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contents

1. "Step in Closer, Please"

So THIS is television!

Waves of heat poured down on me from the bank of floodlights. Through their blinding glare, I could dimly discern the other end of the small studio and the three-legged monster that was nosing toward me. Its metallic snout was aimed at my Adam's apple. Two mean little red eyes glittered on either side of the lens.

This was all new and strange to me. I felt like some oddity impaled on a pin, held up for public examination. I was beginning to sweat and to wish that—somehow—I could get out of there. My panic button was down.

Over the audio, the announcer's voice boomed into the studio: ". . . but first this message from our sponsor . . ."

Suddenly I felt right at home. If there was a sponsor around, I could relax. All my life, you might say, I have been dealing with sponsors. Why, at one time I had ten million sponsors!

Ten million sponsors?

That's what the announcer said, five nights a week for four years, eight months and eleven days.

"Mr. Edwards," he said, "is sponsored by the ten million men and women who make up the membership of the American Federation of Labor, your friends and fellow citizens . . ."

Now that's an awful lot of sponsors, even in these days of superlatives. But as every seasoned broadcaster knows all too well, sponsors come and sponsors go. Some do it for reasons, others for seasons. Some exit quietly and gracefully, others go blustering and mumbling. The one trait that all sponsors have in common is that sooner or later they all take their leave.

My first sponsor had never seen a commercial radio station for the simple reason that there was none in 1919. He had no announcer, no technicians and no microphone. But he did have a program, a product and some of the most potent commercials I have ever heard.

"Doc White," he called himself when he came to Sullivan, Illinois, where my Dad ran a grocery store. He was Doc White. He wasn't a doctor at all and the name, like the title, had been acquired by outright purchase. As he traveled along, Doc picked up his mail at the General Delivery windows under the monicker of George B. Mott.

The first time I ever saw him was on a hot June afternoon when he came sweeping around the courthouse square in a cloud of dust, the four big white horses pounding along ahead of the brass-trimmed stagecoach while Doc cracked a long whip over their heads. It was thrilling to watch. And it was good advertising.

I put down my copy of Beadle's *Frontier Series* and ran down the sidestreet to the Savoy Hotel, where this stagecoach had stopped. Doc was standing up on the front seat, his long white hair down around his shoulders, bellowing for the loafers to "look out for that horse, Mister! He's hard to handle."

By the time I got there the hotel keeper had hurried out to lend a hand along with the two aged bellhops. Doc tied up the horses to the hitching post and carefully lifted out a huge black leather-covered case, which he handed down to one of the bellhops. Just as the old fellow was about to take the box, Doc let out a bellow that could be heard for blocks: "My God, man, be *careful!* That case holds a priceless exhibit, a *two-headed baby!*"

While the trembling bellhop lowered the case to the sidewalk Doc eased himself down and turned to the assembled bystanders. As though someone had asked him the question, he gravely rumbled, "Yes sir, that's what I said. A genuine two-headed baby, one of the medical marvels of our time. I'm going to put it on display, without charge, for those who are interested."

After that kind of an introduction Doc was certain to have an audience. You might say that it was his opening commercial.

That night, when the stagecoach was parked on a vacant lot near the hotel, I was one of the first on the scene. Doc lighted his flares, put up the little brass-railed platform at the rear of the coach and got ready for business. I screwed up my courage sufficiently to inquire if that two-headed baby was really going to be shown. He assured me that it was. Did I want to help him a few minutes each evening?

I was flabbergasted, but I managed to blurt out that I certainly did. Imagine me up there on that platform with Doc White, right up there in front of everybody in Sullivan! Did I want to help? What a question! I wouldn't have missed it for the world. Best of all, the pay was fifty cents a night. That meant seven copies of Beadle's *Frontier Series*—fifty cents a night! Why I'd be the envy of every kid in town!

By seven o'clock the crowd was there, giggling, shoving and eager for the program, whatever it might be. Doc came out of

the stagecoach onto the platform, strumming a guitar and doing it exceptionally well. In a fine baritone he gave them "Oh Susannah," "Dixie," "Little Yeller Dog" and then a request number. It was my job to single out one of the old men in the audience for Doc's personal attention.

I would call the old fellow by name and ask him to come down to the edge of the stage. There Doc would shake hands with him, ask him if he'd been in the Civil War and inquire as to his favorite tune. Before the reply was half finished Doc would straighten up and bellow, " 'Marching Through Georgia?' Certainly, sir! Be glad to sing 'Marching Through Georgia,' for you, sir! How many of you boys out there were with Sherman? Let's see your hands—how many were with Sherman?"

Scores of hands would go up, for there were still quite a few of the old boys in Sullivan in 1919.

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" Doc would shout. "I'll be glad to sing 'Marching Through Georgia' if you boys will sing it with me. How about it. . . ?"

Of course they sang it; the whole crowd sang it, and from there on they were buddies of Doc.

My share in the evening's proceedings consisted of playing straight man to some ancient jokes, fanning the bugs away from the back of Doc's neck while he played guitar and drum and handing him the jars full of horrifying tapeworms. And for it I received the fifty cents and an invitation to work the next night. With the half dollar clutched firmly in my hand, I ran all the way home, too excited to be frightened as I cut through the dark schoolyard and past an old house that every kid knew to be haunted.

Doc's routine in Sullivan was similar to his routine in other communities in that part of Illinois. First, there was the chariot-race effect he got by dashing around the business district with his four big white horses, his cracking whip and his long white hair flowing in the breeze. Then there was always the bit of business where he lowered the black leather box to someone and yelled "Be careful—that case contains a two-headed baby!"

With that alleged monstrosity as an attraction, he got crowds every night, Monday through Saturday. Doc never offered to exhibit the "double-header," as he referred to it when we were alone, but if pressed he would take a half-dozen individuals into the coach each night and give them a quick peek. What they saw was a wrinkled rubber creation jammed into a huge glass jar of water. It evidently looked convincing,

for I don't recall that we had any doubters, and the ones who had seen the thing always did such an excellent job of word-of-mouth advertising that we could never accommodate the crowds.

The "two-headed baby" had to be exhibited inside the coach where the back of the thing could not be seen. It seems that Doc had once gone to sleep in a hotel and left the "baby" lying on a radiator. When he awakened the "baby" was beginning to vulcanize itself to the radiator, and in tugging it loose Doc tore a hole in its back. He never bothered to have it patched, just jammed it tightly into the jar and kept it in the corner of the coach, illuminated by one small flare.

Whether they were young or old, homely or pretty, Doc was always especially attentive to the ladies. They generally took kindly to him, too, for he was really a handsome figure in his well-tailored clothes and with that white wavy hair, which he wore after the Buffalo Bill fashion. As a result of his fondness for the ladies he picked up many a free meal along our route. He also picked up many a customer, too, for some of his wares were of particular interest to women.

For instance, on Tuesday nights Doc sold household items. "Extracts from rare and costly essences, brought to you for less than the cost of manufacture" cake coloring, "bayonet-steel" butcher knives and one of the best sellers of all: The genuine, unbreakable, lifetime wrought-iron skillet!

That skillet was sure-fire. In those days, most skillets were made of cheap cast iron. When dropped on a hard surface they broke easily and the life expectancy of the average skillet must have been pretty short, to judge from the manner in which the ladies bought Doc's "wrought-iron" jobs.

As he used to say, "You have to have an opening or you haven't got an act." He certainly had the openings. On the skillet sales he would stride out onto the platform banging on his skillet with a ball peen hammer. The skillet dangled from a short thong, and every time he smashed it with the hammer it would ring like a bell. The astounded ladies would gasp every time he drew back with that hammer; after all, they *knew* that the skillet couldn't stand such pounding.

After he had milked the scene for all it was worth Doc would invite one of the ladies to step forward and smite the skillet with the hammer, harder and harder. Then he would present her with a bottle of tonic—to build mighty muscles next time she had any hammering to do.

The "lifetime, unbreakable wrought-iron skillets" sold for one dollar—and they really sold. The gimmick was that the

one on which Doc did the pounding was actually made of steel, but the ones he sold the ladies were cast iron, as always. As a precaution he warned them to follow instructions carefully. The instructions advised the ladies to handle the skillets "just like an ordinary skillet" until they had been used at least ten times. By that time, the instructions claimed, the quality of the skillet would be insured. And by that time, of course, Doc would be out of town in case somebody dropped one of the things.

Since we were playing Sullivan and other small communities in that general area, our customers among the fair sex were largely farm wives or mothers who did a lot of sewing. That meant that they would be especially receptive to scissors of unusual quality.

Doc had them, so he said.

Once again, the opening of his act guaranteed its success. Waving a sparkling nickel-plated pair of scissors in the torchlight, he would bellow that he had just bought them that very day in one of the best stores in town. He neglected to say which town, however. Actually we carried those shears with us.

"Now as every lady in this audience knows, the real test of a pair of scissors is whether they will cut wet tissue paper. Right, Madam? . . . Thank you. . . . Now watch closely, please, as this young man dips this piece of tissue paper in water!" With that I dunked the sheet of tissue paper in a bucket of water and handed it to him. Instead of slashing away at it with the shears, Doc would take time to order me to place the pail of water down on the floor, behind the low railing of striped canvas which concealed it from the crowd.

By that time the tissue paper was ready to disintegrate.

"Watch closely, please, as I endeavor to cut the wet tissue paper with these high-grade scissors from your local merchant. . . . Watch closely. . . ."

The wet paper clung to the scissors because he turned his hand ever so slightly as he started to cut. The paper wadded up. The local merchant's product made a dismal failure of its assault on wet paper.

Just as he started to demonstrate his own shears, Doc always dropped the paper. That was my cue to come up with another sheet identical to the one he had dropped, even to the torn bottom—but with one major difference. The one I picked up came out of another bucket. Instead of water, it was soaked with lard. Doc would wave it quickly before the audience, slash at it with the scissors, and presto, cut it into ribbons. That never failed to convince the ladies and they bought

plenty of scissors. I have often wondered how many of them tried to cut wet tissue paper with the things.

Doc and I got along famously. We jogged along the dusty highway from Sullivan to Pana, from there to Taylorsville, and on to Allensville. We slept in hammocks alongside the road upon occasion. We sold tonic and scissors and cast-iron skillets. We told old jokes and sang old songs. We had fun and Doc made money hand over fist. I got my fifty cents a day and saved it.

Sometimes Doc would unbutton a little and tell me about himself. How he had once been a druggist in upstate New York. The business of rolling pills and mixing salve was too confining for him and after his wife's death he decided he would travel. One night he stopped to listen to a medicine show where the lecturer was selling "submarine ear oil, made from the inner ear of the fish." The lecturer was not impressive to Doc, but he evidently impressed the crowd for they bought more than fifty bottles of the auricular elixir at a dollar per bottle. Intrigued by this easy way of making a living, Doc said that he followed the show for about a week, then proposed a partnership. For a couple of hundred dollars Doc became half-owner of "Doctor White's Magic Medical Discovery."

A few weeks later his partner offered to sell him the whole show for four hundred dollars—cash. Since the man appeared to be in a very agitated state, Doc decided to stall. A few minutes later the partner was back, offering to sell for two hundred dollars. This time Doc bought and his ex-partner grabbed the money and scurried away. A short time later the local constable arrived with two very irate women in tow. They took a good look at Doc and angrily told the officer that he had the wrong man—Doc wasn't *their* husband!

Since his bigamous ex-partner had headed east out of town, Doc felt that it was a good idea for him to take Horace Greeley's advice. He moved into Ohio, across Indiana and into central Illinois where I first saw him that bright afternoon in June. He figured that it would be cheaper to pretend that he was Doc White than to change the lettering on the stagecoach and all the labels on the bottles, so he became another of the countless "Doctor Whites" who made the name a generic term for their profession.

The man from whom he had purchased the enterprise had only one product, the ear oil. It apparently worked miracles, but the performance was an illusion so the show had to change towns for each performance.

This was not only tiresome but contrary to Doc's idea of living. Now that he was in possession of the trick that sold the ear oil, he began adding other items, so that he could stay in each community several days, reserving the ear oil for the last night's performance.

By the time he reached Sullivan he had a full week's supply of merchandise. For the first five nights he would urge them to be sure to come back Saturday—and to bring with them any friend or relative who might be hard of hearing or even totally deaf. "You will witness a miracle here Saturday night, my friends, a miracle you will long remember."

In one respect he was right.

I witnessed those "miracles" many times and I remember them very well.

On Saturday nights Doc always indulged in a bit of mild, one-man celebrating. As he put it, he "got a little bit bourbonated." He gave them the guitar and the songs; together we gave them a few minstrel jokes that had seen better days but had never encountered more appreciative audiences.

Then came the event they had all been waiting for.

Doc would take off his big hat and stand between the two hissing flares, his hands held up for silence. As the giggling and shuffling died down, his voice would boom out over the crowd:

"There is a time for levity and a time for gravity. We have had our fun—but there are many in this audience tonight who have not been able to share our happiness. They are your own dear ones, those who are suffering from impaired hearing.

"I have been promising that tonight you would see a miracle and you shall see it. Tonight you are going to witness an amazing restoration of hearing to one of your own friends or neighbors. You are going to go away from here tonight knowing that you have witnessed a miracle.

"The essence of that miracle is in this little wooden box which I hold in my hand. It is a remarkable preparation known to the world of science as Submarine Ear Oil—made from the inner ear of the fish."

At this point he always paused for the inevitable titter that ran through the crowd.

"That's what I said—the inner ear of the fish. It sounds ridiculous, of course, to talk about ears on fish! How many of those in this crowd tonight like to fish? Hold up your hands."

There were always plenty of hands.

"Fine! Now how many of you ever saw ears on a fish?"

More giggles but no hands up on this one.

"No, my friends, of course you never saw ears on the fish you catch. You never saw their ears, but they have them just the same; ears that are far more sensitive than yours or mine.

"How many times have you been sitting beside the stream when suddenly you saw an insect drift down to the surface of the water. You didn't hear it, of course, but thirty feet away a bass was lying under a rock and he heard it. Quick as a flash he dashes out, gulps the insect down and goes back to his hiding place. How could that bass, with no ears at all, hear something that you could not? I'll tell you how he did it, my friends!

"Inside the head of that fish there is a tiny amount of an amazing fluid that transmits sounds far better than the mechanism of the human ear. This fluid begins just beneath the skin and penetrates to the brain of the fish. It is simple, efficient and easy to find; but for years it defied the efforts of scientists who sought to preserve it for the benefit of mankind. Now, at long last, Scandinavian scientists have found the secret of preserving this priceless oil, the oil which I bring to you tonight."

He would then open the little box, unroll the cotton and pull out a tiny green bottle, which he held up for all to see.

"Notice the color of that bottle, please, the delicate green which transmits to the oil the same light it got beneath the surface of the sea. There is the secret of preserving it.

"Now I am going to ask for some help from some member of this audience. I want some man or woman who is deaf or hard of hearing to please hold up their hand. . . ."

Whenever possible Doc always selected an elderly man. There were always plenty of them in the crowd, old-timers who were known to the entire community. When Doc made his choice my job was to lower the little brass steps at the right side of our platform so the old fellow could get up on the stage with us. Once he was on the platform I closed the exit again and stood there to keep it closed.

The old fellow would be asked to identify himself, with Doc shouting the questions at him. As soon as this preliminary was over and the crowd confirmed that our subject was a bona-fide hard-of-hearing case, Doc would hold up his hand for silence.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, I must ask you to be perfectly quiet for a few minutes. Quiet, please. . . . This gentleman who stands here beside me on this platform tonight is well known in your community. You know that he has been deaf

for many years. He has suffered from this affliction because he did not know that blessed relief was available.

"No doubt he has used some form of medication in his efforts to alleviate this curse of deafness. . . ."

At this point Doc would turn to the victim and shout into his face.

"Have you ever used any kind of ear oil?"

Invariably the answer would be in the affirmative.

"Of course he has used ear oil. Any kind of oil you put into your ear is ear oil; if you put it on your hair it would be hair oil. It could not remedy this gentleman's ailment, my friends, because it could not penetrate deeply enough to reach the trouble. Only genuine Submarine Ear Oil, made from the inner ear of the fish, can penetrate through flesh and bone to reach the brain. Only an oil which can do this can cure deafness.

"Now watch closely, please. I am going to show you that this remarkable oil which I hold in this tiny green bottle will perform a miracle of healing before your very eyes. I am going to show you that within less than two minutes after I apply this oil, it will enable this gentleman to hear normal speech at a distance of six feet for the first time in many years. Watch closely, please!

Deliberately, Doc would break the seal on the little green vial. The crowd was hushed, awaiting the miracle. Doc would dip a quill into the bottle, filling it with the oil.

"Only three or four drops, ladies and gentlemen! This oil is designed by nature to penetrate through flesh and bone to reach the brain. Now watch closely as I apply it to this gentleman's ear. . . ."

At this point Doc would put his left arm around the old man's neck. The oil was dropped into the patient's right ear, the quill replaced in the gold case that Doc carried in his vest pocket.

"In order to assist nature I am now going to stimulate circulation by massaging this gentleman's ear—to speed up the action of the oil as it penetrates through flesh and bone."

Pulling the old fellow up to him by tightening the grip around his neck, Doc would place his right hand over the ear which contained the oil. As soon as Doc began to massage the ear briskly it became apparent to the audience that something was certainly taking effect on the patient. First an expression of surprise, then an effort to back away. Doc only tightened his grip and rubbed all the harder on that ear, shouting "Watch closely, please!" at the top of his voice.

I soon discovered the reason for the victim's antics and for Doc's shouting at that particular time. Doc was bellowing to cover up any remonstrance the patient might be making; and the old man was trying to get away from that infernal massage.

There were two methods of giving the massage. Some responded to one type and some required the other, but it took only seconds to determine which would produce results.

For instance, Doc generally tried first what he called "grip number one," which consisted of catching the rim of the patient's ear between his thumb and forefinger as he started the massage.

This could not be detected from the audience and it happened so quickly that the patient may have thought it was accidental. The cartilage of the ear was crimped between thumb and forefinger and given a quick, rotary massage—the friction soon became painful. If the patient showed no response, Doc would loosen the grip and try another. This time he would slip the end of his thumb into the poor old fellow's ear, jam it tight and start that grinding motion.

It seldom required more than a minute of this before the patient had had enough. Doc held him as long as he dared, then suddenly released him. In every case the reaction was the same: the old fellow would back into the corner of the platform, as far from Doc as he could get, fingering his red, throbbing ear.

That was my cue to step over beside the old man and pull his hand down from his ear.

"Watch closely, my friends, for you are about to witness that miracle I promised you. You are going to see this friend of yours, this man who has been deaf for years . . . you are going to see him as he hears normal human speech at a distance of six feet for the first time in years."

Then turning to the victim Doc would carefully enunciate: "Can . . . you . . . hear . . me?"

The anguished patient would always reply, "Yes! Yes!"

Whether they actually heard Doc or not, they certainly could read his lips—and they wanted no more of that massage.

The old man's reply always brought a roar of applause from the crowd. Doc would bow slightly, silence them, and present the old man on the stage with a fresh, unopened bottle of Submarine Ear Oil before I helped him down the little brass ladder.

"Only one dollar a bottle, every bottle packed in its own chest just like the bottle I gave your friend a moment ago.

Guaranteed to keep its remarkable powers for years, if kept in this chest. Take home a bottle tonight for your friends or loved ones who have impaired hearing. Or take home a bottle as a blessed measure of protection for those loved ones who may become hard of hearing in the future! You have seen what it can do. You never know when you or your loved ones may need it. I urge you to take home a bottle for that family medicine chest tonight. I may not pass this way again."

It was a good seller. Fifty or sixty sales were by no means unusual, for who could tell when their own loved ones might be confronted with the need for just such a product? For those who wished to mail a bottle out to some friend or relative, Doc was glad to provide a little carton and of course the wooden chest which contained the tiny bottle of oil required no further packing.

We closed the week with Submarine Ear Oil and moved on to another town on Sunday. This was a good method of operation and a pleasant one. Jogging along the dusty roads on Sundays with the four big white horses pulling the bouncing brass-trimmed stagecoach, we attracted quite a bit of attention. Doc often let me hold the reins while he leaned back, hair blowing in the breeze, and exchanged greetings with everyone we passed.

It was a good workable system. All went well until Doc varied the routine in Decatur, a larger city than we generally played. As usual, we had had a good week. The scissors, fountain pens, harness preservative and tapeworm treatment had sold well. But the big night had been Saturday night. The ear-oil sales were above the hundred-bottle mark, the first time that had ever happened to him, Doc said, and he decided to stay over that night and celebrate.

To celebrate, in his book, was synonymous with what he called "getting bourbonated." That hundred-dollar night sparked his dormant desire to get with the boys at the hotel. They played poker and bourbonated; I went back to the stage and went to sleep.

About eight o'clock on Sunday morning, I was sitting on the back steps of the stagecoach waiting for Doc to show up so we could be on our way. For one thing, I was getting homesick. Sullivan was about thirty miles away and I had been gone several weeks. I had saved fifteen dollars and I wanted to show it to the kids around the courthouse square.

Presently a big bluff fellow sauntered up and asked for Doc. I could only direct him to the hotel a couple of blocks

away. Instead of going, however, my visitor decided to sit down in the shade and talk to me.

He was certainly a friendly man. Wanted to know if I was Doc's boy, where did I come from? Did I plan to start back to school next month? Had we been doing a good business in Decatur? Did we plan to stay very long? Was that ear oil really good for deafness?

He was such a friendly fellow that I was tickled to talk to him and I did my best to answer all his questions. He wanted to know if I happened to be any relation to the fellow named Edwards who ran a store on the west side of the square in Sullivan? I assured him that it was my Dad's store he was talking about.

"Could I buy a bottle of that ear oil this morning, son?"

I explained that we had sold every last bottle we had the night before but that we would bottle up some more as soon as Doc came back. My friend seemed quite surprised that we bottled our own ear oil and I assured him that we always did it on Sunday, between towns.

He seemed to be having lots of ear trouble. Did I think it possible that he might help me fill a bottle that he had brought with him?

At a glance I saw that his bottle did not have the green color that Doc said the scientists had discovered was necessary to preserve the submarine ear oil. No matter, he wanted a bottle of it, so I got out the gallon can and filled his bottle. My friend took the can out of my hand and read the label.

"Cottonseed oil, huh? Are you trying to trick me, son?"

I hastened to reassure him that he was getting the same thing we always used to fill those ear-oil bottles.

My friend was still holding the cottonseed-oil can in his hand when Doc brushed the curtain aside and came in. As soon as he saw the can, Doc let out a bellow.

"What's going on here? Get out of this coach! Get—"

The man flipped back the lapel of his coat and Doc's face fell.

"Sheriff?" he mumbled. "Well—well—why didn't you say so, Sheriff?"

The sheriff did say so; and Doc never opened his mouth. Seems that I had forgotten to tell my folks I was going on a little tour with Doc and Doc hadn't mentioned it to them either. Then there was also the matter of the Submarine Ear Oil which came out of a can of cottonseed-oil. Doc began to squirm. It was the first time I had seen him at a loss for words.

Finally he agreed to pay my fare on the train back to Sulli-

van. He thrust a bill into the sheriff's hands for that purpose.

"If that's okay, Sheriff, I guess I'll be getting along. Got a long trip ahead of me today, going clean over into the next county or maybe farther than that, and I'm late now."

The sheriff nodded. Doc swung up into the front seat, cracked the whip, and the coach went careening down the street.

Suddenly I felt all sick and puckery inside.

I had just lost my first sponsor.

2. Headphones and Cat Whiskers

"WHEN IN doubt, start a grocery store!"

That plain, ineffectual formula was my father's stock solution to the recurrent economic crises that plagued our immediate family. A railroader without a job in 1918, he had opened a grocery store in Sullivan, Illinois, which led to my meeting with Doc White there in the summer of 1919. A year later my father was bankrupt, again working for the Illinois Central Railroad in Mattoon, Illinois.

Perhaps the truth of the matter is that my father was a railroad worker who hated his job and wanted to escape from it. If so, it was small wonder. He was a car inspector, in the language of the trade a "car knocker," one of a legion of poorly paid toilers, who could never completely free himself from the tentacles of his job. His several ventures into the grocery business all ended disastrously and each time he had to go back to the railroads in order to feed his family.

My father, my grandfather and my uncles were railroaders all, and union men as far back as I can remember. My grandfather, now approaching ninety, sits on his front porch in New Albany, Indiana, and avidly peruses the latest copies of the *Locomotive Engineers' Journal* while he waits for another issue of the national newspaper *Labor* to arrive. It was from the pages of *Labor* that I acquired my understanding of what trade unionism sought to accomplish. Since my father was a railroad man, he received *Labor* as a matter of course. From John Baer's cartoons I got the impression that all railroad presidents were bloated characters in silk hats who carried a bag of ill-gotten gold in one hand and a whip in the other. From my father's discussions with fellow workmen I inferred that anyone who did not join the union was a "scab"—the lowest

form of human life, who existed only because of the protection afforded by corrupt law-enforcement agencies.

By contrast, the unions were shining examples of clean well-muscled men marching side by side through tempest and sunshine toward the commendable objectives of good wages, fair prices and honest government.

There was a lot of material in *Labor* in those days that I skipped over because it meant nothing to me, but I did grasp the nature and location of the principal targets, the evil-doers who would be brought to their just deserts by the noble, selfless leaders of the unions.

While I was cutting my teeth on the weekly edition of *Labor* my father was struggling to keep a job. His known sentiments on the subject of unionism did not endear him to railroad management, but fortunately for us my Dad had a good friend among the officials of the Illinois Central who shifted us from place to place as work was available. This led to a semi-nomadic existence, which my little sister and I regarded as sheer adventure, a view not shared by either of our parents.

In the dead of winter, 1915, my father was sent to Sullivan for the first time. He rented a house that had just been vacated by a fellow who enjoyed some local renown as a baseball player, which explained the heavy flannel baseball shirt we found stuffed into a flue hole in the kitchen. My mother examined the find and decided that it could be worked over into a nice warm pair of school breeches for me.

She cut up the shirt, removed the red flannel lettering from it and made the breeches. Unfortunately for me, the lettering had faded a little onto the flannel, leaving a stain that washing did not erase. There on the seat of my warm flannel breeches was a large, unmistakable "A," a scarlet letter which led to some very pointed rustic wit from my schoolmates, until Mom finally dyed the material black.

Since the Illinois Central depot in Sullivan was a sort of headquarters for my dad while he worked for the railroad, I spent quite a bit of time hanging around the station. Like most kids, I loved to see the locomotives come pounding through and to hear the telegraph instruments chattering. But there were other and more profitable reasons for liking the depot. I had discovered that the machine that dispensed Zeno chewing gum reacted favorably to manipulation. It was a device where you put in a penny and pulled a plunger; there would be a buzzing sound while a little pop-eyed figure turned half around and pretended to drop a cake of gum from a nearby stack. My discovery was that this mechanical man

was more nearly human than his inventor knew—he was susceptible to bribery! The technique was to drop in a second penny before he had delivered the gum for the first penny. The little man, without moving or making a sound, would then drop half a dozen pieces of gum as fast as you could work the plunger, and I was pretty fast on the draw.

The depot was a favorite spot on cold winter nights. The I.C. railroad generously provided a big, potbellied stove, plenty of seats and lots of coal. The surrounding community furnished an unfailing supply of characters, who were in regular attendance, ready and willing to argue about anything.

It was probably inevitable that they should turn their attention to the latest marvel—wireless telegraphy.

Was there such a thing as wireless telegraphy?

Merchant Policeman Tobe Webb would sit around the depot stove with the rest of the boys and listen to them wrangle. Wireless was his favorite topic and when the talk got around to that, he had the clincher.

"Okay, boys," he would drawl, "Assumin' that there *is* such a thing as wireless telegraphy——" He would pause for emphasis and to direct a stream of tobacco juice in the general direction of the sand box—— "Now I ain't sayin' there ain't no such thing, mind you, but I wanna know this: If all that wireless sends out is a little spark and it don't foller no wire, how does it know where it's goin' and how to git there?"

That invariably stumped them. Even Long Jim Butcher, the railroad telegrapher in the I.C. station, had no answer for Tobe's poser.

When there was no reply forthcoming, Tobe would wink knowingly at someone on the other side of the stove, button up his coat, and shove out into the darkness for another round of duty, rattling doorknobs and watching for drunks.

At Sullivan I heard so much skeptical talk of wireless that I had begun to doubt that such a thing existed. It was not until we had moved back to Mattoon in the fall of 1916 that I saw my first broadcasting station. I passed it each day on my way to school, a small whitewashed shed about the size of today's one-car garage. Two tall poles, each about fifty feet high, stood at opposite sides of the lot and supported the antenna.

When Lloyd Swanson, one of the kids who walked to school with me, told me that the white shed and the two big poles were a wireless station, I challenged him. Wireless was on ships, not in people's back yards! We argued all the way to school, and that evening when school was out we took up the argu-

ment again. It was my contention that the place in question could not be a wireless station because it had *wires* between the two big masts.

Lloyd knew the young man who owned the place and offered to prove to me that he was right and I was wrong. My mother had laid down a hard-and-fast rule that there was to be no loitering on my way home from school, but I could see no harm in stopping for just a few minutes to settle such an important matter.

The door of the shed was open. Lloyd stuck his head in and beckoned me to follow.

The man who had built the apparatus was standing at a workbench, soldering something. He grinned and called Lloyd by name.

"What can I do for you young men?"

Lloyd blurted out that I didn't believe he had a real wireless telegraph. Would he please set me straight and show me that Lloyd knew it all the time?

The man put his arm around Lloyd and said that of course it was a wireless station. Why did I doubt it?

It took a few seconds for my tongue to come unstuck from the roof of my mouth, but my natural gabbiness soon asserted itself. I explained that I didn't think it was a wireless set because wireless was on ships—and besides, nothing was clicking, like in a real telegraph office.

The parting shot did not faze the man for even a moment. He snapped a couple of switches, turned some dials and put a pair of headphones on me.

Sure enough, something *was* clicking after all! The code was rattling along at a terrific rate, accompanied by squeals. It sounded like a railroad telegraph station gone mad. I yanked the headset off and handed it to him.

"That is a ship at sea," he explained. "He is talking to another ship."

"Are they sinking, like the *Titanic?*"

He laughed. "Oh, no, nothing like that. What do you know about the *Titanic?*"

What did I know about the *Titanic?* What a question! Why, I was probably the outstanding juvenile authority on the subject. I had read all about it in a book, which told, with highly imaginative drawings and lurid prose, how the *Titanic's* wireless operator had rattled out his calls for help until the icy waters of the North Atlantic silenced his key forever. When anyone asked me about the *Titanic* he was just opening the flood gates.

Lloyd sat on a box and our host leaned against the workbench and I proceeded to give a vivid account of the manner in which fate had dealt with that ill-starred liner and its human cargo. Incident followed incident with the precision of tracer bullets as I warmed to my opportunity.

Due to the many gripping sidelights attendant to the story, the sinking of the *Titanic* took much longer in the telling than I realized. I was just about to slide her under the waves when I happened to glance out the window. It was almost sundown.

I snatched up my books and raced down the street. What kind of an excuse could I give for being late getting home from school?, Wireless? The *Titanic?* Ships at sea talking to each other. . . ?

The issue was resolved for me a few seconds later when out of the gathering dusk I heard my mother calling for me. By the note of urgency in her voice I understood that alibis were useless.

My estimate of the situation was true—painfully true. When she finished with me, the back of my lap was sore for a week.

Those were hectic days, days when America was getting ready to "make the world safe for democracy," a laudable program which has since become chronic. In 1917, anyone you disliked could be conveniently labeled "pro-German" and the local gendarmes would be glad to badger him for a while. The young man who owned the wireless station suddenly closed it and was seen no more. Local rumor had it that he had been hustled off to prison; that he had been found to be pro-German and was using the wireless to undermine America.

Like most wartime rumors, it was bunk. He had gone away to play his small but important part in that great endeavor, one of the few well-trained men in his highly specialized field. Unfortunately it seems to be a characteristic of ours that in times of national hysteria the stupid are prone to persecute the studious.

While I was growing up in Illinois the world was changing rapidly. We had won the war—and America was entering into that period which historians have since decided was the Tumultuous Twenties. In the hills outside Los Angeles D. W. Griffith was transforming the motion picture from a casual amusement to a medium capable of pictorial storytelling on a vast scale. In Detroit Henry Ford had built his new River Rouge plant and was turning out almost a million Model-T's a year in the world's first assembly-line factory.

And in New York the Radio Corporation of America had bought out its old rival, American Marconi, and thereby acquired the services of its commercial manager, a former wireless operator named David Sarnoff. Radio, too, was coming of age.

Spurred by the technical advances made during World War I and in the years immediately following, the science of wireless transmission made great strides. The chattering of the sparkgap had given way to the human voice, riding over the ether with the speed of light. And voice, too, was finding itself in competition with a charming adversary—for there was music in the air.

All over America schoolboys dropped their old hobbies to take up a new and fascinating project. They had discovered that by wrapping an old Quaker Oats box with a few coils of copper wire, adding a tiny crystal of galena and tickling it with a fine wire called the "cat whisker," they could lure music into their headsets. It made no difference that the apparatus had about the same fidelity as the average telephone. It was music, it was free, and it was magical.

The simple diagrams for these crystal sets were printed in the newspapers. The magazines which thrive on telling you how to do things for yourself offered free blueprints of super-duper crystal sets that any boy could make, according to the text. After frittering away many an hour and several dollars on these devices I came to the conclusion that any boy could make them, all right, if he had a couple of technicians to help him. The truth of the matter was that other boys could take a rolled-oats box and fifteen cents worth of wire and work wonders with it. I never did manage to get a squeak out of the contraptions I concocted. Out of a rolled-oats box I got nothing but rolled oats.

In spite of all the ads about the boys with the magnificent muscles, the guys who got the girls in those days were oftimes pimply-faced kids with crystal sets. It required no special mental faculties to see that you were not in the social swim without that ubiquitous device for snaring entertainment out of the ether. You simply couldn't get ahead without a headset.

Frankly, I never understood it. I had a portable record player. It was about the size of a portable typewriter and prior to the advent of the crystal-set craze had been sure-fire girl bait. Then suddenly I found that I was passé. It was no longer enough to crank up my classy portable phonograph and listen to Husk O'Hare playing "Tiger Rag." The new thing was to hunch over a crystal set with a pair of head-

phones clamped on your ears, fiddle with a cat whisker, and listen to Husk O'Hare playing "Tiger Rag" from some fading station halfway across the country.

That was the new thing—and I didn't have it.

I fought bravely but in vain. I sneered at the squeaky music that trickled out of those headsets. Once I even played my phonograph at a party in an effort to drown out the crystal-set crowd. I was evicted, records and all.

The blow that forced me to surrender was a sneak punch to the heart: my best girl stood me up in order to date an unattractive whippersnapper who had a pair of Frost 2000 ohm headphones. He spent the evening at her house, amusing and amazing her parents by putting the headset in a dishpan. Then, while everyone kept perfectly quiet, the faint music could be heard across the room. A real miracle, no less.

There was but one thing for me to do, a bitter pill but inescapable: I had to buy a crystal set.

One of the fellows I knew helped me with a scheme designed to scuttle my competitor, the lad with the high-powered crystal set. Since he obviously would not sell out to me while he was doing so well with my girl and her family, I induced my friend to buy the set for me.

The deal was arranged with gratifying celerity. All I had to do was to practically give away my phonograph, sell my two best golf clubs for next to nothing and throw in my last three dollars—and the coveted crystal set was mine.

That night I got to my girl's house early, so her father could hear a couple of Chicago comedians who called themselves "Sam and Henry," later to become justly famous as "Amos and Andy." While the father fidgeted, I fumbled with the cat whisker and worked the coil back and forth. Not a sound. I scraped the end of the aerial to get a good contact. Silence. The old man began to get peevish; clearly, my demonstration was a failure.

About the time the comedians were scheduled to go on the air, my competitor just happened to drop by with a new crystal set under his arm. When my girl's father told him what was happening to us, he pulled the aerial wires off my set, hooked up his own and handed the headset to the old man with a disgustingly smug grin. I could tell by the expression on Papa's face that everything was all right, as far as he was concerned.

Because of the circumstances through which I had acquired the set, I couldn't complain, and my competitor pretended not to notice. All I could do was to sit there, and I sat, although

no one seemed to realize that I was present. For July, it was a mighty cool evening.

It is not easy to reconcile yourself to the fact that you have lost your girl because of a pair of headphones chirping in a dishpan, but that's the way it was, and I finally faced the facts. A few nights later I slipped over to her house and stuck her picture in the mailbox. The crystal set which had failed me in my hour of need I put in storage on the pantry shelf.

A couple of years afterward, when I was re-arranging things on that shelf, the set fell down and the crystal dropped out. As I picked it up and examined it, I realized why the set failed to work. Instead of a genuine galena crystal, my competitor had switched and sold me a lump of lead.

There, in my hand, was a lesson that I would have done well to remember. In my very first radio deal I had been outsmarted.

The early days of radio had many points in common with the early days of television. When the word got around that you had a radio your popularity among the neighbors was wonderfully enhanced. Folks you hadn't seen for years would begin dropping in on you and of course you would show off your set. No one complained that the programs were amateurish; the important thing was that you could flip a switch or adjust a cat whisker, and presto! your guests could hear a phonograph record being played in Kalamazoo just as clearly as if you were playing it on your own phonograph. There was something of black magic in the operation. It gave you a feeling of wizardry that was flattering.

Not all the programs were phonograph records, of course. Singers, piano players, banjo bands, fortune tellers and cantankerous characters like Old Man Henderson of Shreveport, Louisiana, were making their bids for public interest. The stations loved to broadcast local talent regardless of its quality; it had the valuable attributes of being free and plentiful. Old Man Henderson owned his own steel company and his own radio station so he did as he damn well pleased, which generally consisted of interspersing phonograph records with caustic comment on the chain stores.

Distance was the thing in those days. If you could identify a program and the station that was broadcasting it you could send in a post card and that station was under federal instructions to acknowledge your message with a DX card. Some set owners framed their DX cards and hung them over the radio. Others just kept them in stacks where they could be

passed around among the evening visitors to impress them with the far-reaching powers of that particular set.

We were living in New Albany, Indiana, when my Uncle Ben bought one of the first vacuum-tube sets, which operated with power supplied by wet-cell batteries. It had a speaker mounted on top of the set in a paper horn. No muss, no fuss, no bother—and no quality.

Shortly after I had gone to bed one clear cold winter night my uncle rapped on my window. "Hey, Frank! Get up and come on down to my house—I've really got something!"

Naturally, if he really had something I wanted to be in on it. I scrambled into my clothes and hurried down the street with him, snow squeaking underfoot and teeth chattering all the way. What he really wanted was my help in getting the storage battery out of his car, so we could hook it up to his radio.

We sat there in his kitchen, batteries strung out along the wall, listening to the faint but unmistakable sounds of music filtering out of the loudspeaker. The fire went out in the stove; we put on our overcoats. The battery from his car was getting weaker by the minute, and still no indication of what station we were listening to.

"It's Cuba, sure as the world!" Ben said. "I know a fellow that lives right down by the Gulf Refining Company and he got Cuba one night last week on a set that wasn't half as good as this one."

The loudspeaker began to fade again. Ben grabbed the dials and twisted them frantically. The volume picked up a bit, then dropped.

"Damned battery's giving out! Sure hope they announce what station it is pretty soon. Been doing nothin' but playing music for almost three hours already."

I glanced at the clock. One A.M. We had been huddled there for an hour and a half, shivering.

Just then the music quit.

"Shhh! Shhhh! Mebbe he'll say something now, Frank!"

There was a long pause. We crowded up around the set and put our ears to the loudspeaker horn. Down in its depths a very tired voice said: "Well, folks, I reckon we might as well call it a night so we can all go to bed and get some sleep. You've been listening to a bunch of phonograph records broadcast from the Big Six garage in Louisville, Kentucky. Good night!"

The Big Six garage in Louisville!

Just five miles from where we were sitting.

3. Voices in the Wind

WAS RADIO broadcasting actually born on a farm near Murray, Kentucky, in the summer of 1885?

There is considerable evidence to that effect. There is even more evidence to support the contention that Nathan Stubblefield, a self-taught electronics expert, was giving public demonstrations of wireless voice transmission at least three years before Marconi went on record with his feeble spark-gap discoveries.

Stubblefield was a tall, thin chap with piercing blue eyes and a reticent manner that kept his circle of intimate friends to a minimum. His farm was a poor one, and Nathan eked out a living for his family by installing telephones.

One night in 1885 he came to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Duncan Holt, farmers like himself and among the few whom he trusted. "If you could come over to my place Sunday afternoon," said Stubblefield, "I would like to show you something that I have been working on—something that nobody else has ever been able to do, I reckon."

The Holts were on hand when the day came. Stubblefield led them to a point about two hundred yards from his house, where a small box was mounted on a stump. At his suggestion they took a couple of telephone receivers out of the box and placed them to their ears.

Years later Mr. Holt still recalled that night vividly. "It was amazing!" he said. "We could clearly hear Stubblefield's son talking to us from the house some distance away; we heard him count up to ten and we heard him ask us how we were feeling and then he played a tune on his French harp. There were no wires of any kind connecting us with the telephone in the house—just two iron rods which we stuck in the ground." As he walked to their buggy with them, the lanky inventor was unquestionably pleased with the impression he had made, so pleased that he almost became talkative.

"With this invention," he said, "I can talk anywhere at any time, without wires. There is no limit to the power of this instrument. I am still working on it, still trying to perfect it."

Many of his close friends urged Stubblefield to patent his method of transmitting the human voice by wireless, but he refused. Finally, however, he yielded to their persistent entreaties and promised to give a public demonstration of what he

called his "wireless telephone system." Permission was granted for him to use the Court House grounds at Murray, the county seat of Calloway County. On the Saturday when the event was scheduled, Murray was crowded with folks from miles around. Some came to scoff, of course, but most of them were just curious.

Stubblefield had set up two boxes about two feet square and approximately two hundred and fifty feet apart. Between them was a concrete walk and all could see that the two boxes were in no way connected. When his arrangements had been completed, the inventor raised his hand for silence. He spoke into the telephone mouthpiece at his end in a rather low tone, inaudible ten feet away, but clearly distinguishable to those around the other box across the Courthouse lawn.

"Very well, Bernard. Let us start the experiment. Can you hear me?"

"Yes, sir. I hear you very well. Can you hear me?" The crowd packed around Stubblefield heard his son's voice clearly.

"Bernard, please count up to ten, then count back down."

It was an old story to Stubblefield and his son. They had been talking to each other by wireless telephone for seven years when they put on this first public demonstration at Murray. The crowd around each of the sets could hear the distant voices. Those around Nathan's receiver heard the boy counting, heard him reciting poetry and heard him play a couple of tunes on a mouth organ.

The crowd was amused but not impressed. Stubblefield was infuriated by their snickers. He had demonstrated wireless transmission of the human voice to people who neither understood nor appreciated the magnitude of his achievement.

Now he bundled up his equipment and stormed back to his farm, angry with himself for having agreed to the demonstration in the first place.

It was 1892. Wireless transmission of the human voice was already a reality, but only in that remote part of Kentucky. The world had never heard about the miracle.

The years dragged by. Marconi won world acclaim for his ability to pick the sparks from his primitive transmitter out of the air. Only Nathan Stubblefield knew how to send voices and music through the air and the earth, but who ever heard of him?

