DOs AND DONTs OF RADIO WRITING

RALPH ROGERS

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PREFACE

IN his daily work of collaborating with hundreds of professional and amateur radio writers, the author discovered that most of these writers were sorely in need of a handy, practical, boiled-to-the-bone working guide, containing thoroughly tested "firing line" helps which could be referred to instantly and applied immediately to the task at hand.

Unable to find anything like this on the market, he has written this book in the hope that it will meet the need of these writers and the thousands of others who are anxious to win success in the newest of the writing fields, radio.

After more than ten years' experience in the writing, producing and selling of network and local shows, the writer is firmly convinced that the majority of radio scripters find it more difficult to sell than to write. Therefore, he has included straight-from-the-shoulder "Do's and Don'ts" on marketing, together with a chapter on one of the greatest problems confronting radio writers today—that of protecting their program ideas and material against plagiarism.

In teaching the subject of "Radio Writing" at Boston University since 1934, the author has found that noth-

ing is of more help to the embryonic scripter than actual copies of professionally prepared scripts. He trusts that the sample mystery, dramatic and comedy scripts included in this book will be as helpful to all tyros as the scripts which he has used in his University classes.

In telling the TRUTH about this new business of writing and selling radio material, the author is well aware that the advice and information packed into these few pages may not entirely agree with much that has been printed elsewhere. If, in calling a spade a spade, he has forgotten to put "plush" on the handle, he has done so deliberately because he believes that the hard working writer, who is digging in to succeed in radio writing, should have a firm-handled grip on the spade.

RALPH ROGERS

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THE PROGRAM IDEA

Many writers have a yearning to write for radio because they believe that writing a radio show is much easier than writing for the magazines, stage or screen. Is it? Let's face the facts.

The playwright who can produce one show a year is generally heralded far and wide as a genius. The radio playwright who cannot write at least one or more programs a week is rarely ever classified as a successful script writer.

The major task of the stage playwright concerns characters, dialogue and plot. The radio playwright, when writing a new show for the air, must face practically all the problems of the stage playwright, minus the help of scenery and pantomime. In addition, the new program must be based on a successful IDEA which will not only entertain millions, but will be so prepared that it will combine all the best elements of showmanship with salesmanship.

In other words, the successful radio program must be carefully written to win and hold a capacity audience over a period of thirteen, twenty-six or fifty-two weeks. It must be built not only to entertain, but also to sell merchandise or to build prestige for a sponsor's product.

Study the programs on the air. Particularly note how few are "distinctly different". Then, you'll have a better understanding of radio's greatest need — new program ideas.

Today, more than eighty-five percent of the big, commercial, network shows are produced by advertising agencies—not radio stations. Due to a scarcity of dependable program ideas, most of these advertising agen-

cies are protecting themselves and their clients' money by buying NAME artists.

Already the listening audience is tired of hearing the same artists over and over again. Soon they will demand air shows that compare more favorably with the successful plays of the screen and stage. The day of SHOWMANSHIP in radio is here. A small fortune awaits any writer who can build this type of program—a program that will win and hold a capacity listening audience over a period of fifty-two weeks or longer. The radio shows of the future must be planned to "wear in, not out".

"Watch your second act," is the advice given to those who write for the stage. Watch your program IDEA when you are building a new show for the air. Get started right!

DO'S	DON'TS
Build your program idea for a thirteen, twenty-six or fifty-two weeks' run.	Avoid ideas similar to those already being used on established shows.
Protect your idea against piracy by getting it onto the air as soon as possible.	Never accuse anyone of pirating your idea, unless you have absolute proof. Ideas have a habit of being born "twins" in different minds which are miles apart.
Get the habit of "ageing" your idea. Think it over a few days before you definitely decide it is worth marketing.	Think twice before you build a comedy program on gags alone. Situations of a comedy nature, plus gags, always make the best comedy material.
Build your program for a national audience, even if it is to be used only on a local station. If the show clicks, it may have network possibilities.	Don't make a practice of testing your program ideas on friends. Most real friends make poor critics.
Make a practice of visiting radio studios and witnessing air per-	

DO'S

formances from "behind the scenes". By doing so, you will not build shows which are too difficult or impossible to produce.

Remember that the radio audience is a family audience. Air shows that enjoy the largest audiences usually aim to entertain men, women and children.

Always retain a carbon copy of any idea you submit in writing. If you use the mails, it is wise to register your letter.

Check the local, as well as network shows on the air, to make sure your idea is original and is not being used elsewhere.

Make a practice of submitting your idea in written form, even when you have the advantage of presenting it in person. Suggest that the prospect read the presentation in the comfort of his home, instead of a busy office.

Read all of the radio trade papers for up-to-the-minute news regarding new and established shows.

Listen to all the best shows on the air, and carefully analyze the ideas behind the success of these programs.

Study the great show ideas of the past in the field of the legitimate stage and motion picture.

DON'TS

Never submit an idea as original when it, in any way, imitates another show on the air. It is suicidal.

Avoid the habit of shopping your ideas in a "wholesale" manner. It cheapens their value and increases the danger of piracy.

Don't attempt to market your own program idea unless you are a super-salesman. A writer is always at a disadvantage when talking about himself and his brainchild.

Never get discouraged if you can't think of a good program idea over night. Good ideas are ordinarily the result of long hours of concentrated thinking and, sometimes, weeks of research.

Steer far clear of program ideas that are morbid, or deal with subjects which offend sensitive listeners.

Don't hold out for a big price for your first program idea. One successful show paves the way for others. Then you can demand bigger money.

Avoid ideas based on religion, politics or racial backgrounds. One cannot offend listeners and then expect them to purchase a sponsor's product.

DO'S

Strive for a type of feature which will make your program "wear in, not out".

Combine merchandising tie-ups with your program idea whenever possible. Remember that sponsors buy time on the air to sell their products, not merely to entertain listeners.

When building a show for a certain type of sponsor, be sure to first study the sponsor's advertising and product. Remember that your show is to be the sponsor's air salesman.

Remember that most people react favorably to novelty. Balanced shows, plus novelty, was the secret behind the success of vaudeville. Novelty and balance is still the showman's surest success formula.

Check carefully the best method of putting your idea into program form. A program which at first seems best suited for a half-hour show is sometimes better presented in a number of fifteen minute programs, three to five times weekly.

Plan your program idea so that the show will have new twists. Then it can't go stale.

DON'TS

Never test a serial program idea by broadcasting only a couple of episodes. Serial type shows generally require many weeks on the air before a correct audience reaction can be secured.

Don't depend upon name artists to make your program idea salable. Many times a good idea can make an obscure artist famous. Radio is badly in need of these new radio-made names.

Never resent constructive criticism of your idea. There is no place in radio for the writer who professes to know it all.

Never claim too much for your idea. Nothing is so obvious to a prospective sponsor as overstatement.

Think twice before you throw an idea into the wastebasket; BUT, never waste time developing an idea which refuses to germinate after you have given thought to it from all angles.

THE RADIO AUDIENCE

Nothing is more important to the success of a radio playwright than a knowledge of the likes and dislikes of the radio audience. One must always keep uppermost in mind that, although the theatre of the air seats millions, this vast audience is broken up into small *family groups.*

Many successful stage playwrights have failed to win success in writing for radio because they neglected to study carefully the difference between entertaining home audiences and theatre audiences.

Many stars of the stage and screen have also gone down to defeat on the air because they failed to recognize that radio acting differs in many respects from stage acting.

Large theatre audiences react differently than do family audiences. In the theatre, the audience is usually in a *mood* to be entertained. When one pays good money to see a show, he usually remains in the theatre even when the performance is pretty bad.

