924 2LO First broadcast mock trial arranged by Ernest Thesiger... Thesiger (1879-1961) was soon to publish his autobiography, *Practically True* (Thesiger 1927) at the age of forty-eight... Thesiger has been described as: 'Witty, skeletal Ernest Thesiger...by far the most eccentric gay actor around in the 1930s and 1940s...' (Bourne, 1996, 17).

[Thesiger, p. 11]—"My companion on that occasion was Charles Conder, who was then living in the lovely house in Cheyne Walk...where the Conders gave their famous masked ball. This was the precursor of all the big fancy-dress balls that soon became the fashion at the Albert Hall and Covent Garden... I went as Death, in black draperies, with a skull-mask wreathed in scarlet poppies. On the many fans that Conder afterward painted representing the ball, there is nearly always to be found my macabre figure in the corner."

[Thesiger, p. 180]—"I make no claim to second sight, but there are days when I am certainly clairvoyant, and certain people become, as it were, completely transparent to me; when I am once attuned to them there seems to be nothing about them that I cannot read." [p. 182]—"...I acquired a certain reputation as a wizard." [p. 186]—"...it rarely happens to me that I foresee the future. But on one occasion I had a queer taste of what was to come." Dinner-party—sitting next to man, a stranger—"sudden attack of faintness"—"I got the sensation that he was being mauled to death by some wild animal"—"Many years later—"Are you any relative?"—"He fell over a tree-trunk while shooting in India, and was attacked and killed by a tiger."

[CHRONOLOGY]

DOUBLE TRACK—TWO ADVENTURES BY TRAIN (NATIONAL, LONDON—BBC)

[Tuesday—8:15-9:00 PM]

June 15, 1937

"Atmospherics" / "Little Ena"

[“...Lord Dunsany’s play has two principal characters, a railway passenger and a fugitive from an asylum possessing a large knife, who is the only other occupant of the compartment...”]

PERSONNEL: Lord Dunsany (scriptwriter), Felix Felton (producer).

CAST: Frederick Piper (Dick Smith), Ernest Thesiger (The Escaped Lunatic), William Trent (The Stationmaster), Brember Wills (The Guard).

DOUBLE TRACK—TWO ADVENTURES BY TRAIN (REGIONAL, LONDON—BBC)

[Thursday—6:15-7:00 PM]

June 17, 1937 “**Atmospherics**” / “**Little Ena**”

(EMPIRE PROGRAMME, DAVENTRY)

[Tuesday—12:15-12:35 PM]

July 5, 1938 “**Atmospherics**”

CAST: Marcus Barron (A Station-master), Carleton Hobbs (An Escaped Lunatic), Frederick Piper (Dick Smith), Horace Sequeira (A Guard).

(HOME SERVICE, LONDON)

[Friday—4:10-4:30 PM]

November 8, 1940 “**Atmospherics**”

(OVERSEAS SERVICE—ARABIC)

[Wednesday—]

December 4, 1940 “**Atmospherics**”

(

[

June 15, 1944 [according to Joshi]

(

[

June 2, 1959 [according to Joshi]

[SOURCES]

Dunsany, Lord. *Plays for the Air*???

Thesiger, Ernest. *Practically True*. London: William Heinemann, 1927.

[GALLERY]



Lord Dunsany



Ernest Thesiger

AU TELEPHONE

[STAGE-PLAY]

Grand-Guignol play by Andre de Lorde and Charles Foley...

[*The Times*, April 4, 1922] "The most thrilling item in the new Grand Guignol programme at the Little Theatre is one that was first produced many years ago, but wears remarkably well. It is *At the Telephone*, by Andre de Lorde and Charles Foley, and many will remember its story—that of the husband who hears the murder of his wife by robbers over the telephone. He is 30 miles away, but he can hear every sound without being able to avert the final catastrophe. The gruesome little piece was in very competent hands last night. Mr. Franklin Dyall gave a remarkable rendering of the husband's part, and Miss Sybil Thorndike and Miss Barbara Gott also acted admirably."

The ending of *Au telephone* has produced its horrific effect almost from the moment when it was first written. "At the time I finished writing the part with the fear of the husband," recalled Andre de Lorde, "with the murder of his wife and his child, and with him shouting 'Help! Murder!', I immediately played the scene out loud and howled so much I could probably be heard at the Palais Royal. Suddenly an office boy, trembling with emotion, white with fear, burst into my office and cried, 'Ah! mon Dieu! What? What is happening?'"