The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* heard of him and they wrote and asked him to demonstrate his invention for them, at his own time and place. For weeks there was no acknowledgment of their request, then they received a post card which

said simply: "Have accepted your invitation. Come to my place any time. N. Stubblefield, inventor."

When the representative of the paper came to his humble home Stubblefield's natural reticence vanished. Perhaps he felt that at last he too might share in some of the fame and fortune that was being showered on others. On January 10, 1902, the inventor and the reporter went through a lengthy demonstration. Handed a pair of thin steel rods about four feet long, the reporter was told to take them wherever he liked, shove them about eighteen inches into the ground and then listen to the headphone attached to the tops of the rods.

The newsman went from place to place, always with the same results. Finally he and Stubblefield climbed to a knoll about a mile from the inventor's house and again the reporter poked the steel rods into the earth and put the receiver to his ear.

Recounting his astounding experiences later in the *Post-Dispatch*, he wrote:

"I could hear every syllable that the Stubblefield boy spoke into a transmitter as clearly as if he were only a dozen feet away across a room!"

How did Stubblefield accomplish this miracle?

"By years of hard work—long before I ever heard of Marconi," said the lanky, cantankerous farmer-inventor. "I had the idea of sending messages through space as far back as 1880 but it was several years before I could even start working on it. This solution is not the work of a minute. It is not a mere inspiration, but the climax of years of thought and hundreds of hours of experimenting.

"The earth, the air, the water—all the universe as we know it is permeated with the remarkable fluid which we call electricity, the most wonderful of God's gifts to the world and capable of the most inestimable benefits when it is mastered by man.

"For years I have been trying to make the bare earth do the work of wires. I know now that I have conquered it. The electrical fluid which permeates the earth will carry the human voice, transmitted to it by the proper apparatus, with much more clarity and lucidity than can be done over wires. I have solved the problem of telephoning without wires through the earth, as Signor Marconi has solved the problem of sending signals through space. But I can also telephone without wires through space as well as through the earth, because the medium I use is everywhere."

Stubblefield was in one of his extremely rare talkative

moods and he went on to describe how he had buried what he called an "earth cell" in the ground near his home. It drew its energy from the flow of electricity in the earth, he told the newsman, and it produced enough power to run a tiny electric motor for two months and six days, or until Stubblefield got tired of hearing it hum and turned it off.

The newspaper feature story on his system of wireless voice transmission brought Stubblefield to the attention of prominent people. He received invitations to demonstrate his invention before scientists, newsmen and financiers, in both Washington and Philadelphia. In May, 1902, he bundled his transmitter, his batteries, and the rest of his paraphernalia into a big black trunk and bought tickets for himself and his son. At long last, it seemed, the world had taken cognizance of the taciturn inventor from the Kentucky hills.

The tests at the nation's capital were conducted from the little steamship *Bartholdi.* Two wires trailed in the water behind the vessel as it chugged upstream. Several hundred yards away, at an inn on the Virginia side of the river, a dozen distinguished witnesses waited for the outcome of the experiment.

In the pilot house of the steamer Stubblefield adjusted his batteries and receivers once more, then stepped back.

"Gentlemen," he said quietly, "please place these receivers to your ears and you will hear messages being sent to us from the station on the shore."

They heard—and they marveled. One of the witnesses was the owner of a telephone system of conventional design. He told Stubblefield that his wireless system would revolutionize the industry and he asked for prices on installation at Charleston, South Carolina. Others were equally as enthusiastic after the test.

But Nathan had more to show them. At his suggestion they went ashore, where he gave each of them a receiver attached to wires between two short steel rods. The witnesses sauntered around over an area within half a mile of the inn, sticking their rods into the earth and listening to Stubblefield talking to them by wireless.

The *Washington Evening Star* reported the story in bold headlines on May 21, 1902:

By Land and Water
First Practical Test of Wireless Telegraphy
Heard for Half Mile

The remarkable invention of Bluegrass farmer. Wireless

telephony demonstrated beyond question. Public tests on Potomac to the Virginia shore. Test interesting, little short of marvellous!

The subsequent demonstration in Philadelphia on May 30, 1902 produced more journalistic enthusiasm, but no tangible results. Stubblefield went back to Kentucky to wait and hope. He was beset by promoters who wanted him to let them exploit his discovery in various stock-selling schemes; he refused to be swayed by their promises of quick wealth. Upon the advice of a friend in Murray, he hired an attorney and patented the basic principles of his wireless voice system.

Nathan Stubblefield was the classic example of a man with a better mousetrap who was ignored by the world. Suspicious, embittered, and poverty-stricken, his family drifted away from him and he became a virtual hermit, living in a flimsy shack on his stony farm.

One night in the spring of 1928 he came to the home of a long-time friend, Mrs. L. E. Owen. Nathan was ragged and unusually thin and Mrs. Owen thought he looked feverish.

"I want you to write the story of my life," he said. "I want you to tell the world how to take light from the energy of the air, just as I took that same energy to transmit voice, long before the days of what we now call radio. That energy is everywhere, free for everyone. It will make the night bloom with light just as it is now filled with music. Light without cost wherever it is needed! I want you to write about it, because there are men who would stop at nothing to steal my discovery!"

A week later, two friends noticed that Stubblefield's shack looked deserted. They found his body lying on an old door between the bedroom and the earthen-floored leanto that served as a kitchen. A cursory examination by the coroner produced a verdict of death from natural causes. Stubblefield's friends and neighbors suspected murder.

Perhaps better than anyone of his time, and certainly better than those to whom he demonstrated his broadcasting system, Nathan Stubblefield saw what his invention could mean to the world.

Standing in that windswept woodland in January of 1902, he said to the reporter from the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch:*

"I can send messages by my method through the earth, the water or the air, and the curvature of the earth means nothing to me. I claim that my invention is practicable for sending messages from a central distributing station over a very wide

territory. Anyone with a receiving instrument could receive weather news from Washington, for example, or from some nearer point. Eventually it will be used for the general transmission of news of every sort. It will convey messages between the land and the sea, between ships and lighthouses, from any point on earth to any other point on earth, for the all-enveloping medium of carriage insures that."

Nathan Stubblefield, the self-taught electronics expert, had described the future accomplishments of the broadcasting industry before the industry even existed. He had suspected, and had to some extent utilized, the earth forces which Einstein long afterward included in his "unified field" theory.

If the broadcasting industry ever establishes a hall of fame in honor of its departed great, perhaps it may condescend to accord a little niche to the memory of Nathan Stubblefield, who said of himself with undeniable accuracy:

"I have lived fifty years before my time!"

Successful transmission of the human voice by wireless was Nathan Stubblefield's greatest achievement; his weakness lay in the fact that having shown the world it could be done, he never developed it beyond that point.

While he lived out his declining years in his ramshackle cabin in the Kentucky hills, his contemporaries were groping their way toward the goal he had already attained. Gradually the crude spark gap of Marconi was converted into a device through which Lee De Forest utilized his new vacuum tubes to broadcast an impromptu program by Miss Eugenia Farrar. Her rendition of "I Love You Truly" originated in Dr. De Forest's laboratory at 19th Street and Park Avenue in New York City and was heard by an astounded wireless operator in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. It was 1907. Conventional science had finally caught up with the achievements of Nathan Stubblefield.

From that point forward, the broadcasting industry took giant strides. Sometimes they were false steps, as for instance the attempts to use radio to replace telephone and telegraph cables. The inventors outstripped the managerial interests; broadcasting soon found itself with the ability to speak well, but with almost nobody to talk to except its own technicians. The amateurs chattered to each other endlessly of transformers, tubes and coils; the professionals rattled out their messages in code, prosaic weather reports, and occasional ship emergencies.

Radio, by 1919, had gone about as far as it could go among

its own kind. Here was a process by which a great number of people could be reached simultaneously, provided you had something they would want to hear.

The man with the method was ready and waiting. The Pied Piper who lured wireless out of its technological cocoon was Dr. Frank Conrad of Pittsburgh, radio's first disc jockey.

Conrad had been dabbling with wireless telephony since 1912, when he had strung together his first crude transmitter in a shed near Pittsburgh. World War I came along and he was called into service as a wireless specialist, later coming back to work for Westinghouse in a similar capacity.

In 1919, there were two transmitters in Pittsburgh: KDKA at Westinghouse and another which used the call letters KQV. Their broadcasts were largely experimental and dealt almost entirely with technical matters. They were unique in that they were the only private broadcasting stations in the nation being operated for business purposes.

A large part of Dr. Conrad's duties consisted of testing and developing radio equipment and in order to test the devices, he had to transmit signals which could be picked up by his checking stations. The endless recitation of numerals and simple rhymes became monotonous. One evening in the fall of 1919, Dr. Conrad hit upon a scheme to relieve the tedium; he pulled a phonograph up to the microphone and played a recording. To his amazement, Conrad discovered that his own operators were not the only listeners to his programs of musical recordings; they were also being heard and enjoyed by hundreds of amateur wireless enthusiasts scattered all across the nation. They wrote to express their delight, and to request that certain musical numbers be played again. The fan mail became so heavy that Dr. Conrad capitulated; he announced that the request numbers would be played in two-hour sessions on Wednesday and Saturday evenings of each week. The first all-request program was a reality.

It was an unprecedented success from the standpoint of the audience. Astute business interests reasoned that where there was such widespread public acclaim there must also be a place for worthwhile investment. By the end of 1920, in addition to KQV and KDKA, eight other stations had popped up across the nation. WKY in Oklahoma City; WRR in Dallas; KRKO in Everett, Washington; KTW in Seattle; KOB, Albuquerque; WQAM, Miami; KWBR, Oakland and WWJ, Detroit.

Two stations in 1919, ten stations in 1920—and by the end of 1922 a total of 114 broadcasting stations were filling the nights with music!

Many of these stations were owned by department stores or other commercial interests which recognized the good-will value of offering free entertainment. Other stations were built, or being built, by newspapers. If radio was going to become a competitor they wanted to have a hand at the controls. Having influential friends in Congress, the newspapers that were smart enough to enter radio early had little difficulty in securing clear channel frequencies and ample power.

By the end of 1920 the public acceptance of radio entertainment was unmistakable. The trickle of commercially made sets was becoming a torrent; the set makers were jubilant, but the broadcasting stations were in a quandary; for them there was no bonanza in sight.

Typical of their plight was the experience of an acquaintance of mine who operated a small station in 1922. He derived no income from it other than the satisfaction of sitting up late of nights to play phonograph records for his audience.

One day he received a letter from the Department of Commerce (which then administered what little radio regulation there was) inviting him to increase the power of his station and to move it to a better frequency.

He turned their letter over and wrote his reply on the back: "Gentlemen: I have just read your insulting letter, which invites me to spend more of my money for your benefit and for the benefit of listeners who do not care enough to be willing to contribute ten cents to the cost of operating this station. If you think for one minute that I am going to spend any more of my money in this ridiculous fashion you are hereby advised that I am not."

The clear channel permit which he rejected was taken up by a newspaper in his city, which recently sold the station for slightly under two million dollars. The newspaper clipping of the sale now hangs on the wall of my friend's office beside a copy of his irate letter to the Department of Commerce.

His expensive error was pardonable, if viewed in the context of its time. Like his contemporaries; he had found that broadcasting was a constant drain on his finances with no visible prospect of reversing the trend. It was all outgo and no income.

As far back as 1912, broadcasters had sought surcease from the expenses by a pay-as-you-go plan. Since they could not collect from the listeners if they sent their programs through the air, Chicago newspaperman Carl Winkler and his partner,

Frank Reichmann, offered regular broadcast service to telephone subscribers for five dollars per month. Surprisingly, they had quite a few takers. If a customer happened to be listening to the music over the phone when someone called, the music stopped and the call came through. The project came to an end when a singer who insisted on wearing false whiskers got his beard tangled up in a loose connection and the ensuing blaze brought about a cancellation of the fire insurance at the makeshift studio.

It must seem surpassingly strange to the present generation to be told that there was a time when radio actually resisted paid advertising commercials. Yet, it is true, and as long as that ban was in force radio had little to offer in the way of entertainment. Worthwhile performers expected to be paid but radio had nothing with which to pay them. Advertisers were willing to pay both performers and the stations, but the stations balked. The irresistible force of commerce had collided with the immovable object of radio's reluctance. Something had to give.

Even the American Telephone and Telegraph Company was beginning to fidget about the cost of operating their station, WEAF, in New York City. In 1922, they suggested that grateful listeners might like to show their appreciation by contributing money to help pay for the broadcasts. If the listeners did appreciate the programs their feelings constitute one of the best-kept secrets of the age. The piddling donations the station received were so few and far between that WEAF quietly returned the money to the senders and dropped the idea.

The question of accepting paid advertisements had been coming up with increasing frequency, since prospective sponsors were making insistent overtures. The telephone company got into the radio business under the mistaken impression that radio could be used to supplant long-distance telephone lines. Unable to get results in that direction under the technological handicaps of the time, the A. T. & T. found itself between the devil and the deep red ink. It was afraid that if it accepted paid advertising on its radio station it would draw criticism from influential newspapers and magazines, on the ground that the telephone company proposed to use a public facility for private gain. Editorials in the press did nothing to allay this uneasiness, since the press seemed to be both dubious and alarmed by turns.

Consequently, the phone company laid down strict rules to avoid offending the press or the public. They forbade any direct advertising over WEAF. Programs could be sponsored only

with the provision that there was no invitation to buy the product and no sales talk of any kind.

The first sponsor of record was a group of real-estate promoters. They bought a series of ten-minute talks on the advantage of owning a home in Jackson Heights, a development which they were anxious to sell. Muffled in restrictions imposed by WEAF, the talks were as unimpressive as the results they produced. The disillusioned real-estate promoters went back to the open arms of the newspapers.

Mealy-mouthed sales talks were not the answer to effective radio advertising. The public wanted entertainment. The advertisers were literally standing in line, drooling money. They could see a new short-cut to the family purse and no slide rule about omitting the sales message was going to keep them out of this lush radio pasture.

The case history of Ipana toothpaste is typical of the early birds. First, the company had to fill out an application requesting permission to sponsor a program over WEAF. The application required the sponsor to state the name of the product, the type of program, plus the names and brief biographies of all persons who *might* appear on the show!

When the Ipana application arrived at WEAF it produced more than a little consternation. The advertising camel had not only poked his head into the radio tent but was proposing to brush his teeth! WEAF held up the application for five weeks while its executives dithered over the advisability of the matter. The manager of the station was worried lest the public be offended by broadcast mention of such a personal matter as toothpaste.

It must have taken a magnificent sales talk to overcome that amount of resistance, but Ipana did it, and was granted the privilege of sponsoring a musical program—with restrictions, of course.

After the toothpaste program had been on the air for several months and had brought forth no wrathful indignation from either press or public, Ipana secured another relaxation of the rules: it could now refer to the musicians as "The Ipana Troubadors." The announcer was instructed to refer to them by that title at every opportunity, and he did. In a short time the name had become a buy-word with the public and the sales of Ipana skyrocketed.

The bars were down, sales figures were up, the stampede was on.

Next in the swim was the Goodrich Tire and Rubber Company, with B. A. Rolfe and an orchestra which he called the

Silvertown Band, a fortuitous title which just happened to coincide with the fact that Goodrich made Silvertown Tires.

Then came Gold Dust Cleanser with a pair of performers cast under the inevitable identities of Goldie and Dusty; the Cliquot Club Eskimos, Esky and Mo, who appeared on the radio program dressed in the parka costumes worn by the characters on the Cliquot Club bottles. True enough, the listeners couldn't see them in their parkas, but they certainly heard about them.

The tremendous popularity of these early radio performers led to another and entirely unexpected source of free advertising and income. The phonograph-record companies discovered that the public wanted to buy recordings of these radio personalities. Records by the Ipana Troubadors sold by the millions. The Silvertown Band cashed in for the sponsor both on the air and on the records, as did that sterling pair which topped them all, "The Happiness Boys."

Billy Jones and Ernie Hare were a pair of grand troupers recruited from vaudeville. They first brought their harmony and contagious good humor to the airlanes for the Happiness Candy Stores of New York and, later on, to the networks for a hosiery company. As "Billy Jones and Ernie Hare. . . . We're the Interwoven pair!" they enjoyed fabulous success, and radio was the magic wand that brought them fame and fortune.

Jones and Hare were exceptions to the rule, in that cleverness was frowned upon and originality was regarded as a distinct detriment. Sometimes this policy had justification of sorts. For instance, there was the time the advertising manager of a vacuum-cleaner company came into WEAF with what he regarded as a cute idea—he wanted to open his program with a quartet singing "Sweep No More My Lady." The horrified radio executives smothered that one at birth.

Indeed, the standard procedure of injecting the name of the sponsor at every opportunity was not without its complications. One classic example was that which befell Norman Brokenshire as he performed the announcing chores for the A. & P. Gypsies, playing on the Marine Roof. Norman made four brave attempts to untangle his tongue, but as the audience howled with delight, his words kept coming out on the air as "the A. & G. Pippsies from the Maroon Reef."

Another Siberia for the announcers was the assignment to introduce the musical numbers on a show sponsored by Brainerd Fisher's Astor Coffee Company, which insisted that its full title precede every tune. Many an announcer must have breathed a sigh of relief when that concern went bankrupt.

Throughout the summer of 1923 I had been caddying at the New Albany Country Club and saving a few dollars whenever I could. It wasn't easy, for my father's work as a car inspector on the Monon Railroad had been spotty and most of what I made was needed at home. We made out, however, and by caddying after school and helping my Uncle Ben hang wallpaper on weekends, I had laid by a little nest egg. It was designed for use on a rainy day, but it came in handy in a snowstorm.

"Juvenile who can double as leading man," said the ad in *Billboard* magazine. "Good pay and steady work."

"It's a long way to Wheeling, West Virginia," my Dad reminded me, "and it's almost Christmas. Besides, what do you know about being a leading man?"

I had a thick crop of wavy hair and I had boundless faith in my ability to meet the requirements for a young leading man. What nicer way to spend my mid-winter vacation than by acting with the Stanley Repertory Company? I sent them a prepaid telegram (the sure sign of amateurism) and awaited results. Perhaps it was the shock of receiving that paid telegram that upset the manager's natural caution. Whatever the reason, he sent me by return mail a railroad ticket to Wheeling.

To this day I have no idea what happened to the "Stanley Repertory Company" between the time they inserted the ad in *Billboard* and the day I arrived in Wheeling. Whatever it was, they vanished without a trace. Not even an oil slick; not even the word "Croatan" carved on a stump. The theatre identified in the ad as the scene of activities had been closed for years. The lobby was tastefully decorated with empty whiskey bottles, dead newspapers and festoons of cobwebs. I do not say this boastfully, but I could have written my name in the scum on the box-office window.

Unable to find a trace of the vanished thespians, I inquired at the post office. The man at the general delivery window showed me a post card he had been holding for some time, addressed to a member of the Stanley troupe. The card assured the addressee that "you could probably get a job at radio station KDKA in Pittsburgh. Why don't you come on over and see about it?"

There was obviously no future in pursuing the ephemeral Stanley and Company. KDKA and radio? Why not? On to Pittsburgh!

Luck was with me there. As I stood at the reception desk, wondering what to say first, a man came rushing through the hall and asked the receptionist if that announcer had shown up

yet. The girl assured him that I was the only person who had been in all morning.

"Are you an announcer?"

I stammered out that I thought so.

"We'll find out. Come right this way—it's about time to go on."

As quickly as that I made my bow in radio. The program consisted of a pianist and a lady who sang, so to speak. We had a conventional carbon mike which all three of us used since it was the only one in the studio. The lady handed me the announcements I was to read, the man in the control room waved us into action, and we were on the air.

I was so frightened that my tonsils were knocking. By a supreme effort I managed to stumble through the opening announcement. Fortunately for all concerned, it was brief.

In self-defense I can only say that my announcing was at least on a par with that lady's singing. We were saved by the masterful efforts of the piano player, who really knew what he was about. By the time I had bumbled through the middle of the program, the shakes were leaving me and I finished strong, as they say at the track.

When the program was over the program director came in and told us to be back the next day at the same time. No mention of how we performed, which was very charitable of him.

I dashed out and wired home, urging them to listen to me next day. In the excitement I forgot to mention that it was a daytime program so my folks listened each night for a week and finally decided I was spoofing them.

We did the same program every day: the quavering soprano, the superb pianist and the nervous announcer. By cautious inquiry I learned that the lady was very wealthy, the pianist was a protégé of hers, and her husband was a Pittsburgh mogul who evidently had influence with the owners of the station. I also learned that there was no salary attached to the announcing of that program; it was a sustainer.

My funds were low but my spirits were high. I had lived! I had announced over the radio! Best of all, it was over KDKA, the station that ranged far and wide across the continent every night, filling the headphones of millions of families with recorded delights. Night after night, as the earth's shadow sped westward and the radio signal went with it, telegrams poured into the station from many states. Essentially they all said the same thing: "Your program coming in loud and clear. Please announce my name over the radio."

The crystal sets and headphones were being supplemented

rapidly by more complex instruments. In that year of 1924 the American public bought more than three hundred and fifty million dollars worth of radios and parts; about one-third of all the money spent for furniture actually went for broadcasting equipment of some sort. Stunt broadcasts made the headlines as radio gained confidence in its powers. Six hundred farmers gathered around a transmitter at Columbia, Missouri, to marvel as a message was flashed from there to Tokyo and returned in less than two minutes. Ninety feet under the Hudson River, RCA officials and sandhogs listened to broadcast music from KDKA in Pittsburgh. Said one of the RCA experts: "Radio can be used as a lifeline of communication with entombed miners."

The vice-president and general manager of RCA, Mr. David Sarnoff, opened the year 1924 with some advice for all concerned. "The public," he said, "will not pay for the entertainment it receives through the air. . . ."

Yes, I felt like a real pioneer when I first spoke over the radio that year but in reality I was already a johnny-come-lately. There were more than five hundred and sixty stations on the air, with more than a hundred others under construction. Most of them were low-powered by modern standards but in those days a five-hundred-watt station could reach several states, and generally did. Today, a station in a densely settled community may feel that it has to have five thousand watts to get out of town. The air is getting crowded, too.

When I got home from that eventful trip to Pittsburgh I found disillusionment. Nobody had heard me around home; they had listened carefully and still they had not heard me. My frustration was worse, in one respect, than that of Columbus. After all, he had some proof of his experience, at least he brought back a cargo of Indians. I hadn't even brought back a microphone.

But in those few days in Pittsburgh I had tasted of this new electronic lotus, and found it good.

4. The Birth of the News

February 1, 1925—**Karl Bickel, Head of United Press, Says Radio Is Inching Into News Business.**
February 1, 1925—**Cave-In Traps Man in Cavern.**

SELDOM HAS a man seen his prophecy accorded such swift

and dramatic fulfillment as Mr. Bickel. He had only seventy-two hours to wait!"

A chill wind moaned through the bare limbs of the beech tree that stood guard above the entrance to the cave as Floyd Collins peeled off his overall jacket and prepared to crawl into the crevice. He ordered his hound dog to git fer home, watched it start away reluctantly before he took his last look at daylight and began his fateful crawl into the slimy cavern.

It was so narrow that Floyd had to dig in with his toes and push himself the first few feet. Not an inviting place, but limestone caves have a way of getting better as they go along. Floyd Collins, as his neighbors said, would crawl into places a hound dog wouldn't go into, and somehow old Floyd (who was thirty-seven) would always find a way out. As they say in that neighborhood, "He had a hankerin' fer gittin' home."

Nobody realized it at the time, least of all the hapless Mr. Collins, but when he scratched his way into that lonely sandstone cave on the morning of January 31, 1925, he was about to send radio soaring to new heights. He was looking for another cave through which he might lead a few tourists. Instead, he found death—and the sort of fleeting fame that comes to those who die in the spotlight.

When Floyd failed to come home that noon it surprised no one. His family remembered that he often wandered into the hills he knew and loved, living out of his pocket and sleeping wherever night found him. But Floyd's hound, Old Porterhouse, came home in mid-afternoon. The dog was dirty and skinned-up and he was also tired. Porterhouse did not follow the storybook tradition by barking until someone followed him to the scene of the accident: Porterhouse was weary and he simply sprawled out on the doorstep and went to sleep.

It was Homer Collins, a brother of the ill-fated Floyd, who first noticed that Floyd's dog was unusually muddy and scratched-up. It was strange that the dog had come home without his master; he had never done that before. Perhaps it would bear looking into.

It did.

Before the family could get their own suspicions translated into action, one of the neighbors came panting into the yard with the news: Floyd's coat was near the mouth of a nameless cave, wet after lying there in the rain. Floyd's red finderline led into the cave, the line that he paid out so he could grope his way back to safety if anything went wrong. And there

were plenty of things that could go wrong on such perilous ventures: a man could tumble into a chasm, get jammed in a crevice, lose his way, or be trapped by a rock fall.

As the searchers stood there gaping at the entrance and wondering what to do next, Old Porterhouse stuck his head into the hole and let out a howl that echoed in the dripping darkness. In a matter of hours it was echoing through the newsrooms of the nation as one of the most dramatic rescue efforts in years got underway. Within three days those bleak hills felt the tramp of thousands of feet. Planes droned overhead. Pick and shovel and blasting powder gouged away at the rock. A human life hung in the balance and every hour was precious.

First to reach the doomed man was a farm boy who lived nearby, seventeen-year-old Jewel Estes. Being smaller than the others in that first rescue party, Jewel had no trouble scrambling around the tortuous passage that Floyd had followed. He found Floyd three hundred feet from the entrance at a point about seventy-five feet beneath the surface. Because the passageway doubled on itself, the explorer had actually penetrated considerably less than two hundred feet from his starting point. As Collins tried to climb over a shelf, he had jarred loose a piece of stone that released a larger section. The second stone dropped on the calves of his legs, pinning him to earth, helpless.

After young Estes had determined Floyd's location, another friend of the family, Johnnie Geralds, wriggled his way to within six feet of Collins. Floyd told him that he was all right but that his feet were badly swollen. Geralds brought out Floyd's plea to please hurry; it was cold down there, lying on that slab of rock.

The news of Floyd's plight trickled out to the Sunday morning papers which gave it a one-column headline. Twenty-four hours later the newspapers realized they had a major story. Newsmen from all over the nation were pouring into Cave City, Kentucky, about six miles from the scene of the tragedy. The *Louisville Courier* gave the story a six-column headline: **Rescuers Unable to Free Collins.** It was reported that Collins was begging them to pull him out, even if it tore off his foot. Millions of people were taking notice of the plight of Floyd Collins, fighting for his life in that slimy sandstone cave. It was front-page copy everywhere.

As soon as the exact nature of Collins's predicament became known it was decided, with his consent, that the only practicable way to rescue him was to sink a shaft through the soft

stone and reach him from the side. Miners who were familiar with such work were already on the scene. They realized that such a shaft might require several days, and wasted no time. A shaft was started, rough board tracks laid to facilitate the hauling away of the debris. The shaft was not more than eight or ten feet square, big enough to work in and small enough to require a minimum of time.

Unfortunately there was no real authority, no single leader, in those critical early hours of the Floyd Collins case. Two separate holes were started and discarded. Precious hours were wasted. A hose was run back to Collins from another entrance and air was pumped to him. The pump failed. And in all the confusion and excitement it was several days before anyone thought of providing Collins with a waterproof blanket to protect him from the chill. Arguments, many of them accelerated by whiskey, contributed further delay to the rescue work. The keynote was confusion.

Some time in the late afternoon of February 2, four men made a desperate attempt to drag Collins to safety. Homer Collins managed to get a crude sort of harness under his brother's arms. Bob Burdon of the Louisville Fire Department, reporter "Skeets" Miller of the *Louisville Courier*, and Guy Turner of Cave City, were with Homer on this venture. Somehow they managed to get within a few feet of Floyd: somehow they found a little room for leverage in the muddy crevice through which they crawled. The four of them pulled as hard as they could. Floyd thought they had moved him a few inches, but he was still trapped and in pain.

That effort had to be abandoned when Turner and Burdon collapsed. Miller and Homer Collins managed to drag their companions out of danger, out into a scene of bedlam. Swarms of spectators were milling around overhead. Drunks and drunken brawls. Pitchmen selling souvenirs. Commotion that contributed nothing to the rescue attempts. The L. and N. Railroad offered to send equipment and men. Governor Fields offered the facilities of the state of Kentucky. The world was anxiously awaiting word from the cave where a man's life hung precariously in the balance.

Into this madhouse came radio, apprehensively coming to grips with its first big news story.

There were only two big radio stations in the area. One of them, WLW in Cincinnati, was only three days old when Collins crawled into that cave. The other station, WHAS in Louisville, was well established, but handicapped in this instance by the management of a fussy little gentleman named

Credo Harris. Mr. Harris was best known in the field of music, but fortunately WHAS was owned by the *Louisville Courier and Times* and since their reporter William "Skeets" Miller was doing such a creditable job, WHAS set up a connection near the scene of the excitement at Sand Cave.

It proved to be a winning combination, a powerful radio station and a small but competent reporter. Mr. Miller was not only competent—he was also courageous. Being slight of stature he could crawl near enough to Floyd Collins to interview him, a privilege denied to other newsmen of greater bulk. Each day Miller would make his unpleasant journey, a matter of a couple of hours' dirty and dangerous work. Once the interview had been concluded, Miller would back out, weary and wet. At the barn where the WHAS wire was located the story could be flashed back to Louisville, to be decoded for the newspapers, the newswires and for radio. WHAS had only a part-time schedule of broadcasting in those days: a late afternoon hour and an hour and a half at night: no programs at all on Monday nights. News, if it was treated at all, was a matter of police bulletins or of general news in capsule form. At first, even "Skeets" Miller's potent prose was well on its way to dessication by the time WHAS offered it to the public.

On the scene as an assistant to a free-lance newsreel cameraman, I must admit to a bit of myopia in my own case. I did not realize that I was witnessing radio's initiation into big-time news coverage. Not at all. At the time I was far more impressed by the glamor boys of the era, the reporters like Miller and Neil Dalton of the Louisville papers, Tom Killian and Eddie Johnson of the *Chicago Tribune*, Dave Austin of the *Cincinnati Post* and a fellow named Eckenberg of *The New York Times*. Many of them slept in barns or wagons filled with straw (as I did) and they ate, for the most part, tramp-style around campfires in places sheltered from the raw winds and snow flurries.

They lied and laughed and drank together. They fought for stories from the miners, the neighbors and the family of the doomed man. They sometimes hired me to listen for their telephones to ring, telephones which were hanging on trees near the cave entrance. Over these phones millions of words on the plight of Floyd Collins went out to an anxious world. Not far away was the special line to WHAS. In an unpretentious barn where radio, the swiftest courier of them all, was shyly flexing its muscles.

Floyd Collins had been trapped underground for seven days when it became apparent that something had to be done

quickly and correctly if he was to be brought out alive. The University of Kentucky sent geologist Dr. Funkhouser to assist the militia who had taken over. Dr. Funkhouser selected the spot for sinking a test drill, which went down a little over fifty feet before it broke into the cave. Fifty feet to go, and the shaft was creeping downward at the rate of about six inches per hour. At that rate it would take at least four more days to reach the trapped man. Could he survive that long?

Radio men set up their gear under the overhang at the mouth of the cave, under a big sheet of canvas which kept off the rain and snow. Through headphones, physicians listened to Floyd's breathing as it disturbed the filament in the electric bulb around his neck. The doctors counted his respiration rate —twenty-two to twenty-six times per minute. While it was slightly higher than normal it convinced the doctors that Floyd was not only alive but that he did not have pneumonia as had been feared. The rescue work became even more feverish: the Western Union office at the mouth of the cave clicked night and day without cease in order to keep abreast of the torrent of words. The correspondents' telephones jangled among the trees and WHAS sputtered out its messages to the world.

Two days later, Homer Collins told newsmen: "There ain't a chance left that we can git Floyd out of there alive. We've done give up at last!" Here he began to sob and could say no more.

Homer was right. The rescue shaft reached the fifty-three-foot level but found no cave. The radio tests failed to detect any breathing.

Floyd had, in his own words, "done gone home and gone to bed."

On the morning of February 14th, 1925, the *Louisville Courier Journal* carried a very unusual front-page box, advising the public that there would be no more extra editions on the Floyd Collins case. Instead, said the paper, "Stay tuned to WHAS for the news." Radio had come of age in the news world. It was on its own.

Eighteen days after Floyd Collins crawled into his last cave, rescue workers broke through into the cavity beside him. Ed Brenner of Cincinnati cupped his hands around the hole and peered in. He was within reaching distance of Floyd's body. John Steger, a photographer for the *Chicago Tribune*, shoved a camera into the opening and snapped a picture. Reporters scrambled madly for their telephones, trying to tell their stories to the home offices through chattering teeth.

While the newsmen were cranking their phones, radio had already flashed the report.

Even in death there was no rest for Floyd Collins. Under the procedures instituted by the political overlords, it was ninety days before his body was recovered. In the meantime his mother (an epileptic) had died of shock and grief. His family had succumbed to the blandishments of a promoter who induced them to put Floyd's body on exhibition. For a time, visitors with morbid inclinations could pay ten cents and peer down a pipe into the lighted coffin to see the mortal remains of this poor hillbilly who had the misfortune to die dramatically.

The story of Floyd Collins has been faded by time and the glare of more spectacular events, but it remains as a landmark in the annals of broadcasting, since it was the first time that radio had dealt directly with a news story of such magnitude. Looking back at it over the years, it is quite apparent that thanks to the combination of WHAS and Skeets Miller, radio made the most of its opportunity.

My own relation to the Floyd Collins tragedy was that of a wide-eyed flunkey who was enthralled with the whole thing. Between toting heavy tripods, answering telephones and hunting down scattered reporters, I was plenty busy. Whenever possible I peeked in at the radio outpost. Mostly I just watched and listened or ran errands to justify my presence.

About two months after the Collins case, I had the temerity to seek an appointment with Credo Harris, the manager of WHAS. He was a very busy man, of course, and had little time for brash youngsters with their ideas. Through one of the station engineers I got the appointment and with well-pomaded hair and sheik sideburns carefully trimmed, I breezed into his office.

Mr. Harris was a rather small man, physically, and generally quite warm and pleasant. On that particular morning, however, he seemed brusque and cold. My confidence oozed out of my shoetops.

With a minimum of preliminaries, I got down to business. When I suggested that it might be a good idea to put on a regular series of news broadcasts over his station his expression was that of a man who has just been tapped in the face with a croquet mallet. "Will you repeat that, young man?"

He didn't sound receptive, but I gulped and repeated it.

Mr. Harris stood up stiffly and seemed to be trying to control his temper.

"Young man," he said, "I shall excuse you because of your age and inexperience. For your sake I am going to give you a bit of advice and I want you to remember it!

"Radio is not in the news business! This radio station is not in the news business! The principal function of radio is to provide music and educational material, not to try to compete with newspapers. I suggest that you remember that. Good day, sir!"

With my deflated dreams dragging behind me, I got out of there like a scalded cat.

Perhaps the real reason for Mr. Harris's refusal to consider my suggestion was that he had no real feeling for news. Nowhere is this more clearly indicated than in a book which he wrote in 1937, dealing with his experiences in the formative years of radio. The book contains no mention whatever of the Floyd Collins story!

I was still determined to become a radio newsman. I had had a couple of months' summertime work with the *Louisville Herald* as a cub reporter and in my opinion I was ready for the broadcasting industry. For months I pestered the manager of the other Louisville station, WLAP, which suffered from financial malnutrition. He finally agreed to let me do one news broadcast per day, an event timed for early-evening listening. In those days the small radio stations had to live off their daytime programs. In the evenings, as reception conditions improved, the audience listened to the more powerful and distant stations. Giving me that early-evening spot was not a gesture of generosity. It was just a gesture.

Since we had no news service and could not buy one, we were reduced to some flimsy expedients. On the way to work I would stop at a handbook joint which had a newsstand for a front and pick up a couple of out-of-town papers. By purchasing both a New York and a Chicago paper of the preceding day I could scrape together enough sports and human interest material for a broadcast. There remained, however, the problem of local news and of important later stories elsewhere.

Fortunately, my boss was an ingenious chap who liked the idea of outsmarting the newspapers. His solution to our problem was to buy a copy of the late edition of one of the Louisville evening papers. We dared not broadcast the stories verbatim, for newspapers and wire services have a marked allergy to being hijacked. It was my job to rewrite the first three or four lines of each of the main stories. I then edited the material we had filched from the out-of-town papers, and we were ready to go on the air. If the evening papers were late

(as they often were) we simply sweated it out and gave our restricted listening audience unusually extensive coverage of sports events in Chicago and New York. Good coverage, but slightly stale.

I have often wondered how it must have sounded to those who listened. For example, when I came to a late news story about a train wreck in Colorado, I had to preface the report by saying: "A friend in Colorado has just phoned us to report that . . ." or else "A correspondent in Schenectady sends us a telegram to say . . ." and after such openings I would read the rest of the story almost verbatim from the local paper. In the case of a big local story, our broadcast version always quoted some eyewitness, and with minor changes was almost identical to that in the paper. If the paper was correct, we were too.

Years later I learned that the newspapers had known what we were doing all along—they just hadn't cared.

At the time, however, we were unaware of their indifference. The station manager had given me firm instructions that I was not to open that studio door *under any circumstances* until the control room had signaled me that the coast was clear. The risky part of the procedure, according to the station attorney, was that I might be caught in the studio with the purloined news material in my possession. There must have been some easier method of doing the job, if it had to be done at all, but we did it the hard way.

One evening, just as I concluded my "news" broadcast, I was startled by a frantic pounding on the door. My heart began hammering at my teeth. So this was it! Trapped at last! Again someone pounded on the door, but this time I heard a muffled yell of "FIRE!"

I was not being taken in by such a transparent piece of trickery. Leaving the studio door bolted, I hastily tore up the incriminating newspaper clippings and stuffed them into the back of an upright piano. I flipped the microphone switch and asked the control engineer what was going on. No reply—perhaps he was busy. A moment later I tried again. Still no reply. I peeked through the curtain into the control room. Nobody there, now that was peculiar! I peeked past the drapes on the studio door into the hall—couldn't see a thing; in fact it was unusually dark.

Then I noticed a little wisp of white smoke seeping under the door. Suddenly my cocksureness was replaced by doubt. Was there really a fire? Or was somebody, a practical joker, perhaps, giving me the business?

Since I had done away with the broadcast material, I could see no harm in opening the door as long as I did it in such fashion that I appeared to be deliberate. The boys weren't going to panic me with their gags!

I swung the studio door open into a billowing cloud of smoke. No chance to get down the long hall to the stairway. I took a deep breath and dashed the other way, toward the men's rest room, which led to a fire escape. Strange how those things stick in your memory, isn't it? Just when I needed it most, I remembered that fire escape. What I failed to remember was that it had been removed two years before when the building next door had been remodeled.

Once in the men's room I got another breath of fresh air, then jerked open the window. The fire escape was no longer there but in its place was a low roof which led to safety. While the firemen were extinguishing the trash fire in the basement of our studio, I was happily ensconced in the building next door. Seeing me scrambling across the roof, the lady who ran the place opened a window and let me in. She introduced me to her "boarders," all girls, and they insisted that I tell them all about radio, which of course I did.

To this day they linger in my memory as a kind and sympathetic bunch of girls. It seems a shame that the police wouldn't leave them alone.

5. Growing Pains

I WASN'T getting rich at WLAP, but as the station's foremost news announcer—in fact I was their entire news staff—I felt I was getting along. But times were growing hard for the independent stations, and one day I was told that WLAP could no longer afford my services.

From top to bottom in the radio industry it was every man for himself. The stations that had embarked so merrily on the sea of advertising found themselves in serious difficulties by 1926. They were clamoring for some sort of government regulation that would require every broadcaster to stay on his assigned frequency. As it was, the big popular stations found themselves sharing their choice spots on the dial with half a dozen other stations, wave-jumpers who had decided to move around.

Matters had also reached a point where the big advertisers were demanding more for their money. The sheer magic of

being on radio was no longer enough to insure booming sales, and they could see no sense in spending sizeable sums on a major station which could by no means cover their market. Something had to be done, and quickly, too.

American Telephone and Telegraph Company was still operating WEAF in New York City but it wanted to get out of the radio business. It was glad to meet with officials of RCA, General Electric and Westinghouse to discuss their mutual problems. The broadcasters wanted to increase their coverage. The answer was plain enough—link the stations together by telephone lines and blanket the nation (and the opposition stations) with sponsored programs. A. T. & T. was willing, even anxious, to grant the use of its lines. It knew that attempts had been made to use Western Union Telegraph Company lines for a similar purpose, but the lines had given inadequate voice quality. Here was a chance to pick up additional revenue and at the same time to keep Western Union from installing better lines and thus becoming a rival.

The outgrowth of the July meeting was a nineteen-station hookup which made its bow as the National Broadcasting Company in November of 1926 with a broadcast from the Waldorf ballroom. Ben Bernie, B. A. Rolfe, George Olsen and Vincent Lopez furnished the music, while Will Rogers delivered a few humorous remarks from a special hookup in Independence, Missouri. It is worth noting that the radio industry sought a solution to its difficulties by presenting a star-studded show which might be called spectacular—a term and a technique still very much in vogue.

NBC created its own competitor a few weeks later, the "Blue" network, which later became the American Broadcasting Company. The third network, Columbia, made its appearance in September of 1927, when the Columbia Phonograph Company bought out a sixteen-station affiliation that had resulted from the abortive efforts to form a network known as United Independent Broadcasters. The phonograph company lost three hundred thousand dollars in ninety days and gladly sold out to a group of radio men, who developed the idea into the Columbia Broadcasting System. Mutual Broadcasting System was a late-comer resulting from a working agreement in September, 1934, by which WOR, WLW and WXYZ pooled their program facilities. They were all powerful stations in major markets and they needed network affiliation in order to compete.

Prior to the formation of the networks in the mid-Twenties, there was little real inducement for talent to enter radio. Few

stations could offer the kind of money vaudeville could pay, even with sponsors to help foot the bills. Yet a smart operator could make an excellent income (and keep it) if he had the right act on a powerful station.

A prize example was that of Smilin' Ed McConnell, a roly-poly piano-and-song artist who held forth on WLW, Cincinnati, for years. Thanks to the station's tremendous power and clear channel operation, Smilin' Ed could be heard over a score of states. He sold kerosene lamps, stove polish, automobile tires and candy. His approach was the sure-fire technique of opening with a ripple of piano and then . . .

"How are all my sweet little ole girls out there this mornin', huh? Havin' fun? Aw, gee whiz, that's too bad! Now you just stop that workin' right this very minute, sit down in the big easy chair and take it easy while I sing to you. That's right, now you listen to me, cause I'm gonna sing this one just for you. . . ."

Smilin' Ed was sure-fire in the mid-Twenties. He made well over a thousand dollars a week at a time when the average workman was glad to make thirty bucks. When he died in 1954, Ed was a wealthy man whose television films were doing well. He died on his own yacht.

Millions of us waited night after night for the melodies of Singin' Sam, a former vaudeville performer who deserted the stage for the magic microphone. As Harry Frankel of Richmond, Indiana, he had sung in the local Elks quartette, played a little piano and eventually drifted into vaudeville. But it was in radio that he made his fortune; radio, which amplified his soft tones and sent them booming across the land. He needed radio and radio needed him. Together they made money as well as music. The secret of his success? I put that question to him a few years ago.