Radio entertainment is free to anyone who owns a radio set. Rarely ever is the family seated directly in front of the loud speaker. Father may be reading, mother may be sewing and the children may be playing. If concentrated attention is to be won and held, the radio program must be carefully prepared and performed. It is so easy to dial to another station.

Then, too, the radio playwright must work against the element of Time. A legitimate stage play may safely run two hours. Most programs on the air are of the fifteen-minute and half-hour variety. Be sure to consider this carefully before you write a line of script.

Why, you may ask, do some air shows which seem very ordinary to you continue week after week? The answer lies in the fact that the big network shows have a potential audience of millions; even when certain millions dislike the feature, there are still other millions who find the program entertaining.

However, when a show lacks real entertainment value, it is extremely dangerous to depend upon this law of average for a "success decision". No capacity audience has ever been won by a weak show. With better features coming on the air every day, the poor programs are being rapidly forced out of the picture.

If it is true that "Knowledge is Power", a knowledge of the likes and dislikes of the radio audience is one of the most powerful helps a writer can have in winning success in this newest of the writing fields. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE!

DO'S

Strive for a type of program that will be understood and enjoyed by all types of listeners from coast to coast.

Combine music, drama, comedy and names, if your job is to turn out a big show aimed to win a capacity audience.

Remember that your radio audience, in the mass, has a mental age of about fourteen.

Build your program so that it will immediately attract the attention of the family. Don't let your program lack listener interest—it's so easy to dial to another station.

DON'TS

Never forget that the radio audience is a *family audience.*

Don't forget that the theatre of the air covers the whole of the United States.

Avoid trying to educate the radio audience when you are trying to entertain them.

Steer far clear of the sophisticated type of entertainment if you are aiming at a capacity audience.

Don't expect the audience to make allowances for the quality of your show just because you are using local talent which does

DO'S

Remember that shows which combine music, comedy and drama should be paced rather fast if the program is slanted to win a mass audience.

Carefully study the advisability of writing your show to please both a studio and an air audience. Most producers prefer studio audiences when the major part of the show is comedy.

Study your fan mail carefully. A criticism from one listener who takes the time to write may mirror the reaction of many who will never write. Of course, "nut" letters can be ignored.

See to it personally that all fan mail is answered whenever possible. An ardent fan can be a great booster for a show. "Over the fence" publicity is not to be overlooked if you want listeners to "talk up" your show.

Get good, clean, sparkling comedy into your programs whenever possible. Seventy-five percent of the most popular shows on the air today feature comedy. America loves to laugh!

Strive to please all listeners; but never forget that no one yet has ever been able to develop a type of entertainment that everyone will agree is tops.

DON'TS

not compare favorably with network artists. Radio audiences do not differentiate between local and national network programs.

Never belittle the intelligence of the radio audience, even tho program builders agree that a mass audience of the air may mentally be compared to a motion picture audience.

Think twice when trying to visualize the "average family". Be careful that you do not make the mistake of thinking that your own family exactly represents families in all parts of the United States.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that the likes and dislikes of your own neighborhood represent the likes and dislikes of millions of families.

Don't forget the women in the radio audience, even when writing sports features slanted principally at men. Most homes have but one radio set.

Never expect millions of "praise letters", even when you feel sure that you have a hit show. Fan mail today is considerably less than when radio was a novelty.

Avoid letting your own likes and dislikes for certain types of

DO'S

Do your best to get something into your show that will appeal to the children, even when writing an adult program. A child listener will many times win adult listeners for your show.

Remember that most men prefer action; women want romance. The show which combines both action and romance has a better chance of pleasing both sexes.

Keep in mind that surveys prove children are most interested in dialogue shows which use plenty of sound effects. This is one reason why so many children listen to certain types of shows planned principally for adults.

DON'TS

entertainment influence you in building a show. You're writing for the radio audience, not to entertain yourself.

Don't forget that the daytime audience is composed largely of women and that they react favorably to serial features.

Don't overlook the fact that the radio audience responds heartily to news broadcasts. Capitalize on this desire for news whenever possible.

SELECTING RADIO CHARACTERS

In selecting your characters for dramatic or comedy scripts for the air, it is most important that you keep constantly in mind that you are writing for the ear and not the eye.

Imagine that you are selecting characters for a play which will be witnessed by an audience of the blind. It is immediately apparent that your characters will be distinguished wholly by lines and voices. Radio acting is voice acting. Your characters have no other means of interpreting their parts. This is one reason why many well known stage actors have found it difficult to win favor with radio audiences. Unable to depend upon gesture, facial expressions and the other stage aids, many a stage favorite has found it impossible to convey his personality to his unseen and unseeing audience.

Radio characters should also be limited to as few in number as possible. This makes it easier for the listeners to follow your play. Limited to fifteen-minute and half-hour periods, the radio playwright does not have the time to set characters as does the stage playwright.

Characters whose voices contrast sharply are always preferred by those whose work it is to cast and produce radio programs. It is also wise to select characters who, by their voices alone, have no difficulty in immediately establishing the characterizations. The English butler, the farmer, colored maid, Irish cop and Southern types are as easily recognized by the ear as by the eye.

Much has been written on the importance of "living" with your characters before you attempt to put them into a story or play. This is doubly true when you are

writing for radio. Characterizations must be extremely well defined.

One of the most successful writers of radio serials makes it a practice to select characters who will immediately win favor with all members of the family audience. He includes a character that will appeal to the women, another for the men, one for the children and a few supporting characters aimed to win listeners of all ages.

Pace of voice is many times important in the characters you select. Dialogue between a slow speaking and a fast talking character immediately establishes each character and makes it much easier for the listener to know who is talking. Contrast of voices also helps to relieve the monotony of the spoken lines. "Amos 'n' Andy" is an excellent example of two characters with perfect voice timing and contrast.

Most radio writers generally select their characters first, then build their story afterward. Of course, in writing for established names, this procedure is always necessary.

The fact that many program titles are built around the names of the leading characters in the program is evidence that characters in a radio script are of major importance.

According to the old adage, children are born to be seen and not heard; radio characters are born to be HEARD and not seen.

DO'S	DON'TS
Always keep in mind the fact that your radio characters must appeal to the ear and not the eye. Radio acting is voice acting.	Avoid using too many characters. When you use more than five, you run the danger of confusing the listeners. Challenge

DO'S

Whenever possible, see that your radio characters contrast sharply in voice characterization.

Select characters who will easily win favor with the family type of audience.

Form the habit of creating your characters first, when writing radio serials. Then build your story.

Remember that lovable characters, like MA PERKINS, are especially popular with the radio audience.

In selecting comedy characters, you will do well to choose types which have been popularized on screen and stage.

Make it a practice to select characters which are easy to portray, when you are writing scripts to be produced in cities where good performers are scarce. Difficult casting will, many times, discourage production on the smaller stations.

Select characters who are naturally interesting to family audiences. An old maid aunt is much better comedy material than the so-called country hick.

Remember that a family audience will enjoy the Big Hearted Herbert characters much more

DON'TS

each character above this number.

Steer far away from characters who speak with a dialect that is hard to understand.

Don't use characters with habits which will be obnoxious to the radio audience. Air listeners prefer clean-living characters.

Challenge the advisability of using characters whose racial or religious characteristics are belittling to the foreign born, or to any religious group.

Never use burlesqued characterizations of revered Americans; as Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Robert E. Lee or Theodore Roosevelt.