[Andre de Lorde] "One remembers the subject of "To the telephone." A husband, obliges, on business, to go away abruptly from at his place, telephone during his voyage has his wife to have his news; his wife tells him her anguish; only in a country house very isolee, with old a servant and his little boy, it comes to hear noises inquietants, steps in the garden... The husband panics. Veiled that a hand opens the shutters - a man penetre in the room. The woman pushes a cry - it is killed. And any invisible residence, nothing is watch.

"With the first act, it is has the tombee day, the departure of the husband, by the bad weather, under the gust; a kid of sinister personage comes to seek the only servant male, under pretexte that his/her mother, domiciliee in another village, is very sick. The woman remains alone with her good old woman, and, malgre they, an instinctive and mysterieuse fear dominates them... The wind blows, the walls crack, the dogs bark. There is, for eclairer the part, only the weak gleam of a lamp... Nothing terrible occurs, and, however, all is alarming. One should not be dissimulated, however, that one contributes much, not has to make naitre the fear, but has to increase it by what is called the plays D scene, effects of light, storm, whistle of the wind, vague cries of valve-grinding tools or rails of wound, etc, stage businesses whose development requires a great skill and a great safety."

Speculation on whether Lucille Fletcher was familiar with this play...

[CHRONOLOGY]

(FL—EIFFEL TOWER, PARIS)

[Saturday—8:20-8:56]

August 23, 1930

"**At the Telephone**"

["...Drama in Two Acts (Lorde)..."]

(PTT, MARSEILLE)

[Thursday—

December 21, 1933

"**Au telephone**"

(POSTE PARISIEN)

[Monday—

November 30, 1953

"**Au telephone**"

GRAND GUIGNOL (FRANCE CULTURE, PARIS)

[

April 25, 1987

"**Au telephone**" / "Vers l'au-dela"

PERSONNEL: Evelyne Fremy (director).

CAST: F. Bouraly, Jean-Pierre Cassel, S. Clement, Roger Crouzet, Linette Lemerrier, Georges Lucas, Louise Roblin, Andree Tainsy, Danielle Volle.

[SOURCES]

De Lorde, Andre. "Au telephone" *One-act Plays for Stage and Study* (edited by Walter Prichard Eaton). 1925.

[GALLERY]



Andre de Lorde

AUGUST HEAT

[SHORT-STORY]

by W. F. (William Fryer) Harvey... First publication: 1910; first book publication: 19??.

[CHRONOLOGY]

NELSON OLMSTED STORY DRAMA (WMAQ, CHICAGO—NBC-RED)

[Saturday—10:15-10:30 PM]

August 29, 1942 “August Heat”

August 14, 1943 “August Heat”

SUSPENSE (KNX, HOLLYWOOD—CBS)

[Thursday—9:00-9:30 PM]

May 31, 1945 “August Heat”
CAST: Ronald Colman, Dennis Hoey.

NELSON OLMSTED (WMAQ, CHICAGO—NBC)

[Saturday—3:45-4:00 PM]

August 10, 1946 “August Heat”

[Monday—8:15-8:30 AM]

August 25, 1947 “August Heat”

SUSPENSE (KNX, HOLLYWOOD—CBS)

[Saturday—

March 20, 1948 “Wet Saturday” / “August Heat”
CAST: Dennis Hoey, Berry Kroeger.

THE PHILIP MORRIS PLAYHOUSE (KNX, HOLLYWOOD—CBS)

[Friday—

April 22, 1949 “August Heat”
[“...Ronald Colman stars as a British artist who is overcome by ‘August Heat’... It’s an eerie story of fear and suspense, packed with chills and thrills...”]
CAST: Ronald Colman.

THE HALLMARK PLAYHOUSE (

[Thursday—

September 29, 1949 “August Heat”

[“...Fred MacMurray is cast in the role of James Withencroft, an artist... After completing a sketch of a condemned criminal, Withencroft takes a stroll on a hot Summer’s afternoon and comes upon a stone mason chipping away at a tombstone. He is shocked to recognize the mason as the criminal he had just sketched, but this shock turns to horror when he sees that the name being carved in the stone is his own...”]

CAST: Ed Begley, Fred MacMurray.