Said Sam: "My secret, if I had a secret, is the same one that made Bing Crosby. We both sang easily, naturally, and we sang songs that made the listeners want to sing right with us. Any performer who does that just can't miss!"

One of the early favorites on the West Coast was an uninhibited operator of a station in Los Angeles who took to the air each night to insult anyone who dared to telephone him. His vocabulary was well suited to the task and he built a huge audience, but admittedly the program was not for children or the squeamish. Eventually the government decided that it was not for Uncle Sam, either, and California radio fans had to tune elsewhere.

From Shreveport, Louisiana, the nightly fulminations of a

character who referred to himself as "Old Man Henderson" attracted widespread attention, if not approbation. Blasting out from his own station, KWKH, Henderson opened his broadcasts with "Hello, world—and damn the chain stores!" His stock in trade was to blame chain stores for most of the troubles that were current. In vitriol he caricatured the chain-store operators as ogres who sought to drain the money out of the rest of the nation in order to pour it into Wall Street. If you wanted to help him in his battle you could do so by purchasing some of his "Hello World" coffee. And between tirades he would play request numbers, generally recordings that were distinctly off-color. I was listening to him one night when he startled me by playing a record which he said had been requested by a lady in Chicago. When he read off her name I recognized it as that of my great-grandmother, a saintly old soul who probably never knew that such a character as Old Man Henderson even existed. I am equally certain that she would never have asked him to play a thing called "Squeeze My Lemons."

Henderson went the way of his kind, with an assist from the Federal Radio Commission.

Night after night I struggled with the cat whisker on a borrowed crystal set in order to hear a convict named Snodgrass, who played piano and sang from his cell in the state prison at Jefferson City, Missouri. He was a sensation in our neighborhood and to miss one of his broadcasts was to count the night as lost. His programs were loaded with lachrymose renditions of songs about home, mother, sweethearts; it was quite apparent to all of us that here was a clean-cut, homespun lad who had been framed. In retrospect it is also apparent that he did everything except ask you please to send him a hacksaw.

I have no idea how he ever managed to get on the air in the first place but I do know how he got out of the clink. The flood of fan mail which resulted from his broadcasts induced the State of Missouri to release him, and our neighborhood was properly thrilled. I regret to say that our hero's talents ran to larceny instead of lyrics, and a short time later he was back in the pokey, this time without a radio program.

It was easier for him to get out of jail than for me to bring him in on that crystal set. The set worked all right when I first borrowed it from my Uncle Ben, but I had made slight changes in it with a view to improving it. As usual, the changes were for the worse. I tried the standard remedies for boosting the crystal, which included soaking it in vinegar and painting

it with iodine, among others. Nothing seemed to help. A friend told me to try boiling it in acid.

That seemed reasonable, for as he explained it the acid would clean the surface of the crystal and the cat whisker could pick up a better signal. I waited until the rest of the family had gone to bed, preferring to conduct my alchemy without interruption. We had a cook-stove in the kitchen which I fired up very quietly, since my father's bedroom was adjoining and I thought it best not to disturb him. When the stove was good and hot I got out a small white enamel kettle, filled it about half-full of hydrochloric acid and dropped the crystal into it. Things were just beginning to bubble when the phone rang and I went into the living room to answer it.

My first intimation of trouble came from my father's bedroom. My mother coughed, then he coughed. I heard him get out of bed, rather hurriedly I thought. The door between the bedroom and the kitchen slammed.

Pop was peeved. "My God, Nellie! That boy's at it again!"

I dropped the phone and darted into the kitchen. It was full of steam or fumes that choked and burned. My father was already there, a towel over his face, feeling for the pan on the stove. Before I could remonstrate he had thrown pan, crystal and all out into the snow. Under the circumstances I did not feel that it was a good idea to protest. We opened the windows and aired out the house, dried our tears, and called it a night.

Next day I bought an Ajax three-tube set with loudspeaker: "All the sound—the dial around."

Through the Ajax we got acquainted with the stars who were beginning to sparkle on the new medium. Graham McNamee, the former church singer turned sports announcer; Will Rogers; The Silver Masked Tenor; Alice Joy, the Prince Albert Dream Girl; Jessica Dragonette; Ford and Glenn; Little Jack Little; Ruth Etting; Wendell Hall, The Red Headed Music Maker; Paul Whiteman; Rudy Vallee; and from Chicago the ubiquitous Husk O'Hare. Husk found himself so much in demand that he could not fill all the engagements that were offered so he hastily assembled other orchestras by hiring unemployed musicians around Chicago and sometimes Husk O'Hare and His Music would be playing in half a dozen widely separated spots, all on the same night, while Mr. O'Hare relaxed in Chicago.

In the immediate vicinity of my home town of New Albany lived a young banjo player whose dance orchestra commuted between the Louisville radio stations and the small roadhouses near French Lick, where they picked up a few dollars enter-

taining the customers, who were generally befuddled with needled beer. About 1930, however, Perry Botkin saw his rainbow in the west and lost no time getting to it. I am happy to report that he has long since grown pudgy and prosperous as the arranger and guitarist for Mr. Harry Lillis Crosby, sometimes called Bing.

In the free-and-easy atmosphere of radio in those days there was little in the way of program planning at the local level. The idea apparently was to fill the time with something—anything—with an absolute minimum of effort. This enabled a lot of local people, talented or otherwise, to get on the air.

By the fall of 1927 I had the urge again. In the summer I had worked as an assistant to Joe Lally, then golf professional at the New Albany Country Club. The first frost brought that job to an end. When I considered the possibility of going back to work at WLAP for nothing it was by no means abhorrent. Rather, it was a financial vacuum into which I was seeking entry.

The mercurial conditions in radio at that time are exemplified by my own experiences. The station had moved and changed hands since my brief service there as a newsman two years earlier. I went out to the new location of the "studios," a decadent brick mansion in a rundown residential section. The first person I saw there was a taciturn fellow who introduced himself as the program director, sitting behind a dry-goods box which was tastefully draped in black crepe paper. When I called back one week later I discovered that he had moved from the dry-goods box to the only desk in the house; he had already become the manager!

That threw me into contact with the new program director. For the sake of this chronicle he shall be known as Wes McClasky, which is not his name. It also happens that the name he was using at that time was not his name either; it was merely a device to deceive his creditors, who had him outnumbered a hundred to one.

Wes greeted me with a handshake that had thawed the hearts of many a credit manager. I had the feeling that I had known him for a long time, and he did nothing to dispel that impression. Before I could state my case he was leaning back in his rickety chair, feet up on the dry-goods box, giving me a spray job about the great opportunities in radio for energetic young men who had talent.

Up to that moment the only thing I had said to him was "How do you do?" and I was amazed at how much he had been able to deduce from such a simple statement. He guessed

my age to within a year, and assured me that he could spot talent a mile away. To him I spelled talent with a capital "T," he said. Had I had any theatrical experience? Before I could tell him that my theatrical experience consisted of being stranded in Wheeling, he had gone back to the Elysian fields of radio. There, he said, lay opportunity unlimited: Fame and fortune awaited those who had the foresight to grow up with the industry.

In the next room, which had recently been somebody's kitchen, an emaciated man was playing phonograph records beside the chipped sink. This struck me as a discordant note in the symphony of success. I could play phonograph records at home. What was so fortunate about being able to play them over the radio? I asked Wes.

He shrugged it off.

"Just a plodder in the field of a new art," he said. "Why you'd be surprised if you knew what we pay him for just that simple task! Yet, the real money in this business is for those with vision and those who have talent that they can project through a microphone!"

Suddenly he looked at his watch. "Seven o'clock! Have you had supper, Frank? How about having it with me?"

Naturally I was flattered to have the opportunity of dining with the program director of a radio station. We went to a nearby restaurant, a quick-and-dirty where Wes spoke so loudly of WLAP that everyone soon knew where *he* worked. Not that it mattered much with the patrons of that place but it seemed to please him to know that he was being noticed.

After a hearty meal he discovered that he had left his wallet back at the studios, and of course I paid the bill.

As a result of this relationship, Wes arranged to put me on the air. No salary of course, since I was just getting started, but a regular broadcast period, each evening at seven. It just happened that the broadcast coincided with his evening meals, at my expense. The deal had the effect of getting me on the air and of getting him on a high-calorie diet.

After all these years I cannot find it in my heart to begrudge Wes those evening meals. In order to qualify he had to sit at his desk until I came off the air, which meant that he had to hear me over the loudspeaker in the hall. That was an ordeal which the listeners could (and did) avoid by simply throwing the switch. There was no such prospect of relief for the man at the program director's box. He could only listen or leave and Wes wasn't going to leave without his meal ticket.

He had been quite a showman in his day, so he said. "I've

played Hamlet and other small towns!" he would bellow, and that would be followed by a hearty laugh at his own wit.

For me, Wes had conceived a character which he predicted would sweep the country. No more of those threadbare old vaudeville routines where one fellow asks the questions and the other gives the mirth-provoking answers. None of that hackneyed business. The theme of early radio was to save labor and Wes had just the idea to do the job: I was to ask the questions and give the funny answers myself. A one-man team, to be known to radioland as "The Funny Professor."

What about material? The man who had admittedly played Hamlet and other small towns assured me that material was no problem at all. Each afternoon he would rummage through the files in his suitcase and rough out the program material for my fifteen-minute session. It was a full fifteen minutes, too, unsullied by commercials of any kind.

I supplied Wes with roast beef and mashed potatoes in return for unadulterated corn. Examples: "What was the matter with that girl? She was so dumb she thought Bay Rum was a seaport." Or: "Why am I worried about my mother? Because she hasn't sent me my check." Or: "You want to see Chung Foo the Chinese magician? Sorry, you can't see him because he's gone to Ireland to visit his folks."

This went on for seven months while Opportunity persisted in looking the other way. I had a feeling that I wasn't making any headway in either the world of art or of radio but Wes would brush aside my doubts. Everywhere he went, he said, people were talking about my program. All I had to do was to have faith, continue to broadcast, and of course continue to provide free evening meals to my combined gag writer and advisor.

The eighth month dragged by, and the ninth. Still no sponsor and no sign of remuneration. In the meantime, the manager had quit and Wes had taken over his duties. Two announcers had also come and gone, but the skinny fellow in the kitchen still spun the worn-out phonograph records and iced his beer in the sink.

Ten months is a long time to work for nothing. Wes's talk about having faith and being patient was wearing a bit thin. I was beginning to think that if Henry Ford had my luck he would still have been fixing bicycles. I decided to have a showdown.

When I entered the studios that afternoon, a couple of hours earlier than usual, I saw that something was unquestionably wrong. There were two policemen in the front hall, the lady

program director was crying, and the owner of the station was arguing heatedly with the station's solitary announcer. The only calm person in the place was the skinny fellow in the kitchen, playing records.

I asked for Mr. McClasky and the whole outfit came at me. What did I know about him? Where had I last seen him? Did I know how to find him?

It developed that my counselor, gag man and free-loading friend had vanished with the weekly payroll of the entire staff. The only foul play involved was the manner in which he had fleeced everybody. And it was then I discovered that for ten long months he had been collecting five dollars a week for my services, too.

Radio never looked less appealing to me than it did at that moment. I decided to toss the whole mess overboard as a bad deal and go back to being a golf professional. There was considerable merit in my decision, for while I had been struggling along night after night seeking a place in the firmament of fun, millions of people, including my own friends and neighbors, had been ignoring my drolleries to listen to a pair of imitation Negro comics who called themselves Amos and Andy.

I was not defeated . . . merely annihilated.

From time to time, in the ensuing years, I would bump into Wes. He always dressed well, always had some big deal which never quite lived up to his description of it. He was on the downgrade and he knew it.

One night in 1950 I was in San Francisco doing my network broadcast from the studios of KFRC. I had a headache, and after the broadcast I was standing at the front door of the studio building, trying to decide whether to hail a cab or to walk to the hotel some blocks away. As I stood there a man went by. He glanced at me, almost stopped, and then shuffled off. It occurred to me that there was something vaguely familiar about him but at the moment I didn't know what it was. I decided to walk.

He was waiting for me at the corner, hands in his pockets, coat collar turned up against the chill wind.

"Brother, can you let me have half a buck? I'm really sick. . . ."

I fumbled in my pocket and came up with a dollar bill. There was certainly something familiar about his features: somewhere in those deepset eyes and sunken cheeks lurked traces of someone I had known long ago—but I couldn't place him.

As I handed him the money he mumbled his thanks and grabbed me by the hand—that same old unmistakable grip—he was still shaking hands with his heart. Suddenly I saw that fleeting crooked grin and I knew who he was.

"Wes?"

He flinched. No reply. We just stood there staring at each other. Finally he broke the silence. "Yeah, whaddya want?"

"I'm Frank Edwards—the kid you put on the radio back in Louisville in the Twenties! Remember?"

"My God! Frank Edwards! Sure I remember—it's been a long time."

"How are things with you, Wes?"

"Oh, all right! All right!"

We can skip the painful details and just say that it was Wes but he was far from all right. Over a meal that he didn't eat and a cup of coffee he couldn't drink for shaking, he told me a story of the years since I had last seen him. He had gone from place to place, from job to job, always looking for that greener pasture and always in trouble of some kind. The trend had been steadily downward, from bad to worse.

Perhaps he was lying to me about some of it, and if he was I can understand that he was lying to cover up something of which he was too ashamed to talk. But there was one part of his sorry story of which there could be no doubt: he was on his last legs as a dope addict.

We went out of the little restaurant and stood on the corner. There was little more to say to each other, but we didn't seem to know how to end it. It was getting late and I had to be on my way. There was a lump in my throat as I gave him another bill. He didn't look at me when he took it, just grabbed my hand for that old familiar squeeze and shuffled off into the shadows.

Like some movie, I thought.

But I've seen worse pictures with happier endings.

6. The Lean Years

THE CRUMBY little office was cold, but the station manager's stare was colder still. "Of course we can't pay you, Frank, but if you'll play ball with us we'll play ball with you."

In other words, the station was as broke as I was. It was not unusual in the winter of 1930, for money was as scarce as naked Eskimos.

My summertime job as a golf professional had blown up. A New Albany bank folded, and with it went my entire savings. That same week my Dad's job with the railroad had ended. Nine radio stations at various cities in the Midwest had already turned me down; I just had to make a deal with WLAP, or else. I knew that "play-ball" routine by heart. It meant working for nothing.

The manager burped. As he reached into a desk drawer for a bottle I noticed his bloodshot eyes; they looked like his mother might have been frightened by a road map. He poured himself a shot and tossed it off.

"Have one?"

I declined with thanks.

"You don't drink?" he asked, suspiciously.

"Nope. Can't handle it and don't fool with it."

He burped again. "Glad to hear it! Glad to hear it! You know what our last sports man did here? He brought a couple of chippies in here at midnight and put the station on the air. The police called me at two o'clock in the morning and I had to come down here and throw 'em out. They were cussing out everybody they didn't like—right over the air! Big wonder we didn't get sued. What's more, they broke into my desk and drank a full quart that I had put away—the dirty little tramps!"

I sympathized with him; for him the loss of that quart had obviously been a major disaster.

"I'm willing to play ball with you," I said. "You give me the time for a daily sports program. If you sell it you keep whatever you get for it. If I can pick up a few bucks from the sports promoters around here, I keep that. How about it?"

How could he lose? There was little prospect that he could sell the show and there was no certainty that I could make anything, either. All we could do was to give it a try. We shook hands on it.

Sports programs were by no means new to radio in 1930. One of the first big radio sensations had been the blow-by-blow broadcast of the Dempsey-Carpentier massacre in 1921, over KDKA. During the broadcast the overloaded transmitter started to disintegrate, by the end of the program it had literally begun to melt.

When Dempsey lost his title in the fall of 1926 at Philadelphia, I was one of scores who heard the fight broadcast from KDKA over my Uncle Ben's Crosley Triodyne. He put the loudspeaker up in the window for the benefit of the crowd that milled around in his yard.

The great popularity of these broadcasts had led to similar treatment of other sports, principally football and horse racing. Graham McNamee, once an obscure vocalist, had become famous for his exciting word pictures of sporting events. Major Andrew White, who had broadcast the Dempsey-Carpentier fracas, retired to the management field of CBS. Ted Husing, a young man who had failed to finish high school, bluffed his way into CBS and got his big break by broadcasting a football game on Thanksgiving Day of 1929. Nationally, major sports were finding radio sponsors. Locally, you could hardly give such programs away. It was against this background that I accepted the job at WLAP for nothing a week.

Our studios were in an office building in downtown Louisville. The small studio was about eight by ten feet, the large studio was possibly fifteen by twenty-five. Both studios were simply office rooms where the walls had been hung with burlap to deaden the sound. It was important not to have an echo, for the crude carbon microphones we used, outmoded even then, would not function well except in a "dead" studio. Those were the traditional microphones of early radio, simply a brass ring about six inches in diameter with the carbon unit suspended in the center of the circle on four springs. They were sometimes disguised by covering them with a perforated shell of brass gauze, but they were still the same old carbon mikes inside.

I have good reason to remember those microphones and the cumbersome amplifying equipment that went with them, for I had to lug the stuff around with me to the various sports events we covered. I was giving a blow-by-blow broadcast of a prize fight one night, holding the old carbon mike by the brass base. It had been raining earlier in the evening and the ringside of the open air arena was still damp when the program started. All went well until the fourth round of the main go, when, in the excitement, I forgot the engineer's warning to keep my feet off the ground. I leaned forward, calling the blows, and dropped my feet to the wet cinders. The shock knocked me backward out of my chair, and with an ear-splitting yell I threw the microphone high into the air so that it came down in the ring with the fighters. The mike was a wreck, and so was I.

Truth was that the station simply did not have enough money to buy any better equipment. We could not afford to overlook any idea that might bring in a few bucks, which probably explains how we happened to do business with a smoothie who called himself The Prince.

He started with fifteen minutes on the air each weekday morning, telling fortunes, doing his mind-reading act and capping it with a neat piece of business where he would seemingly receive a phone call asking for information which he would unerringly give. For instance the phone rang one morning and a voice asked him if he could tell where the caller's car was parked. The swami promptly told the caller the license number of the car, the make, and then informed him where it was parked. It was a gimmick, of course, worked by a few confederates who had the number of his private phone in the studio. Ordinary listeners who called the station number were told that his line was busy, which it was. The stunt was an attention-getter, of course, and within a few weeks he was doing half an hour each day and paying full price for the time.

Then he added a new gimmick.

If you had personal problems (and in the Depression, who didn't?) you could write and ask the Prince for guidance, enclosing a one-dollar bill to repay this great man for his services. He read a great many of these letters over his programs and his replies made about as much sense as the usual "Advice-to-the-Lovelorn" columns. When this began to pall on his big audience, he added the touch supreme: Tell him your troubles, enclose the dollar, and if he reads your letter over the air you get your dollar back and a five-dollar bill from the generous old Prince himself.

The cascade of dollar bills that followed the announcement of this new plan made the manager's eyes pop. The Prince opened every letter himself. Since he identified the writers on the air only by initials, he never sent out any five-dollar bills. The only letters he read were letters he had written to himself, so he kept the money.

A short dark man came into the Prince's life one morning. The man was a marshal who said he wanted to talk to the mystic about a little matter of parole jumping. If it was a development which the Prince had not foreseen he met it with his customary aplomb. He handed his gaudy turban to the marshal, invited the officer to step in and meet the manager of the station, and while the marshal was shaking hands with the manager the Prince ducked out the door and was gone. We never saw him again, nor did we ever see the money he owed us for his last month's broadcasting. And now that I think of it, we never saw that "marshal" again, either.

I remember the Prince especially for a remark he made one morning, just after he had finished his program. He was stuffing the dollar bills into his pockets. Picking up the letters which

had contained the money he held them between thumb and forefinger for an instant before he dropped them into the wastebasket. "My dear public!" he sneered. "The goofs that lay the golden eggs!"

For him it was literally true.

The first deal I was able to make under my unusual working agreement stemmed from a chance meeting with a theatre manager, Ford Tracy, who was a friend of mine. I bumped into him as I sauntered along Fourth Street, Louisville's main stem. We had known each other for several years and there was no reason for either of us to be less than honest about our mutual predicament. I had a lot of empty listeners and he had a lot of empty theatre seats. Could we work out a deal? We dropped into a drugstore for coffee.

Ford had an idea. "You work in a plug for my picture or for the theatre and I'll give you sixty passes a week. How about it?"

I was dubious. This might have been a sporting proposition but it was hardly sports.

"And if the holder of one of your passes brings a paying customer with him, I'll give him a free sack of popcorn. Is it a deal?"

That incident in the drug store stands out clearly in my mind for the simple reason that it was the only time I ever knew Ford to reach for the check.

Clearing the deal with the station manager was surprisingly easy: I gave him twelve of the passes each week. Getting the plugs for the theatre or the pictures on the sports program often took a bit of doing. Once, in sheer desperation, I managed to fulfill my agreement by the happy thought of tying a local sports figure to the theatre Ford managed. I had just announced that a popular wrestler named Blacksmith Pedigo had injured his back and was in the hospital—as an afterthought I added: "Only yesterday I saw Pedigo standing in the lobby of the Ohio Theatre on Fourth Street, where Clark Gable is being featured in his latest picture." Technically, it was true, for I had been standing there talking to Ford Tracy when Pedigo came along and stopped to chat for a moment. But it was a technique that would not bear repetition; I couldn't get along by pretending that newsworthy athletes were hovering around the lobbies of the theatres like termites.

The station manager came to my rescue. "Give 'em a plug," he said, "but keep it short. After all, we can't start peddling commercials for a handful of theatre tickets!"

I did, and made an interesting discovery: In times of economic distress, theatre tickets are almost as good as money.

My basic problem was that of eating regularly. I couldn't eat the theatre tickets, of course, but there was a cafeteria on Walnut Street in downtown Louisville known as the Magnolia. It was a big place, and a busy one. Toast, egg and coffee for fifteen cents. As I shoved my tray along the counter I had the happy thought that the waitresses might like to use some of the movie passes that were cluttering up my pockets.

Would they? They certainly would!

It was the beginning of some beautiful friendships: I gave them the passes, and they showed their appreciation by piling my tray with extremely generous portions of food. Hamburger steak, in my case, was not hamburger but steak. It was a wonderful deal, and there was no unpleasantness about money when I got to the cashier, either, for she too was generously supplied with free passes to her favorite films.

I never knew whether the theatres did any business through this arrangement, but I certainly did!

With banks crashing all around us, we frequently found that in order to sell an account we had to do a bit of bartering. Thus it was that in the depths of the depression we agreed to take part of the payment from a small packinghouse in the products of that institution. Perhaps the manager of the station walked into this deadfall dreaming of pork chops and steak. I am sorry to report that the payment was in weenies.

Even at our bargain rates for broadcast, it took a lot of frankfurters to pay for half of the time. They came in greasy cardboard boxes, generally, but sometimes we got them in white cloth bags. The manager began to dread Saturdays. After a couple of weeks the rest of the staff had all the weenies they could use—or all they could stand—and when he offered me a box of the things I didn't have the hear to tell him that I had already eaten so many that my stomach rebelled at the thought of them. With as much feigned appreciation as possible I accepted them, and got rid of them at the nearest Salvation Army mission.

After five weeks of deluging us with frankfurters, the sponsor obligingly solved our problem by going out of business.

We did business with other clients who insisted that we take some of the amount due in merchandise. Cagier, now, as a result of our experience with the weenie works, the manager received due bills, which he passed along to the members of the staff. Thus it was that we sometimes had new garments, although of dubious quality. Our clients did not operate the

swankiest shops and the clothing we got had already been picked over by customers who were far from discriminating. We were, as announcer Ken Hall once said, just a bunch of wolves in cheap clothing.

For the nation it was a dark winter. For those of us in this newest branch of the entertainment world it was particularly hard to get along. Even the big names were having their troubles. Vaudeville had folded, the public was impoverished, and show people had to eat, too. It was no accident that so many of the top stars of radio and television got their start on the air in the depths of the Great Depression. Ed Wynn, Bob Hope, Eddie Cantor, Burns and Allen, Jack Benny, Rudy Vallee, Orson Welles and many others brought their talents from other fields to radio in those days. Everybody had troubles, but if they had a radio they could turn it on in the evenings and have a little fun, as well.

Major Bowes started his famous "Amateur Hour" in 1934 and it was an instant success. To the listeners it seemed that this kindly old entrepreneur was offering fame and fortune to the impoverished amateurs. Actually, many of the "amateurs" on his program were professional entertainers who were unemployed. If he sent them out on the road with one of his units to play theatres across the nation, they were paid pittances in the neighborhood of fifty dollars per week. Major Bowes made millions of dollars from his "amateurs."

The owners of WLAP decided that they might improve their fortunes by changing the management. They dispensed with the services of the fellow who had hired me and brought in a gentleman named George Jaspert, a husky, energetic "let's-get-going!" type.

One of his first moves was to hire a new salesman, a lean, threadbare and determined chap who had starved out trying to sell insurance. To us he was a ray of sunshine—a shaft of light in the gathering gloom—for he went right out and sold a series of programs to the new owner of a company that made battery cables. Each program was to be of thirty-minute duration and the contract called for two programs each day, seven days a week!

Bonanza! No wonder Jaspert took one look at the contract and yelled, "YEEEEEOWWIE!"

To show our appreciation, the station put on free announcements many times each day calling attention to the new battery-cable program. We dragged in all our friends to jam the studio for the opening program. They dutifully applauded the

Sparkling Baritone, the Super-Voltage Orchestra, and the Sure-Fire Quartette.

By the standards of the time it was a pretty good show, with the exception of the silly business of tagging those titles on the performers to tie them in with the product. Judging from the mail response it was a very popular program, too. Unfortunately, there was just one thing wrong with the whole pretty picture: it did not sell battery cables.

People do not go to their repair garages and demand a certain type of battery cable. They feel that any good copper cable which connects the battery with the rest of the car's innards will do the job as well as any other battery cable.

Thirteen weeks of Sparkling Baritones and Super-Voltage melodies were drawing to a close when the first signs of trouble appeared on the horizon. The sponsor began to complain that he wasn't getting the orders that he had been led to expect. Furthermore, he did not like the singer, he did not like the announcer, and he was not happy with some of the tunes.

If he was unhappy with those things I feel certain that he was a great deal unhappier when he got the bill from the radio station. Happy or unhappy, it must be admitted that our sponsor was a man who did not dally. He knew where he was going —and he went—bankrupt.

While the rest of the station was so disastrously entwined in battery cables I was out scrounging around, trying to line up a few sources of income. On the sports program I managed to include a few timely references to the two local wrestling shows each week. This brought me a combined total of five dollars, cash, plus a handful of ringside tickets the promoters couldn't sell. I traded the tickets to local merchants for articles of clothing that were approximately my size. These merchants were as broke as the rest of us, but by taking my tickets they could go to the wrestling matches and sit in the expensive ringside seats, giving every indication that they had sold a pair of pants for real money.

There lingers with me still the memory of one of those four-flushers who traded me a new suit for my entire week's supply of ringside seats, twelve in all.

"I got guests comin' in from New York," he pleaded, "and I just gotta have all twelve of them tickets!"

I had some of the tickets promised elsewhere, so I demurred.

"Aw, come on, Frank! I gotta have them tickets—I've done promised to take these people to the wrestling matches. Now I'll tell you what I'll do—wouldn't do this for anybody else, but you've been nice to me, Frank, so here's what I'll do: See

this suit here in the window? I'll let you have it for them twelve tickets!"

How could I resist such a generous proposal?

He got the tickets. I got a bilious green suit and he threw in a sporty green hat, just to show his appreciation.

After my broadcast that evening I ducked into the men's room at the radio station to don my new apparel. I noticed that the suit seemed to be a little on the flimsy side, but I did not attach too much importance to it at the time. I tilted my new green hat at a snappy angle and headed for the wrestling matches, which were scheduled to start in less than half an hour. I'd have to hurry, because being penniless I would have to walk the intervening eight blocks.

Before I had covered half that distance the storm broke, one of those sudden summer downpours that simply gushes all over you. I made the mistake of starting to run; in half a minute the water was slopping out of my shoe tops, and I saw to my dismay that it was *green* water. The hat brim sagged, flopped, and gave up. I was drenched.

It was just as well that I went back to the station and did not attend the wrestling matches that evening. The customers would have regarded me as an extra added attraction. I had green hair, a green face and green hands. When I finally got out of that skin-tight suit I found that I had green skin from head to foot. And in spite of a liberal use of soap and water, I had that ghastly complexion for days. It caused quite a bit of comment when I ventured down the street. I must have been the greenest radio man they had ever seen.

A regular Monday night sports event was the boxing matches in an outdoor arena known as the Swiss Punch Bowl, located several miles from downtown Louisville in a residential section. The promoter, Jimmy Dell, had the same trouble as the downtown theatres but he had an advantage: They had no customers seven days a week; Jimmy's customers stayed away only on Monday nights. When I first proposed broadcasting blow-by-blow descriptions of the bouts from the ringside he wouldn't go for the idea.

"My God, boy, I'm goin' broke already! If I let you come in here and broadcast the fights I won't get anybody at all out here! I'll give you some ringside seats and you can come out any time you want to. But broadcast the fights? . . . No sir!"

Things went from bad to worse for Jimmy, and a few weeks later he called to say that he had changed his mind. "C'mon out and broadcast. I'm goin' broke anyhow and I might as well advertise it. What have I got to lose?"

He agreed to pay ten dollars a week for the broadcast line (which left the station a five-dollar profit) and he gave me five dollars for doing the blow-by-blow account of the fights. This often meant thirty-two rounds of broadcasting for five dollars, a sizable night's work, but I loved every minute of it.

On the occasion of our second broadcast from the Punch Bowl, Mr. Jaspert called me into his office. "Look Frank," he said. "You did a pretty good job at the fights last week but you could have done a lot better. Get more local color into the broadcast. Get it? More local color!"

I was by no means certain what he had in mind and I said so.

"You don't know what local color is? Crowd noise, boy. Get that crowd noise! Get that local color! We gotta make these things live!"

That night the main go was all that any broadcaster could ask for. Two local lightweights, Cecil Payne and Joe Paglina, gave it everything they had from the opening bell. The crowd went wild. I was chattering frantically, trying to keep up with the action. Then I remembered that I had forgotten the "local color." My dilemma was solved for me a few moments later when Payne backed his opponent into a corner right above me and threw every punch he had. In back of me a shrill female voice screamed "Kill him, Cecil, kill him!"

Aha! I thought, there's some crowd noise the Boss will like! I shoved our old carbon mike up over my shoulder, facing the woman who was doing all the shouting. Payne threw another terrific punch into his opponent.

"Kill him, Cecil!" she screamed. "God damn it! I said kill him!"

The bell rang and the fighters went to their corners.

Our phone rang and the engineer answered. When he hung up he turned to me and said: "That was the Boss. He said to tell you to never mind about the local color!"

Mr. Jaspert was not entirely cured of his longing for local color, however. A few weeks later he came up with a suggestion that seemed quite workable and safe: I was to scan the crowd and mention the names of prominent people who were attending the fights. Of course, it was just a suggestion, but I have never been able to distinguish between suggestions and orders, when they originate with the Boss.

Looking over the crowd between fights one night, I spied a wealthy and well-known business man from southern Indiana, a man for whom I had caddied in years gone by. He was proudly escorting a very lovely young lady down the aisle. I had a feeling that he would certainly be surprised when he

found out that I had mentioned his name over the radio.

He was.

When I came to work the following afternoon Mr. Jaspert called me into his office and shut the door. I regarded that as a bad sign. Through sad experience I had found that when a manager called me in and shut the door he was either getting ready to fire me or to demand that I split my salary with him. Since I had no salary in this particular instance there seemed to be little doubt as to what was coming.

The Boss tore off a sheet from his memo pad and shoved it over to me. There was the name of the wealthy Indiana businessman whom I had mentioned on the fight broadcast the night before.

"Know this fellow, Frank?"

"Sure, I've known him for years. Used to caddy for him. Real nice guy, too. Last night I saw him out at the fights and I mentioned him on the air. I thought it would surprise him."

The Boss moaned. "Surprise him? You sure as hell did! His wife heard you—and he had told her he was going to Chicago!"

From Mr. Jaspert I got the impression that he had been on the receiving end of a very heated conversation with my irate Hoosier friend. The upshot of it was that I had to go tell the businessman's wife that it was a case of mistaken identity. She was polite, but unconvinced. He promised not to sue us (which he didn't dare to do in the first place) and the Boss suggested that I forget his earlier suggestion. No local color. Just the fights, please.

Under the Kentucky laws then existing there could be no official decisions on the outcome of boxing matches. The fighters were dependent on the conclusions reached by sports writers for the various papers. This led to situations where a fighter could win a fight in one newspaper and lose it in another; after all, it was only a matter of opinion. But with the broadcasts, it was different. We were the only station carrying the fights and when I gave a decision it was the only broadcast decision made. I do not maintain that they were infallible but I do contend that they were exclusive.

Thus it was that I happened to deliver a decision after witnessing a main go between Mickey Breen of Louisville and a welterweight named Lee Cox of Cincinnati. Breen was a very capable and likable lad. Cox was what is known as a counter-puncher: he wouldn't make trouble unless it was forced upon him.

For eight long rounds I watched that one. It was a two-man

demonstration of creeping paralysis. The referee could have walked between the fighters at any time with perfect safety. When the sedate and bloodless duel was over, I called it a draw.

I arrived at the station next morning about nine-thirty. As I walked in I glanced into the office of our sales manager, Guy Stewart. Mr. Stewart was there, all right, and right beside him was one of our salesmen, Jimmy Cox. They were standing against the wall with their hands up. I really couldn't blame them, either, because a big nasty man with a revolver was obviously the instigator of the whole thing.

I saw no point in going into that office, which was already crowded, so I whirled around and went downstairs again. In fact, I was so eager to get downstairs that I ran most of the way. There was a cop at the corner and he gave up directing traffic long enough to hustle up to the studio and disarm the pistol-waver. It turned out that the fellow was a relative of Mickey Breen and that he did not approve of my calling the fight a draw. Thought Mickey won it all the way and damned if any radio announcer was gonna rob the kid! He couldn't decide which one of the men in that office was Frank Edwards, but when he did——! The cop took him outside and Mr. Stewart called me inside. Still visibly disturbed by his experience, he issued another order on the fight broadcasts:

"No more decisions, Frank. Just call the punches."

On one of these Monday night hegiras from the station to the scene of the fights I found that I had to take the equipment, two heavy suitcases and the microphone, by streetcar. I was late getting started and when I reached the point where I had to get off the car it was beginning to rain. I had a least a block and a half to carry all that heavy equipment and I didn't relish the task. Standing there in the rain didn't help, so I got the stuff together, tucked the old carbon mike under my coat to keep it dry, and lurched across the street.

There I found a friend in need, a tall thin young man who asked politely if he could help me carry some of that equipment. He seemed so sincere that I just couldn't refuse, so I let him carry the heaviest case.

As we staggered along he told me that he had always wanted to be a radio announcer. Could I help him get started?

Each Monday night for a couple of months Rodney Haldane met me at the street car and carried the broadcast equipment for me. At odd hours which did not interfere with his work as a shipping clerk for a chain grocery, Rod would come into the studios and practice reading announcements. I was of little assistance to him there, but Burt Blackwell and Ken Hall

and others who were really competent taught Rod the tricks of the trade.

When it was decided that he was ready for some actual broadcasting, we cooked up a program of warmed-over news to be called "Behind the Headlines" and wrote the script for him. Rod was standing in the studio with only a minute before he made his first broadcast. Suddenly he turned to me and said: "Frank, I can't go on the air under my own name . . . I'll get fired if they find out I'm working here, too! What are we going to do?"

He needed another name and he needed it quickly. The only thing I could think of was one that I had glimpsed that morning in a novel my mother was reading. Fifteen seconds later he was on the air under his new name—"Behind the Headlines with *Allen C. Anthony*."

As Allen C. Anthony he won national acceptance during his years on the famous "Dr. I.Q." program. Today he is known to millions of television fans as Jonathan Blake. He is one of the successful graduates of the lean years of radio, and it couldn't have happened to a nicer guy!

In an era which was relatively devoid of sponsors, radio rolled along in a free-and-easy fashion. The government regulatory body was swamped with work and gave little heed to individual stations as long as they did not become public nuisances. The stations themselves, and especially the smaller stations that I knew, were experimenting with all sorts of program ideas in hope of finding something that would pay off. They seldom originated the ideas themselves but they were willing to listen to yours.

As an experiment, WLAP bought a series of mimeographed scripts which enabled us to produce a nightly hour-long program called "The Night Court of the Air." It was supposed to deal with a night court where all sorts of characters were brought before the bar of justice on a wide variety of charges. Their brief colloquies with the "Judge" always ended in confusion and defeat of the "prisoner," who found his drolleries no match for the vaudeville repartee from the Bench. It was corny, of course, but it attracted attention—and sponsors. A staff member, O. B. Carpenter, was the star of the show. In the daytime he made a living by selling Watkins' Vanilla Extract and face cream, door to door. Each weekday evening, from six to seven, O. B. performed before our microphone as a wide variety of characters. He could switch quickly and convincingly from being a wronged Chinese laundryman to an impersonation of a belligerent Irish workman. On one show he did fifteen

different dialects and did them well. For some reason, he could not or would not impersonate a drunken Indian, a task that fell to me on those rare intervals when the pixilated primitives were called before our mythical bar of justice.

The Night Court of the Air attracted a studio audience without any prompting on our part. The spontaneous reaction of the audience helped the show, of course, and brought out the full flavor of the ham in those of us who performed.

It also brought out a streak of impishness in our chief engineer, a very quiet fellow named Jimmy Grass. He was the perpetrator of a practical joke that went unsolved for months simply because nobody suspected him.

Jimmy's mother-in-law had been pestering him to bring her to the studio so she could watch a broadcast of the Night Court. She finally got her wish and at Jimmy's suggestion took a seat against the wall, near the control-room window, where she would be sitting in the path of the fresh air from the window fan, which furnished the only ventilation.

The studio was filled with people, as usual, when the program went on the air. Jimmy had slipped a soft rubber hose through a hole in the wall. The other end of the hose was hidden behind the burlap drapes, on the downwind side of his mother-in-law. In the hose were several "stink bombs"—tiny glass tubes filled with a vile-smelling liquid. There was a rubber bulb on the end of the hose near Jimmy's foot.

A few minutes after the show got on the air, Jimmy stepped on the hose and crushed the stink bombs. Then he put his foot on the rubber bulb and began to puff the horrible odor into the studio. It smelled, let us say, like rotten eggs, and the stream of air from the fan picked it up and wafted it gently along the wall, away from his mother-in-law. The people nearest her got a whiff of it first—and one whiff was plenty. They left.

In a matter of a couple of minutes or less she found herself surrounded by empty seats. The exodus was in full swing when the smell reached the microphone. Merle Tucker, the "Judge," took one sniff, gasped, and headed for the door, followed by the rest of us in the cast.

That left only Jimmy's mother-in-law in the studio, sitting there in the stream of incoming fresh air, obviously puzzled by the whole procedure. She leaned forward to see what was going on. Suddenly she, too, got a noseful. With magnificent self-control she got up and walked out into the hall, where the rest of the audience had congregated. Jimmy stuck his head out of the control-room door.

"Jimmy," she said solemnly, "I think there is something wrong in there!"

That line got her the biggest laugh of the evening.

When WLAP was moved to Lexington, Kentucky, in 1934, I went along as program director. Our programs consisted of vocalist with piano, phonograph records, hillbilly band, and piano solos. We had no network, very little operating capital, and only a hundred watts of broadcast power.

On account of poverty, I had to find a place where I could live for little or nothing, preferably nothing. Gil Hewitt, one of the engineers at the station, had already solved a similar problem. He had discovered a little room above the control room which could be reached by climbing a rickety ladder and crawling through a trapdoor. Gil generously invited me to share his den, at least until we got a payday.

Even thick layers of wadded newspapers are not an adequate substitute for a mattress, as we discovered. But if you are completely exhausted, after being on duty all day and half the night, a pile of newspapers on a nice warm floor is mighty inviting.

We went on the air about five-thirty in the morning and we had the best alarm clock imaginable, a hillbilly band. I gave them the key to the front door and they got us up by rattling the ladder.

One especially hot night I decided to sleep on the couch in the main studio. It was after midnight when I went to bed and five-thirty came all too soon. Matt, the leader of the hillbilly band, had to shake me several times to get me off the couch. "C'mon, Mr. Edwards! You gotta get up and make the opening announcement. It's time to go already!"

Stark-naked and dripping with perspiration, I stumbled into the main studios and recited the ritual prescribed by the Federal Communications Commission. I noticed that the hillbillies were having a lot of fun about something. As I turned around to go back to my bed I glanced through the studio window out into the hall.

That morning the hillbillies had brought their families.

Nineteen thirty-four was election year and A.B. "Happy" Chandler was campaigning for the governorship, the same Happy Chandler who later served as czar of major-league baseball. He was our first political client in Lexington and he paid thirty dollars in advance for fifteen minutes of broadcast time on a Sunday afternoon.

I introduced him and Happy started talking. He ad-libbed

so frequently that it soon became apparent that he could never cover the rest of the material in the script in his allotted time. The station manager, Winky, was in the next room, jittery about the whole thing. I signaled that we were going to run over. The Boss scribbled out a sign which he held up to the studio window where Happy couldn't see it: GET THE MONEY.

I whispered in Happy's ear that he owed us another thirty dollars. Without missing a word of his impassioned address, he went through his pockets and produced the cash.

At the end of that second quarter hour he was still in high gear. Winky held up the sign again: GET THE MONEY. Happy kept right on talking as he hunted through his pockets. He had only five dollars. He motioned to his bodyguard, Joe Burman, but the best Burman could do was to add another five. Happy went right on denouncing his political opponents while he stripped off his wristwatch and handed that to me.

After the broadcast, Winky returned Happy's watch and told him we would bill him later. How could we lose? We had already charged him double the regular fee.

During that same campaign I toured part of Kentucky with Mr. Chandler. As we drove up and stopped in each community, Happy would bounce out of the car, beaming at the local folks, and calling many of them by name. Even in remote hamlets he had not visited in years he could recognize them. "Hello, there, Lefty! How's the wife? Charlie, you old skunk! Haven't seen you for a coon's age! How's that boy of yours, that boy Walter? He all right? Now don't you forget to vote for me!"

It went on day after day in city, town and crossroad. I was flabbergasted. "How do you do it, Happy?" I finally asked him. "How do you remember all their names?"

He paused for a long while before he replied. "You know something, Frank? I don't really know how I do it. Funny thing about it is that I can generally only remember their first names and I couldn't remember their last names to save my soul!"

During the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1952 I ran into Happy just outside the Blackstone Hotel. It had been almost twenty years since he had seen me, but he stopped and stuck out his hand.

"Hello, Happy."

"Hello . . . Fred?" There was a question in his voice.

"Not Fred. Try it again, Happy."

"Fritz? . . Francis? . . I got it! *Frank!*"

I laughed with him. He was quite pleased, and rightly so.

"It's Frank, all right. But I'd like to make a bet with you,

Happy. I'll bet you three to one that you can't remember my last name."