Think twice before you select characters who lisp, stutter, are hard of hearing, or who have other physical defects, when you are building comedy characters. Afflicted persons in the listening audience may feel that they are being ridiculed.

Don't use a number of the same type of characters in any one script, unless you have other characters which c o n t r a s t sharply with them.

Challenge the comedy character who has to depend upon a tag

DO'S

than the wise-cracking type. Dumb, slow-thinking characters give the audience a superiority complex that they enpoy.

Always select true-to-life characters, when writing the serial type of program. "ONE MAN'S FAMILY" is an excellent example of holding the mirror of radio at the right angle to correctly reflect family characters.

For an all-comedy script featuring a comedian, make sure that you do not include characters who steal too many laughs from the "star". Many top-notch comedians have the reputation of demanding a corner on the laughs in the show.

Remember that a comedy character who can "take it" and "come back for more" is always popular with the radio audience. Study the style of Jack Benny.

DON'TS

line to get repeated laughs. Tag lines are extremely popular for a little while, but they wear out quickly.

Avoid using characters who must be rapid-fire talkers to win interest. Rapid-fire talk on the air is hard to understand, and even more difficult to follow; especially for slow-thinking listeners. Only a very few comedy characters have been able to succeed as fast talkers.

Think carefully before you select colored characters or rural characters for comedy scripts. These types have been used so often that it takes a veteran writer to put them over.

WRITING THE DRAMATIC SCRIPT

Radio has yet to produce a Shakespeare. Dramatic writing for the air is still in its infancy. The opportunities in this field are unlimited; the pitfalls are many.

Limited to fifteen-minute and half-hour periods the radio dramatist is faced with a problem not encountered by the stage playwright. Even when writing for an occasional full hour air-show, the radio playwright is still handicapped by lack of time.

He is also faced with the problem of radio taboos. Most anything goes on the stage; but in writing for the family audience, he must not mention any subject that couldn't be included in a children's bedtime story.

Maybe this somewhat silly censorship will relax as radio "grows up", but the air will never permit certain types of plays which are always welcome on the screen and legitimate stage.

Then there is the matter of technique. It differs considerably from that employed by stage and screen playwrights. Minus scenery and pantomime, the radio drama must depend entirely upon the ear and imagination of the listener. Practically all action and lines must be conveyed by voice alone.

The radio playwright must also steer far clear of the stage playwright's habit of using the first act to set characters and plot. In radio, these must be set in the first few lines, for, unless interest is developed immediately, the listener may dial to another station.

The radio playwright would do well to start with what might be termed the "second act". He should get into his plot as soon as possible. THE CONFLICT should be established immediately.

If interest lags in the stage play, the audience rarely ever walks out; but let this take place in the radio drama and click go the dials to another station. In the theatre, there is but one play; on the air, the programs are many.

Owen Davis, one of the most prolific stage playwrights of the day, found it more difficult to write three episodes of a radio drama than to write a three-act play for the legitimate theatre. Reports state that he was paid $1,000.00 for each of his dramatic air plays. When you compare his radio earnings with what he would receive for a three-act play, you will have one of the main reasons why there are not more recognized stage playwrights writing for the air.

Because of this, the novice has an excellent opportunity to win a name for himself in writing air dramas, although he cannot expect to get rich overnight. Top prices for radio network dramas average about $100 per script. Many small radio stations pay as little as five dollars for dramatic plays.

The dramatic playwright of the air should either aim at the network shows or have his plays electrically transcribed. If fifty stations can be sold the same play electrically transcribed, the radio playwright should net at least five dollars per station.

Before he writes a line, let the writer who would win fame as a radio playwright invest considerable time in the study of this new technique of dramatic writing. If he does not, he is doomed to many heart-breaking disappointments and the waste of considerable time and money.

DO'S	DON'TS
Get into your play as soon as possible. Establish the nature of the CONFLICT in the very first few paragraphs, and keep the	Avoid sophisticated plots and dialogue. Remember, radio is a mass audience which gathers in the home.

DO'S

play moving forward every minute it is on the air.

Limit your principal characters to not more than five, if possible, and don't waste too much precious time setting their traits.

Remember that the radio audience reacts best to ACTION plots. When the radio play drags, the audience finds it very easy to dial to another station.

Check the playing time of your radio plays very carefully. Radio plays must start and finish on the dot. Many radio playwrights read their plays aloud and use a stopwatch to determine the exact playing time.

Use sound effects whenever they aid in making your play move or help the audience to visualize the setting of your play.

Be sure you specify exactly how and when your sound effects are to be employed. Should the telephone bell ring in the distance or close to the microphone, signify "AWAY MIKE" or "UP MIKE".

Use music or sound effects instead of announcer's description to shift scenes, whenever possible. Every time the announcer cuts in, there is a tendency to destroy the realism of your play.

DON'TS

Don't depend upon dialogue to hold your radio audience. A good plot is even more essential to a radio play than to a stage play.

Do not constantly shift scenes. This may confuse your listeners.

Never use too many sound effects. You wouldn't continually use the loud pedal when playing the piano.

Don't write your play to fill the full fifteen or thirty-minute period. Leave at least three minutes for commercial announcements. If there is much transition music, you'll have to allow even more time. Also, never overlook the fact that sound effects use up time.

Avoid the plot which lacks a good climactic punch or which seems to fade into thin air at the end of the script. O. Henry, if he were alive today, would probably be an ace radio dramatist.

Steer far clear of the old-fashioned melodramatic plots which savor of "TEN NIGHTS IN A BARROOM". Keep your plots plausible and modern, unless you're writing an historical drama.

DO'S

Employ background music during dialogue, whenever such music enhances the action of the scene.

Make a practice of never running an actor's speech from the bottom of one page to the top of another. It's difficult to turn pages in the midst of a line.

Remember that radio listeners prefer a complete, or nearly complete, story in *each* script, even when your drama is presented in serial form. Write for the occasional, as well as the regular, listener.

Use a theme song to open and close your dramatic play, if such musical aids enhance the setting of the play; e. g. Chinese music for a Chinese setting.

Be sure to use contrasting types or voices for your leading characters, so that they may be more easily *visualized* by the listeners. The radio listener must *always* know which character is speaking.

You can use as elaborate settings as necessary. Any setting which can be suggested by words, music or sound effects is possible. There is no stage scenery to be moved, and you are not confined to the indoors.

DON'TS

Be careful of your dramatic endings. A happy finale is even more preferred by radio audiences than by theatre goers.

Avoid wordiness in dramatic dialogue. Long paragraphs have a tendency to slow up the action of your play. Remember you are writing a play, not a monologue.

Be careful when you use telephone conversations. The one-way conversation is generally more effective and is much easier to handle in the studio.

Don't call for sound effects which are impossible to produce.

Avoid turning a good mystery drama into one scream after another, or into one sound effect after another. Remember the old law, "All emphasis is no emphasis". One scream from the loud speaker is worth two on the stage.

Challenge every dramatic twist of your play. If it can be eliminated without hindering the continuity of your story, slash it out. You are writing against time when writing for the radio.

RADIO DIALOGUE

Unlike the magazine story and stage play, more than ninety percent of a radio drama or comedy is dialogue. Even the veteran stage playwright, who is accustomed to the art of effective dialogue writing, should stop, look and *listen* before he writes a line for the air. Writing for the ear alone is much more difficult than writing stage dialogue, which has the support of pantomime and stage business.

The ear of the radio's "blind" audience is much keener and more critical than the eye and ear of the theatre goer.

Many magazine writers have failed miserably in writing radio scripts because they have neglected to take into consideration the fact that writing for the ear alone is a brand new technique.