SLEEP NO MORE (WRCA, NEW YORK—NBC)

[Wednesday—9:30-9:55 PM]

November 28, 1956

“Mr. Mergenthwerker’s Lobbies” / “**August Heat**”

PERSONNEL: Ben Grauer (announcer), Nelson Olmsted (reader).

AURA

[SHORT-STORY]

Based on a short story by Carlos Fuentes...

“Recipient of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting award for Best Radio Drama, 1984.

“Combining sounds recorded in Mexico City and indigenous actors, Fuentes’ dreamlike realism spawns an exquisite and hypnotic chiller. Felipe Montero responds to a want ad in the Mexico City newspaper. He’s exactly right for the job—it’s as though the ad was written just for him. At the address he meets a woman who surely must be over a hundred years old, and her young niece, Aura. A strange force takes over and Felipe can’t help but be drawn into their lives...”

[Ivan Olson, *Fresno Bee Republican*] “...novelet about a young teacher of history who moves into the mansion of an aged widow to write a general’s memoirs. And there he meets Aura. Love of a green eyed beauty and physical degeneration and death—two favorite themes of Poe and Baudelaire—are woven so dexterously together that the fascination continues to glow long after the book is finished.”

[Robert Nott, *New Mexican*, September 9, 2005] “Global DanceFest — now celebrating its fifth year in Albuquerque — kicks off another season of world dance productions with Aura, based on the novella of the same name by Carlos Fuentes. The piece, co-presented by VSA North Fourth Art Center and NevvArt New Mexico, features 10 dancers who explore via movement, the sensual and mysterious elements within Fuentes’ story.

“Aura deals with a young historian who agrees to help an elderly widow with her late husband’s memoirs in her creepy old mansion. In the process he falls for the widow’s young niece, Aura — but there’s something weird about the whole setup, including the widow’s relationship with Aura.”

[Eliot Fremont-Smith, *New York Times*] “Carlos Fuentes, Mexico’s leading writer (best known for “Where the Air Is Clear” and “The Death of Artemio Cruz,” both about the Mexican Revolution), turns to the horror tale in his latest book. The setting of “Aura” is a mysterious, dilapidated, unlit house in a poor section of Mexico City. To the house comes Felipe Montero, a youthful historian “full of useless facts,” to take a job editing the private memoirs of a long dead French general for his ancient widow.

“The memoirs — thick, musty bundles of manuscripts tied in red ribbons—are kept in an old trunk in the widow’s bedroom and are jealously guarded her and the squealing rats that infest that corner of her room. As she hands the bundles, one at a time, to Felipe to edit, a strange eroticism spreads through the house like a poisonous mist. Felipe seduces, or is seduced by the widow’s beautiful green-eyed niece, Aura. Slowly at first, and then faster, the three of them are sucked into a hypnotic nightmare as the secret of the memoirs and the relationship of the two women become frighteningly clear.”

In 1996 a stage version was presented by the Chicago Dramatists Workshop...

In 1987. Mario Lavista received a Guggenheim Fellowship for his first and only opera Aura, based on the short story by Carlos Fuentes.

February 16 - 20, 2005

Contradanza and Rosanna Gamson / World Wide

Aura -- World Premiere

Mexico City’s acclaimed contemporary dance company Contradanza collaborates with Los Angeles choreographer Rosanna Gamson and her company World Wide to premiere Aura, a new

international collaboration. The evening-length dance theater piece is inspired by Mexican author Carlos Fuentes' famous novella *Aura*, a ghost story set in a labyrinthine unnamed city. RG/WW in collaboration with Mexican choreographer Cecilia Appleton and her company Contradanza merge movement, bilingual text and evocative theatrical images to explore the duality of Latino and Anglo cultures in Los Angeles.

[Gary Ferrington, "Audio Design: Creating Multi-Sensory Images for the Mind," *Journal of Visual Literacy* (1993)] "A critical difference between stereo and binaural playback is the aural effect each has on the listener when headphones are used. A stereo recording will sound as though it is originating within the listener's head. One seemingly becomes the soprano singing all the high notes. The sound from a binaural recording will seemingly exist in a spatial field outside the head forming a 360 degree sphere of acoustical space around the listener. A knock on the door, in a binaurally produced ghost story, is quite startling. The binaural production of audio plays has opened new production opportunities. In the ZBS presentation of Carlos Fuentes' *Aura*, the listener enters the dark landscape of the mind. A young man answers a newspaper ad and finds himself drawn into the lives of a reclusive old woman and her beautiful daughter who live in house devoid of daylight. The ambient sound was recorded on-site in Mexico City and the use of binaural technology enhances the listener's sense of presence's in each scene of the play."