He grinned. "Why do you say that, Frank? What makes you think I couldn't remember your last name?"

"You told me so, yourself, Happy. You can remember first names but not the last names. Right?"

He grinned sheepishly. "An' I told you that, huh? Well whaddya know about that now! That's something I thought I'd never told anybody at all! Well, gotta get on with my politickin'—Good luck, Frank! See you again!"

He gave me a handshake that felt like the grip of a bear trap. I thought of what Bob Hope had once said to me about him: "Happy Chandler? Strongest guy in the world! He's got muscles in his dandruff!"

One of my duties as program director at Lexington was to interview and audition the scores of groups and individuals seeking entry into radio. I knew how they felt as they waited for the verdict, for I had been through the same experience myself, not once, but many times. It was not easy for me to tell them that they were not ready, even by our modest standards, and I always tried to leave with them the hope that if they kept working and trying they might eventually make the grade, as some of them certainly did.

While that policy softened the blow for the aspirants it still did not entirely solve my problem. It led to an experience with one eager applicant who haunted me for months.

She was the spinster daughter of a very wealthy and prominent Lexington family, about forty years of age, a college graduate who had also had years of voice training. She saw in our little radio station the answer to her dreams; in her opinion, we could set her up in competition with Jessica Dragonette.

Perhaps we could have done just that, if she had had a voice. But the sad fact remained that all her voice training had been seed cast on barren soil, the poor lady had a soprano voice that included a built-in quaver. She could overlook the defect but I couldn't. Each week, on audition day, I would find her waiting for me among the crowd of guitar players, fiddlers and pianists. This was becoming annoying. I didn't want to hurt her feelings but she simply couldn't take a hint.

She gave me the opportunity I was seeking. "Mister Edwards, I don't feel that I am making any progress. What is wrong with me?"

I sat down beside her, fumbling with my shoelace as I stalled for time to think. "Young lady," I said at last, "I have never

said or implied that there was anything wrong with you, have I?"

"Oh, no! Not at all! But there must be something wrong!"

"You're right, there is something wrong, something which I don't like to talk about because it concerns us—not you! You see, this is just a small station. We do not have the finest and most modern equipment, therefore we sometimes find certain voices which our equipment can not reproduce. The truth is, we could not make your voice sound like it should sound."

She was grateful for this little off-the-record chat but she was puzzled, too. "Isn't there any hope for me in radio at all?"

Her lip was trembling. I had to take care of this quickly. "I can't answer that question because I really don't know. As I say, this is just a small station. I would suggest that some time when you are in a city where they have a big, modern fifty-thousand-watt station you might ask them for an audition. They will have the finest broadcasting equipment. But don't be surprised if they have the same trouble that we have, for it may be that you have one of those rare voices which no radio station can reproduce as it should be reproduced."

For several weeks after that she did not appear at the regular audition sessions and I felt relieved. Then, to my consternation, I found her waiting to see me one morning.

"May I speak to you privately, Mr. Edwards?" We stepped into the small studio. "Guess what has happened! I took your advice and on my vacation I went to WLW in Cincinnati, WHAS in Louisville and WLS in Chicago. I was auditioned at all three places. They all agreed that I had an unusual voice, just as you suspected!"

"They did? Fine!"

"And another thing. I told them what you said about the possibility that their equipment might not be able to handle my voice as it should be reproduced—and they all said to tell you that you were absolutely *right!*"

I was just leaving for dinner one night when my boss called me in to inform me that he had made arrangements for me to go to Louisville to broadcast the running of the Kentucky Derby.

"We are going to feed it to a special hookup of about sixty stations," he explained. "And we want you to do the running account of the race."

Before I could explain that I knew next to nothing about the race or the horses, he had the drop on me. "Now just to make sure that there will be no slip-up, we have made arrangements

for an expert horse man to be right there beside you, Frank. He knows those horses like they were members of his own family. He is the editor of a publication that is devoted to the subject of fine horses. He's going to be right there, whispering in your ear, telling you what's happening out on that track. All you have to do is to put it into the microphone in your own words!"

Everything depended on that expert. In order to save expenses the Boss and I did not arrive at the track until the day of the race. There was no sign of the expert and I did not have enough time to memorize the colors of the various stables which would be in the big race. It had all the earmarks of a rough afternoon.

We set up our microphone on the roof of Churchill Downs at a point overlooking the finish line. The Boss went back downstairs for another mint julep and another quick search for the missing expert.

Our microphone was particularly susceptible to moisture so I followed instructions and tucked it under my coat, since the air was a bit clammy. I was gabbing away, filling time by telling my audience about the notables I was seeing in the vast crowd, when I spotted famed sports announcer Graham McNamee coming toward me. I told the audience I would try to get him to our mike for an interview.

At first Graham did not recognize me and in return I failed to realize that he was slightly potted. Weaving toward me, he grabbed me by the hand. "Frank! Well you old bum—haven't seen you for a long time! Looking great! Let's go have a little snort, huh?"

"Well right at the moment Graham I just couldn't do it—" I pointed to the microphone partially concealed under my coat—— "I am just waiting, like a hundred thousand others, for the big race to start——"

Graham grabbed my coat and said, "What the hell you got under there, a bottle?"

I showed him what it was.

"That's not my network!" he exclaimed. "Goddamit, I'll get fired!"

He didn't get fired, of course. Graham was celebrating because he had just effected a reconciliation with his wife, he had a new start in the business he loved and the future looked bright. But for him the sands were running low. It was his last Derby.

When the bugle blew for the 59th running of the Kentucky classic I was in a cold sweat. The expert had not arrived and I

hardly knew one horse from another. To make matters worse, I had no binoculars with which to watch the horses as they went around the far side of the track. My boss was as jittery as I was: we had a network to feed and our prospects of delivering were next to nothing.

A roar went up from more than a hundred thousand fans as the horses leaped from the starting gate and came pounding down the track. Cold sweat was standing out on me. I managed to identify the first two horses as they swept past the grandstand. The roar from the crowd was deafening. I glanced around: still no expert; Cavalcade's blue and white colors in front as the horses started around the back stretch. It was hazy away over there across the track but I could make out a couple of horses, with Cavalcade straining every muscle. I poured Cavalcade into the microphone . . . Cavalcade pulling out of the pack . . . with a couple of others fighting for the lead . . . Cavalcade at the third quarter . . . come on Cavalcade and save my bacon!

And then the expert arrived! He knelt down beside me and fumbled with a pair of tiny opera glasses which were worse than useless. He took one quick squint, grabbed me by the head and began to croak: "Bazaar—Bazaar!—Bazaar!"

My boss was hunched over both of us, pounding me on the back, and he heard the expert, too. I dropped Cavalcade entirely and Bazaar came from nowhere to lead the field . . . under the wire . . . and to victory! But it was only on our network.

Cavalcade won the Kentucky Derby that day.

I won the booby prize, thanks to that expert who showed up drunk. The last I saw of him my boss was chasing him toward the exit stairs, shouting some very uncouth words at him and kicking at him as they went.

It seemed like a good idea at the time—and it still does.

7. The King of Quacks

AROUND THE back end of the truck a string of bulbs sent a yellow crescent of light out over the upturned faces of the vast crowd. Insects danced in the glare of the naked bulbs. The band stopped playing and a man at the microphone held up his hand for silence.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I take pleasure in presenting to you

the best friend the common man ever had in this State next Governor of Kansas—Doctor John R. Brinkley!"

From the shadows at the rear of the platform a dapper little man briskly approached the mike. Blue eyes flashing, blond goatee bobbing, Doc Brinkley tore into the opposition. By day he thundered his messages through XER, his powerful station on the Mexican border. Night after night, Brinkley's big truck with its powerful loudspeakers played to tremendous crowds wherever he went. Band concerts, prayers, hymn singing, vocal solos by hired artists were all on the agenda; but the star of the show was Doctor John Romulus Brinkley and no mistake about that.

The summer of 1932 was another scorcher that parched what little the farmers of Kansas had left. Doc had a plan: "Why continue to suffer from these endless droughts? I propose to build a lake in every county of this great state of ours, lakes which will send vapor into the skies, vapor which will fall back to earth on your farms in the form of blessed rains."

The thousands of voters who jammed around his truck were grateful for small blessings; some of them were destitute, all of them were hard-hit by the great depression. Every dime was important to them, the line between eating and not eating was often very slender.

"Your children are entitled to an education and I'm going to see that they get it—in public schools—out of school books which will be furnished by the State without a cent of cost to you!"

Many of his listeners had to hitchhike in order to attend Brinkley's meetings because they could not afford to buy license plates for their cars.

"The older the car the cheaper the plates!" Doc boomed through his loudspeakers. "When I get into the State House you can buy license plates for a dollar a year!"

Doc Brinkley's sound truck rolled on and on, his "Ammunition Train," as he called it, drawing record-breaking crowds in every county seat and scores of smaller towns. At Dodge City, for example, Brinkley drew more listeners than the Republican and Democratic candidates combined. And each performance followed a set pattern: The entertainment, the fiery speech by Brinkley and then his prompt exit for the next town. He never mixed with the crowds; instead, he wisely contented himself with delivering his speech and fading from the scene; heard by many, touched by few. Doctor John R. Brinkley was on his way to becoming a living legend and he did not want to destroy the illusion.

...ne proprietor of a little drugstore in Milford, ... early Twenties when he "discovered" that old ... made young (or so he claimed) by what he called ...and operation." Several gullible old gentlemen who ...g on money and short on sense signed up for the treatm... at seven hundred and fifty dollars each. There was no rush to be rejuvenated, however, until Doc went on the air in 1923 with his own radio station, KFKB. The call letters, he explained, meant "Kansas First, Kansas Best," but to millions of listeners throughout the Midwest KFKB represented some very unusual radio fare. The peppery little proprietor not only ballyhooed his goat-gland specialty but also devoted considerable time to prescribing for those who had written to him of their ailments. After a brief program of hymn singing, the listener was plunged abruptly into a discussion, in Doctor Brinkley's nasal twang, of the innards of ailing females. Doc tactfully refrained from mentioning names but initials were sometimes used and generally he identified the community from which the writer had mailed the original letter to him. One of his classic broadcasts concerned a worried lady in Western Kentucky. To her Doc said: "Dear A.D.L. Your complaint is a pretty common one, and I agree with you that your health would probably be better if you stopped your family right where it is. Eight children should be enough. My advice to you is to have your husband sterilized and that will solve your problem unless you get over into another pasture with a strange bull, like sometimes happens, so they tell me."

To still another ailing writer he broadcast this message: "Dear Miss C.K. of Dewitt, Arkansas. You say you are the mother of five children and you sign your letters 'Miss.' How in the world am I going to help you if you won't help yourself?"

And so it went, hour after hour and night after night. Doc prescribed for both man and beast, since many of his listeners were farmers. But the backbone of his program and the principal source of his income was the goat-gland operation.

"Here's a letter from a fellow who says he is seventy-four and doesn't have the zip he used to have. All he has to do is to come right on over to Milford, Kansas, and let Doctor John R. Brinkley fix him up. Won't take long—my slogan is 'In Monday and out Friday' and I guarantee that seventy-four-year-old gentleman that when he gets back home he will feel like roller skating. But he won't have time—he'll be too doggone busy picking up where he left off twenty years ago!"

In 1923, Harry Chandler, the publisher of the rich and pow-

erful *Los Angeles Times*, heard about Brinkley and invited him to perform his miracles in Los Angeles. Chandler had arranged for an elderly editor of his paper to undergo the goat-gland operation.

"If it works," the publisher told Brinkley, "I will tell the world about it through my newspaper and my new radio station, KHJ. But if you can't make good on your claims I will blast the hell out of you!"

Brinkley made the trip and performed the operation. It evidently convinced Chandler that the Kansas medicine man had something, for the *Times* and KHJ went to bat for Brinkley. Thanks to their support Brinkley made a small fortune in a few months before he left for home with the medical wolves snapping at his heels.

He was the fair-haired boy of Milford, now. A new church sprang up, compliments of John Brinkley. New hard-surfaced streets replaced the muddy lanes of former years. A new hospital went up while the water system of the town was being renovated. And of course Brinkley paid the bills. After all, he was proud of Milford and Milford was proud of him. By 1927, his radio station's power had been boosted to five thousand watts and the flood of listener mail was so heavy that Uncle Sam had to supply Milford with a new and larger post office, top-level acknowledgment of his popularity. Doc poured money back into the station that was making him rich. In 1930 KFKB had a payroll of five thousand dollars a month and a large staff of entertainers. In that same year Brinkley tasted the headiest wine of his radio career—his station won the *Radio Digest* popularity poll as the nation's favorite!

Old men poured into Milford from every corner of the country, eager to turn back the clock. Brinkley's hospital was filled to capacity; his waiting room was lined with specimens of male senility who had heard and believed that Brinkley's sacrificial goats could make them young again. At the peak of his operations in Milford, Brinkley was making widows out of fifty nanny goats per week.

Kansas is noted for the sudden appearance of its storms, and Milford was not immune. Just when Brinkley was at his zenith, the American Medical Association delivered a bolt from the blue: His goat-gland operation, they said, was an impossibility. It could not be performed as Brinkley claimed.

Brinkley immediately filed suit against the American Medical Association seeking damages of $600,000. "I am not a member of the A.M.A." he told reporters, "because I am trying to cure people instead of covering up for malpracticing

members." He offered to prove that the operation could be performed, exactly as he claimed. In September of 1930, before a group of newspapermen, members of the Kansas State Medical College and eminent medical authorities, Doc performed not one, but *two* of his rejuvenation operations, exactly as he had described.

Doc soon learned that being right is not always enough to offset entrenched power. The Federal Radio Commission refused to renew his broadcasting license for KFKB; his house of cards was beginning to crumble.

Using the same brand of showmanship that had catapulted him from country drugstore to national notoriety, Brinkley ran for governor of Kansas in the 1930 elections. He offered free music lessons, free movies and cut-rate medical care. Since he had filed too late to get his name on the ballot, he had to depend on the voters to write him in, and one hundred and eighty-three thousand did just that. In Oklahoma, where he wasn't even running, his popularity was so great that he got twenty thousand votes. But in Kansas, he lost the election by fourteen thousand votes, according to the official tally. (Years later, after Brinkley was dead, prominent political figures admitted that he had actually won the election but he had been counted out of it.)

Brinkley was down but he wasn't out. Through his friendship with Vice-President Charles Curtis he made a deal with the Mexican government to build a super-power broadcasting station right on the border, with its transmitter in Mexico and its audience in the United States. With undaunted enthusiasm he proclaimed the remarkable power of goat-glands over XER —"the sunshine station between the nations!"

His enemies in Kansas remarked dourly that he had fled the country, and that they were glad to see him go. But if they thought Doc Brinkley was running away they were mistaken. He maintained his legal residence in Milford while he built and operated his new and more powerful radio station. Doc hadn't run away; he had just moved his loudspeakers. When he ran for office again in 1932 he got his name on the ticket. His popularity frightened the opposition to such an extent that they brought in his old friend Vice-President Curtis to speak against him. Free school books, free movies and free ponds were not enough: the voters wanted jobs. Doc came off second best because 1932 was a Democratic year.

I distinctly recall that I was hunched over the ringside microphone at the Punch Bowl in Louisville. Since it was a swelter-

ing night in midsummer of 1933, I was probably gulping down a Coke and hoping that the next fight would be better than the one just ended. It is also quite possible that I was trying to figure out some way of making an extra buck, for radio was in the doldrums and WLAP was picking at the coverlets.

Somebody tapped me on the shoulder. "Young man, how would you like to broadcast sports over the most powerful station in the world?"

One look over my shoulder at those bright blue eyes and that fancy little goatee and I decided the guy was a spook. "Sure," I said. "But I just can't do it tonight. I gotta broadcast this main go."

The little man laughed. "Of course! Of course! Here's my card. I'm staying at the Brown Hotel. I'll be there for several more days. Think it over and give me a ring."

The bell clanged and the main bout was on. The card went into my pocket and I went to work, calling the fight blow-by-blow. It was the next afternoon before I even thought about the little man with the big idea. His card read:

Dr. John R. Brinkley
Del Rio, Texas
Owner of
X-E-R
"The Sunshine Station
Between the Nations"

There still lurked in my mind the suspicion that the whole thing was a joke of some sort. I knew half a dozen guys who might have gone to considerable length to give me the bird. Still, I doubted that any of them would have gone to the expense of putting out a gold-embossed calling card for the sake of a gag.

When Doctor Brinkley answered the phone he was the personification of courtesy. Would I do him the honor of dining with him that evening at the Brown, Louisville's newest and finest?

The steak was wonderful, the cigar nearly choked me and his sales talk was very, very convincing. The gullible country boy from southern Indiana was playing Trilby to his Svengali.

"You can have all the time you want for sports broadcasts," Brinkley assured me. "I have the money and I have the station that reaches from Florida to Alaska, from Maine to Monterey. You have the ability—you're wasting your time on your present job. Now how much money do you want to make the deal?"

I hesitated, not because I didn't want to name a price but for fear that I would set my figure too low. After all, I had been working for nothing a week for a couple of years; the sudden prospects of ready cash and a regular salary sort of overwhelmed me. Doc evidently mistook my silence for reluctance. Before I could regain sufficient composure to make any kind of reply, he had picked up the ball again.

"Now Frank, I realize that this may be a pretty big decision for you to make without some thought. Why not be my guest for a couple of weeks at Del Rio? You'll love it there. Lovely place! Want you to see my sunken garden. Want you to see the great work we are doing. You can see for yourself that being the sports director for XER will give you a national reputation. How about that?"

Was there any possibility that we might also include some news broadcasting in my activities, I inquired.

"Certainly, sir! I'd like nothing more than to have a good newsman on my staff. I can buy all the news services you want —all you need!

"Now I'll tell you what I'll do. You come on down to my place and look it over; I'm not going to be happy unless you're happy. Come down and look things over as my guest. I've got twelve Cadillacs; I've got a yacht; and if you like horses we can get all you want. But you don't have to answer me right this minute. Let's just shake hands on it and I'll send you the tickets in a day or two. Okay?"

We shook hands and I started back for the radio station to do my evening chores. I walked, so I presume my feet must have been touching the ground.

During the course of the dinner Brinkley had explained that he was in Kentucky to buy some property; he had 15,000 patients per year and might build another hospital soon to take care of the expanding business. Having nothing else to do, he had gone to the fights, where chance had placed him right in back of me at the ringside. My inspiring description of the fights, he said, had convinced him that I was just what his station needed. Since I wasn't making anything at WLAP I couldn't lose anything by taking a couple of weeks off to go to Del Rio. Clutching the return half of the railroad ticket tightly in my little fist, I took off.

Two weeks later I was back in Louisville. As they said in Barnum's day, I had seen the elephant!

Brinkley had all that he claimed, and more. He had *thirteen* Cadillacs, all painted bright red and each car labeled on all sides with his name in gold letters three inches high. He had a

couple of passenger planes to whisk him from Del Rio to Milford or to his hospital at Little Rock. A hundred girls worked in his various offices, many of them doing nothing but opening mail and keeping track of the flood of money that poured in at the rate of more than seven thousand dollars a day. In city after city, millions of people craned their necks to watch sky writers decorate the blue with the name of John R. Brinkley.

I never worked for him. It took me no time at all to realize that he was fleecing the sick and the gullible. I wanted no part of any outfit that was peddling exaggerated health claims, gold-mining stock and fortune telling books. During the few minutes he could spare me while I was in Del Rio I had just enough time to tell him that I felt out of place there and to thank him for the trip. He made no comment, just bade me good-by and wished me luck.

He was the one who needed it. A few months later, in the early spring of 1934, Doc Brinkley was through. The Mexican government, at the urging of certain powerful interests in this country, ordered him to close the station and get out, "for failure to comply with the rules on medical advertising." The United States Postal Authorities were ready with charges of using the mails to defraud; the American Medical Association had produced proof that Brinkley's diploma as a doctor had been purchased for seventy-five dollars from a Kansas City diploma mill.

He fought, of course, but the outcome was inevitable. His fortune vanished. He tried broadcasting from his yacht but that too was a failure, so he rented the vessel to the Duke of Windsor and the former Wallis Warfield Simpson for their honeymoon cruise.

Broken in health and spirit, Brinkley dropped out of the limelight. When he died in May, 1942, his estate consisted of two small diamonds and a pet duck.

John R. Brinkley was woefully short on scruples but he was well supplied with an understanding of human nature. He knew that in the hearts of the masses there exists an overwhelming tendency to believe that miracles can be managed if you just know the secret; the willingness to believe that there really is a pot of gold at the rainbow's end and that somewhere the Big Rock Candy Mountains are actually waiting.

He was the king of the quacks, a master charlatan who perverted radio to his own ends. In the annals of broadcasting he stands alone; there was no precedent for him and no successor.

It is well.

8. "Onward and Upward"

CAN PAY YOU THIRTY DOLLARS PER WEEK PLUS COMMISSIONS AS SALES MANAGER, said the telegram.

When I informed the manager at WLAP that I was on my way to accept this splendid offer from a little station in Springfield, Illinois, he must have heaved a sigh of relief. If he did, it was mutual. We were friends, but it was quite apparent to both of us that I wasn't much of a program director; like the unmarried mother of seven, I simply couldn't say no.

Whether I was ever intended to be a sales manager I shall never know, for I spent only three hectic days and nights in Springfield.

The station had been selling spot announcements in bunches, like radishes, four for a dollar. There was some sort of internal friction in the ownership and management end which I could not fathom. I wanted to throw in the towel but I didn't have a towel; all I had was one thin dime and that had to last me until I could get enough money from home to be on my way. I sent a collect wire home for the money and invested my last ten cents in some potatoes. A salt cellar filched from a restaurant added zest to the diet. Since I had no room and didn't care to be listed at the police station, I decided to spend my time in a sylvan spot in the business district of Springfield, known as Phoenix Park. It was July, and my woolen pin-check suit was more than adequate.

To those of you who have never gone on a raw-potato diet I should like to explain that on the first day they are not very appetizing. On the second day of the diet the potatoes acquire a delectable flavor that you have never noticed before. By the third day, they are positively succulent. I can give you no information on eating raw potatoes beyond the third day. That was when I ate my last one, washing it down with a draft of lukewarm water from the combination bird bath and drinking fountain in Phoenix Park.

Day after day I haunted the telegraph office to see if any money had arrived for me, but the answer was always "No." Not only was I hungry and disgusted but I was also suffering from lack of sleep. The Springfield authorities had neglected to provide adequate sleeping facilities in Phoenix Park. On my last night in that fair city I decided to make another effort to get some rest before hitchhiking southward. I put two benches

together and stretched out with my coat under my head. In a matter of minutes I was asleep and in another matter of minutes I was awake, with a dozen mongrel dogs snarling in my face.

Carefully keeping my eyes on the mangy brutes, I picked up my coat and backed away. They followed, growling and snapping at me. I swung the coat and one of them grabbed it. I yanked it loose and ran, with the pack right on my heels.

There was just one thing to do and I did it. I went up a tree. The dogs milled around under it, waiting for that tired fat man to come down where they could sink their teeth into him.

Then the rains came. Just a summer thunderstorm, lovely to watch from a parked car or from a bedroom window but a real aggravation when you are sitting in a leaky tree, surrounded by a pack of hungry dogs.

After the storm, the curs finally gave up and scattered. By that time it was almost daylight. Still nothing for me at Western Union. I threw my wet coat over my shoulder and started down the highway, thumbing rides.

There was one aspect of the night-time activities in Phoenix Park that I have not mentioned heretofore: after dark its population increased rapidly, two by two. The city fathers who planned that convenient bit of greenery in the midst of the business district of Springfield, Illinois, should be commended for their thoughtfulness. I can assure them that during the three nights I spent in the park the facilities were being utilized to capacity. Officially it may still be Phoenix Park, but I shall always think of it as Cupid's Grove.

I was ready to say to hell with radio. In eleven years of struggling I had never been able to do better than eke out a bare existence. My relationships with the stations were generally based on what was later to be known as "fringe benefits" and when any benefit showed up, somebody cut off the fringe.

Back in New Albany, scratching around for a living, I went to work in 1936 as a reporter, proofreader and editor of a new daily paper which had just reared its empty head. We made out pretty well until one sad day when we discovered that one of the owners had decamped with all the liquid assets, leaving us jobless.

Rescue came in the form of a middle-aged couple who had once worked on a newspaper in Michigan. They had inherited some money and they wanted to be publishers, so they took over the defunct daily.

It was obvious to the staff that our congenial angels did not know the business, so we tried to do for them the things they

did not seem capable of handling. My friend Ray Allen shared with me the title of managing editor and Jim Galloway, now with International News Service in Chicago, was editor. We were all things to all departments, taking turns as photographers, reporters and bill collectors. It was rough but it was wonderful. And, more to the point, the paper began to show signs of survival. Our advertising picked up as our circulation grew. The publisher bought some better printing equipment and laid in a store of paper in the basement of our building.

The Ohio river came into our basement on a Saturday night. By Sunday morning it was six feet deep on the first floor and the *New Albany Daily Ledger* had passed into memory.

That was the Great Flood of '37, when the rampaging river reached heights never recorded before or since. I got a call from Pete Monroe, an announcer at WHAS, asking me to keep him covered on flood news from my side of the river by telephone, which I did. WHAS was on the air all day and often all night, broadcasting late reports on the flood, directing emergency work and in general doing a wonderful job of public service in the emergency. Those broadcasts went on the CBS network, too, and Pete Monroe's voice became familiar to millions.

He was one of the nicest guys I ever knew, and from the day he came to WHAS in 1929 until his untimely death in 1938, Pete and I were the best of friends. Our first meeting, like our last, gave us many a laugh in retrospect.

The first occasion was on his first day at WHAS. I was sitting in the reception room reading some fan mail which I had probably written to myself, when Pete dashed through. He glanced my way, gave me a grin and a "Hello!" as he hurried past.

A moment later he popped around the corner of the studio and yelled: "Come on with that ukulele—I need you in just one minute!" There was a ukulele lying on the chair next to mine. I recognized it as the property of a fellow who had been kicking around the various Louisville stations for years. Had he gone into the studio and forgotten it—was that what all the excitement was about?

I grabbed the uke and dashed into the studio. The new announcer was sitting at the mike, beaming.

"Are you ready?"

"This is Little Johnny Doolittle's—" I began.

"I know," said Pete. "Quiet, please!"

He signaled the engineer in the control room. The red light flashed over the mike and we were on the air.

"And now, ladies and gentlemen, WHAS presents another quarter-hour with one of your favorite entertainers—Little Johnny Doolittle with his ukulele and songs!"

I just stood there, stunned. I never played a uke in my life and my singing was about on a par with my ukulele-playing. Pete stared at me and I stared back. He motioned for me to get going—do something! Through the windows between the studio and the control room I could hear the engineer bellowing with laughter; he knew who I was, of course, since I had been on the station many times broadcasting various golfing events.

Between my inaction and the merriment from the control room, poor Pete was flabbergasted. He waved that he wanted his mike turned on and got it. Glaring at me and with an obvious bite in his voice, he said, slowly and distinctly: "Ladies and gentlemen—Little—Johnny—Doolittle—with—his—ukulele—and *songs!*"

By that time I had regained my composure sufficiently to get my tongue away from the roof of my mouth. To the radio audience I said: "This morning I have decided not to sing and play; instead, I should like to talk to you about golf." Pete ran out of the studio, and I talked about golf. I told all the old golf stories I could remember (and under that kind of pressure it isn't easy to recall old golf stories that are clean enough for radio!) then I switched to a discussion of how to cure a slice.

It was twenty-one minutes later before Pete came back and told me I could quit. I had actually been on the air only a few minutes before the station had filled the balance of the quarter-hour with recorded music from another studio. Pete was profuse with apologies, of course, and I was soaked with perspiration.

From that day forward we were friends. My meanderings took me away from Louisville and brought me back just at a time when Pete had been looking for me. I had been to Hollywood for a spell. Walking along Fourth Street in Louisville, I ran into Pete.

"Boy, am I glad to see you!" he exclaimed. "We've got a problem and I have a hunch that you can help us. Got a minute?"

I had nothing but time. We drifted into a nearby quick-and-dirty around the corner on Liberty and got some coffee. "The problem is this. . . ." Pete handed me a sort of theatre ticket. "One night each week we do a big stage show from the National Theatre and the thing is broadcast over WHAS. The sponsor pays all the bills. Admission is for so many bottle caps

from his products. For a while things went pretty well but lately the attendance has been poor and it looks like they're going to cancel. Naturally, we'd like to save the account if we can, and we need some advice. Will you come around tonight and take a look at it and tell us what we can do to revive it?"

I went. Pete's problem child was one of the sorriest spectacles I have ever witnessed. It was an hour-long conglomeration of orchestra, singers, mugging and bungling, the kind of show where a seat behind a post should be worth a premium price. The mainspring of the mess was a young radio announcer who fancied himself a comedian. His stock in trade consisted largely of rushing up the footlights at frequent intervals and dropping his false teeth for the benefit of the little vandals in the three front rows. The rest of the show was hardly that clever.

At Pete's suggestion I wrote out a proposal for revising the bottle-cap revue. My recommendation included putting someone in full charge of the entire show and giving more time on the air to a girl singer and a male trio, the only performers of any real ability in the cast.

The following afternoon I went with Pete to the office of the advertising representative for the sponsor. Since he had been directing the debacle, he was not eager to hear anything that might suggest a change in that category, as I soon discovered. But when Pete read to him my recommendation that the girl singer and the male trio be given more air time, he blew up.

"Ridiculous!" he snapped. "Why I fired them last night!"

I wondered why he had fired them.

"Because, sir, they have no talent!"

Pete and I packed our proposal and left quietly. The bottle-cap extravaganza folded a few weeks later. The girl singer who was fired for "lack of talent" was Dale Evans, now married to cowboy star Roy Rogers after a headline career of her own. The male trio who got the axe at the same time went directly to Chicago, where they have been featured on The Breakfast Club for years as Sam, Gill and Louie.

Except for a brief hitch at WGRC in Louisville in 1940, I devoted my time to other and more lucrative enterprises. Commercial movies, aerial photography and booking such outdoor enterprises as fairs, fireworks and even a balloon ascension kept me busy and reasonably remunerated.

The attack on Pearl Harbor brought my aerial-photography business to a sudden stop; no more flying permits and no more film. I wrote editorials for a syndicate that serviced about a hundred small-town newspapers. The owner of the syndicate

got a commission and joined the army. The navy invited me to come to Cincinnati to talk over with them a proposal that I accept a commission in order that they might assign me to a special photographic mission. The job they had in mind required a man who was both a skilled reporter and a competent photographer. I was willing and eager but the navy medics took one listen to my ticker and shook their heads.

Those were mad, frenzied days when the legions of Hitler and Hirohito were clutching at the throat of a prostrate world.

I had no time for radio in the first two years of the war; I was too busy working as a superintendent in a huge explosives plant and later in a shipyard.

Came the day when the postman brought me the inevitable greetings from the President. It was the only letter I ever received from Mr. Roosevelt and it came to naught when the draft-board medics checked me over and decided that I was not long for this world. I suppose that I should have written to FDR and told him how things turned out but I didn't do it. We were both pretty busy at the time.

After being rejected by the army and navy, I offered my services to the Treasury Department, which promptly sent me out on a tour as toastmaster for a series of war bond sales. It was highly successful from the bond-sales standpoint but I was glad when it was over; tired and glad to get back to New Albany for a little rest before I started looking for another job.

When I saw that antique Chrysler drive past me and pull over to the curb, I knew that it was driven by a long-time friend and former schoolmate, Charlie Harris. The car was the 1933 "Airflow" model and ten years of service had not improved its appearance. My car was the only one in town that looked worse than Charlie's. His had fenders which were so bent up they looked like cookie-cutters; mine had no fenders.

Charlie opened the door and motioned me to get in. "Whatcha doin', you old dog? Haven't seen you in ages! Where you been keepin' yourself, huh?"

An hour later Charlie was suggesting that I join the staff of his radio station in Louisville, WGRC, first as an early morning disc jockey, with news programs to follow.

My partner on that venture was a veteran showman named Pop Hatcher. We dug up an old Edison "Morning Glory" phonograph with cylinder records and had our photographs made with it, celluloid collars, bowler hats and all. We were the 6 A.M. shadows.

It would be grossly unfair to Pop to say that we were terri-

ble. He handled his end of the show with his customary suavity; it was I who dropped the ball. I simply could not be jovial before daylight on cold winter mornings. There was nothing funny to me about crawling out of a nice, warm bed to play phonograph records at that hour.

Charlie Harris couldn't see anything funny about the show, either. He thought we should cut down on the music and give the customers more jokes. Time after time, Charlie came in to suggest some sample gags for the next morning's program. He invariably convulsed himself with the stories, but Pop and I merely laughed politely and forgot them.

Quite by chance I happened to tune in an all-night disc jockey from St. Louis in the wee hours of one winter morning —and there was the garden in which Charlie's corn was growing! Sure enough, on the afternoon of that same day he called Pop and me into his office and repeated some of the weary jokes from that same program. The only way Pop and I could fend off the assault was to beat the Boss to the punch: Thereafter we told him the jokes first and ridiculed the program from which they came.

It worked. We got rid of Charlie's insistence on jokes and he got rid of our program. At the age of only seven weeks, the early-morning show with Pop and Frank sank quietly from sight without a ripple to mark its passing.

The Liberty Bank in Louisville had already started to sponsor me on a daily news broadcast, and it had worked out well for all concerned. So well, in fact, that Charlie had sent samples of my broadcasts to Mutual Broadcasting in New York.

He called me into his office and showed me a telegram: WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS FRANK EDWARDS NEWS BROADCASTS WITH YOU. ADVISE WHEN COMING TO NEW YORK. The telegram was from John Whitmore, News Director of the Mutual Broadcasting System.

Charlie and I went to New York a couple of weeks later and closed the deal. I was to do a regular Sunday commentary on Mutual; uncensored programs, devoted to discussion of unusual facets of science and invention, to late news events and to other items which I regarded as of general interest.

The program was by no means a sensation but it was a good, sound show. It began to pick up an audience around the nation and I felt that I was accomplishing something, at last.

One Sunday I was sitting in the WGRC newsroom, typing up the last of my seven pages of copy for the network show. The phone rang. "Mutual in New York calling Frank Edwards." Someone in the Mutual newsroom wanted to know if I had a

certain story and if I needed additional information on it. I dashed across the room, picked up the first page of my script and checked what I had with New York. When we had finished that part of the conversation I laid down the page and went on talking.

The station engineer, Karl Haberman, yelled over the intercommunications system: "Come on Frank . . . you're on the network in thirty seconds! Get into the big studio!"

I snatched up the pile of papers beside the phone and rushed into the studio. Karl made the opening announcement to the network and ran out of the studio toward the control room. As I started the broadcast I heard a resounding crash. Karl did not appear in the control room; but I couldn't help him, I had troubles of my own!

The opening page of my script dealt with a big bombing raid then in progress over Germany. As I reached the bottom of the page and tossed it aside I discovered that I had no more script. By mistake I had picked up a stack of stock-market reports!

Twelve minutes to go—and a network waiting to hear the rest of the report on that bombing raid. Shutting my eyes tightly, I began ad-libbing. I told the audience (truthfully) that the objective of the raid was not known at the moment but we might have it later. That got that story out of the way and I went on to other matters, some of which I did from memory of the material I had written that morning and some of which were stock speculation pieces. Suffice to say that I covered the war fronts, all of them, with sweat streaming down my face.

When I finally opened my eyes to glance at the clock there was still one minute to go. I tossed in an imaginary Tokyo broadcast and tossed it out again as patently fictitious. What about the air raid with which I had opened the show? At what target had it been directed? I told the audience that I had no further confirmation but I suspected the B-17's might be blasting the industrial center at Merseburg . . . "Stay tuned to this network for further details." . . . and I was off the air.

I did not know it at the time, but my suspicion about Merseburg had been correct; I had made a direct hit by a lucky guess.

Karl had made a direct hit, too. As he ran out of the studio into the dark hall he had tripped over some metal folding chairs and taken a nasty fall which hurt his back. He managed to crawl into the control room just in time to release the network at the end of the broadcast.

When we saw the confirmation of my guess about the

bombing of Merseberg come in a few hours later we had a good laugh.

Said Karl: "It's the kind of a thing that wouldn't happen again in a hundred years."

That was all right with me. I was willing to wait.

On a quiet Sunday in September of 1944 I touched off a broadcast that reverberated from Rhode Island to the Rockies.

It had its genesis in an old book which had been brought to me by a tiny, aged nun from a Louisville convent. The book dealt with the lives of some of the lesser-known saints. It included a brief biography of St. Odelia, who lies buried in the little churchyard at Odelianburg, near Strasbourg. The old nun told me that she had seen the grave many years before when she was a young girl living in southern Germany, and she knew of St. Odelia's writings.

For some weeks I had had in my possession a copy of a document which is generally known as "St. Odelia's Prophecy." Actually it is not a prophecy but two letters describing some unusual dreams. I needed some proof that such a person had actually existed and this little book provided that evidence. I made notes and returned it to its owner.

In September of 1944 we were still in the midst of World War II. When would it end? Would its termination result in lasting peace? Those were questions to which war-weary millions sought the answers. Had St. Odelia written of them more than twelve hundred years before?

After considerable deliberation and discussion with the station heads, Porter Smith and Charlie Harris, it was decided to approach Mutual on the advisability of my using the writings of St. Odelia on a network broadcast. Mutual read the script and promptly approved it.

By way of background on this remarkable lady let me say that she was born of wealthy German parents in the year 660 A.D. She was blind for about sixty years and is said to have gained her sight in 719. Though sightless, she had become renowned as a teacher, and her tombstone at Odelianburg is marked with a pair of hands holding a book on which a pair of eyes are resting, symbolizing her faith, her work and her blindness.

In the year 720 A.D., St. Odelia wrote two letters to her brother, the Prince of Franconia, in Germany. These letters were written in Latin. They described some terrifying dreams she had experienced. And they included things that were impossible of accomplishment in her own times.

She tells her brother that she has seen the world in torment; in more trouble than ever before in history. Germany will be led, she says, by a terrible warrior who shall come from the banks of the Danube.

Hitler was born on the banks of the Danube.

She says: "Future generations will be astonished that his numerous and powerful enemies will not have been capable of stopping the march of his victories. The war will be long."

For almost three years Hitler's opponents reeled from his blows. When Germany collapsed, Britain had been fighting more than five years.

"The conqueror will have attained the apogee of his triumphs toward the middle of the sixth month of the second year of hostilities."

The sixth month of the second year of hostilities was March of 1941. After that date, Hitler never took over another first-class nation. In June of 1941 he launched his attack on Russia and his fortunes turned downward. It was the beginning of the end.

"It will be impossible to estimate the number of cruelties committed."

Hitler's gas ovens consumed millions of helpless victims. Bombing raids by both sides caused tremendous casualties.

Did St. Odelia see these bombing raids when she wrote: "One will see winged warriors in these unbelievable attacks, mounting to the heavens to seize the very stars and throw down fire on the cities from one end of the universe to the other, starting gigantic fires."

London, Coventry, Cologne, Stalingrad, Warsaw, Tobruk, Tokyo!

She describes (incorrectly) a second part of the war only nine months long, then a period of diminution for the German leader. "The third period of this war will be the shortest of all and the conqueror will have lost faith in his warriors."

Hess had deserted to the British. Hitler's generals had tried to assassinate him.

"This will be the period of the invasion. By just retribution the soil of the conqueror, because of his injustice and his atheism, will be invaded in all parts and pillaged."

The invasion of Normandy began on June 6, 1944. Eleven months later Hitler was dead, Germany crushed.

At the time of my broadcast, September 3, 1944, the progress of World War II seemed to parallel many of the events described in St. Odelia's remarkable letters. She mentioned "strange monsters rising from the seas to spread terror," and

no doubt submarines would have seemed like strange monsters to the world of twelve centuries ago.

But there were two other things in her letters which did not seem very specific at the time of my broadcast.

"One shall see prodigies in the Orient," and "a great black cloud will spread desolation."

Eleven months after that broadcast I had reason to remember those words when there was indeed a prodigy in the Orient: the great cloud of atomic horror called Hiroshima.

As soon as I concluded my broadcast the phones began to ring. Local and long-distance calls from listeners who wanted copies of what I had just said. It was a gratifying response and not unexpected. I had cautioned Mr. Harris that we might have a deluge of requests for copies of the unusual script. Did he feel that I should offer the copies to listeners who sent in a dime for mailing charges? Charlie thought it over and decided that the station would send out the scripts free to those who asked for them. "Southern hospitality, Frank! Good old Southern hospitality!"

In the weeks that followed, Southern hospitality certainly got a workout. The station ordered about a thousand copies printed and those were gone before we got them—requested by local listeners. And there was still the network mail to be reckoned with.

It came in boxes, sacks and bundles. It was full of nickels, dimes, dollars and return envelopes. Within a matter of days it became a full-time job for several girls to open and answer the requests which poured in from all over the country. It was the heaviest mail response Mutual had ever had to any single broadcast up to that time, and it was the biggest headache WGRC had ever faced.

Just what the final score was has been lost in the shuffle but I doff my cap to Charles Harris of WGRC. He said he would send reprints of the script out free to everyone who requested a copy, and he did. The experience taught us that Southern hospitality is both expansive and expensive.

But perhaps we haven't heard the last of St. Odelia yet. Among her remarkable writings, which appeared to foretell much of the course and conclusion of World War II, there is one line worth noting for future reference:

"This will not be the end of these wars, but the beginning of the end."

Korea? . . . Indo-China? . . . What next?

St. Odelia doesn't say.

9. Happy, Hectic Hoosierland

MY SUNDAY commentaries on Mutual had an audience, all right, but no sponsor. Charlie Harris had a management contract with me which entitled him to a sizeable share of my network earnings, if any. He decided that we should go to New York and try to line up some paying sponsors.

When we checked in at the Astor, there was a call waiting for me from Mutual. Johnny Whitmore, the MBS news editor, was on the line. "Can you get over here in fifteen minutes, Frank? The Allies are in the outskirts of Paris. We are going to do some pick-ups from France and we want you to go on with Gabe Heatter and Boake Carter for comment from here. How about it? Can you get here?"

I got there, of course.

Whitmore had a connection with some point in France, where he was trying to get a high-ranking American officer in the field to give a brief word-picture of the Allied forces converging on Paris. It was an intensely thrilling moment: The Germans on the skids at last; Paris being liberated; the outcome of the bloodiest conflict in history no longer in doubt.

Johnny kept calling for his contact. "Come in France! This is Mutual in New York calling France. Come in France!"

Suddenly a voice boomed at us from overseas. "Keep quiet a minute! We're trying to fight a war over here!"

There was a long moment's pause, during which we could hear the military broadcaster talking with a tank. From the conversation it was apparent that an American tank was trying to locate a concealed German gun that was blocking the advance in his sector. The voice in the field station was telling the boys in the tank that the spotter plane had located the source of the trouble: "The gun that just fired is in a stone house about a thousand yards ahead of you, slightly to the right of that steeple with the big hole in it. Does that help?"

Then we heard a voice crackling and hissing—that of the commander of another tank who was much nearer the target. "We've got him located! It's a Tiger (tank) inside a house! Hold everything—here we go!"—A couple of seconds of dead air, then a heavy grunt that we could hear over the rumble of the tank's engines—"Got him! Blew the hell out of him with that one!—Here goes another one right in the guts!—That's

got him—he's on fire!—C'mon, let's get going back there—we ain't got all night to fight this war!"