Like the human eye, the ear of one listener may be keener than the ear of another. Unaided by sight, the radio listener has to "see" your radio play through the sense of hearing. In other words, he must "visualize" all action by means of the ear, alone.

Keep this fact constantly in mind when writing for radio. Challenge every word, every sentence and every paragraph on its ability to make the radio listeners "see".

Masters of the art of writing for the screen have learned that a gesture on the part of an actor is more important many times than a comedy or dramatic line. In writing for the air, *all action* of the play must be conveyed in words aided by sound effects.

Close your eyes when in a theatre. Much of the action in a play is lost. If this same play is presented on the air, it will be just as incomplete if not adapted by one who knows the technique of radio writing.

Write a paragraph of radio dialogue and then read it *aloud*. Then write another paragraph and check it the same way. Reading dialogue as a book is read will never enable you to check the SOUND of your lines. Only when you read each paragraph *aloud* are you able to get any idea of how your dialogue will reach the ear of the listener. Always remember that radio plays are written to be *played*, not read as one reads a book.

Many radio plays have been classified as weak when read by a prospective purchaser, because, accustomed to reading books, he read the typewritten pages in the same manner. Not until dialogue is brought to life by characters, speaking the lines correctly, can one judge the merits of dialogue which is written to be played.

As a matter of fact, many radio scripts, when read as one reads a book, seem to have excellent possibilities. Later, when cast and produced, these same scripts sound flat. The ear, not the eye, should be the judge of radio dialogue.

Words have *sound* values and *eye* values. Select those which appeal to the ear. Your success in writing radio dialogue will be governed by just how much you are able to make your radio listener *see* and *feel* as a result of what he hears.

DO'S	DON'TS
Watch your "s" words carefully. They have a habit of hissing on the air. Even the veteran actor will have plenty of trouble in putting over—"Sister Susie saw the sassy sailors sliding down the slippery ship's side."	Don't use three-syllable words when one-syllable ones will convey the same meaning. Secure forceful expression in simple everyday words which everyone in the radio audience can easily understand.

DO'S

Read *aloud* every paragraph you write as soon as you've written it. Eradicate every useless word.

Write your dialogue with the aim of making your listeners cry, laugh or thrill to the action of the script.

Be sure you sustain the emotional reaction of your listeners, so that they will "enjoy" a real laugh, a real cry or a real thrill. If you are working for tears as a baby is dying, don't let it die too quickly.

After you have completed your script, have someone read it aloud to you. If it is possible, cast the show and listen to a reading of the play. It is well to turn your back to the readers, inasmuch as the radio audience does not *see* the characters.

Be sure that each line takes the plot forward. This is very important; for, the minute your play drags, the radio audience may dial to another station.

Check the dialogue carefully; and never forget that Webster defines dialogue as a "conversation between two or more persons". See to it that your dialogue never becomes a monologue.

DON'TS

Avoid writing long sentences and long paragraphs. Nothing kills the action of a radio play any quicker than long-winded, monological speeches.

Be careful not to repeat the same thought. Many writers have a weakness, that of having their characters say the same thing in different words.

Avoid attempting to make the audience both laugh and cry when you are limited to a fifteen-minute script. It is better to make them laugh in one script and cry in another. Rarely do you have time in a fifteen-minute script to secure a bunch of real laughs and a Niagara of tears.

Steer far clear of ultra-sophistication in dialogue. Remember, you are writing for a mass audience, not a group of sophisticates.

Don't let your climactic punch or comedy situation hinge on one or two lines. Something may go wrong with the radio set or a crackle of static will ruin an otherwise entertaining play.

Avoid soliloquies. They savor of the old style of playwriting and sound flat on the air.

DO'S

Watch your dialogue carefully when writing a modern love story. Young people, in love today, talk differently than in Grandma's day.

Be sure that every character in your script speaks *true*-to-character. Some radio writers make the mistake of having child characters use words whose meaning would baffle even the child's parents.

Watch the dialogue of your story most carefully when the action is most tense. Excited characters usually speak quickly, and use short, staccato words and sentences. Short sentences and short words always make for action, when they are properly used.

Try to boil most of your dialogue to the bone; then when you rewrite, boil some more. You will rarely write a line of radio dialogue that cannot be improved by shortening.

Check the very first lines of your script carefully. Short speeches are especially effective at the beginning of a play. They enable the audience to get in step with your characters and CONFLICT just that much sooner.

DON'TS

Don't rely upon the so-called smart lines to maintain listener interest. Your script must have more than just a few hit lines. It must have a STORY which moves forward with every sentence you write.

Do not depend too much upon an actor's intelligence when writing a tricky line or one which requires the emphasis to fall on a certain word. Underscore such words to signify that the actor should play them in a certain way.

Avoid the commonest mistake of most novices. Do not use three or four pages of ordinary conversation which fails to advance the action of the play. Bear in mind that the first few paragraphs of your script should be used to *sell* the audience on the idea of listening to your play. Get away to a running start.

Steer far clear of "cuss" words on the air. An occasional "damn" or "hell" may get by, but they are very likely to offend. It is better not to take chances, even if you have to have a real rip-roaring character say "darn."

Avoid the use of "mushy" dialogue in love scenes, unless you are writing a comedy.

WRITING COMEDY MATERIAL

One of radio's greatest needs today is good comedy material. Smash comedy acts of the air can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Even the ace comedians live in constant fear that their material will go stale. More than forty hours of nerve wracking work on the part of three topnotch comedy writers is required each week to supply *twenty minutes* of comedy material for one of the big Sunday headliners.

No task in radio writing is more difficult than the turning out of sure-fire comedy material week after week. It is almost an impossible undertaking for one writer to prepare all the comedy material for an air show. Practically all the ace comedians have two or three writers constantly working on material. Those who haven't these staff writers must look to free lance writers for help.

On the stage, a comedian can use his material over and over again. On the air, it is used up in one performance. There will never be an over-supply of good comedy material, and the writer who can consistently turn out topnotch comedy for the air has a small fortune assured him.

One of the greatest mistakes made by the novice who attempts to write comedy material is the belief that all one has to do is make up a few gags, or lift them out of a book. Radio comedy requires more than just a number of gags, if it is to win and hold a capacity audience week after week. Ace comedy writers agree that there is not a new gag under the sun. Those which sound new are merely worked-over old chestnuts, which the radio audience is sick of hearing.

It is true that a few comedians have been able to stay on the air with gag routines, but their number is growing less and less every day. The time is not far distant when even these *name* comedians will have to seek new material, based on comedy *situations*, rather than on worn-out gags.

For a number of years, Jack Benny has been awarded the crown as radio's number one comedian. Any writer who plans to write comedy material will do well to study this show. Particularly, note how Benny employs the *situation type* of comedy: e.g. conflict between members of the cast, repeated ribbing at the expense of Benny and the almost constant use of short radio comedy blackouts under the title of "Buck Benny Rides Again".

To date, the feud culminating in the appearance of Fred Allen on the Benny show has been adjudged the hit performance of the entire series. Why? Two *name* comedians, plus CONFLICT, plus comedy lines based on a situation, plus a build-up that couldn't possibly miss fire, totaled a perfect score for a topnotch performance.

In connection with the appearance of Fred Allen on the Benny show, it is interesting to note that even Benny felt the need of support from another comedian, in spite of the success which his show has enjoyed to date. This "guesting" of comedians on other comedian's shows is evidence of the frantic effort being made to maintain a success pace.

Where are the new comedians of the air coming from? Already, the stage and screen has nearly been milked dry to supply comedians for the air. The answer is obvious. Radio must make its own comedians; to succeed, these comedians must be supplied with comedy *ideas* and material of topnotch quality.