53rd International Festival of Contemporary Music of the Venice Biennale, chaired by Paolo Baratta, to be held in Venice from 25th September to 3rd October 2009. The presentation of the multimedia work by José-María Sánchez-Verdú, *Aura*, based on the novel by Carlos Fuentes (Teatro Goldoni, 1 October), is another important moment in the 53rd Festival. Born in the context of the European performance network (ENPARTS) that the Biennale has launched with other international partners and with the support of the Culture Programme of the European Union, the work had its premiere at the Teatro de la Zarzuela in Madrid last May and will be performed at the Theaterhaus in Stuttgart on 17 and 18 July before arriving in Venice.

[Denis Donoghue, *New York Times*, 1990] "His major fictions are projects of the bizarre and the uncanny. He is not content for long to gratify one's sense of the usual, or one's prejudice in its favor. I would not like to be asked to say what precisely happens in "*Aura*" (1962).

Ian Watson,

WRITING/ADAPTATION (THEATRE)

Bitter Fantasy - Loosely based on the Carlos Fuentes novella "*Aura*" - 1989.

La strega in amore (1966)

'FRITZ' CREATES THREE-DIMENSIONAL RADIO

(Neumann KU-100 artificial head mike system)

Betty Smith...put on a pair of headphones to audition Carlos Fuentes' "*Aura*," the first of a series of three-dimensional radio dramas...After a few minutes, she heard footsteps and a voice behind her, and turned around. There was no one else in the room.

"I knew what to expect, but I was still fooled," she said... "Kunstkopf" binaural sound is a step beyond stereo. Where stereo creates the illusion of sound originating on both sides of the listener, binaural sound also reproduces sound behind, above, in front and below...

Fritz, officially the KU-81i dummy head manufactured in Germany by the Georg Neumann Corp. , is a gray, solid-rubber replica of a human head, mounted on a microphone stand pole...Fritz embodies several improvements over early binaural mechanisms. .. By measuring more than 70 ears, Neumann calculated an average size and shape, according to Tom Lopez, president of ZBS Media...Because the solid rubber... has about the same density as a human head, the dummy's ears have the same acoustic properties as a human's. . . Neumann solved the loudspeaker [playback] problem with... acoustic delays (in essence, sound filters) placed in Fritz' auditory canals enabling the microphones to cope with the diffuse and complex sounds coming in from all directions.. .

At a stroke, the old studio recording techniques...became obsolete. ZBS couldn't rely on a couple of actors speaking all the parts while a sound person rattles doorknobs and rings telephones in the background because the Kunstkopf would reproduce what was happening too accurately...

Screwing the head onto a stand and attaching it to a Sony portable digital recorder, ZBS went on location. Lopez...carried Fritz around to record footsteps approaching over fallen leaves and voices echoing in a stairwell... The listener hears the sound...with a devastating intimacy.

[from *The Boston Globe*, October 1984]

[CHRONOLOGY]

THE CABINET OF DR. FRITZ (DISC SERIES BY ZBS FOUNDATION)

Circa 1984

"Aura"

PERSONNEL: Roert Bielecki (Location sound engineer), Tim Clark (music), Thomas Lopez (scriptwriter, producer), William Raymond (director).

CAST: Yamilla Constantina (Aura), Lope Einecka (Senora Consuello), Gregorio Rosenblum (Felipe Montero).

EXTANT RECORDING

[SOURCES]

Ferrington, Gary. "Audio Design: Creating Multi-Sensory Images for the Mind." *Journal of Visual Literacy* (1993).

Fuentes, Carlos. Aura.

THE AUTHOR AND THE THING

[RADIO-SCRIPT]

Arch Oboler's self-reflexive script figures himself into the grisly action as Oboler the writer conjures up a hideous monster for his next *Lights Out* plot... Oboler uses a metafiction approach as both a clever story device and a form of self-promotion.

[*Winnipeg Free Press*] "The author of the play himself as the leading character in the 'Lights Out' drama... Although the writer is the central character, Author Arch Oboler will not play the role. He'll sit safely at home and hear himself go through a very uncomfortable evening."