There we were, sitting in New York, listening to men fighting a war three thousand miles away. Radio had come a long way since Nathan Stubblefield and his voices in the cornfield.

Gabriel Heatter, Boake Carter and I each did five minutes of commentary that afternoon on the drama and importance of the liberation of Paris, symbolic of the liberation of the rest of the peoples who had been overrun by Hitler's legions. It was just another broadcast and won no ribbons for outstanding presentation, but to me it was a highly gratifying experience. After twenty long years of struggle and disappointment, the car-knocker's boy was on a national network with two of the top newsmen of the day.

Personal satisfaction was all that I got out of the broadcasts I did for Mutual that year. Furthermore, that was all I was likely to get, since the network assured Mr. Harris that they could not sell the program. Why not? One of the top MBS officials took me to dinner next day and told me, off the record, that Robert McCormick, publisher of the *Chicago Tribune* and principal stockholder of Mutual at that time, "did not like the tone of my broadcasts."

This was puzzling to me, since Harris and I had been extremely careful not to include any material which could possibly be construed as political. To what "tone" did he refer?

"Well, Frank, you know how the Colonel is! He hates the Roosevelts and he never misses a chance to give them both barrels. Perhaps a little item of that sort, occasionally, might change things so that our sales department could get started——"

Precisely what they had in mind, if anything, I shall never know. Charlie Harris and I talked the matter over on the train as we returned to Louisville and we decided that under the circumstances the thing to do was to terminate my Sunday broadcasts over the network. Charlie handled the separation a couple of weeks later, leaving me with only my local news program in Louisville, sponsored by the Liberty Bank, programs which were already crowding another news show on WHAS for top spot at the time of the broadcast.

My long time buddy, Ray Allen, had gone to Hollywood two years before and he was urging me to come out there. He assured me that he could get me a job similar to his, writing gags for Bob Hope. The pay was good, Bob was a wonderful guy to work for, and Hollywood, in my book, is a wonderful spot to live. To go or not to go, that was the question.

You have undoubtedly noticed that your destiny has been shaped by little things which you did not recognize as destiny-shapers at the time they occurred. So it was with me in that winter of my discontent. I received two telegrams. They arrived within an hour of each other. Both were from newspapers which owned radio stations in the same city—Indianapolis. Would I be interested in discussing with them the possibility of becoming a news commentator on their respective stations?

I talked it over with Charlie Harris. He knew I wasn't content as matters stood. If I was going to make a change, Charlie, as a long-time friend, wanted to see me make a change for the better. He suggested that I should at least talk to the Indianapolis interests before I made any decision.

One of the telegrams had been sent by Mr. Eugene Pulliam, publisher of the *Indianapolis Star;* the other had come from the *Indianapolis News,* a rival paper, which had just bought radio station WIBC.

Purely by chance, I decided to talk to WIBC first. Alex Campbell, the manager of the station, Joe Breeze, a congenial little Irishman who was business manager of the *News,* and I went to dinner one cold October night in 1944 at the Columbia Club on famed Monument Circle in Indianapolis. Campbell had been hearing me on the network, he said, and Breeze explained to me that the station had been mismanaged prior to its purchase by the *News;* the new owners wanted to attract attention to it and to make it a paying property. They would give me ample promotion in the *News,* plus a good salary and enough freedom to enable me to develop local news stories and feature material. Was I interested?

We wrote out a contract on the backs of a couple of menus, and I became a newsman at WIBC.

Alex Campbell called me into his office to show me the promotional material the station was getting ready to release, prior to my opening broadcast. I took one look and my jaw dropped.

"For crying out loud! You've got me stuck in right behind Fulton Lewis, Mr. Campbell!"

"That's right. Why not?"

"But your own Hooper ratings show that he has virtually no audience—I'll be buried alive!"

Alex grinned. "On the contrary, Frank, the contrasting styles between Lewis and you will make a good half-hour of listening. You have a sense of humor that gets into your broadcasts. You can use that, plus good local coverage, and between the two of you we are going to have thirty minutes that will

attract an audience—and I'll bet you a steak dinner on that. Is it a bet?"

I didn't like the programming, and I took the bet. I regarded the prospects of following Lewis each evening as a booby-trap, but Breeze and Campbell were adamant, and Frank followed Fulton. Each evening Lewis did his customary commentary on some phase of the national scene; I came on immediately following him with a brief roundup of headline news stories, plus fresh local material and some items that were calculated to provide a few chuckles. Month after month the ratings indicated that we were attracting more and more listeners to that half-hour; Lewis and I were both climbing at the same rate. In a year we were among the top-rated shows on the station. When I left WIBC in January of 1948, Lewis and I were leading the Indianapolis field with ratings of 10.8. Contrasting styles had paid off.

Clearly Mr. Campbell had won his bet; I owed him a steak dinner. But where to get a steak under those wartime meat-rationing conditions? After quite a bit of looking around I made a deal with the proprietor of one of the better eating places: If I would give him a gas coupon he would call me the next time he had any steaks available. Sure enough, he called one afternoon and Alex and I hurried out to get our steaks. We placed our order and waited. Then we waited some more. Finally the proprietor came up to our table. I knew by the expression on his face that he was bearing ill tidings.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I owe you an apology. When I called you I had two nice steaks saved for you. I have just learned that my two cooks ate the steaks themselves. If I fire them, Lord only knows where I would find replacements. I'm terribly sorry about the whole thing!"

By that time we were hungry enough to eat anything, even an order of broiled eggplant, that looked and tasted like beaverboard.

I still owed Alex a steak dinner. Would he settle for a bottle of Scotch? Gladly! Of course Scotch was also rather difficult to come by in those days but I knew a friendly druggist who promised to take care of it for me, and he did.

At that time I was living at the home of an elderly widow, Mrs. Carter. She was a very sweet old lady, nearing eighty, and still quite active in the affairs of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Knowing how she hated whiskey, I did not take the bottle of Scotch into her house. Instead, I locked it up in the trunk of my car where it would be safe until I could deliver it the following day.

It should have been a safe-and-sound procedure, but when I left the house the next day about noon, Mrs. Carter was sitting on the porch, fanning. I sat down beside her and we chatted for a few minutes about the insufferably hot weather. As I got up to go, she said: "Mr. Edwards, I have to go downtown to a Temperance meeting. May I ride down with you?"

Of course she could, and I helped her into the car.

We were about halfway to the business district, rolling along on Meridian street, when a little old lady walked out against the light at an intersection right in front of me. I slammed on the brakes and missed her by inches, but the sudden stop spelled trouble, just the same. From my trunk came the tinkle of broken glass—and the overpowering smell of Scotch. Being hard of hearing, Mrs. Carter could not hear the bottle break, but there was nothing wrong with her nose. She began to sniff.

I was sweating it out. We were drenched with the smell of that whiskey and it was certainly going to cling to our clothing.

She took another deep sniff and gave me a puzzled glance. "Mr. Edwards, what is that odor—perfume?"

Hallelujah! I saw a way out.

"Yes ma'am. I broke the bottle, accidentally."

"Awful strong, isn't it?"

"No ma'am. Just standard strength."

Did she suspect? Was she baiting me along? I wondered!

"What kind of perfume is it?"

"Uh—it's imported."

"Imported?"

"Yes, ma'am. Imported from Scotland!"

Just then I drove up in front of her destination. I hurried around to help her out of the car, the sooner the better. The fumes from that broken bottle of booze were literally boiling around us. Mrs. Carter fanned herself with a folded pamphlet and wrinkled her nose.

"Goodness," she chuckled. "Why, it wouldn't take much of that stuff to make a person groggy!"

During that first year in Indianapolis I worked day and night. From my previous experience with both newspapers and radio I knew that "contacts" were all-important. These are the friendly sources through which you either get the stories in the first place or can check the tips you get somewhere else. I worked hard and long developing contacts.

It was not too difficult. I am by nature gregarious. I had a

sizable fund of stories, funny and otherwise, acquired in my hectic early days of being kicked from pillar to post, and I was a good listener to the stories of others. Within six months I had contacts in the state house, the court house, the state police and scores of other points of possible interest. Many of the friendships I made were genuine and lasting, and many of them never came up with a single item that I could use. They were just nice people and that was enough.

Like many other cities, Indianapolis at that time was having a particularly difficult job trying to stem the tide of burglaries, purse-snatchings and stick-ups. It was probably the natural result of a police force that was suffering from the wartime manpower shortage, and of warplant wages that offered tempting targets for the thugs. At one point, there was talk of forming neighborhood bands of armed civilians to patrol the streets.

At the station we felt that a broadcast or two dealing with the crime situation would restore some balance to the public's jittery state of mind. I did a broadcast which set forth the actual crime rate for Indianapolis, as compared with other cities. It was not a pretty picture, but it was true, and we felt that it would set at rest some of the fantastic rumors that were current.

The politicians thought otherwise. Since the *Indianapolis News* owned the radio station over which I had made the broadcast, they made their complaints to the *News*. The *News* called on the station manager for an explanation. Being low man on the totem pole, I got the story last.

The meeting was held at the office of Mickey McCarty, who then headed the *News*. It seemed that the principal objection to my broadcast had been directed against the figures I had given for the frequency with which various types of crimes had been committed. A local politico who was present snorted that the figures were grossly exaggerated, they bore no resemblance whatever to the facts. I was in a tough spot.

"Tell us, Frank," said Mickey, "just where on earth did you get such figures?"

Without comment I passed out to each person present a copy of my source—a report by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, taken from the records submitted to it by the Indianapolis police department.

Mickey grinned. Being a veteran newsman himself, he probably enjoyed the complete deflation of the politicians who were trying to put the heat on him in this matter.

I had won the round. Although I did not realize it at the

time I had also won the enmity of a little clique of politicians who had good reasons for opposing my broadcasting of facts which might upset the balance between crime and punishment as it existed at that time in the capital city of Indiana. Yet, that same state of affairs also brought about a working arrangement for me with a member of the Safety Board, which controlled the police department. This gentleman, a sincere and devoted public servant in the finest sense of the term, gave me a veritable bonanza of factual material which could hardly have been obtained otherwise. Our arrangement was simple and satisfactory: He would provide me with the material and the supporting documentary proof; I could use or reject it as I saw fit.

Thanks to this connection I scooped my opposition by many hours when the wife of a well-to-do Indianapolis businessman was found murdered in her home one chilly October evening in 1947. And a few weeks later, when a young woman was criminally assaulted by six hoodlums who forced her into a car at gun-point and drove her out into the country, my high-level source tipped me off to the existence of an old state kidnap statute which provided mandatory life sentences in such cases. Later when these men were caught, and tried, I mentioned this statute on my broadcast. Instead of being dusted off with a milder charge and released after a few months' incarceration, they were convicted on the kidnap charge. Five of the guilty parties went to prison, the sixth was sent to an insane ward.

One of the strangest things that ever happened to me in the news-broadcasting field occurred while on WIBC. On March 8, 1947, a seven-year-old lad named Petey Hubbel disappeared from the Riviera Club in Indianapolis, where he had gone that morning to play basketball with other youngsters. His mother told police that she had phoned him and instructed him to get on his bicycle and come home. When he failed to appear, Mrs. Hubbel had driven to the Riviera Club in search of him. Petey had answered a phone call, all right. Then he had left his basketball with his friends while he stepped out to see someone in the parking lot.

Petey never came back.

His parents were by no means wealthy, although they lived comfortably on Mr. Hubbel's income as a traveling salesman. Kidnaping seemed unlikely, unless someone hoped that Petey's grandfather, a well-to-do Chicago businessman, might pay off. Grandfather came to Indianapolis and employed a private detective, Bob Dodd, to join in the search for the missing lad.

The weeks dragged by. There were no requests for ransom and no ransom was offered. Scores of false leads were run to their fruitless conclusions. The mystery of Petey Hubbel was quietly filed away—unsolved.

On May 3rd, exactly eight weeks from the day the little fellow disappeared, I was sitting in the newsroom at WIBC, writing my Saturday-evening news script. For some unknown reason, I began thumbing through my files for the Petey Hubbel case. I glanced at the scripts but I could see nothing newsworthy in them, so they went back in the drawer. I finished writing the script, checked it for typographical errors and went on to the front of the building where the studios were located. It was ten minutes before I was due to go on the air . . . and as I sat there in the studio that feeling of uneasiness again came over me. . . . I felt impelled to go back to the newsroom.

There was my desk drawer, opened just enough so that I could glimpse the name of Petey Hubbel on the two-month-old scripts. I had a hunch. It took only a couple of minutes to slip a sheet of paper into the typewriter and put my hunch into words. . . .

That night, just before I signed off the program, I broadcast my hunch. "Ladies and gentlemen, it was exactly eight weeks ago today that a little boy named Petey Hubbel disappeared from the Riviera Club. There has been no trace of him in all that time, so I should like to ask a favor of you . . . for I think we can find Petey. Tomorrow, according to the weather man, will be warm and springlike. Thousands of you folks will be out roaming the fields and woods, hunting for mushrooms. Please keep a sharp lookout for any little mound which might conceal that little boy's body—for I have a hunch that Petey Hubbel is in a shallow grave."

At nine o'clock the next morning the search for the missing boy came to an end. Two mushroom hunters found his body along the banks of the White River, miles from where he disappeared, and partially concealed under some rubbish.

How Petey got there will never be known. The police listed the case as accidental drowning. They theorized that the little fellow left the gymnasium and went out into near-freezing weather (without sweater or coat), walked across a nearby field (without leaving tracks in the mud or snow) and drowned by breaking through the ice on the White River (no such break was found).

Their "solution" was convenient, but not convincing.

By the end of 1947, after three full and busy years on

WIBC, I had campaigned for better streets and better sewers, for police sub-stations throughout the city, for improved fire equipment, for a hospital in the eastern part of the city (all the hospitals were grouped in one cluster on the west of Indianapolis), for better housing and for more alert and efficient state and local government. I liked Indianapolis and its people. The audience surveys indicated that a great many of them evidently liked me, too.

During the dog days of a particularly dull summer for news I chanced upon the reports of a firm of private detectives which had been hired by a group of church members to check on the nocturnal activities of their minister.

The reports indicated that the gentleman in question was doing an extraordinary amount of missionary work in widely separated parts of the city, and this work oftimes kept him occupied until the wee hours of the morning. Upon several occasions, according to the worried church members, they had found their parson stumbling around in an alcoholic fog, unable to locate his own house.

Further checking by the detectives disclosed that his evening endeavors were exceptionally arduous, especially for a man of his years. Strenuous though the work may have been, the parson clung to the task.

There was one stubborn case which involved a curvaceous young lady who lived in an apartment on the eastern edge of Indianapolis. For her he had evolved a special treatment. At the drugstore across from the young lady's domicile, the parson would provide himself with a fifth of whiskey and a pound of salted peanuts. Thus fortified, he was ready to undertake his missionary work for the evening.

The results must have been encouraging, for he soon extended this same formula to his other nocturnal endeavors in different parts of the city. Grueling though the long hours must have been, he never shirked his task.

By deleting the names and other pertinent facts it was possible to use portions of the detectives' reports. Done in the fashion of radio soap-operas, my audience loved the hilarious episodes in "The Nightly Adventures of Parson Peanuts."

Immediately following my first broadcast in this unusual series I received three phone calls from men who identified themselves as ministers, all threatening to sue me if I mentioned their names.

Odd part of it was that none of those who called was the fellow I had in mind.

My work at WIBC consisted of two news commentaries each evening, one at six-fifteen, immediately following Fulton Lewis, and the other at ten o'clock. Both of my shows had high ratings in the audience surveys, and the policy of putting me on right after Lewis, which I had opposed, was clearly vindicated. This letter which I received in 1947 is typical:

> I enjoy your broadcasts, especially your treatment of the dispute between Greece and Turkey. How anyone can get around your logic is beyond me. We do not agree at all times but I admire your independence, which makes your broadcast much better than just reading off the press dispatches. Fulton Lewis, then Frank Edwards on the air, gives me a fine half-hour of listening.
>
> (Signed) Roy O. Pike, President, Citizens Bank and Trust Company, Bloomington, Indiana.

It was only one of many thousands of letters that I received during my stay at WIBC. Not all of those letters were friendly, but they all had one thing in common; every letter was answered. This was quite a task, since I had no secretary and I am a bumbling typist. But I knew enough about human nature to realize that those people would appreciate replies, even when they disagreed with me. Furthermore, every reply that I sent out became a little missionary for me as the recipients showed it around or discussed it with others. It is a fertile field that is neglected or mishandled by too many stations and too many individuals in the broadcasting industry. The man who gets too big to take notice of his fan mail is in the wrong business.

I had come to WIBC in October of 1944. By November, 1947, I had been there a little more than three years, and during that period the station had had three different managers, the newspaper that owned the station was undergoing some important high-echelon changes prior to selling out, and the men with whom I had made my original contract were either gone or preparing to go. I felt uncomfortably alone and expendable, as indeed I was. One of the occupational hazards of being a news commentator is that in certain circumstances you become a piece of property which can be sold or exchanged for various considerations. If your popularity inspires jealousy among your employers, or if your influence inspires discomfort among corrupt politicians, you may become a marked man and there isn't much that you can do about it.

Early in my Indianapolis days I had come into contact with a man who toiled not, neither did he spin, yet he lived exceedingly well. His home was a rendezvous for top politicians; no hint of scandal ever touched him. On a golf course one day, about a year after I had first met him, I spoke to him as he passed on the fairway of an adjoining hole. We were well away from the other players. He motioned for me to come closer.

"One of these days," he said, "I'm going to give you a story that you could never get anywhere else—and I'll give you the stuff you need to back it up. It's dynamite, Frank, but it isn't ready yet. I'll let you know. In the meantime, keep quiet about this."

So I was not altogether surprised when the same individual called me, late in 1947, and suggested that I meet him in an isolated spot which he named.

He was obviously a very sick man, his face almost pumpkin-colored, his breath wheezing heavily.

"I've been told that I have cancer," he gasped. "I refused to let them cut on me months ago, and now they say it's too late. I once told you that some day I'd give you a story that would be a bombshell. I guess this is the time, if I'm ever going to do it. But before I turn this stuff over to you, I want you to promise me one thing: Promise me that you won't use any of it until I'm gone. Is it a deal?"

"It's a deal. But I want you to understand that I may never use any of it, at any time, either. I don't know what you have and I don't know what the stuff is all about, so I feel that you should not be under any misunderstanding as far as I'm concerned."

"That is understood. Do what you please with it, or do nothing at all. But the time may come when you will need something like this and if it does, I want you to have it. Now take those two packages off the back seat and let's get out of here!"

When I opened the packages, in my apartment, I found that they contained a few photostats of some personal letters and checks, and at least forty or more spools of wire recordings. Since I had no wire-recording playback, I decided to wait until I could take the stuff out of town, where I could borrow a playback and listen to some of the recordings.

I spent most of a Sunday listening to it a few weeks later. The wire contained conversations between the man who had given the stuff to me and various other voices of persons who had apparently been guests in his home. Some of the voices

and names I could identify as those of various political figures. Others were unknown to me. There was talk of slot-machine deals, lotteries, race wires and the various other methods by which influential politicians line their pockets. In one county alone, the voices on the wire said, the slot-machine payoff was twelve thousand dollars a month.

One of the most interesting items, as far as I was concerned, was a spool of wire on which a voice with a name identical with that of a wealthy Hoosier industrialist was angrily recounting an experience he and two prominent state officials had undergone a short time before. The voice said that the three of them had been engaged in an evening of dalliance at a bawdy house in southern Indiana, when a pimp came dashing in to warn them that the police were on their way to raid the place. . . . The informer had seen the cops hiding their cars a short distance away. The voice said that he and the two bigwig politicians had barely raced out the back door of the love-shop when the officers started pounding on the front door. According to the voice, he and his partially clad companions had to hide in a weed patch until they could get their clothes on. "It was a dirty, stinking, political double-cross," he declared. "The Mayor there had assured us that there would be no trouble, and to think that we just barely got out of there without being arrested! It's an outrage!"

In a campaign year, the material on those wire recordings could have been explosive. A lot of political careers were involved in the conversations; a lot of prominent names were presented in unfavorable fashion. It was powerful medicine but it was not evidence. Certainly it was not for me and not for radio.

I locked the recordings and the rest of the stuff in the back of my old Buick and drove back to Indianapolis. I planned to go over the whole thing with an attorney and follow his advice.

During the night, someone broke into the trunk of the car by removing the back seat. Wire recordings, photostats and even the heavy blanket that had been thrown over them were all missing. After the initial surprise, I heaved a sigh of relief.

It was premature.

My first intimation that something might be wrong occurred one night about a week after the recordings vanished. I came out of our studios in the old *News* building on Washington street and turned west. The building was adjacent to a narrow and very dark alley. As I stepped into the alley to cross it, I heard tires squeal and I instinctively jumped out of the way.

The car had no lights on. It missed me only because it had been too far up in the alley. It shot past and sped away, east on Washington. It had been a close call but I dismissed it as mere careless driving. Traffic was pretty heavy in that alley and it could have been purely coincidental that the car had no lights on.

The next incident came two weeks later. This time they were too quick. The car leaped out of the alley, struck my right leg and spun me around. I was scared but unhurt.

Somebody was anxious to nail my hide on their barn. If they were going to play rough then I had better be prepared. I filed application for a pistol permit. The state police promptly approved it, but my application got stymied somewhere in the county court house. At the suggestion of the state police I did the next best thing: I got a hunting license and carried a shotgun in my car.

A special permit was granted which enabled me to park directly in front of the *News* building and thereby eliminated the necessity of crossing that menacing alley. One night, about eleven o'clock, I left the studio and got into my car to drive out in North Indianapolis, where I lived at the time. As I pulled away from the curb I happened to glance into the rear-view mirror. Another car was pulling out about half a block behind me. Its headlights were not turned on, which may be why it attracted my attention. If it was following me I could check very easily by driving around Monument Circle a couple of times. It was following me, all right.

Driving out of the business district was the wrong thing to do in the circumstances, as I soon realized when I got into the darkened residential area and the other car began to move up on me. It was clear that we were going to have a showdown very quickly, the question of where remained to be seen.

That, too, was soon settled—my car quit cold, out of gas! I pulled over to the curb, grabbed the shotgun and slid out on the side away from the street, crouched in the gutter where the open door of the car covered my back and the fender gave me some protection in front.

The other car crawled past. I slipped the safety on my shotgun. One man was holding the door of the other car partially open, a pistol in his hand. They were trying to locate me.

I made it easy for them. They were about fifty feet in front of me when I blistered that fellow holding the pistol with a load of number-eight chilled shot. He let out a yell and dropped the pistol in the street. The driver stepped on the gas. I pumped

in another shell and splattered the back of the car before they roared away.

I was sick and scared. After my knees quit knocking I ventured out and picked up the pistol that was lying in the street. I still have it.

The next day was a busy day, all day. I was subpoenaed to appear before the grand jury. The state police made arrangements to provide me with a bodyguard. They had picked up information that indicated I needed one.

The grand jury appearance lasted four days. When it was over the prosecutor, no friend of mine, was so unhappy that he called me into his office and grumbled about it.

I, too, was unhappy. I had become a target for certain politicians who objected to my digging up stories which they preferred to leave unpublicized. I was tired, too, for I had been through a long period of strain. My friend Ken Church, then manager of WIBC, agreed with me that a vacation was in order. I hopped in my car and began a leisurely drive to California.

At Kingman, Arizona, a telegram was waiting for me. Would I be interested in transferring my activities to another Indianapolis station, WISH, owned by banker Frank McKinney? I would, and I did.

The ensuing two years at WISH were happy and successful years. I increased my audience until at the end of that period I had more listeners than the other four stations combined, at the time I was on the air. What was far more important to me, I had greater freedom at WISH than I ever had before. I had the right to choose my own material and to treat it as I felt it deserved. George Higgins, the manager, was an excellent harness-mate for me. We mapped our campaigns and carried them out. If I was in doubt about some phase of the commentary I could depend on him for sound advice. I was sponsored by banks, tire, real-estate and furniture companies, none of whom ever made an attempt to censor me, although there were unquestionably times when they did not agree with my views.

It was at WISH that I had several memorable experiences. For instance, there was the day I earned the nickname "Earthquake."

I had prepared the script for the program and had left my office for a few minutes. When I returned I found a bulletin lying on top of the script.

"Tokyo," it was datelined. "A heavy earthquake has rocked Japan. Damage believed to be heavy."

Since it was a press-wire bulletin, I used it to open the show. "We will probably have additional details on the earthquake later in the program," I told the audience. I waved to the control room to signify that I would like someone to take a look at the news-wire right away. I wanted the follow-up on that bulletin, if possible. Gene Allison, the announcer on duty, hurriedly scanned through the latest wire reports—nothing about the 'quake. I went right on reading the rest of my script, signaling Gene to call the news service for details.

"We are contacting the news service for further details on the earthquake," I reported. "Should have something for you in just a moment."

The program ended without the additional details I had been promising, and I was quite disturbed about it. Some news service, I thought, to put out a bulletin like that and not follow it up with a single line. Mighty puzzling. Gene reported that the news-service office said it had not carried any such bulletin. I grabbed the phone and was just about to call them and read the thing when I chanced to notice the dateline—it was several months old.

At first I thought I had been the victim of a practical joke, which would only have been poetic justice, but a little investigation developed the whole story.

Our janitor had been cleaning up my office while I was out. Behind my desk he had found that little scrap of news-wire copy reporting an earthquake in Japan, and he had placed it on top of the script that I was ready to use. I put it on the air, not realizing that it was an item that had been lying behind my desk for almost a year.

From that day forth, to the staff of WISH, I was "Earthquake Edwards."

In my broadcasts over WISH I paid close attention to politics and tried to call the shots as I saw them. The presidential campaign of 1948 was noteworthy for the unanimity with which the press and radio forecast an overwhelming victory for the Republican candidate, Thomas E. Dewey. In all fairness, I must admit that I had little expectation of seeing President Truman reelected. But shortly before the election I predicted a Truman victory and when it happened I scored heavily as a political prognosticator. But there was a story behind it, a story which began on the Saturday before the 1948 election.

The governor of Indiana at that time was Henry Schricker. He invited me to ride over to Terre Haute with him that afternoon as Mr. Truman's train came through, taking the Presi-

dent to Missouri for the election on the following Tuesday. I gladly accepted the invitation and secured permission to take my friend and fellow newsman Bob Hoover along with me, to record the trip on his press camera.

The three of us entered the President's car at the Union Station in Indianapolis. The late Charlie Ross, Mr. Truman's secretary, was also in the car. As the train rolled through the Hoosier countryside, Mr. Truman was kept busy waving to little groups of people who had gathered at every grade crossing to see him. He had noticed the camera of course, and he suggested that he would like a picture with the Governor and me. We lined up and Hoover snapped the picture. Then I took the camera and Bob took my place between the Governor and the President.

As I backed up to take the picture, they all gave me the customary grins. But in the actual picture they were all laughing like mad . . . and with good reason. For just as I spread my legs to steady myself against the swaying of the train, my belt broke and my pants dropped down around my knees. It was probably the only time any president has been photographed under such circumstances.

Later that afternoon, as the train neared Terre Haute, where the Governor and I were going to get off, I had a chance to ask the President about a matter that had been bothering me.

"Mr. President, in view of the widely held contentions that this election is going Republican, is it a fair question to ask you if you really expect to win? If you'd like to reply to that off the record, not for broadcast, that would be acceptable; I'm just curious, I guess."

He laughed. "You can regard this as either on the record or off the record, as you see fit. With almost all the nation's newspapers plugging for Dewey I realized that getting reelected was an uphill fight, and up until a couple of weeks ago I had my doubts about the outcome. Then do you know what happened?"

"No, sir. What was it?"

"About two weeks ago I noticed that the farmers were running to market, selling their cattle and hogs and grain and poultry on a falling market. Why were they doing it? Why were they taking these losses? Well, I'll tell you why they were running to market—because they were being told that my opponent was going to win. If they are so afraid of a Republican victory that they will take a loss on their farm products now, then I figure that they are so scared of a Republican victory that they will vote for me! And if the farm states

vote strongly for me, I'm in! That's the way it looks to me."

The Governor and I drove back to Indianapolis and I hurried to the nearest library. I scanned the market pages of recent issues of several newspapers, and sure enough, there was an unmistakable heavy flow of farm products into the falling markets.

I took a chance and made my prediction of a Truman victory.

Actually, Mr. Truman did not carry many of the farm states in the election of 1948. But when the ballot count began coming in, showing him running ahead of the 1944 Democratic votes in such states as Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota and Indiana, it was apparent that the election was not going to be the whopping GOP victory the polls and the press had been talking about. When Ohio went Democratic with its twenty-five electoral votes and Colorado switched over to the Truman column with six more, the irrevocable trend of the election came into focus.

It is a bit belated, of course, but I think that I should give credit for the surprising accuracy of my presidential prediction in 1948 to the man who inspired it, Harry S. Truman.

Indianapolis was the scene of the first annual convention of the Grand Army of the Republic, when more than 200 former members of the Union armies flocked to the Hoosier capital from every point of the compass. When the GAR held its last convention in Indianapolis in August of 1949, fewer than twelve tottering centenarians who had served in Mr. Lincoln's armies were able to attend.

Some of them were under constant medical care while they were in Indianapolis; some of them died within a few days of the event. When the afternoon came for their last grand march around famed Monument Circle, only six were well enough to be helped into the flashy convertibles which would carry them past the waiting throngs.

I was covering the event for the ABC network. I think it was one of the most touching scenes I have ever witnessed. There was a lump in my throat, a feeling I evidently shared with the many thousands who had packed the Circle to witness the moment when this handful of survivors would officially close a chapter in this nation's history.

It was a stifling hot day and the sky had become overcast so darkly by parade time that a storm seemed imminent. The crowd was noisy, restless in its discomfort. Somewhere a bugle sounded. An instantaneous hush fell over the crowd. The

cars bearing the aged veterans came eastward on the street that led into the Circle. Flash bulbs flickered, newsreel cameras hummed and a television camera carried the scene to the surrounding communities.

The automobiles had crept three-quarters of the way around the Circle and were turning northward when the sun suddenly broke through the heavy overcast; a dazzling spotlight that sparkled on the gold braid of the old soldiers' hats and on the flag for which they had fought and bled almost a century before. No stage manager could have timed it better.

As I write this, in the summer of 1955, only one veteran of the Union Army is still living, Major Albert Woolson, of Duluth, who will soon be one hundred and nine years of age.

At the time of the last GAR convention in Indianapolis, I took a tape recorder to Major Woolson's room in the Claypool and interviewed him. He was remarkably alert and responsive. In a tape recording which I used that night on the ABC network, I asked Major Woolson if he had voted while he was in the Union Army.

"Yes," he replied. "The proper authorities notified the members of my regiment that they had the privilege of voting for whom they wished. I, at the age of not quite eighteen, cast my ballot for Abraham Lincoln. I have been a consistent Republican ever since, but I am a liberal Republican these late years. I wrote a letter to President Truman this last week, complimenting him on these points: 'As a true American, and an honest man—I congratulate you Harry Truman!' "

Major Woolson had just been chosen as head of the G.A.R. Did he and his fellow veterans of the Union Army have any message for the nation?

Without hesitation, his voice quivering with emotion, he replied: "The Grand Army of the Republic says God bless the United States of America! We fought for it once—and we will fight again if necessary!"

(In 1953, Major Woolson's daughter kindly reminded me of his approaching birthday. I passed the tip along to my nationwide audience and to the White House, as well as both Minnesota senators. The last surviving member of the Union Army received a birthday greeting from President Eisenhower, from Senators Thye and Humphrey, and from thousands of members of my audience in every state.)

Mutual Broadcasting System calling me?

I stopped writing my noon news program at WISH and took the phone. Abe Schecter of Mutual was on the line.

"Frank, how would you like to do a daily news show over Mutual with William L. Shirer?"

That sounded odd. "What do you mean, exactly?"

"You do the first six minutes on national news, Shirer does the next six on international news. Are you interested?"

"No, sir, I'm not. It would be an honor to work with William L. Shirer but neither of us could do a decent job under those conditions. Thank you for thinking of me, but I just wouldn't be interested."

Strange that Mutual should be calling me. I hadn't been on their network since 1944 and there was no apparent reason why they should select me, a real nobody in Indianapolis, to team up with Shirer. I couldn't figure it out and I didn't propose to waste much time trying.

A few days later I got a call from Congressman Andy Jacobs, who represented the Indianapolis area on Capitol Hill. Andy had heard that the American Federation of Labor was planning to institute a network news program. Would I be interested? Possibly. He agreed to see what he could find out in Washington while I spoke with a couple of AFL vice-presidents who had their offices in Indianapolis.

Dan Tobin, the president of the million-member AFL Teamsters was a fighting Irishman who had built that union up almost single-handed. William Birthright, president of the AFL Barbers, had done much the same for his organization. The two of them were regular listeners to my news programs and they were prepared to intercede for me in the proposed AFL broadcast series.

Half a dozen commentators, all better known than I, were angling for the job. Some of them had friends among the AFL officials in New York, and I had little hope of being chosen. While I was waiting for a final decision to be made, Mutual signed me for a night news series to originate from the studios of WIBC in Indianapolis—the same station where my picture had been turned toward the wall for the preceding two years!

My first broadcast on that Mutual series was scheduled for November 5, 1949, and I started off with a bang. Fulton Lewis had just broken a sensational story to the effect that we had sent material to Russia during the war that the Reds could have used in making atomic bombs. I got in touch with the famous atomic scientist Dr. Harold Urey, who permitted me to quote him as saying that the substance to which Lewis referred was virtually useless for anything except the manufacture of paint. I released the text of his statement to the news wires in mid-afternoon. They were quoting me all over the

country, hours before I made my first broadcast. Schecter called me to see if I was sure of my facts and I got the impression that Mutual was not happy about this Hoosier upstart deflating their pet commentator.

A few weeks later my supporters on the AFL Executive Council managed to outmaneuver the opposition and I was selected. I flew to New York to sign the contracts for the AFL broadcasts which were to originate from Washington, starting January 2, 1950. When I got back to Indianapolis I found my friend, WIBC newsman Gordon Graham, waiting for me.

He handed me a big brown envelope, bulky with papers.

"I got this by mistake," said Gordon. "It's a hell of a story and I know that you have been interested in this business. Do what you want to with it . . . just keep me out of it, please."

When I upended the envelope, out slid a rough advance copy of *True* magazine, an issue scheduled to hit the newsstands in less than two weeks from that moment. The featured article was by Major Donald E. Keyhoe, U. S. Marine Corps, (Ret.) and top-flight aviation writer. I looked at the title of his contribution and whistled through my teeth.

"The Flying Saucers Are Real!"

Are they?

10. To See or Not to See—

"ANOTHER GORGEOUS night!" says your co-pilot.

You agree with him. It is indeed a glorious night. Fifteen minutes ago you pulled the big four-engined DC6 off the runway at Philadelphia, en route to Washington. Your engines are drumming along smoothly; eight thousand feet below, the moonlight flickers briefly on the Susquehanna River, just above the Conowingo Dam. Off to the right and thirty miles ahead, the lights of Baltimore glow like tiny jewels. It's a great night to be alive!

Your wrist watch says it's ten minutes past midnight, October 19, 1953.

"What the hell is that!?"

You look where the co-pilot is pointing. There is something out there, something that shines in the moonlight as it moves in and out of a thin layer of cloud. It doesn't look like a plane; it doesn't act like a plane. There are no running lights on it, and the thing flips on edge. You instinctively cut down your air speed a little from the two hundred and seventy miles per hour

that you have been doing. The thing, whatever it is, has stopped. You're closing the gap quickly.

"Give him the landing lights!"

The co-pilot had anticipated you there, his hand was already on the switch. The powerful lights in your wings flash on and off, to warn the thing ahead of you that you are coming.

A blinding beam of white light reaches out from it . . . finds you . . . and the thing comes straight at you! You shove the wheel forward . . . the big passenger liner plunges . . . you miss the thing with the blinding white light by a split-second. You know that the twenty-seven passengers you are carrying are piled up in the aisles, but now your job is to bring the ship out of the dive. At five thousand feet you manage to level off, but there's hell to pay back in the cabin; passengers, pillows and overcoats all in one scramble. You get on the horn and flash the report of your experience to the National Airport in Washington, as per instructions. No planes in your area, says the airport control, and they will have medical facilities ready when you bring in your passengers.

Your story makes one issue of an early morning newspaper and then it vanishes.

Did you really see something, or did you and the co-pilot both have what the Air Force calls a "hallucination?"

Your experience is just one of thousands of similar reports, filed away as classified material, which keeps them from the prying eyes of newsmen who are not convinced that the official stories are true stories, where these strange objects are concerned.

What may some day be the greatest news story of all time began on the afternoon of June 23, 1947. A railroad engineer called the newspaper in Cedar Rapids, Iowa to report that he had seen something very strange in the air that day.

"They looked like ten shiny, disc-shaped things," he said. "They were very, very high, fluttering along in a string and pretty soon they vanished toward the northwest."

How fast were they going? Well, he guessed they might have been traveling five hundred miles an hour—faster than any plane he had ever seen.

Railroad engineers are not regarded by newspapers as authorities on aerial phenomena. His report made only a few lines on the news tickers and was dropped during the early-evening reports.

Next day the storm broke.

A Boise, Idaho, businessman, Kenneth Arnold, was flying his own plane from Chehalis to Yakima, Washington. Before

him in the distance something glinted in the brilliant sunshine. Between his plane and Mount Ranier he saw a string of nine shining, disclike objects swerving back and forth over the mountains. Flat like pie pans, Arnold later told authorities. How fast were they? Veteran flier Arnold estimated their speed at a thousand miles per hour—or better.

That story hit the news wires with a crash and made the front pages from coast to coast. Before the night was over, Arnold's strange account had support: A Portland building contractor who knew nothing of the furor over Arnold's report told authorities that while up in the Cascades during the day, he and his companions had watched six or more shiny disc-shaped things zooming overhead in unbelievable maneuvers. They noticed more than that, however, for while the objects were in the neighborhood the contractor reported that his compass wavered wildly.

In the ensuing week, reports of sightings poured in from all parts of the United States, from Canada and Alaska and from ships at sea. The Air Force, charged with evaluating such reports, was plainly bewildered by the magnitude of the problem. The first official announcements stated that a check was being made on the reported sightings. A few days later the Air Force made its initial backflip: On July 4, in an effort to reassure everyone, a statement was released to the press to the effect that the mystery had been solved: everyone was having hallucinations!

The Air Force brass could not have chosen a more transparent solution nor a worse day on which to release it. On that same day, thousands of perfectly sane citizens in Portland, Oregon, watched dozens of strange discs flip around in the skies at tremendous altitudes. Seattle, Vancouver,. Spokane and many smaller cities reported similar sightings before the day was done. Most conclusive of all was the experience of a United Airlines crew flying a passenger plane over Idaho. Captain E. J. Smith, Co-pilot Ralph Stevens and other crew members watched five wingless discoids move into the path of their plane, to be followed a few moments later by four more objects of identical form, which the fliers estimated to be about one hundred feet in diameter and perhaps twenty feet in thickness at the center. The airliner crew watched them for ten minutes before the discs suddenly accelerated and ran away from the big passenger plane.

Since those first hectic days of the so-called "saucer" sightings the Air Force has changed its position several times, generally with an ineptitude that served merely to underscore the

contradictions in the official statements. Since the 1947 sightings in this country, similar unidentified flying objects have been reported from every country on earth, including the Soviet Union and its satellites. A great deal has been learned about the discs in these past eight years but thus far no nation has been able to produce a comparable device. The strange objects have been frequently tracked by radar, photographed by movie cameras, by still cameras with diffraction grids and by telescopic devices. They have been seen at close range by military fliers who pursued them in jets; they have played tag with civilian and military pilots on occasion. Many credible witnesses have reported to authorities that these circular, metallic-appearing objects have been seen on the ground, generally about daylight and almost always in remote areas. The favorite theme in Air Force public statements has been to dismiss the matter as a crackpot phantasmagoria.

If that is the correct explanation our problem is serious indeed. The "disease" has spread to official circles, to the governments of many nations including our own. Some of our government agencies are spending fabulous amounts of money and time trying to solve the mystery of the flying discs at the same time they are telling the public such things do not exist!

What are these unidentified flying objects?

Are they fact or fantasy? Let's look at the record.

The sightings of 1947 created intense public interest and then ceased as dramatically as they had begun. In 1948 I went to Alaska and made movies of that majestic land. While I was there I made inquiries about the mysterious UFO's—and I found numerous civilian fliers who had reported the things. I talked with two jet pilots who had reported chasing a strange wingless object that looked like the fuselage of a wingless B-29, with no visible means of propulsion. Then I got a spray job from the Air Force in Alaska, whose representatives slyly hinted that they knew all about the things. And, unofficially of course, they could assure me that there was nothing to be concerned about. The UFO's were ours!

I must hang my head in shame and admit that I fell for their story, for a while at least. Then came that night in the winter of 1949 when Gordon Graham gave me that package—the advance copy of an article which *True* magazine had scheduled for release in its January, 1950, issue. Written by Major Donald Keyhoe, it methodically punctured the Air Force shield of confusion and presented an imposing array of factual matter to support his statements.

When I saw what the package contained I realized that time

was very short if I was going to break the story before it hit the newsstands. After my network broadcast that night I put in a call for the editor of *True*, Mr. Ken Purdy, and finally got him out of bed at his home in Westport, Connecticut. He was unhappy about that and he was even less happy when he learned that I had come into possession of that advance copy.

"Let you break it?" he snapped. "I don't see how I can do that; we've already made arrangements with Walter Winchell to give him first break on the story. If you beat him to it he will probably blow his stack and then——"

I persisted and he resisted. The phone call was beginning to cost real money. Purdy knew, of course, that I could break the story without his consent. We finally agreed that I could go ahead with it the following night, providing I used not more than two hundred words of the text. It was a good deal for both of us.

My preview of that forthcoming magazine article got nationwide coverage through Mutual and again by way of the news services which reprinted what I said the following morning. The Air Force was peeved at me, a state of mind from which they have never fully recovered, as far as I am concerned. A few days after my broadcast Winchell and Lowell Thomas picked up the story from *True* and the flying saucer controversy was off for another round.

A great deal of criticism has been leveled at the Air Force over the manner in which it has dealt with the public on the subject of Unidentified Flying Objects. Some of that criticism is warranted, I think, for it is my opinion that the Air Force has bungled this particular assignment badly. They are admittedly in a ticklish position in this matter and their responsibilities are heavy. Yet to be most effective they must win public confidence and in this they have failed. I say failed, because the tens of thousands of people from all walks of life who wrote to me on this subject made it clear that they did not believe the Air Force official statements and "explanations" which are too frequently contradictory or ridiculous.

It would, I think, have been far better for the Air Force to have admitted that they were aware of the implications and that they were seeking the answer, whatever it might be.

When a veteran jet fighter pilot's radar locks on a strange object and he chases it at full speed for hundreds of miles before it eludes him, it hardly makes sense to tell that pilot (and the public) that he was chasing a weather balloon.

When a naval officer makes movies of several disc-shaped objects maneuvering in formation at speeds that were official-

ly estimated to be in excess of nine hundred miles per hour, it is hard to accept the Air Force statement that the objects are only seagulls! Nature has done some wonderful things but she has yet to develop a nine-hundred-mile-an-hour bird of any kind.