One of the greatest difficulties faced by those who would write comedy for the air is the fact that radio comedy material must be the clean, wholesome type. The risqué is taboo. Recently, one ace comedian had to rewrite his entire show because his material was dangerous in the opinion of network officials. Censorship for comedy air shows is stricter than for the stage or screen. Air censors insist that home entertainment must be above criticism, even from the most sensitive critics in the radio audience.

Incidentally, clean and wholesome comedy has always topped the risqué in all forms of entertainment; it always will. A good, clean situation is worth a hundred cheap wisecracks or time-worn gags.

Baron Munchausen's sensational overnight rise to fame was not due so much to his puns and tag lines as it was to the fact that he was a *lovable liar*. Through the ages, all classes of people have loved a lovable liar. This act had a *comedy idea* which, in the parlance of the stage, is called a "natural".

Seek the *comedy idea*. If it is a "natural" and the material can be kept tops, the *idea* will win fame for even an unknown. Maybe this is the answer to the problem of building new comedians for the air.

DO'S	DON'TS
Seek a *comedy idea*. Never forget that situation comedy is much preferred to gags.	Don't depend upon gags to win fame as a comedy writer.
Keep your radio comedy clean and wholesome. Risqué comedy will never be tolerated in the home.	Never imitate the style of the established comedians on the air. It's suicidal.
	Challenge every comedy *idea* as to whether it will be as good

DO'S

Remember that radio comedy is the most difficult form of air scripting. You may think that what you write is funny. Will the air audience think so?

Carefully study the comedy blackouts being used on the big shows today. These one-shots are much in demand, and do not subject a writer to the terrific grind of writing new material every week.

Team up with another writer if you secure a job of furnishing comedy material for a weekly show. You will be glad you did, before the comedy has run many weeks. You will also be protecting yourself and the sponsor in the event of illness.

Keep a careful watch of the comedians who come onto the air and *fail*. Nine out of ten times it is because of poor material. This is one of the best markets for the free lance comedy writer.

Submit your comedy material, in person, if possible. If you can get the comedian to read your material or consider your idea, he may sign you up.

Test your comedy idea on a local station, if possible. Name

DON'TS

fifty-two weeks from the time it takes the air as it was on the first night. This, of course, refers to regular weekly shows.

Don't make a practice of sending unsolicited material to name comedians. Ninety percent of this material is returned. Practically all the big name comedians have their own staff of highly paid, carefully selected writers. Those who haven't have a number of free-lance writers whom they can depend upon.

Think twice before you attempt to sell a gag or a bunch of gags to established comedians. They have millions of gags at their disposal, and rarely ever do they purchase them from free-lance writers.

Don't expect a million dollars for the first comedy idea you give birth to. Use your first sure-fire material to crash the gate. Once in, you need not worry about your future.

Never get the idea that your comedy is sure-fire because your family and friends think it is unbeatable. Many a comedy writer has gone wrong in this direction. If you are going to test your material before you put it on the air, test it on strangers — even enemies have

DO'S

comedians have a reputation at stake, and they are shy of purchasing material from a new comedy writer.

Study the daytime program field carefully. Women react surprisingly well to comedy; yet most of the daytime dialogue shows are "tear jerkers".

Remember that comedy situation shows are generally built around the reverse of the serious. Get the habit of taking a serious situation and seeing the comedy twist to it.

Never forget that a family audience generally reacts favorably to comedy which "ribs" relatives. Properly handled, it is sure-fire.

Use dialect characters whenever possible in your comedy material. A good piece of dialect writing well done is certain to make a hit. However, don't tackle the colored or hick type, unless you are a masterful writer of blackface or rural comedy. The air is overloaded with this type.

Employ CONFLICT as much as possible in building material for two acts.

DON'TS

been known to be of more help to comedy writers than relatives.

Don't forget that most comedy material is written for five or six-minute spots. These spots are generally used twice in a half-hour show.

Avoid the slapstick type of comedy when writing for the air. It rarely ever wears; and when it does, it generally wears out.

Be careful about burlesquing timely events that appear in the news of the day. The show before yours may do the same thing, and you will be the laughing-stock of the radio world.

Keep away from burlesquing historical events in history. This has been done time and time again; strange as it may seem, it has never been very successful.

Don't depend upon the comedy O. Henry twist when writing a comedy blackout. One big laugh at the end of the material is not enough. You must secure laughs in rapid succession, or continued smiles with a big laugh at the finish.

WRITING SERIAL FEATURES

No form of radio writing is more naturally adapted to this medium of broadcasting than the five-a-week or three-a-week serial. It is a natural, both from a point of view of the radio audience and the commercial sponsor.

Surveys show that the serial features now on the air not only have capacity followings, but most of them are doing a marvelous merchandising job for the products they advertise.

Advertising successes have always been based on a regular scheduled appearance of the printed sales message. The serial feature, like the dripping water on the stone, has tremendous power to wear away sales resistance because of its constant regularity.

Not so long ago, a certain advertiser spent considerable money to build what was heralded as a million dollar hour show. Expectations for its success ran high. The best brains of the radio business were paid to make it a success, but it flopped terribly. It was replaced by a five-a-week, fifteen-minute family type of show and this unpretentious serial has been a winner from the start. It is still going strong.

Serial features are especially popular with the women, and sponsors know that women do most of the spending for household needs.

Writing this type of program three to five times a week is a job that will tax the brain and energy of even the most prolific writer. However, serial features, once established, have a habit of running for years. "Amos 'n' Andy" is, of course, the best example of a successful serial.

The serials based on family life have also enjoyed capacity audiences. The family audience seems to enjoy listening to a radio family whose trials and tribulations are similar to its own. "One Man's Family" and "Vic and Sade" have been outstanding successes in this field.

Another type of radio serial which seems to win and hold millions of listeners is the character study type. Usually, the chief character is a lovable, true-to-life, kind-hearted person who loves the world and is, in turn, loved by all the world. This type of serial aims straight at the heart. When it hits the mark, it is unusually successful. "Ma Perkins" is one of the outstanding serials in this field.

After a careful study of the most successful serial feature on the air, it is evident that a radio serial wins and holds capacity audiences, not so much through interest in the plot, but through interest in the leading characters.

It is the opinion of the writer that the serials of the future will have plots which are as interesting and entertaining as the chief characters. Everyone loves a good story. A good story, plus well-developed characters, will always out-distance a show which depends upon characters alone.

The sameness of these features also affords an unusual opportunity to some writer who can develop "something different". Today, most of the daytime serials are tear jerkers or heart stimulators. Comedy is a minus quantity in morning and afternoon shows. A well-written comedy serial would contrast perfectly with the present heavies of the air, and a good laugh show is always a smash hit.

There are really no hard and fast rules for writing

serial shows. The exact reason why some shows of this type fail and others succeed still remains a mystery. If one could personally interview the millions who follow these shows day in and day out, the secret might be forthcoming. Until then, we shall have to depend upon the "Do's and Don'ts" of successful serial writers.

DO'S

Remember that the greater number of serial programs are broadcast during the day. This means that your characters and plot should be slanted to win a femme audience.

Strive to make your plot as interesting and entertaining as your characters. Everyone loves a good story.

Use the lovable type of characters, and aim for the heart when possible.

Carefully consider the opportunity for comedy serials . . . The field is wide open in this direction. Most of the daytime serials are heavies.

Try to plan your serial for both the occasional and the regular listener. Make each script as entertaining and as complete as possible in itself, in addition to the running story.