[*Chicago Tribune*, September 11, 1936] "Lights Out," the midnight horror show written by Arch Oboler, put on a drama Wednesday night in which Oboler cast himself, his mother, his brother, and a girl friend. A monster enters his room (according to the script and Oboler's imagination) and consumes his brother and mother and murders his girl friend. "Oboler" summons the police, who can find no monster. So they hold "Oboler." A sanity hearing ensues in which physicians bearing the surnames of the radio editors of Chicago examine him. They pronounce him a lunatic. And then the thing comes and consumes him!

At the conclusion of the broadcast your reporter made a telephone call to Oboler's home and finding him in New York, apologized to his mother for disturbing her at such a late hour.

"That's quite all right," she said. "Your call reassures me that I am still alive. I heard the broadcast all alone here except for our dog!"

Shirley Frohlich, *The Billboard*, October 16, 1943] *Lights Out* Reviewed Tuesday, 8-8:30 p.m. Style — Melodrama. Sponsor — Ironized Yeast Co., Inc. Agency — Ruthrauff & Ryan, Inc. Station — WABC (New York) and CBS.

Author Arch Oboler was probably trying to prove in *The Author and the Thing* (he's writing those win-the-war dramas again, now that he's fortified himself financially on Ironized Yeast) that his commercial ending could be as auspicious as his beginning. His first mistake was telling his press agent. Prior to Tuesday's show, every radio ed's desk received the news that Oboler was planning to wind up *Lights Out* by bumping himself off and involving his Hollywood enemies and friends as accomplices and victims (interchangeably, not respectively). The only victims turned out to be Oboler's own defenseless mother and brother, and Mercedes McCambridge, radio actress. His second mistake was to try to kid the handiwork that feeds (or fed) him. Oboler played himself in this one, the author of the *Lights Out* series, dreaming up his final play. Because he's been dwelling on evil thoughts for the past seven days and nights (it says in a medieval tome he happens to have around the house), he conjures up a super-monster, the embodiment of all evil, who knocks off mom, brother, leading lady and finally Oboler, who winds up where he modestly claims to belong — in hell. Before the final kick-off, however, Oboler, a good egg at heart, informs the authorities about the murders and, since no one believes the story about the monster (he's invisible to everyone but his conjurer), Oboler comes up before the lunacy commission. He's pronounced insane on the basis of his peculiar shirts and the plays he writes. The farce isn't good or novel enough to be funny, but there's just enough of it to take the edge off whatever chills of the obvious plot. Result, therefore, wasn't even good Oboler."

[CHRONOLOGY]

LIGHTS OUT (WMAQ, CHICAGO—NBC-RED)

[Wednesday—

September 9, 1936

“The Author and the Thing”

[“...Arch Oboler writes himself a Frankenstein monster for tonight’s broadcast... Oboler will be the central character in the sketch, although he will not actually appear as an actor... Searching until weary for an idea for an episode, the author dozes as he sits at his typewriter, his hands idle in his lap. Somehow, maybe from news of the day, thoughts turn to the Far East and to the dragon that shakes the earth. The idea shapes itself into something awe-inspiring and a great green monster assumes proportions from the curling smoke of a little cigarette. Soon the gruesome animation grasps the dreamer by the shoulder and shakes him into activity...”]

SCRIPT: Arch Oboler.

LIGHTS OUT (KNX, HOLLYWOOD—CBS)

[

September 28, 1943

“The Author and the Thing”

[“...In a jovial mood Arch Oboler turns actor in the role of himself during his drama ‘The Author of [sic] the Thing’... In the script Oboler murders his enemies and takes his friends to heaven...”]

SCRIPT: Arch Oboler.

PERSONNEL: Arch Oboler (director).

CAST: Mercedes McCambridge, Arch Oboler, et al.

EXTANT RECORDING

AUTHOR’S OWN COPY

[**RADIO-SCRIPT**]

[**BBC TITLE CARD:** “Ghost story about the spirit of a thwarted novelist which enters into a copy of his own book and tries to force its present owners to read it.”]

WEDNESDAY MATINEE (HOME SERVICE, LONDON—BBC)

[Wednesday—3:00-3:20 PM]

December 13, 1950

“Author’s Own Copy”

[**BBC TITLE CARD:** “Ghost story about the spirit of a thwarted novelist which enters into a copy of his own book and tries to force its present owners to read it.”]

PERSONNEL: Frank Hauser (producer), Godfrey Howard (scriptwriter).