For the past eight years I have been as close to this baffling subject as any civilian could be. I have waded through reams of phony photographs, most of which could be spotted with little trouble. I have had countless letters from crackpots and psychopaths who were eager to relate thrilling experiences with the little people who existed only in the wide-open spaces, of their troubled minds. But I have also been in close and constant communication with pilots, physicists, astronomers, radar experts and other credible sources from all over the world, and through their findings and reports I have witnessed the gradual verification of a news story that may some day surpass all others.

During the four and a half years that I was with Mutual, I was in very close touch with the men who fly America's thousands of commercial airline planes. These are the carefully trained pilots, co-pilots, navigators and flight engineers who are responsible for the safety of millions of passengers and billions of dollars' worth of equipment. Since the airline pilots are members of the AFL it was easy for me to establish rapport with them on a confidential basis.

For a couple of years, until 1952, there was no difficulty in getting prompt reports of strange objects the fliers were encountering in the skies. I made a telephone recording of a conversation with Captain Jack Adams of Chicago and Southern Airlines only a few minutes after he and his co-pilot had reported that a large circular object was flying rings around their airliner near Stuttgart, Arkansas. This incident was promptly covered by the press services and got excellent coverage on press and radio.

In contrast we have the case of a B-36 bomber near Rosalia, Washington, which radioed that it was being circled by a huge disc-shaped object carrying blinking blue lights. The crew of the bomber were watching the thing visually and on their radar. Dated February 6, 1953, their account of the sighting is one of the most detailed reports in the files, but the press wires ignored it and few people knew that it had happened.

I mention this incident because it is typical of the manner in which thousands of similar cases have been kept from the public knowledge. The less the people know about what is happen-

ing the easier it is to deceive them into believing that nothing whatever is occurring. It is ironic that in the United States, which prides itself on its freedom of press and freedom of speech, the muzzle has been clamped on the subject of Unidentified Flying Objects. The best examples of this suppression are to be found in the manner in which the sightings in the District of Columbia have been handled.

As late as the summer of 1952 there was prompt publication of the sightings in Washington, D.C. On the night of July 20th, 1952, the radar scope at the National Airport picked up five objects which were also reported by commercial radio engineers, who saw the things near their transmitter, moving in formation. The radar contact verified the formation and speed; a warning was flashed to nearby Andrews Field military base. For two hours the strange objects circled the nation's capital without interference. (Actually all the jets were sweeping the skies over New Jersey at the time, where a gigantic object was hovering far above the reach of the jets. They stayed there until the thing went away, about 2:10 A.M.) The first jets to reach the Washington area came roaring in about three o'clock on the morning of July 20th. As the jets approached, the Unidentified Objects scattered and vanished from the radar scopes. After scouring the area vainly, the jets went on to land at Andrews Field. Five minutes later, the radar scopes again picked up the mysterious blips. One of the things, easily seen because of the lights around its periphery, followed a commercial airliner to the edge of the National Airport. By daylight, the objects were gone and the weary jet and radar crews went to some well-earned rest.

Newspapers had no trouble getting the story from the airport personnel and others who had been in the midst of the excitement. Only the Air Force remained aloof.

On the night of July 26th, the things were back over Washington again. This time they came in at high altitude. First reported by commercial pilots, they were quickly picked up by radar and jets were dispatched. The jet pilots saw the things right where the radar indicated they should be, but the jets were hopelessly outdistanced in the chase.

Official explanation: The things were natural phenomena! If so, it is the first time in history that armed planes have been sent up to shoot down natural phenomena.

On the night preceding the second visit of the Unidentified Flying Objects to Washington, the jet pilots were instructed to order the "natural phenomena" to land and if they refused, "shoot to kill." Under a nationwide barrage of protest to Presi-

dent Truman from aroused and alarmed citizens, the "shoot to kill" order was quietly rescinded a few hours after I had broadcast the fact of its existence.

The sensational and puzzling developments were fully reported in the nation's newspapers and on the air. There was ample coverage—but that was in the summer of 1952. From that moment forward the screws were tightened on the release or discussion of Unidentified Flying Objects at official levels.

The evidence: On May 13th, 1954, between 12:45 and 2:00 A.M., police and other personnel at the National Airport reported watching two large glowing objects which maneuvered over the airport and over part of the city of Washington. Military Air Transport confirmed the sightings and an Air Force spokesman recommended that the things be referred to as Unidentified Flying Objects. The report of this incident appeared in one early edition of the *Washington Post.* It did not appear in any other newspaper or in any other edition of the *Post!*

On that same day, May 13th, shortly before noon, a group of government electronics experts were putting the finishing touches on a special type of long-range radar equipment. Suddenly they noticed that the screen was recording some sort of object at great altitude, something of a tremendous size. They double-checked by switching on another unit and it, too, began to track the thing, whatever it was. They were able to determine that it was approximately 250 feet in diameter, about fifteen miles above Washington, moving from point to point around a rectangular pattern at about two hundred miles per hour. For three hours the thing hovered over the Capital, under the scrutiny of several government radar units, before it moved to the west and finally vanished from the scopes.

The story of this strange visitor did not make the news wires.

It is worth noting, however, that on June 14th, one month after the Washington incident, a great object of unknown nature was located by radar over the city of Wilmington, Delaware. Ground observers watched it through high-powered optical devices. The Baltimore Filter Center kept it on their radar screen for two hours. Whatever it was, it performed exactly like the object that had been located over Washington, moving in rectangular patterns about 15 miles above Wilmington.

More silence.

The silence is so thick that it is oppressive.

Just how successful the authorities have been in keeping the facts about these mysterious visitors from the American public is convincingly set forth in an official document published by

the Civil Aeronautics Administration, a copy of which I have. It is entitled: "For Limited Distribution—A Preliminary Study of Unidentified Targets Observed on Air Traffic Control Radars." Designed for the guidance of radar control experts at the nation's airports, it contains a few reports from various cities, but the meat of the study is concerned with Unidentified Flying Objects that have been tracked in and around Washington. It is pretty heavy reading since it is loaded with technical data concerning radar. However, the booklet also contains numerous charts, which show how the UFO's moved across the radar screens, and these charts are readily understandable. By careful reading of the text it becomes apparent that the CAA's explanations do not explain.

The CAA study is forced into the realm of speculation when it has to deal with Dr. Menzel's theory of temperature inversion, which holds that these mysterious blips are nothing more than reflections caused by cold air pressing against warm air under certain close restrictions. Since this theory does not explain how temperature inversions fly in formation and elude jet pursuit planes, the CAA report indicates that your guess is as good as theirs. Temperature inversions require both cold air and hot air—apparently plenty of the latter.

There is another effect known to radar men as the delayed-pulse, which can cause blips to appear on the screens. The CAA evaluation says that if the objects on the radar scope were actually nothing more than this delayed-pulse effect, *the speed of the object could not exceed the speed of the air itself.* An examination of the official charts for the sightings of August 13th and 15th, 1952, in this same official document, *shows that the objects were moving more than twice as fast as the air itself!* The delayed-pulse explanation doesn't fit the circumstances, either.

In this official document "for limited distribution" there are listings of thirty-four recorded sightings in and around Washington in less than three months in 1952 alone. Many of those sightings were made by the pilots of commercial airliners entering and leaving Washington. I checked the newspaper files for that same period and I find only four of these sightings mentioned. The others evidently never got beyond the official files.

On July 7th, 1952, the CAA study says that Captain Bruen of National Airlines radioed that he was being approached by a blue-white light at an altitude of 11,000 feet about 60 miles west of National Airport. "The object," says the CAA report, "came to within two miles of the aircraft and hovered at the

same altitude. Pilot switched on all lights, ball of light took off, going up and away."

On July 20th of that same year, Capitol Airline Flight 610 was approaching Washington National Airport at three in the morning. The CAA report says that the plane was followed by a lighted object to a point about four miles from the airport. The object was tracked by two radar stations until it left the field of the scopes. On July 14th, the same report says, Pan-American flight 901 got a good look at six red objects flying beneath the plane. The objects were doing an estimated 1000 miles per hour when they made a sudden acute-angled change of direction and sped away.

The CAA charts published in that document list more than a score of sightings involving a single object in each case. Other sightings, both radar and visual, include what it calls "many" objects. The real jackpots were hit on May 23rd, 1952, when fifty of the things were under observation on the Washington radars at the same time and again on August 13th, when 68 Unidentified Flying Objects were officially tracked within ten miles of the National Airport between 8 and 11:30 P.M., moving at widely varying speeds and directions. Please note that this remarkable and unexplained event took place less than one month after the July sightings, which made the front pages. When the August 13th UFO's darted over the nation's capital, not one word was made public.

The muzzle was on.

That CAA study covers only three months in 1952. How many UFO's have been charted around Washington since then? The record does not show, because the records are not available to the public. Only once in a while can you get a peep under the lid of secrecy—on one of those rare occasions when the Air Force slips up.

Such an instance took place in the summer of 1954 when the Air Force released from the Pentagon a press statement which asserted that during the first five months of 1954 it had received only 87 reports of sightings of UFO's. The three newswire services dutifully transmitted this statement to the newspapers and broadcasting stations where it was passed on to the American public as further evidence that the so-called "flying saucers" were almost nonexistent.

Not one of those news services took the time or the trouble to check the accuracy of that Pentagon handout. They simply accepted it and sold it to their clients. I was the only national news source which refused to carry the story. I knew that it was incorrect because I knew that more than a hundred sight-

ings had been reported to the Air Force in that same period and I was receiving more than a hundred reports per week from listeners who were sending clippings from their local papers. The news-wires carried reports of such sightings in 1952; they did not carry them (with rare exceptions) in 1954.

In Washington the Air Force press desk told the public in June of 1954 that it had received only 87 sighting reports in five months. At Cincinnati, which is the nerve center of the entire government UFO investigation, Lt. Colonel John O'Mara is Deputy Commander of Intelligence. He was interviewed by Mr. Leonard Stringfield, Cincinnati businessman and publisher of a periodical dealing with UFO's. Colonel O'Mara scuttled the Pentagon statement when he told Mr. Stringfield that sightings were actually pouring in *at the rate of more than 700 per week—the heaviest rate since the investigation was started five years before!*

As further evidence of the manner in which the flood of sightings has been kept from the public, the *Wilmington Delaware Morning News* carried a front-page story on July 9, 1954, headlined: 100 MYSTERY FLYING OBJECTS SPOTTED HERE. "Air Force permits Ground Observer Corps to release data on phenomena sighted in past two years and confirmed elsewhere." The article disclosed that ground observers had been watching these things and reporting them to the Baltimore Filter Center where the Air Force studied the reports. On July 5th, just four days before the *Wilmington News* broke the story, the Air Force had officially identified one of the sightings as "an Unidentified Flying Object!"

As the evidence mounted, month by month, I carried the reports briefly on my nationwide Mutual news commentary. The Air Force efforts to ridicule the subject were not helped by my repeated disclosures.

There can be little doubt that many of the reported sightings are nothing more than ordinary objects: weather balloons, high-flying planes, meteorites, et cetera. By the same token it becomes difficult to dismiss the reports of credible observers who are trained in their fields and equipped with devices to record such things: the astronomers, the military and commercial pilots, the civilian fliers, the ground observers, the radar operators and the weather-bureau personnel who report unidentified flying objects.

What importance does the Air Force really attach to the UFO's?

Air Force Chief of Staff General Nathan Twining said at Amarillo, Texas, on May 15th, 1954: "The best brains in the

Air Force are working on this problem of the Unidentified Flying Objects, trying to solve this riddle."

Are these things secret weapons of some sort?

No nation which had a secret weapon of such fantastic potentialities would risk sending it over a foreign country where it might be forced down and the secret exposed. And the UFO's are reported over every country on earth.

What are they?

The eventual identification of the UFO's is the first aim of the project to which General Twining referred in his Amarillo speech. The second objective of that same project is to duplicate the propulsion system the UFO's are believed to use.

Where do they come from?

Two separate groups of distinguished American physicists have told me in writing, that after careful evaluation of the evidence, they are of the opinion that the UFO's "do not originate on this earth and that they are created and operated by intelligent beings of a very high order!"

How do they function?

It is now known, through the patient research work of American, Canadian, Australian and Scandinavian scientists, that there is a severe disturbance of the earth's gravitational forces when a UFO comes within range of the recording instruments. Many nations, including our own, are now engaged in extensive (and expensive) gravity-magnetic research programs, in the belief that a great new field of untapped energy may lie in that direction.

Dr. Hermann Oberth, father of the German rocket program, told newsmen recently: "There is no doubt in my mind that these objects are interplanetary craft of some sort. I am confident that they do not originate in our solar system but they may use Mars or some other body for a way-station."

During the summer of 1954, hundreds of astronomers placed throughout the southern hemisphere kept the planet Mars under continuous observation. This unusual project was known as Operation Mars. At Bloemfontein, South Africa, Dr. E. C. Slipher of Lowell Observatory watched the red planet through the giant telescope and finally announced that there could no longer be any doubt that there is life on Mars. Thousands of pictures were taken during the worldwide observations but the official statement from the Mars Committee was delayed for months—the committee members could not agree on what to say about what they saw!

Why does Mars come in for so much attention?

For several reasons, principally because a chronological

study of UFO sightings reveals that they are most numerous when Mars is at its nearest approach to the earth. Since Mars takes almost twice as long to orbit about the sun as is required by Earth, it comes into close proximity to our planet every two years and fifty days. At these times of nearest approach, the red planet will be within 35,000,000 to 60,000,000 miles of us. The sequence of sightings reach their peaks at two-year periods, while we are approaching Mars and just as we begin to pull away from its nearest approach. The UFO's are sighted most frequently in the years when Mars is nearest: 1947-8, 1950, 1952, 1954, and perhaps another peak year in 1956, when we will come closer to Mars than we have for many years.

Why don't they ever land?

There are numerous reports from dependable witnesses which indicate that the things do land, especially under cover of darkness.

Why doesn't one of them ever crash?

If, as many investigators believe, these devices are operated by distortion of gravitational forces, then they are immune to gravity and could not "fall," as we put it. They might, however, collide with some conventional aircraft and what would happen then is not known. The first official statement on the crash of a British Jet Comet airliner in India in May of 1953 said that the big passenger liner had been destroyed in midair by "colliding with a heavy unidentified flying object," a conclusion which was later officially denied without explanation.

Near-collisions between aircraft and unidentified flying objects are no longer publicized. For example: On November 24th, 1954, a Brazilian National Airlines passenger plane approaching the field at Buenos Aires radioed an emergency call for immediate aid. The pilot reported that his plane was being circled by at least fifteen shiny, disc-shaped objects and that his panic-stricken passengers were being kept in their seats at gun-point by the co-pilot and steward. The story made front pages throughout South and Central America. It met with stony silence from the news services of the United States.

The chronological sequence of events related to the topic of unidentified flying objects brings the nature of the matter into focus:

Immediately following the widely publicized sightings of these objects over the nation's capital in the summer of 1952, the lid of secrecy was clamped on. The Air Force adopted a policy of withholding from publication sightings which were not easily recognizable as conventional objects. Local news-

papers continued to report on sightings in their communities, but the press wires obligingly ignored the reports.

February 17th, 1954:—Officers of Military Air Transport Intelligence meet with officers of the Airline Pilots Association in the Roosevelt Hotel in Hollywood. Purpose of the meeting was to urge commercial pilots to radio at once when unidentified objects were sighted. Pilots were to be advised to make full reports to government officials and to make no public statements.

May 15th, 1954:—Air Force Chief Nathan Twining tells audience in Amarillo that best brains of Air Force are trying to solve the riddle of the flying saucers: "If they come from Mars, there is nothing to be alarmed about!"

May 17th, 1954:—Four National Guard jet pilots near Dallas, Texas, engage in game of high-altitude tag with sixteen flying discs, before jets were outdistanced. Reported in Dallas Herald on May 25th. Not carried by news services.

May 31st, 1954:—Fifth Air Force officials confirm report that U.S. jets in South Korea have been chasing flying saucers.

June 9th, 1954:—Colonel Frank Milani, Baltimore director of Civil Defense demands that Air Force lessen its secrecy about the saucers.

June 10th, 1954:—Air Force denies Colonel Milani's charges of secrecy, says it has received only 87 reports of sightings in six months. I check with the Air Technical Center in Dayton and debunk the Air Force statement. Air Technical Center says more than a thousand scientists now working on the matter, sightings of unidentified flying objects pouring in at rate of more than 700 cases per week: "—heaviest rate of sightings on record."

July, 1954:—Official confirmation that Doctor Clyde Tombaugh and Doctor Lincoln La Paz, of the University of New Mexico, are conducting search for two tiny objects known to be circling the earth.

October-November, 1954:—Sightings of flying saucers reported throughout Europe, Northern Africa and the Near East. Germany, Italy, Sweden and Yugoslavia become latest countries to open serious investigations.

December 15th, 1954:—President Eisenhower is asked at press conference if he cares to make a statement about possibility that the flying saucers might be from some other planet. The President gives the curious reply that a "trusted friend" in the Air Force had assured him that it was inaccurate to say that the discs come from another planet. Then he adds that he has not heard about the sightings in Europe at all. (Mr. Eisen-

hower's statement in this instance is worthy of study. He has access to any information that any government department possesses. He could have squelched the flying-saucer controversy once and for all by simply stating that the Air Force had advised him that the things were not interplanetary devices; instead, he merely referred to a trusted friend, a nameless source which gave his statement the shape of refutation without substance.)

April 26th, 1955:—Russia announces that its scientists are planning to launch small space satellite within two years.

February 18th, 1955:—Adler Planetarium in Chicago discloses that an astronomer whom it calls "thoroughly responsible" has located more than a score of small objects of unknown nature circling this earth at an altitude of about 475 miles.

June, 1955:—British government decides not to release its findings on flying-saucer investigation, orders pilots not to talk.

June, 1955:—Famed rocket scientist Dr. Hermann Oberth, head of official German group investigating saucers, says in public statement that he is convinced they do not originate on this planet, evidently come from out in space.

July, 1955:—Dr. Hermann Oberth flown to this country and becomes part of our guided-missile project at Huntsville, Alabama.

July 29th, 1955:—President Eisenhower announces that the United States will launch a small experimental satellite within two years. This satellite will be designed to circle the earth at the equator at an altitude of 250 miles and a speed of 18,000 miles per hour. This means that it will become the third object to circle the earth at the equator at that height and speed.

What is the nature of the other two?

Where did they come from?

How long have they been there?

How did they get there?

Is there any relationship between the all-out rush to launch this tiny satellite and the statement in *The New York Times* of December 16th, 1954: "The Air Force maintains a serious and continuing study of flying saucers because of a definite obligation to identify and analyze things that happen in the air that may have in them a menace to the United States."

If these things constitute a potential menace to the United States then the people of the United States are entitled to be kept informed of the Air Force findings. Instead, the people have been kept in the dark, hoodwinked and confused by a policy of official deception.

The Air Force has said repeatedly that there are no such things as "flying saucers." With that statement I can find agreement. It is much more interesting to ignore them as "flying saucers" and to use jets and radar against them under their official name of "Unidentified Flying Objects."

Sometime soon we expect to launch our first man-made satellite. This will be but a humble beginning, a flimsy aerial canoe crawling along the rim of space. Man, too, is planning to visit his neighbors some day. It hurts his pride to feel that he may already owe them a visit.

11. How Mighty Is the Mike!

YOU CAN put me down as a confirmed do-gooder, for in looking back over all my years in broadcasting, my fondest memories are of those occasions when I was able to use radio in helping others.

Rain, mixed with sleet, was rattling against the studio windows, when one of my biggest public-service ventures started. It was 1945, two days before Christmas.

Mr. McKittrick, superintendent of the Union Station in Indianapolis was calling me. He really had a problem!

"Frank, there must be more than eight thousand service men packed into this station. Some of them have been here since day before yesterday and more are pouring in with every train. There is a blizzard headed this way—the trains are overloaded and running hours late. We've got to do something quickly. We've got to get those boys out of this station even if we have to appeal to the people of Indianapolis to take them into their homes! Can you help us?"

"I'll do everything I can. Let me call you back in about ten minutes. We'll work out something, you may count on that."

First thing for me to do as a matter of routine was to get in touch with the manager of the station. That was impossible; he had left on a shopping trip and couldn't be expected home for a couple of hours; and I was going on the air in thirty minutes for my regular news program.

Even though the weather was bad and getting worse, I knew that many of my listeners would be driving out of the city that night to begin their Christmas holidays. On the news program I described the plight of those stranded service men and women, many of them combat veterans trying to get home for their first family Christmas in years. "If you are driving from

Indianapolis to some other city tonight, would you please help out by stopping at Union Station and giving some of these service men a lift as far as you can? That way they can at least get out of town, perhaps to another point less congested and where they may be able to get another ride to help them on their way. If you would like to help, just drive down to Union Station."

I could hear the office phones beginning to jangle while I was still on the air; we were going to get results, all right. The engineers and the announcers were trying to handle the calls but already they were swamped.

First to offer help was Father Somes, pastor at a northside Indianapolis church which had its own school. "I just heard your broadcast, Frank," he said, "and I want you to know that our school buses are at your disposal. We will furnish gasoline and drivers and you may send the buses wherever you wish. Good luck!"

The Veterans of Foreign Wars were waiting for me on another phone: "We're on our way to Union Station with our public-address system. We'll set it up so we can get the right people to the right automobiles as quickly as possible. We'll call you from the station as soon as we are ready!"

Father Somes on the phone again to report that two of his school buses were already on their way to the station, complete with drivers, full gas tanks and tire chains. Operation Traffic Jam was less than ten minutes old and it was already gathering momentum.

The city police and the sheriff's office called to say that they were sending men to Union Station to help handle the traffic when it developed. The American Legion posts reported that they would round up personnel and cars, which they did. The Marine Veterans organization was ready and willing.

Within an hour we had more than a hundred people on the scene. Some of them were explaining the nature of the operation over the loudspeakers, others were registering the service men and women and lining them up at different doors for different destinations. Outside in the freezing downpour, hundreds of volunteer drivers waited in their automobiles, ready to give the stranded service men and women a lift.

And in the midst of it all, going about their work as quietly as always, was the good old Salvation Army.

As soon as we got the work organized at the Union Station, I got in touch with various veterans' posts and had them extend the program in every direction. They called posts in other cities and made arrangements for volunteers to be waiting with

relay cars. When a civilian took a carload of service men from the Union Station to Richmond, for example, he would be instructed to take them to some veterans' organization post in Richmond, where another car would be waiting to take them on.

I broadcast my first appeal at six-fifteen in the evening. Twenty minutes later the first load of stranded service men was on its way out of the city. By ten o'clock that eventful evening I could report to my listeners that hundreds of volunteer drivers had started out with several thousand weary members of the Armed Forces, and that in other cities, other drivers were waiting to speed them on their way.

The manager of WIBC had long since given me permission to stay on the air till we got the job done. The announcers, the control men and several listeners who had come in to help us were all busy with the countless telephone calls that poured in, hour after hour.

At Union Station, each incoming train added to the magnitude of our problem. By midnight it was apparent that private cars alone could not meet the demands for transportation. I got in touch with the governor, who immediately called out the National Guard trucks and assigned them to assist us. Carrying twelve men in each truck, they sped over the icy highways to the state lines in every direction. There, other cars from other states were ready to take over. The governor got in touch with the state superintendent of schools, who authorized the use of the school buses throughout the entire state to get the boys home. Things were really moving.

I think the most dramatic moment of the entire project took place on Christmas Eve, about twenty-four hours after we started.

We had about a hundred boys who had just arrived, en route to the East. They were dead-tired, dirty, bedraggled and anxious to get home, somehow—anyhow! There was little chance that they would make it, for their connecting train was hours behind schedule, jammed to capacity, and bad weather was making the highways virtually impassable. In that group were two brothers who had just received a telegram notifying them that their mother was critically ill at her home in Maine.

There was little reason to hope that I might find room for those two boys on an eastbound plane, but I called the airport just to make sure. TWA reported that it had three planes there —*empty!* They were westbound planes which had just discharged their passengers and were preparing to take off immediately for the East before the sleet storm closed the air-

port. They could take a total of eighty passengers, if I could get them to the airport in twenty minutes. Said the TWA dispatcher: "We can't wait a minute longer than that; Control says this airport will be closed in and we've got to get those planes out of here!"

"We'll get the boys there as quickly as we can," I promised. "Please give us every minute you can safely spare, will you?"

"Twenty is the limit. I'll hold the planes! Hurry!"

The Indianapolis Street Railway Company had a barn near the Union Station. As soon as I called them, they dispatched a city bus which could take about fifty of the boys to the airport. That left us with thirty to go—eighteen minutes left—I got two state police cars—two city police—a sheriff's car—but we still had boys standing there in the rain and sleet—hoping against hope.

Then I called the fire department. Sure they'd help!

To save time the service men ran about half a block to the nearest fire house. Three minutes later a big hook-and-ladder truck loaded with tired service men was roaring toward the airport, siren screaming. When they got there the plane was warming up. The men scrambled aboard—and they were on their way home at last.

Forty hours after it started, Operation Traffic Jam was over. During that time we had moved almost eight thousand stranded military personnel, thanks to the cooperation of public officials and private citizens working together to meet an emergency, their efforts coordinated by a radio station which was performing a real public service in the finest sense of the term.

In these days when mass evacuation is such a pertinent topic of high-level discussion, the powers that be might get a few ideas from the manner in which we dealt with a similar problem in Indianapolis during those two action-packed days and nights in 1945. When prompt, centralized direction was imperative, broadcasting met the challenge.

Using radio in the public interest has always been a source of deep personal satisfaction to me and I have been alert for opportunities in that direction. One day I received word of a pathetic case, that of a young veteran who was dying of leukemia. There was no chance of his getting well, according to his doctors, and in order to keep him alive at all the hospital had to give him eleven blood transfusions every day, which soon exhausted the available supply of his particular type in the blood bank.

Would my listeners who had his type of blood like to help him in his struggle to stay alive?

Within an hour of my broadcast the hospital had more than a hundred donors lined up, with others waiting to be called.

On the day following this particular appeal I received a most unusual letter. It said, in part: "If the Veterans' Hospital needs blood, let them buy it. That's what I pay taxes for!" Then the writer went on to say that he was not going to give both blood and money, too. "They got my money, now let them buy the blood!"

It was such a stupid letter that I naturally assumed that the signature was a phoney. It wasn't. I found the writer's name in the phone directory and called. He "didn't know nothin' about no letter" and hung up. My curiosity was aroused. Through the state police I found that they not only knew a character by this name, but they knew plenty about him. He was a professional gambler, procurer, operator of a handbook joint. Numerous convictions, a few short jail sentences and just generally no good.

George Higgins, the station manager, agreed with me that this character could use a little lesson in common decency. On my broadcast that evening I first thanked all those who had contributed blood to that dying veteran; then I read the letter from the gambler, without disclosing his name. I assured him that unless he made amends within twenty-four hours for such an outrageous letter I would then feel free to tell who he was and what he was, hinting at enough details so that he would know I wasn't guessing. A few minutes after the broadcast an attorney who claimed to represent this fellow called me and tried to bluff. I had aces. When the bluff didn't work he made an appointment for the following morning in my attorney's office.

They were right on time. The greasy client kept squirming and scraping his heels under his chair. The attorney assured us that his client realized that he had made a mistake—he was terribly sorry—he had been drunk and didn't mean a word of what he had written. Why, he was very fond of veterans.

What about some blood?

The gambler began to paw and scrape. He licked his lips and blinked. His attorney stepped into the breach.

"Well, you see," he began, "my client would like very much to give some blood—but—uh—unfortunately he has a disease which would make his blood unacceptable. You understand, of course?"

We understood.

His attorney brightened.

"Since my client can't give blood, how about letting him give some money, instead?"

"Sorry, gentlemen," I said, "but this case is one where money would be of no help whatever. This veteran is dying and the only thing that will keep him alive a few days longer is blood."

My attorney had an idea. To the other attorney he said: "Aren't you a veteran, young man?"

The other attorney admitted that he was.

"Then how about you giving a pint of blood on behalf of your incapacitated client?"

The attorney and his client went out in the hall. We couldn't hear what they were saying but it was some sort of an argument. A few minutes later they came back. They agreed.

That afternoon the attorney went out to the hospital and gave the blood for the doomed leukemia victim, a donation for which he later made the gambler pay through the nose.

My attorney claims this is the only case where anyone got blood out of the lawyer.

As a confirmed do-gooder I quite naturally turned my attention one year to the approaching Mother's Day. I knew of a "home" where more than a score of elderly ladies were quietly living out their remaining days. It was nicer than the average such institution but it was still a far cry from homes they had known before. What would Mother's Day mean to these ladies, I asked myself. Would anyone remember them or would they be forgotten?

The more I thought about it the deeper became my conviction that something might be done to brighten the day for these fine old girls in that "home." Since I dared not mention it on the air for fear of tipping them off, I had to proceed with caution. My sponsor at the time was Bud Williams, a jolly 350-pounder who was manager of a big store that specialized in an unusual type of gas cookstove. Together we made the plans and worked out the details.

Bud invited the twenty-two elderly ladies to be his personal guests on Mother's Day and reserved a banquet room at one of the hotels for the occasion. When they arrived by chartered limousines, I introduced them to twenty-two elderly gentlemen, all widowers and pretty lonely themselves. There were orchids and music and dancing and a wonderful dinner by candlelight. Those forty-four old folks had a delightful time and when it came time to end the activities for the day, many of them declined the invitation to ride back in the limousines. Instead,

they chose to walk along arm in arm, all the way home. It was one Mother's Day they would long remember.

An unexpected outcome of the party was the eventual marriage of two of the couples. One pair continued to live in Indiana, the other couple went to Florida where they had individually dreamed of going for a long time. Long after I came to Washington I got a letter with a snapshot of them standing hand in hand on the beach at St. Petersburg. Across it they had written: "Whoopee!"

I'm a hell-of-a-looking Cupid, so it must have been Bud Williams who fired the arrow.

I mention these things not by way of boasting but because it seems to me that they are the very essence of "public service." Unquestionably such things build good will for the station and build audience acceptance for the commentator. And to the listener these good-will campaigns constitute a welcome relief from the ubiquitous stunts designed to wheedle money on behalf of some medical research outfit. Good deeds and good will run in parallel channels, available to any station which is sincerely interested. Over a period of a good many years I have found that the radio station which helps the helpless is also helping itself.

If you ever get over to the leper colony operated by the Sisters of St. Francis at Ginja, British East Africa, you will find a glowing tribute to a group of businessmen in Union City, New Jersey. You will find electric lights making life more livable for those nuns and their doomed patients and you will find electric pumps bringing water from the lake two miles away.

Leprosy afflicts a great many of the natives of Africa and the little colony at Ginja always had more patients than it could handle. Wild animals destroyed their gardens; elephants, hippos and baboons regarded the crops as special treats for themselves. But worst of all was the problem of water, which had to be carried from the lake about two miles away. The patients would take goatskin bags, wade out into the water and fill the containers. Pounding on the surface with paddles sometimes kept the hungry crocodiles at bay—and sometimes it served merely to advertise that a meal was there for the taking. Scarcely a week passed without human lives being sacrificed to those crocodiles.

Two nuns, Sisters Peter Mary and Mary Patrick, came to the United States to seek assistance. They needed some sort of pumping system to eliminate the need for the natives to wade into those crocodile-infested waters. With their limited re-

sources, however, their prospects of getting what they needed were slim.

For weeks these two patient and persevering nuns went from place to place seeking help and getting only discouragement. They were tired and dejected when Congresswoman Edith Rogers put them in touch with my assistant, Charlie Warren, in the winter of 1950.

After discussing the matter with them I realized that what they really needed was a motor-driven generator of some sort. I told their story on the air one night and by noon the next day we had seventeen offers. Some of the proposals were too expensive. Others were offering machinery that was not suitable for the task. But in the stack was a telegram from an electrical contractor in Union City, N.J., which proved to be the answer.

In the first place, Mr. Paul Eifler was not suggesting a sale; he was offering to make them a present of two powerful electric generating plants, complete with control panels and wiring. Mr. Eifler, himself a Mason, had been in touch with the Kiwanis Club of Union City and its members wanted to contribute the necessary water pipe and fittings, while a physician of that city donated two high-speed pumps. An official of Philco gave the nuns a huge new refrigerator; from other sources came donations of bandages, medical supplies, radios and other items. Since the generators alone were worth about $15,000, the entire donations must have amounted to around $20,000, which was far beyond what they had planned to spend.

The carpenters' union local crated the shipment, the teamsters hauled it to the docks, the longshoremen donated their services to load it on the ship and the Robbins Steamship Line hauled it all the way from Philadelphia to Mombasa, East Africa, free of charge.

A couple of months after the grateful nuns had returned to their lonely outpost, I received a letter from them informing me that they still did not have the shipment; it was being held up in Mombasa by the British, who insisted that it was medical equipment and import duties must be paid.

When I laid the story before the British Ambassador here in Washington he was first abashed and then angry. He got London on the phone while I was there. Two weeks later British Army trucks delivered the entire shipment to the leper colony. No import duty was paid after all.

Today those generators bring water from the lake, operate the refrigerator and radios, charge the electric fence that keeps some of the wild animals out of the garden. Because a few

Americans cared, more victims of leprosy can be treated in that far-away land, and life means more to those who have so little.

At Moorhead, Minnesota, a very competent young man named Dewey Berquist (now with WDAY-TV) was then with KVOX. During the course of his broadcasting duties Dewey became aware of a little fellow with a tragic story which he eventually passed along to me.

In St. Luke's Hospital, just across the river from Moorhead in Fargo, N.D. was a lad named Covey Hendrickson. Little Covey was seven years old; a polio victim confined to an iron lung, he weighed a pitiful thirty-eight pounds. Covey was cheerful in spite of his predicament and he wanted to see some picture books.

He saw them all right. A brief mention of this youngster's plight on my broadcast was enough to flood the hospital with letters, cards and picture books. The doctor on the case said it was a wonderful tonic for Covey.

The little fellow naturally wanted to go home as soon as his condition permitted. Since his home was about seventy-five miles away on a farm the doctor was reluctant to make such a decision. It would mean sending an iron lung out into the country and the hospital did not have one to spare.

Mr. Berquist kept me apprised of the lad's condition and I made arrangements for a portable iron lung to be furnished when needed. Pat Gorman and Earl Jimerson, the two top men of the Meat Cutters' Union in Chicago, authorized me to buy the lung and charge it to them. Within two hours after I got the wire that Covey could go home the portable respirator was on the plane en route to Fargo. It wasn't the full answer to Covey's struggle but it was just another indication that somewhere somebody who didn't even know him cared enough to offer a helping hand.

In 1951 several of the boys at the Ninth Air Force base in North Carolina pitched in to help repair a rickety school bus belonging to a nearby orphan's home. Once the bus was refinished and ready to run, someone suggested that they put in some presents for the orphans, since Christmas was so near at hand. That, too, was done.

In two years this project had grown into Operation Christmas, which the boys of the Ninth Air Force called "the world's largest Christmas party," as it may have been. With the aid of the Junior Chamber of Commerce in North Carolina, the Air

Force boys worked at dances, games and other money-raising ventures to finance their program. Every child in every orphanage in the state was invited to write to Santa and tell the old fellow what they wanted for Christmas. The heads of the various institutions checked the items which they felt would be best in each case and sent the lists on to the Air Force and the Junior Chamber of Commerce, where the purchasing and wrapping was done. This was quite a job in itself, since there were about 13,000 individual gifts involved, each addressed to an orphan who had asked for it.

Vestal Taylor, new editor of WFNC in Fayetteville, suggested to Major Jack Cordova of Operation Christmas that I be invited to come down and see how it operated, perhaps making a broadcast somewhere along the route. I countered with the proposal that I play the part of Santa Claus, since nature had endowed me so generously with padding.

Thus it happened that I found myself traveling from place to place in a big helicopter loaded with presents which I handed out to the delighted youngsters. From dawn to dusk, Lt. Len Hughes and his buddies drove those choppers, over mountains and cities, to reach every orphanage in the state before Christmas.

It was hard work, sometimes even dangerous, but we were well repaid by the expressions on those little faces as we dropped down out of the sky with their gifts. They would naturally swarm all over Santa, wanting to be patted or picked up. Lifting a few tons of youngsters a day was hard labor for a man of my years and flabby physical condition but I did the best I could, for who could refuse those little fellows who were asking for nothing more than a sample of the love that is the birthright of more fortunate youngsters?

During the three winters that I served as jolly old St. Nicholas, we naturally had some experiences that would stick with us. There was the time when two helicopters loaded with toys took off from Asheville, N.C., headed for the orphanage at Black Mountain. We separated when the other chopper stopped for some errand. Our craft, with five of us aboard and about half a ton of toys, lost its way and began probing the various valleys in search of the orphanage.

After a long run up a blind valley the pilot decided to climb in order to see what was on the other side of the rocky ridge. All went well until we reached the summit, where a veritable gale was churning the air full of ice crystals and boiling down into the valley. The heavily laden chopper swung sideways,

unable to lift itself in that turbulence. We all fastened our safety belts and braced ourselves for the crash.

We did not have long to wait. The big helicopter dropped down into a stony clearing. There was a bone-shaking jolt, the landing gear on my side was driven through the side of the ship and the tailboom buckled as the rotor dug into the rocks.

It was pretty wild-looking country, and thinly populated. Just as we struck, however, a black Ford slid to a stop on a nearby road. The car belonged to an official of a public utility and was equipped with radio telephone. In a matter of minutes he was in communication with the Asheville airport, which radioed to the other helicopter and directed them to us.

In addition to that radio telephone the car also contained the four-year-old grandson of the driver, a youngster who saw me scrambling out of the wrecked helicopter and began crying: "Grandpa! What's the matter with Santa Claus?"

Grandpa explained the difficulty to me and I took the little fellow over beside the broken tailboom where we would be shielded from the cold wind. As I sat there on the ground in my Santa outfit, the youngster in his Confederate cap wrapped his cold hands in my beard and sobbed out his Christmas wants. One of the photographers was ready. . . . It made the picture of the week in *Life*.

Because of their design, helicopters do not have a great deal of forward speed. We became acutely conscious of this shortcoming one day as we took a load of toys through a gap in the Blue Ridge, en route to an orphanage at Banner Elk. Because of the necessity for carrying a heavy load of fuel for the round trip, we left two of the boys at our last stop, to be picked up when we came back.

It soon became somewhat of a question whether we were going to get back that day. The helicopter couldn't get over the mountains, so the pilot decided to go through a gap, a great stony slash between the peaks. Just as we got well into the gap and about three hundred feet below the top of its rim, a terrific gale of snow struck us head-on. The forward speed of the chopper dropped to about ten miles an hour. Visibility was next to nothing. Lt. Hughes kept on, straining his eyes to avoid being banged against the sides of the gap.

We got through at the expense of an unexpected fuel consumption. We got lost a couple of times, ran into more swirling snowstorms, finally stopped near a filling station for directions.

If we didn't locate the orphanage very soon we would have to turn back before our fuel supply got too low.

The man at the filling station could direct us all right, in fact it seems that in the snowstorm we had probably flown right over the place a couple of times without knowing it.

"Just fly right over the ridge," he said. "When you see a green outhouse, turn right down the valley and you can't miss!"

We found the outhouse and we found the orphanage. When we landed, the kids came charging down upon us, wild with delight. The poor little devils had been standing out there in that snow and biting wind for almost an hour, listening to us grinding around overhead, biting their nails for fear we would go away without stopping.

If, on some Christmas Eve, you hear faint sleighbells tinkling back and forth through the gloom, do not be disturbed. It will probably be old St. Nick, patiently trying to locate a green outhouse in the storm.

One of our biggest stops was at the Union Mills Orphanage. In 1953, my last year as Santa with Operation Christmas, Union Mills happened to be the instance which received considerable coverage on the nation's news wires.

To get there we had to make a fifty-mile jump from our last previous stop. I was riding in the co-pilot's seat. It was very warm there, right up over the nine hundred horsepower motor which drives the big rotor and I had pulled the Santa Claus beard down and tucked it under my chin.

The landing at Union Mills was scheduled to take place on a ball diamond behind the school. As we approached we could see an unusually large crowd, the hundreds of orphans augmented by families which had come out from town for the big event.

The pilot swung the big ship over the ball field and we settled gently for a landing. The rotors do-not stop immediately and they churn up plenty of dust from such a dry field as we were on. There was a strong likelihood that the youngsters swarming toward us would get their eyes full of sand from that downblast.

"Get out there and lead 'em away from the ship!" the pilot yelled.

I slid back the window on my side and scrambled down to earth. The children were already pouring across the ball diamond toward the dust cloud that surrounded us, I ran out away from the ship, waving them toward me—and they came.

The first ones to reach me stared in amazement and stopped several feet away. I beckoned them on. They just stood and

stared. It was then that I realized what was wrong: I had forgotten to pull my beard out from under my chin and put it over my face; the kids were startled by a bare-faced Santa!

I needed time. I turned and started to run, ducking my head forward as I tugged at the beard. The kids yelled gleefully and charged ahead in full pursuit. The beard wouldn't budge. Too late, it dawned on me that it was caught in the zipper of my heavy costume coat.

There was only one thing to do, get back into that helicopter and shut the door until I could free the whiskers. I glanced at the plane and saw the pilot pointing his movie camera in my direction. Wrapping my arm around my big bare blushing face, I headed toward the side door of the chopper, about thirty feet away.

By this time the kids were upon me. Their little hands began clutching at my coat, dozens of them. I staggered on. More hands caught me, this time by the pants, which were held up only by a heavy string belt. A few more steps and the string gave way, the pants went down around my feet and I went down in a pile of screaming youngsters. All I could do was to wiggle, hanging on to my pants with one hand and hiding my beardless face with the other. It wasn't easy, but judging by the roars of laughter from the adults in the crowd it must have been pretty funny.

Those heartless wretches inside the helicopter refused to open the door. For the first time in the history of Union Mills, a Santa in green-striped shorts cut his beard loose from his coat with a pocket knife.

Weeks later I asked that pilot to let me see those movies and he said he was sorry but they had been overexposed.

I knew what he meant.

The United States Chamber of Commerce could hardly be described as a warm advocate of a news commentator sponsored by a labor organization. For that reason, if for no other, the following paragraphs taken from the June, 1954, issue of the magazine *Nation's Business* are of interest, because that magazine is published by the U. S. Chamber of Commerce.

In a special article entitled "Labor Tells Its Story" the magazine says:

"Odell Hall, a nine-year-old Nortonville, Ky., boy suffering from a rare blood disease, was told that he had only a few months to live. A radio commentator, hearing of Odell's plight and the fact that the boy was crazy about picture postcards,

broadcasted several appeals asking listeners to send cards to Odell.

"Almost immediately postcards began to pour in. From all over the United States, Alaska, Canada, Mexico, even Europe, they came. One batch came from the crew of a submarine which had surfaced 100 miles off the Pacific coast to hear the broadcast. In a short time Odell had received more than 300,000 cards. More important, the wonderful response gave the boy a new will to live, and he entered school when the new term started like other kids.