Watch your dialogue. It is very important in writing serials. It must ring true-to-life.

DON'TS

Never use a large cast of characters in serial shows. Many of the most successful serials have been two-acts. More than five characters is always dangerous to the success of a serial.

Avoid using types of characters that people dislike because of negative traits.

Don't forget that your material for the fifteen-minute serial should not run over twelve minutes each day. You must leave time for the commercial announcements.

Steer far clear of big words. Use simple, every-day words and expressions.

Never use characters whose traits are not sharply defined.

Don't expect your audience to puzzle out situations which may be foreign to them. Explain every story twist, so that it will be readily understood.

Avoid breaking each episode up into many scenes. The most pop-

DO'S

Be sure you have a worthwhile serial idea and formula for carrying it to successful completion before you write a line of dialogue.

Remember that most serials are planned to run from twenty-six to fifty-two weeks. You must have a story which will "wear in, not out" over a period of many weeks.

Before you present a serial feature to a prospective sponsor, it is well to have a supply of scripts sufficient for at least thirteen weeks.

Watch your suspense endings at the close of each script. Remember you are writing a serial and your audience must be sold on listening to the coming episode.

Plan the plot of your dramatic serials with extreme care. Steer far clear of the hackneyed plots which have been overdone on the stage and screen.

Bring a child into your serial whenever possible. A baby has been known to work wonders with a serial that seemed to be losing its punch. Let the audience name the baby. It's an old wheeze, but it is always sure-fire.

DON'TS

ular serials do their best to establish and maintain realism. Constant changing of scenes makes your episode stagey. Radio serials should, above all else, ring with plausibility.

Avoid attempting to combine repeated laughs and tears in one episode. Comedy dramas are more suited to half-hour shows. It's difficult to play on too many emotions in twelve short minutes. If you desire both laughter and tears, make it a practice to work for tears in one episode and laughs in others. This formula has been successfully tested by "Amos 'n' Andy".

Guard against going too deeply into morbid subjects. Divorce, unfaithfulness on the part of a wife, and other dangerous subjects should also be carefully handled.

Never have the heroine of your serial tell her husband a vicious lie. A woman can nag or stay out late nights, but she must NEVER become a liar. Study the cartoon comics in the newspapers. They have an unwritten law that no femme character shall lie. Women highly resent this trait.

Steer far clear of characters or lines which burlesque the weak-

DO'S

Prevent wrinkles, sleepless nights and nerve-wracking days by writing your material at least a month in advance of broadcasting date. You can always insert a timely script if the occasion demands.

Study all the successful script shows of the air. You may wonder how such "ordinary material" ever clicks. Maybe it is the simplicity of characters and story that has made it popular. Remember the Gettysburg address. It lacked length and oratorical fireworks phrases; yet, it was a masterpiece because of its depth of emotional appeal and simplicity of understanding.

Read each script aloud by reading each line as you write. Remember, you are writing for the ear. Be sure your dialogue is not just so many words, words, words. Play on the emotion of your listeners. Make them feel through their sense of hearing.

DON'TS

nesses or shortcomings of sectional groups throughout the country.

Challenge religious subjects whenever you have an urge to include them in your serial. Religion and politics are dynamite, and they must be handled with kid gloves unless you are looking for an explosion.

NEVER, NEVER, NEVER be satisfied with the scripts you write. A success is harder to maintain than to win.

DRAMATIZING MAGAZINE STORIES

This chapter has been prepared for the many magazine writers who are interested in dramatizing their magazine stories for the air. It has also been written as an aid for radio writers who may be faced with the problem of adapting a magazine story for the air.

Many times, even a rejected magazine manuscript may contain an excellent dramatic plot, or the basis of one.

Adapting a stage or screen play for radio is child's play compared to adapting a magazine story. Dramatic action and dialogue have already been established. It is principally a matter of boiling down the play, so that it may be presented on an hour or half-hour program.

To adapt a magazine story for the air calls for a most thorough understanding of radio writing, plus the ability to heighten the dramatic possibilities already existing in the magazine story.

To begin with, all description must be changed into dramatic action. A radio story must move fast, for time on the air is limited. The conflict of the story must be presented in the very first few pages of the dramatic script to win the interest of the listener.

After the conflict is established and the interest of the listener secured, it must be maintained. Each twist of the story must be presented minus anything which will make the drama drag.

In adapting a magazine story for the air, the adapter should first make a dramatic synopsis. After making this synopsis, he should read the magazine story again to make sure that he has not overlooked any of the dramatic possibilities of the story.

Careful attention should be given, especially, to the beginning and ending of the dramatic adaptation.

Preserve as much of the dialogue in the story as possible, provided, of course, that it is well written. If it isn't, make every effort to improve the dialogue. Ninety percent of every radio play is dialogue, and it must be well written.

Care must be taken also to eliminate anything in the story which may be offensive or taboo from a radio audience point of view. Radio censorship is much stricter than magazine censorship.

In selecting magazine stories for radio dramatizations, the adapter should select those which have an appeal to the family audience. If the program is to be presented during the day, the adapter should make certain that the story appeals to women.

Probably the best type of magazine story to adapt for radio dramatization is the short short. In the first place, the story is generally boiled to the bone, unfolds rapidly, and has an O. Henry type of climax.

Probably the most difficult task of the magazine writer, who dramatizes his own stories, will be the work of dialoguing his radio play. He should first study carefully the chapters in this guide which pertain to the "Do's and Don'ts" of "Writing the Dramatic Script" and "Radio Dialogue". He will also profit from reading the chapter, "The Radio Audience".

Writing for the eye and writing for the ear are two distinctly different techniques. Learn that difference before you attempt to adapt any magazine story for the air. If you do, you have an excellent chance to succeed; otherwise, you will unquestionably fail.

DO'S

Always make a dramatic synopsis of a magazine story before you attempt to dramatize it.

Preserve as much of the dialogue of the magazine story as possible. unless you believe the dialogue would be weak when played by a radio actor.

Eliminate anything in the story which may be offensive or taboo from a radio audience point of view.

Select stories which have an appeal to the family audience. If the dramatization is for a daytime spot on the air, be sure the dialogue and plot will appeal to women.

Remember the magazine story was written for the eye. You are adapting it for the ear. Be sure you use "ear words" and eliminate "eye words", if you use any of the magazine story dialogue.

Employ sound effects for background and action or for changing scenes, if possible.

Remember that all description in the magazine story must be challenged. Plot *action* in radio plays is very essential, and the "beautiful words" must give way to those which stir emotion or carry the plot forward.

DON'TS

Never attempt to dramatize a magazine story until you have read it over *twice*, unless you are adapting one of your own stories.

Don't let your magazine style of writing creep into your radio dramatization. Writing for radio is distinctly different from writing for readers.

Avoid using all the characters included in your magazine story if possible. There should not be more than five principal characters in your radio adaptation. Any character who is not absolutely necessary for the dramatized version should be dropped out.

Don't give your radio characters long speeches. Sometimes, they sound almost like monologues on the air. They are then likely to slow up the action of the play.

Never waste time attempting to dramatize a story that is weak in plot or characterization. A good plot is also to be preferred to characterization, unless the story dialogue is especially entertaining.

Don't attempt to dramatize any magazine stories until you have read the chapters in this guide devoted to "Writing the Dra-

DO'S

Check and recheck your "s" words, especially when they follow each other. Repeated "s" words are difficult to speak and they sometimes hiss worse than a snake.