AUX FRONTIERES DE L’IRREEL

[**RADIO-SERIES**]

This pioneering Swiss fantasy series (the title of which translates as *On the Borders of the Unreal*) cut a wide path through the realm of the fantastical.

ORIGINATION: Radio-Sottens, Lausanne.

DURATION: April 17-June 12, 1955 (first series), August 18, 1961-August 25, 1968 (sporadic broadcasts).

PERSONNEL: Jean Grimod (scriptwriter), Robert Schmid (scriptwriter).

[**CHRONOLOGY**]

AUX FRONTIERES DE L’IRREEL (RADIO-SOTTENS, LAUSANNE)

[Sunday—

April 17, 1955

“Lolibe ou l’oiseau des îles” (*Lolibe or the Birds of the Island*)

[Friday—

May 6, 1955

“Cirque”

[Sunday—

May 15, 1955

“Les Etoiles” (*The Stars*)

[Friday— June 3, 1955	“Le Train de brouillard” (<i>The Train of Fog</i>)
[Sunday— June 12, 1955	“Le Portrait”
[Friday— August 18, 1961	“L’Anneau de Stone Hill” (<i>The Ring of Stone Hill</i>)
[Thursday— August 8, 1963	“L’Anneau de Stone Hill”
[Friday— November 29, 1963 December 13, 1963	“Isabelle et les roses” “La Jeune fille, le renard et le condor, legende des hauts plateaux andins” (<i>The Young Girl, the Fox and the Condor, a Legend of the Andean High Plateaus</i>)
January 10, 1964	“Les Trois lieutenants”
February 7, 1964	“La Nuit ramene les fantomes” (<i>The Night Brings Back the Phantoms</i>)
May 22, 1964	“Vervelin et les gens de la noce” (<i>Vervelin and the People of the Wedding</i>)
October 9, 1964	“Le Vent de la derniere chance” (<i>Wind of the Last Chance</i>)
February 12, 1965	“Une femme en or massif” (<i>A Woman in Solid Gold</i>)
June 25, 1965	“Duo dans un labyrinthe” (<i>Duet in a Labyrinth</i>)
[Thursday— October 21, 1965 November 25, 1965	“La Peau du lion” (<i>The Lion’s Skin</i>) “L’Homme qui entendait siffler le train” (<i>The Man Who Intended to Whistle the Train</i>)
June 30, 1966	“Dialogue dans un compartiment”
July 28, 1966	“L’Horloger de la quatrieme dimension” (<i>The Clockmaker of the Fourth Dimension</i>)
September 14, 1967	“George”
October 19, 1967	“Un gout de sang” (<i>A Taste of Blood</i>)
February 8, 1968	“La Fille du docteur Rappaccini” (<i>Rappaccini’s Daughter</i>)
March 7, 1968	“L’Express de 16 h 15” (<i>The 4:15 Express</i>)
April 4, 1968	“Epha que j’aimais” (<i>Epha Which I Liked</i>)
[Sunday— August 25, 1968	“Il faut croire au diable” (<i>It is necessary to accept the Devil</i>)

[SOURCES]

Berger, Jacques. Radio Mysteres.

AVALANCHE

[RADIO SCRIPT]

An episode from a BBC series entitled *Glacier Hut*, which ran on the Light Programme in 1961.

[CHRONOLOGY]

GLACIER HUT (LIGHT PROGRAMME, LONDON—BBC)

[Friday—8:00-8:30 PM]

July 7, 1961

“Avalanche”

[BBC TITLE CARD: “Two climbers and their Maori guide are marooned in a hut during a two-day storm in the Southern Alps of New Zealand. During the second night they hear a cry which gets nearer and the door blows open as a man enters. He looks frozen but manages to get a few words out about a party and an avalanche, then collapses. He revives and rushes from the hut. It is discovered next day that he was the guide of a

party of climbers buried by an avalanche 60 years earlier. The rest of the party were found 10 years ago, but the body of the guide has only now come to the surface.”]

PERSONNEL: Audrey Cameron (producer).

AVENUE X

[RADIO-SERIAL]

[J. B. Macabre] “In 1990, WBAI aired a program called Avenue X, which was produced by Brenda Black and written by Nate Torres. It was an episodic program that followed the lives of a group of vampires that lived along Avenue X in Brooklyn, New York. The show featured the radio voices of many of the station’s local talent, including the mysterious Fred Geobold. The program borrowed many of its plot elements from several literary works on vampires, but Nate Torres helped to make the show successful by adding other unique elements to the plot and capturing a feel for that part of the New York area. The program lasted two years and went off the air not due to lack of audience support but as a result of problems within the cast and production team.”