"To many people the strangest part of this story is not Odell's marvelous recovery, but the identity and pulling power of the commentator—Frank Edwards, whose sponsor is the American Federation of Labor. Before the first Odell Hall broadcast the general belief was that Mr. Edwards broadcast only labor news, and only to a labor audience. The spontaneous response to this nonpartisan appeal showed that the AFL's million-dollar investment in the program was paying off."

The U. S. Chamber of Commerce recognized the fact that my broadcasts were making millions of friends for labor beyond the ranks of labor itself.

In brief, my broadcasts had a growing appeal to a tremendous audience, both in and out of labor. It was about people, for people. Unfortunately for me, there was a little clique in the AFL who were not interested in people; they had something else in mind.

While I worked on the program, they worked on me.

12. A Paradise for Parasites

THE FORMER FBI official put his feet in the middle of my coffee table, squinted at me over his tenth gin-and-tonic, and observed knowingly:

"Washington is a place where fifty per cent of the people are in bed by ten o'clock—and the other fifty per cent are in bed with 'em!"

From my own viewpoint, Washington is also one of the world's most beautiful cities. Magnificent elms make living green tunnels of the streets. Splendid parkways wind for miles through well-kept woodlands right in the heart of the city. scores of superb buildings line the famous thoroughfares: embassies, government buildings and the residences of great fig-

ures in history. Countless statues—and of course the world-renowned Smithsonian Institution.

It is a beautiful city and I was the perennial tourist, for I never got enough of its incomparable spectacles. If I were to choose the most unforgettable of them all, I would unhesitatingly name one that most tourists do not see; the Lincoln Memorial at night, after the floodlights have been turned off. Then, and only then, the Great Emancipator sits in his huge white chair, bathed in a pale blue light from above. Head slightly bowed, he seems to be gazing thoughtfully toward the floodlit Capitol dome at the other end of the Mall. It is a sight to be remembered.

Perhaps the figure of Mr. Lincoln is gazing at the statue on top of the Capitol. It does not face him, which may be just as well for the statue atop the Capitol is a symbol of Freedom —yet it was cast by slaves!

By way of contrast to Mr. Lincoln's granitic sadness there is Mr. Washington's perpetual smile. If it is true that the Father of Our Country was grim-visaged in his lifetime, then perhaps it is only belated justice that has enabled him to wear this expression of suppressed mirth for more than half a century. Unfortunately for the public, for almost a hundred years this particular statue of Mr. Washington was not on display, for what was once considered a very good reason.

In 1832 Congress felt an urge to dabble in the arts. It appropriated the sum of five thousand dollars, which was quite a sizable chunk of cash in those days, and turned it over to a sculptor named Herbert Greenough. He was instructed to carve a heroic statue of our First President. It was to be done in the grand manner, sparing nothing to create a lasting work of art in keeping with the historic eminence of the subject.

Greenough went to Italy and invested in a huge block of white marble. For six years he measured and marked and chipped and chiseled, then he announced that his work was finished; he was coming home.

There were some technicalities that had been overlooked. First, that statue weighed twenty tons and it was packed in a wooden box that was none too sturdy. When he tried to move it from Florence to Leghorn for shipment, all the trees had to be chopped down along one side of the highway. Congress squirmed but Congress paid—for $8390 worth of abbreviated trees. At Leghorn the stevedores swung the huge crate over the ship. The rope broke and the twenty-ton package plunged through the bottom of the vessel. The boat settled on top of George.

This was becoming pretty embarrassing to all concerned.

The Italian government provided manpower to fish the statue from the bottom of the harbor; the American navy sent a couple of cruisers to fetch it home without further delay. The ship docked at New York where it was learned that the crate was too big to go through the railroad tunnel at Baltimore. After a great deal of palaver, the statue was laboriously reloaded onto the cruiser and sent around the coast to New Orleans. From there, by steamboat and by train, it made the last leg of its long journey to Washington. Thus far it had cost a total of $26,000. Congress was delighted that it had finally arrived and promptly appropriated another $2000 to build a suitable pedestal for it.

On the great day of the unveiling, nine years after the order had first been placed, the navy band blared, the crowd removed their hats, and the Speaker of the House pulled the string that dropped the curtain.

George Washington stood revealed, twice as big as life, and clad in the manner of a Roman on his way to the bath. The ladies took one look and several of them demurely swooned.

Editorial shrieks resounded throughout the land. Some called it blasphemy, this near-nude representation of the First President. People came from far and near to see for themselves this allegedly fantastic affront to the memory of a great man. They stormed up to Capitol Hill to register their reactions with their unhappy Congressmen.

Congress promptly ordered a high board fence built around the troublesome creation, but enterprising youngsters soon drilled holes in the fence and charged ten cents a peek. The lawmakers held a hurried conference and voted to "blast or otherwise destroy" the statue. At the last minute they found themselves thwarted again. There is a law prohibiting the destruction of any government-owned work of art, good or bad.

Inside the perforated fence they built a heavy wooden shed to conceal their problem child, adding another six thousand dollars to bring the total cost of the project up to thirty-five thousand. By this time the nation's jokesmiths had taken up the subject, and the harried legislators had to endure more ridicule for their venture into the thorny field of sculpture.

By 1908 the shed was becoming rickety and the statue was in danger of again being exposed to public gaze, an accusing marble finger pointing at another crop of lawmakers like an inherited sin. They voted an additional five thousand dollars to tear down the shed, remove the statue and conceal it from sight.

For more than forty years, General Washington stood in heroic pose in the cellar of the main building at the Smithsonian, behind a cluster of antique printing presses, until a more enlightened management summoned enough courage to bring him forth and place him once again on public display.

Just inside the main entrance to the Smithsonian, in the hall to the right, you will now find this statue of our First President, wearing his inscrutable marble smile. It serves as a haunting reminder that pure art is for those who appreciate it but congressional art is for the birds.

My appreciation of the fascinating capital of the nation had to wait until I could find more time. I was scheduled to make my first broadcast under the AFL sponsorship from Washington on the night of January 2nd, 1950.

It was the first time that any labor group had sponsored a daily nationwide radio program and I was as jittery as a pregnant humming bird. I knew that a little clique in the AFL had tried to keep me from getting the job. I knew also that the job itself was probably a transitory project. One of my advisors had cautioned:

"Don't regard this as anything permanent, because it isn't likely to last more than a few months at most. The AFL is sharply divided in its political views and you can't please both sides. Keep one foot on solid ground so you'll be ready to jump if this thing folds up!"

The hands on the studio clock said ten o'clock. Joe McCaffrey stepped up to the microphone and said: "Ladies and gentlemen, eight million Americans, your friends and fellow citizens who make up the American Federation of Labor, bring you Frank Edwards and the news——"

I was on the air, and in spite of the innumerable handicaps and booby traps, I managed to hold the job for more than four and a half years, but I must confess that it wasn't easy.

The late William Green was then president of the AFL. His instructions to me were simple and straightforward. "We want the American people to know that the men and women of this organization are good, sound, hard-working citizens like themselves. We want you to broadcast the items of interest to the average American which are not given adequate coverage by the ordinary news program or newspaper. You choose your own material and tell the story in your own way. If the public likes you that is all that we can ask, for the American Federation of Labor is just a cross-section of the American public."

We shook hands on that, and as long as Mr. Green lived, and

for a short time after his death, that was the way the program was conducted. He had notified me that I had a job to do and the freedom with which to do it.

I was glad to have him state the ground rules so unmistakably; it confirmed what I had already been told, and I knew how to proceed. The AFL program was to be a commentary. If it became a popular program I might be continued; if not, I wouldn't.

Actually, there are only three types of news programs in the entire broadcasting field. Most common is the "newscast" which consists of reading without change the material furnished by some press-wire service. This type of program is cheap to produce, but it has the drawback of sounding like all the other newscasts; they sound identical because they are identical.

The "commentary" type of news program in its most useful and attractive form, is an honest, intelligent effort to interpret the news for those who have neither the time nor the facilities to analyze the events for themselves. Since he is human, it is perhaps inevitable that the commentator will project his own personality into his work to some extent. The end result can be either candid or sly, viciously partisan or painfully neutral, as the commentator wills it. Commentary at its best should be honest editorializing, done with candor and a desire to present the truth so that the listeners may make their own decisions. Commentary is both a great opportunity and a grave responsibility.

The third type of news program available to the American public is a creature which would be known in medical terminology as a eunuch. It is neither plain newscasting nor honest commentary. It is neuter gender with a false beard.

You can spot this hybrid by the tricks used to conceal its emptiness. In order to get out of the newscast category there must be comment on something, so the spokesman vents his spleen on foreign countries, the farther away the better. Time after time these eunuchs of the airlanes spray their far-away targets with bombast, advice, criticism and ridicule. It sounds courageous and purposeful. In reality it is as meaningless as the growls of your pet puppy, chewing on a rubber bone.

Having vented his spleen in this meaningless performance, it is customary for the eunuch to dwell briefly on a few news items before closing with a pompous little essay devoted to nothing of consequence. There are many of these hybrids in circulation. A classic example is that of a fellow who has been making a fortune at this stunt for years, wheedling, cajoling, bemoaning and counseling by turns. If he is on one side of a

topic tonight then as sure as rain he will be on the other side of the same subject tomorrow night. But on payday he is always on top.

Some years ago I found myself thrown into competition with one of these lads, who had built a nice audience giving an impersonation of a commentator. He was a man with good news sense, his delivery was excellent and his audience rating was very good. Before I took him on as an opponent I spent a couple of weeks analyzing his operations carefully. The pattern stood out clearly: Six minutes of high-flown interpretation of foreign affairs, liberally interspersed with such enchanting place names as Saudi Arabia, Chichicastenango and Ras Tanara. But once he had finished with this phase of the material the bounce went out of his voice and he gave short shrift to national and local matters.

There was the bridge to his moat, over which I could lure his audience away. While my esteemed colleague was devoting his impassioned pear-shaped tones to far away lands, I was assiduously cultivating the domestic field with items of local concern. In exactly sixteen months I had eased past him. While he dwelt on events over there I harvested his audience over here.

Let me make haste to explain that I do not claim credit for having originated this technique—far from it! All that I had done was to apply the principles taught to me many years before when I was the rawest of raw recruits on my first newspaper job, under the editor of a small town daily, a man who knew his business.

My first day's work on that publication consisted of writing an article of my own selection. The editor, cagey old Gus, was letting me bait my own trap, of course. At the close of the day I came in with a lengthy article on astronomy, compiled with loving care from the resources of the local library. Gus called me into his office and asked me to sit down. He pointed to my article and shook his head.

"It's interesting, Frank," he said. "Your punctuation is good and you have certainly worked hard on this, but I still can't use it. Now as long as you work here, I'd like you to remember this one thing: You just write about things that mean something to the folks you're writing for. Report the things that are close to them. Always remember that folks are a damned sight more interested in a burning outhouse next door than in a volcano in Bolivia!"

Since AFL President Green wanted a program that would appeal to common, everyday Americans, I realized that I

would have to get out and dig for material that the other boys were overlooking, intentionally or otherwise. One of the first things I learned in Washington was that I could not expect much help from the sponsors if I hoped to turn out anything better than the musty puff sheet which came out of the AFL mill each week. I had to get out on my own and do some news hawking.

My activities quickly assumed a sort of routine. My day began about ten each morning, when I finished breakfast and started through the phone calls that had accumulated. The calls came from members of Congress, agency heads, lobbyists, public-relations men and zanies of all kinds. As soon as I became personally acquainted with good contacts, I was able to save time by eliminating the others.

For a long time I worked alone but it was extremely difficult. Most of the network commentators have several assistants called "leg men" who run down stories, check sources and often write the material in usable form. Bob Allen has an excellent leg man in Paul Scott; Drew Pearson has Jack Anderson and Tom McNamara; Fulton Lewis has Russ Turner and others. After several months of trying to do the job by myself I hired a good leg man named Charlie Warren. Between us we turned up many a story, including some memorable exclusives.

A typical day for me is this one in late spring of 1950, taken from my diary and appointment calendar:

Up at nine-thirty to answer a phone call from Charlie Warren.

"Should I try to run down any more of the coffee hearings today, Frank? How about seeing Paul Hadlick (counsel for the Gillette Subcommittee, which was conducting the hearings) to see if we can get a look at yesterday's transcript of the testimony. Understand it was hot."

Sounded like a good idea, so Charlie left for the Hill. We had been covering the hearings closely and reporting to the public the findings, which showed how American and Brazilian interests had manipulated the coffee prices, planting false stories of shortages to pave the way.

10:30:—Long-distance call from a big labor organization in California. Could I attend their forthcoming convention as a guest speaker? (Told them I would let them know but I already knew the answer. The AFL wanted to "approve" all my speaking engagements and they generally found it impossible for me to attend. NOTE: I was beginning to get the invitations which formerly went to a couple of top AFL figures.)

11:15:—Went to Pentagon. Asked to see figures on stockpile of certain aircraft parts. Was told the information was "classified." Asked to see figures on rental of so-called obsolete planes to private operators by Air Force. Was told information being compiled would be available in two weeks. Same stall I got three weeks before.

12:30:—Lunch at Colony with two former Cabinet members who briefed me on trade deal being cooked up by State Department. One party went to considerable length to discuss what he regarded as the virtues of removing natural gas from government regulation. I suspected that this was the real purpose of the entire luncheon. So much wasted time as far as I was concerned.

2:00:—At office. Call from one of the men with whom I had just had lunch. Wondered if I liked to fish? (as if he didn't know—we had just talked about it!) Said he wanted to invite me to be his guest on a deep-sea fishing trip to Panama in a couple of months. Fly me down there and fly me back, etc. No sale.

2:15:—Call from Congressman Andy Jacobs. Wanted to tell me about his new bill to force men who desert their children to pay for their support. Says his "Runaway Pappy" bill would save the states $250,000,000 a year now being spent to care for these dependents whose fathers have reneged on their responsibilities by skipping out of the state. Andy also invited my wife and me over to his house for what he called a "Hoosier handout," which means a pecan pie his wife has baked. That kind of a bribe I cannot refuse. Wouldn't be polite.

3:00:—Charlie Warren called. Says he has seen transcript. Says president of one of the largest American coffee companies has apparently perjured himself in his testimony before Gillette committee. Paul H. suggests we hold off on the story for another twenty-four hours to see if the witness makes any effort to get off the hook. Charlie inviting Senator Margaret Chase Smith to make two-minute recorded interview for us on Child Welfare program she has in mind.

3:10:—Went into office of Phil Pearl (AFL public-relations director). He was deeply engrossed in study of racing form. Did not disturb him.

3:15-4:30:—Answered mail. Got a couple of real nasty letters today, both from persons who obviously hated organized labor and anything in any way related to organized labor. Sent each of them notes thanking them for writing and assuring them that I had read their communications. After all, they listen, even if they detest me. Maybe if they continue to listen

they will some day begin to realize that I am doing my best to tell the truth, whether or not it is what they want to hear. Reminds me of what my old editor Gus once said so long ago: "The editor who tried to please everybody is now in the looney bin at the poorhouse!"

5:00:—Rode home with Charlie Warren. Drove my own car back to studios. Woman driving a Crosley station wagon cut across in front of me at 17th and K. Just missed her. Those Crosleys could cause an accident if they got caught under your front bumper.

7:30:—Started writing script. Senator Lister Hill called to see if I could have lunch with him tomorrow. Sorry. He's a nice guy but I'm going over to the State Department to meet a contact who may be able to furnish material. Finished writing script by nine o'clock. Turned it over to Mutual censor for checking. Everything okay. On the air at ten. Home at eleven. Read a book, *Public Plunder*, by David Loth. Written in 1938 and a fine piece of work on graft in the New World beginning with Captain John Smith, who was pretty good at it! The Indians were not so dumb, however. Smith thought he had Pocahontas but he really got her sister, Mataoko.

1:30 A.M.:—Los Angeles calling. I've got to get an unlisted number. My program is delayed broadcast on West Coast. . . . I've only been off the air fifteen minutes out there. Might as well take the call.

"Go ahead, Los Angeles."

"Is this Frank Edwards?" Man's voice.

"Yes, sir. What can I do for you?"

"Drop dead!"

And so to bed.

The sponsors and I both got ourselves crossed up in the early days of the AFL program. In their contract with the network they agreed to pay thirty of the key Mutual stations to carry the program on Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights, with the explanation that the sponsor could not afford to buy time on Tuesday and Thursday nights. Then, after pleading poverty, the AFL went out and spent about thirty thousand dollars for display advertising in newspapers in the same cities where they had told the stations they couldn't afford to pay for Tuesdays and Thursdays. This did not endear us to the stations.

My own troubles came to light when the network received a letter from the late Senator Robert Taft, charging that I had misquoted him on several occasions.

This was a touchy subject. Senator Taft was the *bête noir* of the union-labor movement, and had sponsored the Taft-Hartley legislation, which labor officials claimed was designed to crush unions. The network called on me for an explanation. There I was, a new man on a new job, being taken to task by one of the most influential members of Congress. I had to stand and deliver, or else.

Thanks to the files of the Library of Congress and the *Congressional Record,* I was able to substantiate fully every statement that I had attributed to the Senator. In all probability he had made so many statements on so many subjects that he had forgotten the remarks I had quoted.

When Taft had the Republican presidential nomination snatched out of his grasp at Chicago in 1952, I felt genuinely sorry for him. He was the boy who wanted to equal or outshine his father. William Howard Taft was conservative to the extreme; Robert Taft lacked his father's saving grace of adaptability.

One of my first major victories on the Mutual series from Washington was scored less than four months after the program started.

Senator Lister Hill of Alabama stopped me in a hall of the Capitol. "Got a minute, Frank? I'd like to talk to you."

For Senator Hill, who is one of the ablest men on the Hill, I always had time.

"We are going to have a hard fight on the Kerr bill when it hits the Senate floor," said the Senator. "I think the Republicans and the reactionary Democrats will muster enough votes to put it over. If you can help us, I would certainly appreciate it. This is a bad deal for the American consumer and we are fighting an uphill battle all the way."

The measure to which he referred had already been approved by the House, with little fanfare. It was a device to remove from Federal control the natural-gas producers and distributors. Since very few states had more than one natural-gas pipeline within their limits, it meant that the natural gas suppliers could hijack the consumers on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. Having no competitive sources of supply, the state utility regulatory boards would have no control. It was legalization of a plan to raid the family purses of natural-gas users to the tune of an estimated half-billion dollars a year.

I got into the battle at once, citing the nature of the bill and the meaning of it to the public. Letters and telegrams began to pour in on the Senators but we were late getting started. The measure was approved.

When the final vote was taken in the Senate, Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois, one of the leaders in the fight against the measure, rose to ask for the floor. Vice-President Alben Barkley ignored Douglas and closed the Senate session for that day. The Veep had two reasons for wanting to keep Senator Douglas off the record for that day: He knew that Douglas intended to make a public appeal to President Truman to veto the Kerr Bill and he knew that the President had privately promised to sign the measure if the Senate approved it.

I saw this bit of by-play from the Senate gallery. A few moments later I had located Senator Douglas in the subway en route back to his office. As we jogged along on the little underground trolley, I put my proposition to him.

"Senator, the President is in Key West, as you know. If you would like to do it, I will give you time on my radio program tonight to say what you were prevented from saying on the Senate floor this afternoon—only this time you can say it to the President and to a nationwide radio audience simultaneously. Are you interested?"

He was surprised and understandably so, for it was without precedent for a United States senator to appeal to the President by radio. But he was interested, too.

That night I told my radio audience what had transpired in the Senate during the afternoon. Then I presented Senator Douglas, who made one of his most eloquent appeals, directing his words to the President in Key West, who had already been alerted by telegram to expect the broadcast. Senator Douglas closed by asking all who felt as he did to write or wire the White House, requesting a Presidential veto.

Mail and telegrams poured in by the tens of thousands. The White House staff stacked it up, unable to handle the unprecedented volume. When President Truman returned from his vacation he held a brief council with his staff and ordered the mail sent over to the Federal Power Commission for evaluation. In a few days the word came back to the White House: The mail and telegrams were running more than a thousand to one against signing the Kerr Bill.

Mr. Truman vetoed the measure.

With Senator Douglas's assistance, I had demonstrated the power of a radio program which dared to tell the public the meaning of important pieces of legislation.

(In 1955, when I was no longer on the air and there was no real opposition to alert the public, the oil companies which own natural gas resources had no trouble pushing through the House a measure which would be far more costly to the public

than the Kerr bill. Known as the Hayes-Fulbright measure, it was so heavily loaded against the consumers of natural gas that one oil company alone expected to make one hundred and sixty million dollars extra profits if the Senate approved the measure in 1956.)

Our victory over the Kerr bill was one of the few bright spots for labor in 1950. George Meany, then Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL was not deceived by the various polls and prognosticators who professed to see a reversal of the conservative trend at the ballot boxes.

"We can't get out the vote," Mr. Meany told me. "They've had regular pay checks coming in so long they can't remember anything else. You can't lead people who don't want to go anywhere!"

He was right. Labor took a licking in the 1950 elections.

The AFL decided that I should make a swing around the country on what it called a "pre-election roundup"—a belated move which got underway in October. Accompanied by Phil Pearl, who edited the AFL weekly paper, I flew from state to state, sampling the political winds. In most cases, Pearl would make the "survey" by telephone from our hotel room, phoning both Republican and Democratic headquarters. He asked the usual questions and got the usual answers. My job was to work this trite material into a few paragraphs for that night's broadcast.

Our "cross-country roundup" was a predestined fizzle, too lousy and too late to have any effect. Pearl abandoned the trip in Los Angeles; I made the rest of the stops by myself and finally flew back into Washington in time to see Mr. Meany's dire predictions realized. The election went against labor's candidates in most states.

One of the most absorbing, and perhaps one of the most important matters I dealt with on the Mutural series for the AFL was the direct outgrowth of a chance meeting with a surgeon friend whom I had not seen since my golf-professional days back in the Twenties.

I was in New York to straighten up some contract details with Mutual. As I entered the lobby of the Astor, I bumped into my long-time friend, Doctor X.

"Ever get over to Pittsburgh, Frank?"

"Haven't been there recently, but it could be arranged. Why?"

"Something damned strange going on there, Frank. You understand that I am not to be mentioned in connection with

this in any way, shape, or form? . . ." I assured him that I understood. "Okay, now listen to this: I specialize in cancer surgery, at least I do a lot of it. By and large, surgery is not the answer to cancer; it merely prolongs the inevitable for most of the patients. But what I wanted to tell you was this: Last year I operated on a patient suffering from an abdominal cancer. We removed the malignancy and after a period in the hospital we sent the patient home. A few months later, the cancer had spread and the patient was back for more surgery. We reopened the abdominal cavity, took one look, and decided that the patient was in the final stages of an incurable malignancy. We had done all we could do with X-ray, surgery and the other means at our command. We sent the patient home to die, with a prognosis of not more than a few weeks to live."

"What happened?"

"Plenty! One morning about four months later I ran into that patient, walking along the street. I damned near fell over! In all my years of dealing with cancer patients I had never encountered such a thing. I invited him up to the office but the patient didn't have time—he was on his way to work! I walked along with him for a couple of blocks, long enough to learn that after we had sent him home as a hopeless or "terminal" cancer case he had taken a preparation from a little clinic in Pittsburgh and had shown remarkable improvement, as I could see!"

"What kind of preparation?" I asked.

"An antibiotic of some sort. I don't know what it is and when I checked with the Medical Society in Pittsburgh it was pretty damned obvious that they didn't know what it was either, but they were going to condemn it anyway—and they did. That's why I don't want to be mentioned in connection with this matter, it would cause me a lot of trouble with the medical brass. I suggest that you drop in and look the matter over for yourself, but for God's sake keep me out of it!"

A few weeks later I was able to get over to Pittsburgh to look into this very interesting story of the cancer victim who had come back from the jaws of death. I found that the case my doctor friend had told me about was only one of several. Checking carefully, I got photostatic copies of the hospital records showing that these people had been examined by top Pittsburgh medical specialists and diagnosed as cancer cases of various types. After receiving the conventional treatment at the finest hospitals in Pittsburgh and elsewhere, they had been sent home to die—terminal cases. In each case that I studied the cancer victim had taken the antibiotic from the little Pitts-

burgh clinic and was, at the time of my investigation, alive and well long beyond the time which conventional medicine had set for the end of his prognosis. He had had a fatal disease; had been sent home to die; had taken the antibiotic—and had cheated death.

I broke the story to the nation in February, 1950, after carefully checking each individual case and after assembling full documentary evidence from the hospitals where the patients had been treated. I was especially careful not to make any claims for the antibiotic, and the clinic that produced it also made no claims for it. It was merely offered, as it still is, as an experimental therapy for so-called hopeless cancer cases who have been told by conventional medicine that there is no hope and no further treatment for them. I suggested in that first broadcast that this obscure little clinic might have stumbled onto a new weapon in the fight against cancer; and in the battle against death, no weapon should be overlooked.

As I expected, the medical heirarchy reacted with their customary high dudgeon. They denounced the clinic as a fraud and its treatment as quackery. It should be noted however that this "official" condemnation was issued without any investigation by those who made the statements. The clinic's records were open to medical authorities and the patients were all available for examination, along with their hospital records; but no such investigation or inspection was made. The clinic operators were hailed into court and charged with practicing medicine without a license, a charge that was promptly dropped when the clinic showed that it had on its staff a licensed M.D. who handled every case. The attempted smear petered out.

Upon investigation I found that the National Health Institute in Washington had, at the request of the clinic, analyzed some of its antibiotic and identified most of the complex factors in it. The National Health Institute did not "investigate" the clinic, did not evaluate the treatment and in spite of repeated assertions by those who would destroy the clinic, the National Health Institute has not to this day, in the summer of 1955, ever said that it conducted such investigation. At my instigation, Federal Security Administrator Oscar Ewing called several of the top men into a meeting in his office where the doctors from the Pittsburgh clinic were to be given a chance to present their records and to offer samples of their antibiotic for experimental work by the National Health Institute. The conference came to nought when word of it leaked out within an hour after the meeting closed. Since the representatives of the clinic had been with me during that entire

period, the leak had obviously come from the representatives of the National Health Institute, who were so intent, so they said, on keeping the matter of their interest secret.

Each year, for several years after that first broadcast in 1950, I made a report on the progress of the work at the little Drosnes-Lazenby Clinic in Pittsburgh. Each year a few more names were added to the list of so-called "terminal" cancer cases who had lived after taking the clinic's antibiotic as a last resort. They constituted only a tiny percentage of the hopeless cases who came seeking help; the amazing part of it was that *any* of them lived at all, since by the verdicts of the best conventional medics and hospitals they were all doomed. Particularly touching was the case of little Karen Gillespie, who twice underwent surgery for a brain tumor, and was finally sent home to die as an inoperable case. The cancer had destroyed her eyesight, but today Karen is alive and well, seven years after the time conventional medicine gave her no chance to survive. She is another graduate of the Drosnes-Lazenby Clinic treatment, a living symbol of bafflement to organized medicine.

One night in July of 1952, when I came out of the studio after finishing my broadcast, I found two dapper gentlemen in smart white uniforms waiting for me in the lobby of the Mutual layout. Could they speak with me privately, please?

I led them into the broom closet that served as my office there. They presented their credentials as military representatives of Juan Peron, the Argentine dictator. I must admit that I was not altogether at ease; I had been something less than friendly to Peron in my broadcasts. Was that what prompted their visit?

"We have come to ask for some assistance," said the taller of the two. "We come at the personal request of President Peron. It is our understanding that you have upon several occasions reported on the work of some doctors who treat critical cases of cancer by a new method. Is that correct?"

"That's right. You understand, though, that the treatment is purely experimental—that it is not endorsed by organized medicine?"

"Yes. We understand that. But we also understand that some apparently hopeless cancer patients have taken this experimental treatment and recovered, did they not?"

I assured him that such was the case, but again I reminded him that those who survived constituted only a small percentage of those who received the treatment. I wondered what my visitors had in mind.

"We are asking your help, Mr. Edwards, on behalf of the wife of our President. She is critically ill with cancer, the doctors say they can do nothing more for her. President Peron would be very grateful if you could help us to get some of this experimental material you have spoken of in your broadcasts. Can you help?"

Eva Peron dying of cancer! If the Drosnes-Lazenby therapy proved helpful to her it would be difficult for the medical moguls to continue their policy of incessant condemnation.

"Of course I will help, as much as I can. You will have to go to Pittsburgh to get the preparation but I will phone ahead so it will be ready. When can you go?"

The gentleman with whom I had been talking turned to his companion and they conversed briefly in their native tongue. "He will go at once, Mr. Edwards, tonight if necessary. Time is very short for Evita!"

Twelve hours later several tiny bottles of the antibiotic from the Pittsburgh clinic were en route to the stricken wife of the Argentine president. They had waited too long; Eva Peron died while the plane that carried the medicine was drumming over the Brazilian jungles.

It has been almost six years since I investigated the Drosnes-Lazenby Clinic and made my first broadcast on what I had found and documented. It is worth noting that not one statement that I made on any of my broadcasts dealing with the clinic was ever refuted or challenged by the powerful interests which sought to discredit the clinic. To this day I do not know whether the clinic's treatment is of lasting value in the treatment of cancer, for I am, after all, a reporter and not a doctor.

In this connection I am happy to be able to close on a strong note of optimism.

When I made my first efforts to interest organized cancer research in the possibilities of the Drosnes-Lazenby therapy, I was told bluntly by Dr. Leonard Scheele and Dr. Robert Heller of the National Cancer Institute (and by officials of the American Cancer Society) that *antibiotics were of no value whatever in the treatment of cancer!*

That was in 1951.

In February of 1955, a statement was issued dealing with the treatment of cancer by chemotherapy. It was signed by members of the National Health Institute and the American Cancer Society, among others. The statement reported that forty-six separate research projects were then underway at various colleges and universities, exploring the possibilities of conquering cancer through treatment with drugs.

Why?

Says the committee report: "This program was inaugurated because of the conviction of the Committee that cures for the many types of cancer will be produced by research in this field."

Here's hoping!

Handling hundreds of different stories each month, it was inevitable that I should make some mistakes. It happens to the best of newspapers; and it happened to me.

In the spring of 1950, one of the staff members of a congressional committee called me. "Got a hot item," he said. "We have just learned that a big public-relations man who testified here a couple of days ago was a lobbyist for the Japanese government at the time of Pearl Harbor. That puts his testimony in a very strange light and he may have perjured himself. Are you interested?"

I was interested if he could back up his story with some proof. Since I did not know my caller, I got in touch with the attorney who was chief counsel for the committee and asked him about the matter. A few hours later I received a letter from the counsel by messenger, a letter in which the counsel assured me that he had checked the story and found it correct.

The story, which I used that night on the air, was a phoney. Fortunately the individual who was named as the former Japanese lobbyist took the view that I had been deceived by someone who had a grudge against him and dropped the matter when I broadcast a correction. At his suggestion I checked back on the staff employee who had given me the yarn in the first place; and I found him to be a chronic drunk. The committee counsel who had cleared the material for me evidently did not know about the staff member's excessive boozing and had merely checked the report by phoning the same fellow who had given it to me.

A couple of years later, when the Reconstruction Finance Corporation was under investigation, I received another call from this same tipster. This time he had a different approach: "I'm working over at the RFC—right next to the director's office. Can't talk to you right this minute but if you will call me back here in fifteen minutes I'll give you a real story! Just call the director's office and ask for me. Okay?"

Once burned, twice shy, but just out of curiosity I called him back. I got the director's secretary and asked for my caller. In a moment he was on the phone, spilling a story of a big steel company which, he said, had just secured a huge RFC loan.

He was tossing names and figures around which would have caused a real upheaval had I used them. I thanked him and hung up.

An hour later I called the director's office at RFC again and inquired if my informant worked there. He did not, of course. He had evidently called me from an outside phone then gone into the director's waiting room to wait for my call, telling the secretary that he was expecting a call from his office. When I asked for him, he got the call and took it on another phone. What his motive was I do not know but the secretary confirmed my suspicion that it was probably inspired by drinking, since he was well oiled at the time.

A strange bird, this one. To this day he still flits in and out of various agencies and congressional groups, never staying long at any one place. Last I heard of him was in the spring of 1955 when he got up at a banquet in New York and gave them an off-the-record speech on the difficulties besetting a famous Washington newsman. I happen to know that the newsman in question has the same opinion of this faker as I have, and I am curious to see what happens if he finds out that this trouble-maker is posing as one of his employees.

My mail was always a source of endless interest to me. It came from many countries and from all sorts of people, of course. Even the nasty letters were welcome, for they provided many a laugh on days that would otherwise have been pretty dull. These caustic critics fell into three categories: Those who objected to something I had said; those who objected to something they thought I had said; and those who objected because I had not said what they had hoped I would.

Soon after I came to Washington I was plagued for several months by a miserable character in Indianapolis, who bombarded me with letters denouncing me, my sponsors and the network as villains of the worst types. His venom was inspired by the fact that when I was in Indianapolis I had refused to broadcast an account of how he had been beaten up by a policeman who tried to arrest him for brandishing a gun in a drugstore. After talking to some of the witnesses I came to the conclusion that he got what he deserved but not as much as he had coming.

His endless tirades, too, became annoying after a while, so I arranged for him to receive numerous samples of pile ointment from various patent-medicine companies. Now I have never been an advocate of prescribing medical treatments by mail but in the case of this irascible little man I am inclined to think that I did him a lot of good. When those samples began

to pour in on him they either improved his health and his disposition, or else he was so busy testing them that he didn't have time to write, for we heard no more from him.

As I said, my mail came from many countries, and that included Germany, where some of my programs were re-broadcast. From Hamburg, in early 1950, I received a letter from a German girl who wrote in her native language. One of the ladies in the AFL bookkeeping department translated the message for me. The girl was writing to inquire if I could help her to get an American husband. She was soon going to be twenty-one and hoped to marry and move to this country. Her picture was enclosed and it was that of a very nice-looking fraulein.

I read her letter over the air and suggested that if any of my lonesome male listeners were interested I would be glad to forward their letters to the young lady in Hamburg.

They were interested, all right. We forwarded about a bushel of letters, some of which we read, since they were addressed to me. There was one from a young man in Buffalo, New York. He was fifteen years old, had three hundred dollars in the bank, and was anxious to get married. Another came from Louisiana and said:

> Dear German girl: I am seventy-two years of age very lively for my age. I live on a houseboat which I own. My living costs are not high and if you are interested in marrying me I will send you my picture. We can get along okay on my pension check of $28.75 every month because I do not have to pay any rent or anything.

There were other letters which I did not forward to Germany, letters from irate American maidens old and young, who informed me that they, too, would like husbands, preferably American.

"You are a fine specimen," wrote one annoyed spinster from Kokomo, "trying to marry off American men to those foreign women. I have been waiting forty-five years for a husband. You are nothing but a meddlesome slob."

Several months went by with no word from the young lady in Hamburg. Then, in August, 1950, she sent me another letter (this time in English) which I quote:

> Dear Mr. Edwards—Thank you very much for all the troubles you had by me, but I am very obliged to you.

I took a few addresses and the rest I gave to my father, as I know, so he gives it to a german newspaper.

If I can something do for you here in Germany, Mr. Edwards, so please let me know, then I'll do my best.

Excuse my bad english, please. I only learned it at school and now I don't have enough intercourse.

with best wishes from Germany

Margaret B——

I have always wondered if she wrote that letter or if some prankish GI told her what to say.

The most nervewracking experience I ever had with a piece of mail all happened in one evening.

There had been a news story from Texas a few days before, about a time bomb sent through the mails. Fortunately the bomb had been detected and neutralized before any damage was done.

Perhaps that was on my mind as I arrived at Mutual one night and found a package waiting for me. It was about ten inches square, wrapped in heavy brown paper tied with cord. There was no return address and it had been sent from Texas. I shook it and it rattled, an unmistakably metallic rattle. On guard!

A few minutes later Joe McCaffrey arrived and we mulled over the matter. Should we take it into the men's john and dunk it in a bucket of water? Should we call the FBI and let them worry with it?

Joe came up with an answer. "I'll go out in the front office, Frank, and you poke a little hole in the side of the thing. How about that?'

We felt pretty silly about the whole thing, of course, but you never can tell about unmarked packages. We didn't want to turn it over to the authorities and become a laughing stock if it was perfectly safe; we'd take a chance.

I cut a little hole in the back of the thing, poked in a finger and struck something smooth and metallic. Goosepimples began to form on my goosepimples. Whatever it was, it felt remarkably like some sort of a battery! I enlarged the opening. I could see the thing—and it certainly did look like a battery!

Joe stuck his head in the door: "Are you going to blow up, or not?"

I really wasn't certain. Another five minutes of careful

prodding and still no explosion and no results. With a pocket knife I carved the entire bottom out of the box and out slid a slim white cannister. When it struck the floor I jumped three feet. I shook it and it rattled. An infernal machine, loaded with gravel? Holding it over the wastebasket, I carefully twisted off the lid—and out popped a couple of pounds of shelled pecan meats!

Joe ate a handful of them. I didn't care for any at the moment; I was too weak to chew.

Although I had many invitations to attend various conventions and other gatherings, the sponsors frowned on such appearances. The groups who extended the invitations to me were generally informed that my work required me to remain in Washington. What really required me to remain in Washington was the clause in my contract which gave the AFL veto power over my appearances anywhere else. Once in a while, however, I did manage to attend a few of these out-of-town functions, sometimes with hilarious results.

The most rambunctious broadcast I can recall having participated in was one that originated at some sort of anniversary celebration where about three hundred rugged outdoorsmen were packed into a very inadequate room. The cocktail hour had started much too soon and ended much too late. The food was cold, tempers were hot and the broadcast was so much excess baggage.

The microphone was on a platform behind the speaker's table. A few feet to the right of the mike and also on the platform was a huge electric organ, which had been installed for the event. The delegates had been bribing the organist with cocktails to play their favorite tunes; by the time I arrived he was beginnng to ripple in the wind.

The president of the gathering managed to get the crowd quieted down so that we could go on the air. He had to tell the organist half a dozen times to stop playing. Finally, with only seconds to spare, the light flashed and we were on.

I was doing my portion of the show when a fight broke out about twenty-five feet away. Several of those big bruisers were swapping punches across one of the narrow tables. A tall floor lamp went down with a crash.

"Get yer hands offa her, you hear me? Offa——"

WHAM!

A blow-by-blow description of the fighting would have been far more interesting to the radio audience than my commen-

tary, but I had no choice in the matter. I got closer to the mike, spoke louder and tried to keep the background rumpus off the air. It lasted only a couple of minutes before I came to the end of my portion of the broadcast and turned the mike back over to the announcer for the closing commercial. We had only half a minute to go when the organist came out of his stupor and decided to favor us with "God Bless America" at full volume. The building shook with it. The gentleman in charge of the banquet jumped to his feet and yelled at the organist to stop. He got only a big, vapid grin—and another blast of music. He grabbed a huge bunch of gladiolas from the speaker's table—several pounds of them—and swung them like a ball bat. They caught the drunken organist across the face and sent him sprawling backward from the stool. We went off the air with a mighty roar of bass notes.

Any plans that may have existed for dropping me at the end of the first six months of my contract were negated by the surprising and smashing defeat of the Kerr bill. There could be no mistaking the fact that within a few short months, the program I conducted had grown into an effective medium of public information, and a very popular show as well. My contract was renewed for the second six months of 1950. Audience-measurement surveys indicated that we were rapidly moving up on another Mutual commentator, Fulton Lewis, who had long been the network's top man. And at a meeting of the AFL executives in Chicago, Mr. Green, president of the organization, surprised those present by launching into an account of the manner in which the broadcasts of Frank Edwards were making friends for the sponsors far beyond the labor movement.

It was in that same autumn of 1950 that I went to Chicago to make a broadcast from the Morrison Hotel, where the Chicago Federation of Labor was celebrating its fiftieth anniversary with a banquet which included a speech by Governor Adlai Stevenson.

I made my broadcast that night from a small balcony overlooking the dining room where about fifteen hundred AFL members were seated. As I concluded my portion of the program, a spontaneous burst of applause rolled up from the audience. A veteran Chicago labor official who was sitting in the balcony next to me leaned over and whispered: "You've got troubles ahead, Frank! Just look at the expressions on the faces at the main table!"

I looked. Mr. Green was smiling, as were a couple of others.

But the rest of the AFL brass at the main table did not seem happy about the applause I was getting from the membership.

Did it mean anything?

I didn't have time to worry about it. I had a job to do.

13. "I'm Ready for the Last Roundup!"

RINGLING BROTHERS uses a title that properly belongs to the Congress of the United States. The "greatest show on earth" operates in a two-ring circus on Capitol Hill.

You will find clowns without greasepaint who are clowns without peer. You will find ringmasters who can make their charges jump through the hoops at any hour of the day or night. There are mountebanks and charlatans, grifters and tightrope walkers. And, thank God! there is also a smattering of quiet, competent, intelligent performers who can be depended on to get the show on the road, and to quiet the crowd in case of a storm.

I was thrown into close contact with members of both houses of Congress in the course of my work. In the midst of the sound and fury I noticed that many of them went their calm, unruffled ways. I wondered about it, and one day I decided to make inquiry of a veteran representative, a man who had been elected and reelected for more than thirty years.

"Congressman," I asked, "How do you maintain your composure in the midst of all the excitement? What's the secret of success in your field?"

He chuckled and chewed reflectively on his unlighted cigar.

"In this business, Frank, you must either be a quiet, sound servant of the folks who sent you to Congress, or you must be a headline hunter aiming for bigger things. The trouble with the shooting stars is that they generally burn out before they reach their goal. They have to choose one act and play it through. If they time it right they may get whatever it is that they are reaching for, but over the years I have noticed that the mortality rate among the flash performers is very high. Once the public gets suspicious of their motives or gets tired of the same old act, the headline hunters are quickly forgotten. They sparkle and fizz and then they fizzle."

Nothing inspires a member of Congress more than the knowledge that the galleries contain folks from his home district. It brings forth windy phillipics directed at any target that happens to be in public disfavor at the moment and it draws

seldom-seen members of Congress out of hibernation, seeking permission to "insert this splendid editorial from my home-town paper" into the back pages of the *Congressional Record.* The members of Congress make friends and influence people in this fashion; the visitors go away content in the belief that they have astute representation in the Capitol. It is an uncomplicated procedure that works well for all concerned.

The visitors, especially the youngsters, roam the halls of the sprawling Capitol, looking for recognizable notables. It is a happy hunting ground, well stocked with live game, for rare indeed is the politician who would not pause to sign his name in an autograph book or to pose for his picture with the voters of tomorrow.

The Senate dining room is small but nice; a little rendevous reserved for senators and their guests. As I came out of it one day I noticed that a cluster of teen-agers were scrutinizing me closely. I had been in the Senate dining room; ergo, I was probably a senator. But *which* senator?

One lad's face brightened. He caught up with me and said: "Senator Capehart?"

"What is it, my boy?"

"I'm from Indiana, too, Senator! May I have your autograph?"

"Why of course you may, young man! Glad to do a little thing like that any old time!" Beaming my best Capehart smile, I took the autograph book and inscribed the senator's name. "What part of Indiana are you from, sir?"

"Bloomington, Senator."

"Bloomington! Fine city. When you get home give my regards to Bob Lemon and Herman Evans, will you?"

"Yes, *sir!* Thank you, Senator!"