Try to dramatize some story which a magazine has rejected if you were the one who received the rejection slip. Phillips Lord, creater of the famous Seth Parker series, tried magazine writing with very little success. Rejection slips drove him into radio writing. His success in this field is now history. You, too, may discover quite to your surprise that this new technique of radio writing is your forte.

Check up on any short short stories you have written. They may make excellent material to dramatize for a fifteen-minute dramatic spot on one of the big shows. Many name actors and actresses are employed as guest stars on these big shows, and they are constantly in the market for radio material.

Study your magazine story carefully before you try to adapt it. Possibly, you have the basis of a series of dramatic radio plays instead of a one-shot. Make the most out of what you have.

DON'TS

matic Script", "Radio Dialogue" and "The Radio Audience". The reason should be obvious.

Avoid padding of any kind in adapting your magazine story for the air. Padding will slow down the action of your radio adaptation and it may spell failure.

DON'T be discouraged if the first magazine story you dramatize for the air doesn't play well. Study the reason for the failure carefully; maybe you will find that you should never have attempted to dramatize it. Many magazine stories move too slowly to be adapted to radio.

Never dramatize another writer's magazine story and submit it for use on the air, unless you have complete radio rights to the story. If it has appeared in any publication, this advice is doubly important.

Don't get the impression that you have got to learn all over again when you start dramatizing magazine stories for the air. If you have the ability to write for the magazines, much of this ability will be usable in writing for radio.

WRITING FOR NAME STARS

To win fame and fortune is one thing; to hold it is another. Name stars are forever faced with the fear of failing. Their radio material must be tops, and the writer who can supply topnotch air acts for them is assured a handsome income.

With the large number of stage and screen stars turning to radio for additional fame and fortune, you will do well to watch this market carefully if you are interested in securing top prices for radio material.

These stars receive the highest prices paid to air entertainers. They, in turn, can afford to pay top prices for material. And, furthermore, good air acts are scarce. There will never be an over-supply, for radio burns up material faster than any other form of entertainment.

In writing for either a new or established air star, you must first determine the type of material which features the star to best advantage. Most headline entertainers are known to their audiences as masters of a specific type of characterization.

It is also well for a writer to select stars for which his own type of writing is best adapted. It is generally suicidal for a comedy writer to attempt to write air material for a great dramatic actor.

If these stars are already on the air, you should listen to them for a few weeks before writing a line. If you are aiming at stage or screen stars who have yet to make air appearances, you will do well to make a thorough study of their past performances and determine, if possible, the exact reasons why they have become stars.

Before reading this book, you may have thought that the same writers who have been writing the stage and screen material for these stars also write their air acts. This is true in some cases; in the majority of instances these stars know that the technique of radio writing demands experienced radio writers. Very few stage and screen writers have mastered this new form of writing.

A year or so ago, one famous English stage comedienne came to America to make stage and air appearances. She gained widespread publicity by panning all radio writers. According to her, they were all just "hacks". After a few radio appearances she awoke to the truth that radio comedy differs considerably from stage comedy. Today, she insists on having her material prepared by ace radio scripters.

Certain name stars from the stage and screen employ writing teams composed of writers who have won success in writing for the stage, screen and radio. This is generally the perfect combination; but, most stage and screen stars appear only as "guest stars" and do not deem it advisable to maintain such an expensive array of writing talent.

Until the day arrives when all stars have successful radio writers on call, the market in this direction will be excellent. Most writers will find it very much to their advantage to make a study of this market.

DO'S	DON'TS
Study the type of material which stars the artist to best advantage. Also, ascertain whether the star has ever appeared on the air.	Don't be discouraged if a certain star has appeared on the air and failed. The failure may have been due to the choice of poor material. If so, the star

DO'S

Select the type of stars for whom you can write to the best advantage. If your forte is comedy writing, slant your material in the direction of comedians.

Listen to the stage and screen stars who have established shows on the air. Many a stage and screen star finds it difficult to keep his air material on a par with his other vehicles.

Strive for dramatic plays which will win a family audience. Even if you believe you are another Noel Coward, your sophisticated lines will be lost on the mass radio audience.

Remember that a stage or screen star has a reputation to protect. Your radio material for this type must be unusually well written. This is doubly true if you are an unknown writer.

Never forget that the stars generally have the final "yes" or "no" on all radio material. Aim to SELL the star, in addition to winning the radio audience.

Always remember that the motion picture stars are accustomed to making one short scene at a time. This is one reason why a long, dramatic air script has been the downfall of many a screen star.

DON'TS

may be an excellent prospect for good material.

Avoid writing the wrong *type* of material for a certain star. Slant as carefully as one slants magazine articles.

Steer far clear of gag comedy when writing for a comedian. Comedians have millions of gags at their disposal.

Don't employ characters who, in any way, will steal the "thunder" of the star. Headliners are very jealous of characters who may steal the show.

Never use a large number of characters when writing air material for a star. The fewer—the better.

Avoid characterizations which are extremely difficult to portray on the air, unless you are writing for a star (or stars) who has a reputation of mastering the difficult to advantage.

Don't send unsolicited material to a star before you find out whether or not the star is radio minded. Most stars have agents who will give you the necessary information in this direction. Many screen stars have picture contracts which prevent them from appearing on the air.

DO'S

Do your best to play up the personality of the star. If it is his big mouth that has won him fame on the screen, try to make the radio audience "see" that mouth in action.

Consider the advisability of writing for more than one star's appearance in a certain radio play. Many stars always prefer to work in pairs; especially, if they are married.

Watch your dialogue as carefully as you would watch a cat near a bowl of goldfish. Each star has a definite way of playing lines, and your radio dialogue should conform to this style in every detail.

Send a synopsis of your radio play with the script if you are submitting it by mail. Make it as easy as possible for the actor to size up its possibilities.

Present your material personally, if possible. There is nothing like a personal interview in winning a star's approval. If you have ever worked for a newspaper, you will know just how to go about "getting in".

Make up a program presentation if you are writing a serial to feature a star. A synopsis of the entire story should be included in such a presentation.

DON'TS

Avoid writing a dramatic play which is a "carbon" copy of something which a screen star has done for the pictures. You may even be accused of piracy.

Sit in on the rehearsal of your play if you are successful in getting a star to do your script. You will learn plenty.

Steer far away from the actor who depends upon risqué lines or situations to win and hold an audience. Radio can't take it.

Don't expect to sell the first script you write. Stars shy away from material written by new "faces". After a while, your "face" will be more familiar.

Avoid putting a top price on your material, unless you are a NAME writer. A new writer has much to gain in having a star use his script on the air. Even if you don't get big money for your first sale, you will get fame; and the fortune will follow.

Don't write a serial in your first attempt to write for a star. It takes an experienced writer to do a serial. Many times a serial is the work of more than one writer.

WHY SCRIPTS ARE REJECTED

Hundreds of writers, successful in writing for the magazines, screen or stage, have listened to a radio program which, in *their* opinion, was "terrible"; then they have rushed to their typewriters to write the hit air show of the year.

Is it any wonder that so many writers receive radio rejection slips? Before one writes for the magazines, he makes sure to study the technique of magazine writing. Then he studies the magazine markets most carefully. He respects the fact that "Knowledge is Power" and that he is in competition with thousands of other writers.

No matter how successful a writer has been in writing for other mediums, he must take into consideration that writing for radio has its own technique. He must learn also that selling to the radio market is distinctly different from selling to the magazines, screen or stage.

To write for radio without a thorough knowledge of this new technique and markets is to invite rejection slips. Why invite them? Why not take the same steps to win success in this field as in any other?