[Mark Wieczorek] “Then there was *Avenue X*. I don't know how many people know about this show... A couple of hundred, a few thousand? Produced by Brenda Black and aired on WBAI, this radio drama kept me up more nights so I could hear it/tape it when it was broadcast at 4:30 in the AM. Mike Sargent was also involved with the first season of this show, of which I have about 9 episodes on tape. It was broadcast at the end of Fredrick Geobold / Fred Geobold's show, *Lightshow*.

“*Avenue X* is about a vampire named Veronica Reverence and her search for David Darren, the vampire who made her. While I don't think this could be considered high art, it was highly entertaining as a sort of "guilty pleasure." One notable cameo was by Max Schmidt, who continues to run the Golden Age of Radio show on WBAI.”

[WBAI Folio, March 1991] “3:00 *Lightshow*. Spotlighting independence in and out of the performing arts, with hosts Frederick GeoBold and Brenda Black. Featuring at 4:30 Brenda Blacks Avenue X, a radio serial about a Vampire named Veronica Reverence. Beware of her...”

[Atomic Age] “Comic book series (Purple Spiral, 1992-1995): Veronica Reverence is a beautiful vampire who recently escaped the vampire jail known to humans as The Knight Club. She killed fellow vampire, Pagan, but only as an act of mercy to save her from an excruciating death in a fire. Now she revels in her power at her lair on Avenue X where she entices unsuspecting victims to their death.

“This title is a combination horror comic and bad girl pin-up book. Unfortunately as a horror title the writing is stilted and the art is primitive. The pin-up pages are done by different artists, and while better, are still cold and lifeless.

“This book appears to continue storylines that were started when the title was initially published by Innovation, and was adapted from a radio drama on WBAI-NY a community radio station in New York. “

Avenue X. Innovation. b&w. Adult. Adaptation of "Avenue X." no. 1 (1992.) a. Article: “Robert Chang: A Profile of the Artist”. 1p. b. "Torment" by Brenda Black & Robert Chang et al. 24p. v Veronica Reverence.

Based on the radio drama that aired on WBAI in New York.

Avenue X. Purple Spiral Comics. b&w. anth. Adult. vol. 2, no. 1 (Dec. 1994.) "More Torment" by C. Brenda Black & Fauve. 27p. v Veronica Reverence, Dillon, Lance Knight, Mercedes. vol. 3 (1995.) "Avenue X" by Brenda Black & Delfin Barral. 23p. v Veronica Reverence, Cathay vampires, Mercedes, Pagan. b. "The Origin of the Cathay Vampires" by Brenda Black & Delfin Barral. 3p. Cover: Louis Small, Jr. & Zeea Adams.

ORIGINATION: WBAI, New York City, New York (Pacifica).

DURATION: 1990-1992.

PERSONNEL: Brenda Black (producer), Nate Torres (scriptwriter).

CAST: Fred Geobold, et al.

EXTANT RECORDINGS: Unknown.

[CHRONOLOGY]

LIGHTSHOW—“AVENUE X” (WBAI, NEW YORK)

[Friday—4:30-?:?? AM]

March 8, 1991

March 22, 1991

April 24, 1992

[“...Music, live radio drama, and undead radio drama. At 4:30AM hear Avenue X, the vampire radio drama. Plus a special surprise guest...”]

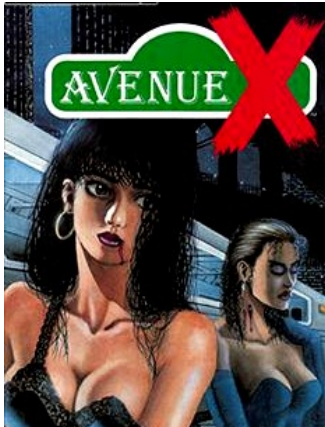
[Sources]

MACABRE, J. B. “The Bat Takes Flight: Vampires on Air.” *The Complete Vampire Companion*. New York: Macmillan, 1994.

WIECZOREK, MARK. “Radio Dramas, an Appreciation.” *Mark Wieczorek’s Weblog* (January 15, 2003).

PERIODICALS: WBAI Folio.

[Gallery]





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