By this time we were surrounded by boys and girls poking autograph books at me. Suddenly it occurred to me that the rotund juke-box king would soon be up for reelection so I elaborated a bit in my next autograph: "Roses are red, so are bricks, Vote for me in '56. Senator Homer Capehart." Flash bulbs were popping all around. I spent perhaps fifteen minutes scribbling in the autograph books before I learned that my amateurish electioneering efforts on behalf of Mr. Capehart had been largely wasted. Only four of the kids in that crowd were from the Hoosier state; all the rest of them were from North Dakota!

Upon occasion I have gone into the galleries in the Capitol just to watch the antics of various members of both houses. Knowing them as well as I did, I realized that many who strut

and bluster and growl before their colleagues are by no means as dangerous as they sound; like wrestling bears, they have clipped claws. I have seen some of them take the floor to make fighting speeches on behalf of certain pieces of legislation, only to learn later that in committee sessions they had actually voted to gut the same bill. The speeches they made on the floor were public, their committee votes were not.

One of the most significant changes in Congress in recent years has been the virtual disappearance of real liberals. The breed is not altogether extinct but the specimens are extremely rare. You can count on your fingers the liberals remaining on Capitol Hill. They still fight on, each in his own way, but to little effect as far as results are concerned. Liberalism, of the brand which flourished in the days of FDR, has slowly faded from the scene, a victim of neglect. You can still hear much talk, both in and out of Congress, that might conceivably be interpreted as indicating latent liberalism, but when the chips are down you will find that it was just talk, little else.

The favorite strategy of the pseudo-liberals, both individuals and organizations, is to lie low while the battle for liberal legislation is going on. Then, after the battle has been lost, they come trumpeting to the fore, issuing windy statements of righteous indignation. You can spot them, coming out like mushrooms after the storm.

An important part of my work as a news commentator in Washington was attending the presidential press conferences, which are generally held on Wednesdays in the old State Department building, which adjoins the White House on the Seventeenth Street side.

This is an institution of comparatively recent vintage where the chief executive faces a battery of men and women representing press, radio and television. The meeting is customarily scheduled for ten o'clock in the morning and admission is by special pass which the Secret Service issues only after a thorough investigation of the applicant. Investigation showed that I had never been a member of any political party nor of any affiliated organizations. Back in 1938 I had joined the Elks Lodge No. 270 in my home town of New Albany, Indiana. The only subversive thing they had ever done was to water the turtle soup at the annual picnic. The Secret Service promptly approved issuance of my White House pass No. 1264.

The first presidential press conferences I attended were those of President Truman in 1950. After we were all seated, he would come swinging into the room with the same jaunty

stride that kept his bodyguards hopping on those early morning walks.

Mr. Truman was a veteran politician with a good working knowledge of current issues. His years of service in the Senate had prepared him for the weekly task of facing the newsmen, most of whom represented publications and interests unfriendly to the little man in the White House. Mr. Truman was an agile thinker, fully capable of fending off reporters who were on "fishing trips" and especially adept at turning aside with a quip matters he did not care to discuss.

There were times though, when he squared his jaw and snapped back with unmistakable sincerity when goaded too far. Mr. Truman had the trait of being far more loyal to his friends than they were to him and in the closing days of his administration he found himself ending many a press conference defending friends against questions which implied debatable propriety. I had the feeling that most of the newsmen liked Little Harry, even if their bosses did not.

With the change of Administration in January of 1953 a great change came over the White House press conferences. President Eisenhower entered those meetings under a severe handicap; he had to face newsmen who wanted to discuss important political issues, and Mr. Eisenhower was not a politician in the accepted sense of the word. His press secretary, James Haggerty, sits at the President's side, ready to assist when the Chief Executive finds himself beyond his depth, but getting the answers through Mr. Haggerty is not quite the same thing as firing the questions and getting the replies right back from the President.

Mr. Eisenhower is a likable man with a contagious grin. The newsmen have no desire to subject him to any more embarrassment than necessary. For a time the presidential press conferences under Mr. Eisenhower took on the aspect of a meeting where the questions were stereotyped and the answers were mimeographed. As soon as the President had run through the list of subjects covered by the handout sheets, the meetings were over. Attendance dwindled steadily until the newsmen gradually developed a technique whereby they prefaced their questions with a brief statement which served to prepare the President for the question itself. This helped a great deal. Then, as time went on, Mr. Eisenhower became somewhat better acquainted with matters of current importance relative to his office and the tension eased.

Coincidental with the change in the President himself has been the improvement in the quality of his advisors. Someone

in that group came up with the proposal that the White House press conferences be televised and filmed by newsreels. This policy has had a double effect; it brought the newsmen swarming back to the press conferences and it gave the President a tremendous weekly audience on radio, TV and newsreels. The newsmen flock there for the meetings, eager to get seats close to the President where they will be seen by the cameras. And since all the material to be released for broadcast must first be edited and cleared by the White House, the recordings and films that reach the public are censored to exactly what the Administration approves. It constitutes a master stroke of applied politics for which I find no counterpart in White House public-relations history; a precedent which subsequent administrations are not likely to overlook.

Once I had established my contacts, I began receiving plenty of tips and stories. One of the most productive sources I had was newsmen who served as Washington correspondents for papers in other cities. They generally called me at home on my private, unlisted phone, and passed on to me stories that they could not use.

One day I asked one of these helpful newsmen why he didn't use the story he had just passed along to me.

He laughed. "Me send in a story that hints at skullduggery in the Eisenhower Administration? My paper wouldn't print that story if I sent in affidavits and photostats of the checks! We are neutral—on one side—the side of our bread that is buttered!"

The story that he had given me concerned some financial transactions involving one Wes Roberts, a Kansan who was then national chairman of the Republican Party. After the matter was publicized on my program and elsewhere, Mr. Roberts became the first official casualty of the Eisenhower Administration.

I covered the phenagling which marked the closing days of the Truman Administration just as assiduously as I rattled the bogus halo which the public-relations experts had hung over the Eisenhower "Crusaders." As far back as 1950 I was calling attention to the fraudulent procedures by which sharpshooters were getting rich through questionable deals with the Federal Housing Administration. I cited case after case, with details, but there was no official interest in either party at that time. Two years after my broadcasts, these deals made headlines. In 1952, I cautioned against the danger of inflation if restrictions on consumer credit were removed to please the speculators who had loaded up with merchandise, expecting to clean

up if the Korean War spread to the Asiatic mainland. Time after time, I reported to my listeners the manner in which the government was handing out tax-exemption certificates to corporations, the rapid tax write-off scheme, which the listeners understood at once when I said, "They get the buildings and you get the bills!" Night after night I was talking about things that went home to every listener; improvement of social security, better schools, better government if the listeners demanded better government.

I summed it all up in one pertinent phrase: "This is the greatest government in the world. Take pride in it. Better still, take part in it!"

As the election drew near in 1952 the signs of a Democratic defeat were becoming increasingly clear. I encountered the Democratic national chairman, Steve Mitchell, in the lobby of the Mayflower Hotel in Washington as I was on my way to a luncheon engagement. He called me aside.

"Mr. Edwards," he began, "what do you think about prospects as of this moment?"

I told him bluntly that I felt that the American people were going to elect Mr. Eisenhower, even though Mr. Stevenson was making a game fight. My mail indicated that the public apathy had been disturbed and a change of administration seemed likely.

"Is President Truman helping or hurting us?"

That was a moot question and only the final results at the ballot boxes would provide a definitive answer. There could be little doubt, however, that Mr. Truman's repeated needling of Mr. Eisenhower on the subject of Korea was a tactic that could backfire, and I expressed that view to Mr. Mitchell.

Steve fingered his chin nervously. "By George, I believe you're right! Can you come to my office this afternoon about three o'clock and bring me anything you have on Korea?"

At three o'clock I was there. I turned over to Mr. Mitchell a new book dealing with the problems of Korea as seen by a professor at State College in Pennsylvania, a man who had been for many years the chief advisor to South Korean President Rhee.

Mr. Mitchell thumbed through the book, noting the marked passages which treated with various proposals for resolving the differences between North and South Korea.

"This is great, Mr. Edwards! I've got to get this to Adlai tonight, even if I have to phone it to his train! He's got to have this immediately! Thanks very, very much!"

When I left his office it was three-thirty on Thursday after-

noon, October 23rd. His next caller was a reporter for one of the news services, as I discovered later.

Next morning, as I breakfasted with a couple of congressmen, I was astounded to find on the front page of my newspaper a story which said that Stephen Mitchell, national chairman of the Democratic Party, was afraid that Eisenhower might come up with a plan for settling the Korean fighting before Mr. Stevenson did. Mr. Mitchell had discussed with the caller who followed me the very same thing that I had discussed with him! Being a newsman, he had reported their talks.

The cat was out of the bag. It was Friday, October 24th; Black Friday for the Democrats. Mr. Mitchell's well-founded alarm appeared in print that morning; Mr. Eisenhower told an audience that night that if elected he would go to Korea. The ball game was just about over.

Throughout the first two years of my sponsorship by the AFL, I operated as Mr. Green had decreed, without censorship. In the closing months of 1951, at a meeting in Mr. Green's office, Mr. Meany informed me that the sponsors wanted to assign an "assistant" to aid me with my work. No mention was made of any censorship, just an "assistant"—and on that basis I accepted the proposal. I always learn the hard way.

The "assistant" assigned to me had formerly been an employee of the AFL public-relations branch under Phil Pearl. The nature of his new job was revealed on the first day he came to work. He wrote out a detailed report which he submitted to Mr. Meany, specifying the exact time I entered my office and noting that I did not remove my coat. That night, when he showed up at the Mutual studios where I always wrote the broadcast, he went into a tizzy because I had included two items which he said were out of place in the program.

Here was censorship in all its nasty nakedness. The two items at which he had taken umbrage had both been arranged in advance. One was a proposal by Al Hayes, the president of the Machinists' Union, who wanted to suggest that the birthday of the late President Roosevelt be observed as a national holiday. The other item was from Dan Tobin, president of the Teamsters' Union, largest in the world, denying newspaper reports that he planned to resign. Tobin had asked me to run the denial and when I had agreed, his office had sent hundreds of telegrams to Teamster groups all over the country, alerting

them that the denial would be broadcast over the AFL program that night.

If censorship was to be imposed, this semed like a good place for it to start. I was willing to let the AFL censor strike out the items by Tobin and Hayes, provided he initialed them, which he did.

The AFL Executive Council was meeting that week in Miami Beach. When Mr. Pearl discovered that I was planning to broadcast from Miami during the meeting, I was promptly informed that I was going to remain in Washington. The AFL heads did not want to attract attention to the fact that they were basking in the Florida sunshine, according to Pearl.

When Mr. Tobin's statement did not appear on the broadcast the other AFL brass discovered that he was hotter than the Miami sunshine. I wired him the details and Tobin took it up in his own rugged fashion with the guilty parties. Mr. Meany was on the phone half a dozen times next day trying to locate the AFL censor, who didn't seem to be available for a couple of days.

The calibre of the censor may be measured by a daily report on me which he turned in to Mr. Meany in the first month of his activities. He was busily assuring Meany and the others who received his missive that I was incompetent and incapable of holding an audience. In that same month, *Motion Picture Daily* announced that a poll of several hundred radio and television editors had just named me as one of the nation's three top commentators.

Also in that same month, according to the surveys, our audience was at the highest point it had yet attained. Mutual's figures showed that we had passed Fulton Lewis in audience ratings.

After the Tobin fiasco the hatchet squad changed their tactics for a time. The censor became more amenable and sometimes we even found occasion to have laughs together over news items that came our way. Actually, the AFL censor would probably have been a likable young man if he had not been assigned to such a contemptible job.

One of the orders he passed on to me was a mandate from Mr. Meany to the effect that I must not mention the name of Phil Murray, President of the CIO; Walter Reuther, President of the CIO United Auto Workers; John L. Lewis, President of the Mine Workers; or Dave McDonald, President of the CIO Steel Workers. I could mention them in case they died, otherwise their names were to be kept off the AFL program. This rule was in force for many months and led to instances

where CIO leaders quoted in connection with legitimate news stories were identified simply by the jobs they held.

Another difficulty developed over a news story which disclosed that an unidentified labor leader was accused of having visited Joe Fay, convicted extortionist who was in a New York prison. The censor couldn't decide whether to recommend the item to me or not. We didn't use it, but it was a close shave, for the labor leader who visited the extortionist was later identified as Mr. George Meany, President of the AFL.

Each day the censor spent about half an hour cutting up the copy that came in on the news machines, sorting it out into little piles and clipping them together. Having done this without exhausting himself, he then typed up a page which he called the program layout. Here he itemized the material which he proposed that I use on the night's broadcast. Some of these "suggestions" ran as high as thirty-four stories—and I had only twelve minutes and twenty seconds of air time. He was very neat about the manner in which he clipped and folded the copy, a task for which he was paid twelve thousand dollars per year. My secretary did the same job for sixty dollars a week and did her own work as well.

The sponsors had changed their opening commercial. After 1952, Joe McCaffrey opened the show by saying: "Frank Edwards is brought to you by the *ten* million men and women who make up the American Federation of Labor."

This change brought me a letter from a professor in a large Eastern university.

"Dear Mr. Edwards: Your opening announcement formerly introduced you as representing *eight* million men and women who make up the American Federation of Labor. Now, by its own words, the AFL boasts that it has *ten* million members. This is a twenty-five-per-cent increase in two years. How do you reconcile this with the AFL claim that the Taft-Hartley act is destroying the unions? A twenty-five-per-cent increase in membership in two years is a strange form of destruction, isn't it?"

I sent the letter up to Mr. Meany's secretary. If there was any reply, I never got a copy.

By mid-1953 the censor was pressing steadily for more items on the broadcast dealing with union officials, especially those in the AFL building in Washington. Also by mid-1953 I had had a bellyful of the whole business and I began looking about for another job. I had a few conferences with prospective employers but they never amounted to anything. It was going to take time.

I worked harder than ever to build the audience. The mail indicated that we were reaching a vast number of people in all walks of life. The eagerness of various members of Congress to be mentioned on the program showed that they were well aware of the scope of the broadcasts. When Congressman Dan Reed of New York was revealed as having set up a scheme to scuttle the President's proposal for improving social security, Reed and his committee members were deluged with mail, and had to abandon their plan. Reed told fellow congressmen that in all his years on Capitol Hill he had never seen such a flood of mail as "that fellow Edwards" brought down on him.

People were taking pride in their government—and they were also learning to take part in it—thanks to our broadcasts.

Secretary of the Treasury Humphrey was irate when, in June of 1953, I correctly anticipated the effect of his "Hard-Money Policy," which he had to abandon ninety days after he started it. I urged listeners who could afford it to buy Mr. Humphrey's new 3½% government bonds, and those who took my advice could have sold their bonds one year later with a profit of 13½%. Little people were being shown how to enjoy the harvest customarily reserved for bankers.

When my contract with the AFL expired in December of 1953, they made no offer to renew it. I thought nothing of this omission until listeners began sending me clippings hinting that plans had been made to dispense with my services. *The Hollywood Reporter* said on December 30: "We hear that the AFL has dropped news commentator Frank Edwards' Mutual show."

Daily Variety reported: "Frank Edwards, for the past four years AFL commentator, is being dropped. Mutual time has been renewed, so another succeeds."

Similar bits appeared in publications in Chicago and New York.

The AFL issued a statement to the effect that my contract had been renewed. The fact was that they had not even discussed such a renewal with me.

During this period of tension and doubt, I went to a member of the AFL Executive Council for whom I had considerable respect. I told him what was happening.

"I am not surprised, Frank. You've known for a long time that some of those birds are gunning for you. Have you got any other prospects?"

I replied that I had none.

"Then my advice to you is to settle for what you can get and then be on your guard. I haven't kept close touch on

things at headquarters but I'd say your days on the air for the AFL are numbered. Why? For one thing you are too popular with the members and with the public! Some of the prima donnas who can force you out are jealous of their power. They aren't going to have one of the hired hands getting the applause!"

As he spoke there flashed through my mind the warning that had been whispered into my ear back in 1950, when the roar of applause went up after my broadcast at the Morrison Hotel. In my mind's eye I could see again the displeasure written on the faces of some of those at the speaker's table, including many of the men with whom I now had to contend. I thanked my advisor and walked away.

After several weeks of stalling and haggling, the AFL gave me a contract which was signed in Secretary Treasurer Schnitzler's office on January 14th. It was almost identical with the contract for the previous year, except that this one gave the sponsor the right to extend the agreement through 1956, if they chose.

From that moment forward there could be little mistaking the shape of things to come. On March 11th, a senator invited me to come to his office for a private talk. He told me that he had just learned from friends in the Republican National Committee that I was going to be silenced or bounced. Why?

"I regret to say that some members of the Eisenhower Administration are very susceptible to criticism," said the senator. "You have bothered them no little by your reporting on their shortcomings as individuals and as members of the team. This is an election year and it is my understanding that they would feel more comfortable if you were silenced, or at least placed under severe restrictions."

"How do they propose to put the squeeze on me?"

"I didn't get any details," he said, "but I believe that such a thing could be done without too much difficulty."

The AFL censor began pressing for more international malarkey in the broadcasts, including twelve such "suggestions" in one program. More foreign news, more puff stories for a few AFL chieftains, less of the material that had made the program one of the nation's top radio news shows.

On May 3rd, Mr. Schnitzler's office called to notify me that Mr. Schnitzler wanted my mail turned over to him each day as soon as it arrived. "This is an order."

I immediately issued a memorandum to both of my secretaries, notifying them that effective as of that date I would open all communications of any kind addressed to me. Mr.

Schnitzler had been receiving a daily report on the nature and amount of mail I received. Neither he nor anyone else was going to open my mail, as I had formerly permitted my staff to do.

In opening my own mail I soon began to notice that I was getting complaints from editors of labor publications all over the country. They said they were not receiving my weekly column regularly and they wanted to know why the service had been disrupted.

It was a good question. When I had proposed starting the column in 1951, the AFL public-relations head, Phil Pearl, had opposed the idea.

"I tried it myself," said Pearl, "and only twelve papers ever ran the column I sent them. It just won't work."

Nevertheless, the AFL offered a column of excerpts from my broadcasts and by 1954 more than three hundred and forty papers were publishing the column each week. Suddenly I found that they were not receiving it regularly. I made inquiry and received evasive answers but the column started going out regularly for a few weeks, then came more complaints from the editors.

On July 7th, I got the answer. It was a memorandum to me, notifying me that Pearl had issued instructions that my column was not to be sent out to the editors of the labor papers until his office had approved its contents. Here was a dilly! The AFL censor had to approve it before it could be broadcast and the AFL public-relations director wanted to censor it again before he let the labor editors see it! Many of them were fully as competent as Pearl in their field, if indeed they were not more competent. Was he unwilling to trust their judgment of what they should run? Since I did not get paid for the column, I instructed my secretary to discontinue the practice of compiling it from my scripts.

July 14th:—Mr. Meany sent me a memorandum asking me to attend a meeting in his office at ten A.M. Wednesday, July 28th.

July 28th:—I went to Mr. Meany's office at the appointed time. Nobody there. His secretary suggested that I go back to my office. The meeting was already in progress in an office adjoining that of Mr. Meany. The AFL censor was there, along with Meany, Pearl, Schnitzler and a fellow named Novik, who is listed as the AFL Radio Consultant. For almost two hours I waited in my office and during that time I received four telephone calls from Meany and Schnitzler, telling me to come up to the meeting, canceling the order, and telling me to wait.

Shortly after twelve noon I left to keep another appointment.

August 3rd:—Went to meeting in Mr. Meany's office. Schnitzler also present. Meany read to me a long list of rules for conducting the radio program. Most of them were trite and dealt with procedures which I had established at the very outset of the program. I waited for the booby trap which I knew must be buried in the mess of trivia. It was there. I was notified that the AFL censor (still thinly disguised as an editor) would tell me what material I *must* use.

I had never before been able to get censorship rules in writing, always it had been verbal instructions. I asked if I might have a copy of the orders and was assured that one would be sent to me.

I got a quiet chuckle out of Rule D, instructing me to keep guest speakers limited to two minutes or less. That was funny to me because I had established the two-minute rule in 1951. The worst offenders had been Mr. Meany and Mr. Schnitzler. On June 18th, a little more than a month before, Schnitzler had blabbered on for three minutes and twenty-two seconds about his recent visit to Germany. On June 28th, Mr. Meany had devoted three full minutes of our air time to repeating something he had said previously on Capitol Hill.

During the course of that meeting in Mr. Meany's office, I took occasion to bring up the subject of the proposed AFL-CIO merger.

"How much emphasis do you feel should be given to the merger talk, Mr. Meany? Is it really going to happen?"

Meany chuckled. "Sure it's goin' to happen! It's gotta happen now. Just don't overplay it, though."

"What about Reuther's part in the merger?"

"Reuther! He's dead and don't know it."

Meany went into the next room to take a phone call. I put the next question to Schnitzler. "What does he mean about Reuther? I don't understand all this."

Schnitzler waved the matter down. "George means that all we gotta do now is to pick up the pieces!"

Mr. Meany came back. He again assured me that I would get a copy of the ground rules for censorship of the program which he had just read. We shook hands and I left. My resignation was still in my coat pocket. My attorneys had advised me not to submit it until I got a copy of the material.

I received my copy that same day, August 3rd. The following day Mr. Meany issued a follow-up order which tightened the censor's control over the program. It was a memo which notified all the AFL department heads with whom I had been

doing business for years that henceforth they must turn over any material for the broadcasts to my censor.

There was no need for any impetuous action which would disrupt the continuity of the program. If the AFL, for some reason unknown to me, had decided to change the format which had made the program a top-rated show, they had that right, as sponsors. Under the same circumstances. I could either accept the change or get out.

August 7th:—The AFL Executive Council was meeting at the Commodore Hotel in New York City. To Mr. Meany and to each member of the Council I mailed a copy of the censorship rules and the following letter:

August 7, 1954

Dear Mr. Meany:

Your memorandum of August 2nd, 1954, imposing serious limitations and censorship, constitutes a violation of the terms of our existing contract and is therefore totally unacceptable to me.

The widespread public acceptance of my broadcasts has been due to the originality of treatment and to my selection of materials. I cannot accept any conditions which would reduce me to a mere robot parroting the preconceived notions of a censor.

In accordance with our existing contract I am hereby notifying you that I am resigning effective at the end of the next thirteen week cycle as provided in the contract.

I am, of course, willing to negotiate with regard to any contract changes you desire, such changes to be applicable for the balance of my services under this contract and if mutual agreement is reached to comply with such changes for the period covered.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) Frank Edwards

They received their letters by special delivery on Sunday, August 8th.

I hoped that there would be no unpleasantness but I had little expectation that Mr. Meany would let us part on an amicable basis. I did my usual broadcasts on Monday and Tuesday nights, as though nothing had happened.

On Wednesday evening, August 11th, an attorney for the AFL phoned me four hours before broadcast time to inform me that I had been fired.

I was immediately swamped with phone calls from newsmen wanting to know what I had to say about Meany's blast at me? I had nothing to say because I had neither seen nor heard anything about it. I referred the reporters to my attorney, Warren Woods, who had prepared a statement to cover such a contingency. It said:

> Mr. Edwards finds Mr. Meany's demands totally unacceptable because they varied and violated the terms of his contract, and, in practice, amounted to a directive to slant the news to fit Meany's personal ambitions, animosities and prejudices.

In examining the statements issued by Mr. Meany and other AFL "spokesmen" at that time, it seems that they were laboring under some very strange delusions.

Pearl is quoted as saying that no effort was made to censor my material. Fact, or opinion? The directive from Mr. Meany, dated exactly one week earlier, notified me that the AFL censor would tell me what items I *must* use. The same directive of August 4th orders the censor to see that any opinions expressed must conform to those of the AFL.

An AFL "spokesman" is quoted as saying that I claimed to have been caught in a squeeze play between Meany and Dave Beck, the Teamster president. That is less than an opinion, it is an outright falsehood. I barely knew Dave Beck, and had only spoken to him twice, when we were introduced by mutual acquaintances. That was the entire extent of our relationship.

Mr. Meany told the Associated Press that "Edwards asked his listeners whether they wanted him to continue his nightly broadcasts on flying saucers."

I made no "nightly" broadcasts on flying saucers. In 1954 I made 158 broadcasts for the AFL. Flying saucers were mentioned on 17 of these broadcasts. And the AFL censor called six of the items to my attention so I could include them on the program. (At the time I was fired Major Keyhoe and I had reason to believe that Air Force resentment over my flying-saucer reports played a major part in my difficulties. Later I found that they were only a small part of the trouble. The real pressure originated elsewhere.)

In the commotion which surrounded them at the moment, Mr. Meany made what *The New Yorker* magazine called one of the most remarkable remarks of the year, when he told *The New York Times* that he had fired me because I was

"too pro-labor"! I find it difficult to believe that he actually fired me because I was working too hard for the men and women who paid my salary—and his expense account.

To this day I do not know what inspired the moves which forced off the program at a time when, according to the AFL's own admissions, my audience rating was at its peak.

The "explanations" which Meany and Pearl gave to the press at the time I was fired apparently left considerable doubt in the minds of many persons, both in and out of the labor field. Many AFL publications picked up and reprinted an editorial written by James Goodsell, of the *Oregon Labor Press*, who wrote:

> In four years on the air for the AFL, Edwards had built up a listening audience of many millions. With simplicity, humor and forthrightness, he had gained the trust and respect of Americans in all walks of life. He had won for the AFL the friendship of many Americans who had no connection with the labor movement.
>
> Then why was he fired?
>
> The real reason must lie deeper than the official AFL explanation, which was that Edwards "failed to differentiate clearly between news and opinion." This is hard to swallow, since Edwards was not a newscaster but a news analyst and commentator. It was his job to interpret the news, and he did it well.
>
> Right at the beginning of an important election campaign, the AFL has silenced its most effective voice, one of the few outspoken, intelligent, liberal voices remaining on the air.

What really did happen to force the AFL to scuttle its top-rated radio program, on which it had spent millions of dollars? Why did it take this action just before the important fall elections of 1954?

If the answer is not to be found in the strange "explanations" of Mr. Meany and Phil Pearl, then perhaps we should look elsewhere. One place of possible significance is the Department of Justice.

At the time the censorship restrictions were imposed on me by Mr. Meany's directive of August, 1954, the Department of Justice was conducting grand jury investigations of certain AFL union officials on an unprecedented scale. During the month immediately preceding my dismissal the Department of

Justice took action which brought about the indictment of 107 labor-union officials on various charges: extortion, conspiracy, embezzlement and so forth. The majority of those indicted were officials of various AFL unions.

At that same time I was consistently reporting to the nation on matters which were pleasing to the audience but displeasing to the Eisenhower Administration.

It may be only coincidence, but on the morning of August 11th, 1954, Dave Beck, president of the AFL Teamsters' Union, several of whose minor officials were under pressure from the Department of Justice, visited the White House. On the late afternoon of that same day, I was notified that my services had been dispensed with.

Did the political overlords of the Eisenhower Administration demand that I be silenced?

Was there any relationship between the Department of Justice campaign against labor racketeering and the AFL's decision to put me off the air?

I do not know. Perhaps time will tell. Meanwhile the record must speak for itself.

In the midst of the commotion which attended my stormy severance from the AFL program, I felt like the actor who was being heckled by a couple of knuckleheads in the audience. The beleagured thespian went on with his work as best he could, until one of the hecklers threw a large turnip which struck the actor on the head. Picking up the turnip, the actor took a bite of it, munched thoughtfully and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen: This is humiliating—but I also find it to be quite wholesome!"

14. To the Ear—We Add the Eye

ROGER PRICE, famed comedian who originated the Droodles cartoons, had just interviewed me as a guest on his network television program, where we discussed some little-known angles of the so-called flying saucers. As we waited for the traffic light at 57th and Broadway, Rog said to me for the umteenth time: "Get into television! With your background in radio and show business and the other things you've done, TV is made for you."

From my long-time buddy Ray Allen (like Rog, a graduate of the Bob Hope staff) I got the same persistent prodding: "Get into television! If you can't break in around New York,

come on out here to Hollywood. You're made to order for TV."

In Washington, I heard the same advice from Jack Anderson and Fred Blumenthal, Washington editors of *Parade* magazine. In spite of my double chins and receding hairline, they all assured me that TV was the business for me.

I could not agree with them. Night after night I had watched the TV news programs in Washington and the more I watched, the less respect I had for the medium. Many of the television newsmen were men whom I knew personally to be competent and capable reporters but when they showed up on my set they were just automatons reading yards and yards of wire copy to an audience which presumably could not read for itself. Stale news and stale films all added up to stale programs on my set.

During the 1952 political convention in Chicago I had been a panel member on some television programs over WBKB and other Chicago stations. It had been an enjoyable experience and I had felt right at home, tossing questions at senators and congressmen with whom I had been working for several years. Once the conventions were over I forgot TV, and TV made no effort to lure me away from radio.

In late 1954 I made some films for television at a couple of Washington studios. The films were conventional panel discussions and deserved no better than the cold shoulder they received. They brought home to me very clearly the fact that if I was going to make any headway in this new medium I would have to do it on my own; there was no television future for me in merely asking questions.

In the parlance of show business, I wanted to do a single.

A single, yes, but what kind of a single? Should I drop the news broadcasting entirely and devote my time to being a master of ceremonies, sort of a latter-day Tom Brenneman? That was a matter to which I had devoted a great deal of time and thought. My inclination to move in that direction was strengthened by the fact that Washington is probably the tourist capital of the world and while I was doing my network news shows from there I was frequently host to visiting groups of youngsters, business clubs and ladies' organizations from every corner of the nation. They would come up and sit through my broadcast and afterward I would devote an hour or more to answering questions, or often just reminiscing with them.

Why not build a network program around those visitors, letting it originate from Washington, where four million visi-

tors per year would provide an endless supply of audience material? Why not let the visitors meet the senators and congressmen and cabinet members and the embassy staffs from other lands? Why not build a little show where the folks back home could see those who were visiting Washington and have some fun with them at the same time? Why not?

I might as well have been trying to sell pickled porcupines. Time after time I tried to interest the Washington businessmen's group that is generally alert to promotions that bring in more people and more business. They couldn't take time to hear my story. Station after station listened and lapsed into silence.

Finally I got the idea that perhaps I was an anachronism, a man who had been passed by without realizing it. I was still thinking of broadcasting as a form of show business, where a good show got a good audience. Was that no longer true? Had broadcasting reached a point where ballyhoo and promotion could lure an audience regardless of program content? I had no answers. I was frustrated and a bit confused.

Whenever I get into a troubled state of mind I have one prescription on which I can rely—go fishing. There is something soothing to me about sitting on the back end of a boat as it wallows along with the engines muttering. It doesn't really matter whether I catch any fish, I get my money's worth and more out of the escape from the troubled little world in which we live these days. Quiet and peace and sanity are my constant companions when I'm fishing. I love to go to Jesse Sparks's magnificent Rod and Reel Club on Lake Harris in Florida, where Jesse made a confirmed fisherman out of me by helping me catch my first black bass, an old lunker that weighed ten and a half pounds.

Fred Blumenthal flew with me to Key West, where we lost ourselves in battles with tarpon and dolphin and barracuda. Since he'd been urging me to switch to television, he had tried to help me. He understood the frustration and the difficulties that I had encountered and he also realized the advisability of getting the right connection before I made a move.

What was the right connection for me? News, perforce, but news where I would not be subject to the kind of pressure and sniping that had marred my last two years under George Meany. A news job that would include television with the chance to experiment and study the medium. Above all, a news job with an organization which I could trust, through thick and thin.

The more Fred and I talked, the clearer it became that I

had already had just such an offer but had held it in abeyance. My two good friends Sarkes Tarzian and Bob Lemon, owner and manager respectively of television station WTTV in Bloomington, Indiana had sounded me out on my intentions in early 1955. We had known each other since my days on radio in Indianapolis and since I had come to Washington I had been able to help them a time or two when they needed a friend in the nation's capital. Now they needed a newsman—and I needed television. Could we make a deal?

We could and did. WTTV covers Indianapolis and a major portion of Indiana and Illinois. The listeners in that coverage area knew me and I felt that I knew them. I was anxious to see what I could do in TV with a news program that played no favorites and missed no bets. Tarzian and Lemon gave me the freedom to do the job my way, win, lose or draw.

My first broadcast from WTTV took place late on a rainy afternoon in mid-September of 1955. It was a sort of hasty-pudding affair from the studios near Bloomington. My material was nothing more than some copy which I had typed out on a half-dozen sheets of white paper, news stories interspersed with a handful of still pictures. By and large, I was doing exactly what I had criticized the boys in Washington for doing, I was giving the audience a radio newscast on television. My nervousness was all too obvious; the stool on which I sat swayed perilously on a rickety platform. There was the chance that the whole thing would flip and dump me out of the picture—and I sort of hoped that it would.

Thirty-one years I had been in the business, but you would never have guessed it from that godawful first news broadcast I did for WTTV. It was amateur night where somebody forgot to give me the hook. After it was over I never bothered to go back through the studios to my office, I just grabbed my hat and slunk off through the rain to my car. Frank the Fizzle, I told myself. "So you're the guy who popped off about the newsmen on TV—and now you're making the same mistakes! You—the guy who was going to do it better! Put up or shut up!"

The sponsors, God bless 'em, were charitable and willing. We promptly signed with Wiedemann's Beer and John Feeser, "famous for Fords," to pay the bills on my show. And little by little, as the weeks rolled by, I became familiar with the tools of my new trade: facsimile pictures hot off the wire, movies and stills from our own photographers, dissolves, superimpositions, the use of taped voices behind still pictures of the

speakers. Thanks to my many years in photography the problems of lighting and lenses presented no difficulties. Suddenly I found myself *liking* this television business. It was a change that came one evening as I was waiting to go on the air. The lights were blazing, the camera was aimed at me, there was music and crowd noise filtering through from the network show which preceded me.

"This is just what you've been looking for," I told myself. "This is show business, movies and radio all rolled into one. Now get out there and make it live—you're on!"

From that second I have never had an uneasy moment before the cameras. There was a marked difference in my appearance, and friends noticed it. Suddenly I had composure and assurance; I began to put zest into my delivery and it showed up on the TV screens. At long last I could glimpse the way to doing things which I thought needed doing. Would these ideas work out, after all?

For the first week I stuck closely to wire copy, rewriting every word of it and injecting as many humorous bits and oddities as I could find. Through friends in Washington I got a set of recent photographs of Mars, showing some remarkable changes in its surface markings. This item, plus the pictures, brightened one program. Meanwhile, I was checking regularly with state police, city police and other law enforcement groups for any late items. It was routine, of course, but it was effective because my contemporaries were apparently relying on wire copy alone.

Little by little I began to get the feel of the business. I varied the fare by throwing in some editorial cartoons from various newspapers to illustrate differing viewpoints on the current news, being careful to present both sides of the scene in each case. After I had been on the air only five weeks, an Audience Bureau area survey, of the forty-two counties we covered, showed that I had already passed such long established network favorites as Douglas Edwards of CBS, John Cameron Swayzee of NBC, and John Daly of ABC.

There was a manslaughter trial in progress at Judge Saul Rabb's court in Indianapolis. The Judge was a friend of mine from years gone by. Would he permit me to bring a sound-film camera into his court to record the highlights of the trial for our television audience? Judge Rabb was receptive to the idea and he very kindly secured the approval of the prosecutor and the attorney for the defense. There were some restrictions, however: We could not change the lighting in the courtroom and we could not move around the room.

Neither of these factors was troublesome. The extremely sensitive film we used required little light and the zoom lens on the camera enabled us to take close-ups of the principals from twenty feet away.

Obviously we could not afford to photograph the entire proceedings. And we did not want the entire proceedings, for in this trial, as in many others, some of the testimony was of a nature which would have been offensive to the television audience. By doing the coverage on film, we could capture the really important and interesting aspects of the trial without subjecting our audience to material which was objectionable by its nature.

We worked out a very simple system to reduce our filming to worthwhile portions of the trial. Here was a man charged with manslaughter in the hit-and-run killing of a small boy on a bicycle. The prosecutor was trying to secure a conviction on evidence which was largely circumstantial. The defense counsel was engaged in casting doubt on the validity of the evidence. As each side reached points of importance in their questioning, the attorney involved would briefly touch the lapel of his coat as a signal to our cameraman, and we would record the scene. It was an unobtrusive gesture which did not interfere with the trial, yet it enabled us to get the real meat of the testimony on film with a minimum of difficulty.

Those trial movies were packed with drama, of course, and our audience indicated by their calls and letters that they liked what we were doing, and when the jury found the defendant guilty, we got the verdict on film.

On the night of November 1st, 1955, I scored my first major scoop on television. Like most newsbeats, it was the result of prompt action—and good connections.

The bulletin came through about nine P.M. "Airliner explodes in mid-air near Longmont, Colorado." As the story grew with each add to the bulletin, it became clear that here was a major tragedy with strange overtones. I was trying to write my eleven P.M. news program, a job that generally takes me about two hours. Since this plane crash would almost certainly be my lead story, I decided to leave it until the last few minutes before I went on the air—and then I noticed an oddity in the story. The tail section of the plane was found more than a mile from the rest of the debris in which forty-four persons had died. Now I knew enough about planes to realize that they do not shed entire tail sections unless there has been a tremendous explosion or collision. Since there had been no mid-air collision, the explosion had to come from

the baggage compartment underneath the plane and near the tail section. An explosion in the baggage compartment probably meant sabotage, perhaps sabotage for insurance.

It looked like a whale of a story, but how to check it?

While I was on MBS I had made several trips to Denver and I had met quite a few people there, including several pilots and other persons who were familiar with the airport operation. I put in a call for one of them, and in a matter of minutes I had my party on the line. Could he tell me whether any action had been taken to check the flight-insurance machines in the airport lobby? He called me back in about an hour:

"The officials have already opened the insurance machines, and I understand that the ones in the airport lobby earlier this evening have been replaced with other machines."

There was my story—probable bombing for insurance—with the bomb placed in the baggage compartment of the ill-fated plane. I had the details at eleven o'clock on the night of November 1st, a little more than two hours after the plane plunged to earth in a Colorado beet field. As the days dragged by it became increasingly clear that my original report was correct in all essentials. Thirteen days later it was officially confirmed when prosecution of the accused saboteur got underway in Denver.

By this time I had been on WTTV for about two months and I was beginning to pick up more and more local news as I renewed old contacts and cultivated fresh ones. Political chitchat, police activities, interviews with prominent citizens and visiting dignitaries who had something worthwhile to say, these things all added to the program.

I had no way of knowing it, but the strangest experience of my thirty-one years in broadcasting was already in the works.

Ronnie Weitcamp, a tow-headed three-year-old, vanished from his home near the Crane Naval Depot at Crane, Indiana, in the rugged south-central portion of the state. The child was reported missing shortly before noon on October 11th and by mid-afternoon an intensive search was underway, directed by Commander Richard Turner of the Naval Depot. Darkness found hundreds of volunteer searchers beating the thickets around the Weitcamp home; WTTV was broadcasting the child's picture every hour, state police were already tracking down scattered reports that a child resembling Ronnie had been seen at various places around the state.

Days passed with no tangible evidence of Ronnie's fate. I broadcast his picture almost daily in the hope that it might

help bring the child back to his grief-stricken parents. They were guests on my program one night, but it was all in vain. The search ground to a halt. Dead end.

On the night of October 22nd, eleven days after the child had vanished, my wife and I were speculating as to what might have happened and what chance existed, if any, of finding him alive. Had any possibility been overlooked? Any method that might provide even the slimmest clue to his fate?

Mary reminded me of the instance in 1952 when authorities in Massachusetts had resorted to a most unorthodox procedure in their search for a missing child. Neither of us recalled the details but a quick check through my cross-indexed card files brought out the script in which I had dealt with the astonishing newswire story on Danny Matson. After prolonged search for the child had come to nought, the District Attorney of Quincy, Massachusetts, had sent representatives to Richmond, Virginia, to ask Lady Wonder, the famed "Talking Horse" for possible assistance. And, according to the authorities, the horse had directed them to the rock quarry where the child's body was found. The horse, said the reports, spelled out answers by flipping up the proper letters of the alphabet with its nose, the letters painted on squares of tin and hanging from a long iron bar across her stall.

Was the remarkable old mare still alive? She had been twenty-seven years old at the time of the Danny Matson case in 1952. Here it was three years later, the horse would be at least thirty years old, a veritable equine Methuselah if she still lived.

Did I dare use material from such a source? The risk would be considerable, for talking horses are slightly out of the regular run of accepted news sources. If I did use such material I knew that I could expect ridicule galore, some of which might attach to the station.

The manager, Bob Lemon, and I talked it over by long-distance that Saturday night. The upshot of our conversation was that I was to use my own judgment and handle the story as I thought best, on the basis of my many years' experience in the business.

It took a bit of persuasion to induce two of my personal friends in Washington to make the trip to Richmond in order to put the questions to the horse. They made the trip the following day, Sunday, and phoned me Sunday night to make their report.

They asked the horse if it could tell them why they were there.

Without hesitation the horse spelled out B-O-Y.

Subsequent questions brought replies from the horse to the effect that Ronnie was already dead, had not been kidnaped, that his body was in a hole near an elm tree less than a mile from where he was last seen.

When would he be found?

D-E-C, the horse spelled out, then the aged mare shuffled away and the "interview" was over.

On October 24th I broadcast the "answers" the horse had given us and identified my source only as one that was most unusual if not downright fantastic. On the following day I revealed my source and showed the audience the pictures and stories on the same horse which had been carried by *Life*, *Time* and various newspapers at the time of the remarkable Matson case in December of 1952. The broadcast was a sensation; it brought me a barrage of ridicule, as anticipated.

Weeks dragged by with no trace of the missing child. November marched off the calendar. Would the child be found—in December—as the horse had predicted? Many thousands of people in this part of the midwest were asking themselves that question.

On the afternoon of December 5th, two teen-age boys found the body of little Ronnie Weitcamp. Pathologists determined that Ronnie had actually been dead at the time the horse said he was dead; the child had not been kidnaped; his body was found in a little gully or ravine slightly more than a mile from his home. There were some scrub saplings near his body; the nearest elm tree was about thirty feet away.

We offered free copies of my scripts dealing with this fantastic incident. Thousands of requests poured in; my office alone handled more than twenty-eight hundred such letters before we transferred the activity to WTTV in Bloomington.

Many weird and inexplicable stories have come across my desk in these past thirty years but never an equal to this one. Fantastic? Yes, but is it really more fantastic than television itself? Who could have known, when I first walked into that Pittsburgh studio so many years ago that the day was not far distant when the audience which was hearing me through the magic ear of radio would also see me through the enchanted eye of television? Local and national television, which would have constituted a minor miracle twenty-five years ago, is already commonplace. Global television is preparing to follow the footsteps of global radio. With space-travel only a few years away, the frontiers of human experience will soon ac-

quire new and incredible dimensions, directed and reported by broadcasting.

As you may have suspected, I am in love with my work. I always have been. Each day a new challenge, a new opportunity to be of service, a new chance to learn something, to make new friends. Television adds a fascinating array of tools with which to do the job differently. If I use these tools wisely I should be able to do a better job than ever before.

My attitude toward this latest phase of my career is like Horatio Alger's attitude toward sex. For more than thirty years Mr. Alger preserved his virginity, until he fell into the clutches of a winsome little waitress in Paris. Next morning, in his diary, Mr. Alger wrote:

"Why! oh why! did I wait so long?"

35¢

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