Just because a writer thinks that most of the radio shows are poorly written, there is no guarantee that he can rush into this field and win instant success. Many a self-appointed savior of radio programs has found to his dismay that writing for the air is not as easy as criticizing the programs he classifies as "terrible".

The likes and dislikes of the radio audience are much different than in other fields. Boiling down a script for a fifteen-minute show or a half-hour feature is more

difficult many times than writing a long magazine story. Writing program material, sometimes as often as five times a week for a period of fifty-two weeks, requires more than just the ability to use words.

Add to this the fact that many times the program IDEA must be distinctly different from the established programs on the air and the fact that the program must be sold, not thru an agent but by the writer himself, and you have one of the major reasons for radio rejections.

Most writers are not salesmen. They seem to entirely overlook the fact that radio programs must do more than entertain. Advertisers purchase time on the air to sell merchandise or build goodwill. Even the sponsors of the goodwill-building shows have their ears cocked to the cash register.

Many programs have been purchased principally because they afforded advertisers an excellent opportunity to use merchandising tieups that would bring in millions of box tops or labels.

A clever program idea, a sure-fire merchandising tieup and a well chosen time on the air are, in the estimation of many sponsors, much more important than the most carefully arranged nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs.

That is why many programs which seem "word weak" are heard week in and week out.

Fine writing has very little to offer radio sponsors, unless it aids in the selling of the advertiser's product. Program IDEAS come first; writing comes second, unless one considers the one-shot dramatic or comedy spot.

Many writers also fail because they haven't the least conception of how many words a script should contain to play fifteen or thirty minutes. Four or five typewritten pages will not supply material for a fifteen-

minute dialogue show. Radio scripts MUST be timed to the second. The only correct way to determine the playing time of anything you write for radio is to cast and rehearse the show with a stopwatch in your hand. You can also get a pretty good idea of the playing time by reading the script aloud to yourself, while you check each minute with a stopwatch.

There are many other reasons why writers receive radio rejection slips. Study the following "Do's and Don'ts" carefully, and you will have a much better opportunity of securing checks instead of slips.

DO'S

Remember that the time will never come when you'll like *all* radio programs. Programs are built for millions of listeners; their likes and dislikes are not always the same as yours.

Time each script carefully to make sure that the playing time is correct.

Watch your program IDEA! If it is like other shows on the air, it has very little chance of being sponsored.

Make certain that your serial program has a STORY that will wear in, not out. Many serials start off as world beaters, but fail to hold the pace after a few weeks on the air.

Count the pages of each script carefully after you have timed the minutes it plays. After a

DON'TS

Don't write a line for radio until you have studied the new technique of writing for the "ear"; also, the radio market.

Never forget that commercial sponsors demand more than a show that will entertain. It must win and hold a capacity audience over a period of twenty-six to fifty-two weeks, or longer.

Avoid "beautiful writing". If you are looking for undying literary fame, write books. Radio has no use for "long-haired" art.

Don't think you are entitled to radio recognition, just because you have had a couple of magazine stories published. Success in radio isn't measured by what you have accomplished in other writing fields.

DO'S

while, you will be able to judge the approximate playing time by the number of pages.

Remember that most radio stations pay very little attention to *one* script. They are interested principally in program IDEAS and serials which run for a period of twenty-six to fifty-two weeks. Even then, they pay very little for these scripts. The BIG market is the advertising agencies.

Learn to accept criticism from the purchasers of material. They won't even take the time to criticize, unless they think you have possibilities.

Slant your material for radio as carefully as you would slant for the magazine market. The radio market changes constantly. Keep up with these changes.

Remember that your script or program IDEA must compete with established shows. Never belittle this competition. A football team may look great in practice, but not so good when lined up against the other team.

Study the chapter on "The Radio Market" in this book, and particularly note that *selling* a radio program is more difficult many times than writing one.

DON'TS

Steer far clear of the program which appeals only to a limited number of people. Advertisers prefer shows that interest mass audiences.

Avoid pestering radio stations in the hope that they will eventually weaken and accept one of your scripts. Once on the "pest list", your script will not even receive a reading.

Never make a practice of sending a rejected script to a number of other stations. Of course, if you KNOW you have a winner, never give up; but be sure the station is wrong before you waste postage money.

Don't expect busy program builders to teach you how to write. If they even give your script a reading, be thankful. They are not running any radio correspondence school.

Never expect a program buyer to get a complete idea of a serial's possibilities from just one script. It is like judging a three-act play by one act.

Avoid asking radio stations or advertising agencies for advice on what to write or how to write it. You are immediately put in the amateur class, even though you may receive a "very polite and encouraging letter."

DO'S

Enclose return postage when submitting a script, even when it is requested. It will be returned much sooner, in the event that it is not satisfactory.

Read the sample scripts in this book and carefully study the professional styles employed by different radio writers.

DON'TS

Never submit a script that that doesn't look professional in every respect. Poorly prepared scripts may be likened unto poorly dressed people. First impressions may be wrong, but they are lasting.

Don't write a "letter story" of your writing successes and mail it along with the script. Most letters of this type just air the ego of the writer and, generally, do more harm than good.

Be careful not to offend a prospective script buyer by demanding an overnight reading of your material. Wait a reasonable length of time for a verdict. Then write a tactful letter, asking whether your material is being considered for a possible spot or sponsor.

WRITING FOR CHILDREN

From bedtime stories to machine guns. This, in brief, sums up the early history of programs for children. About a year ago, the mothers of America put up such a protest that program builders were forced to clean up the "radio playroom" and give the youngsters something besides a desire to shoot up the country.

This brought a new cycle in children's programs. Radio is still struggling to give young America entertainment which will make it forget the trigger of a machine gun and the wild yells of Indians and cowboys. Even the "G-Man" had to be soft-pedaled because "G-Man" to the youngsters meant guns and plenty of them.

No field of radio writing offers greater possibilities than the writing of children's features. The likes and dislikes of children seem to be a great mystery to most writers. They seem to forget that children today, due to the times and movies, have a habit of surprising their elders with childish sophistication that was unheard of in grandmother's day.

"Baby talk" is as much out of date as five o'clock bedtime hours. As a result, many children prefer adult programs to those planned especially for them. They like to feel "grown up", and have a happy habit of greeting "baby shows" with that well-known cheer which made a certain bronx birdie as popular as the American eagle.

If you are writing for the children of today, remember that they do not think and act as you did when you were a child. Even the mother of a four-year-old has

a difficult job making sonny believe there is a Santa Claus these days. Little girls still play with dolls, but most of them prefer the "Real McCoy".

Before you write a line for children, study them under all conditions. Learn what they talk about. Watch them at play. Particularly note the books they read. Unless you have a family of your own, you may be in for quite a surprise.

Few writers have yet solved the question of just what children prefer. The new writer has excellent opportunities of winning his spurs in this field. Give a child a program he likes, and he will be at that loudspeaker every time the show is on the air.

Commercial sponsors are constantly in the market for good children's shows. They know that if the child is interested, the mother is within sales range. Many a family is eating certain breakfast foods in order that little Johnny may get pictures of his favorite airmen, or some other pocket filler. Anyone who has both a radio set and children knows that "A little child shall lead them"—to the grocer.

Who can blame the commercial sponsors for their intense interest in shows for the youngsters? Mail from children is much easier to secure than from grown-ups. Many times it is "Mother" who helps to write the letter.

If you have the ability to write children's shows, by all means write them. First, however, make certain that you know something about what children prefer on the air. It is nearly time for some writer to give radio a feature that will be as much of a success in the youngster's field as "Amos 'n' Andy" was in the realm of the grown-ups during its early days on the air. Strange as

it may seem, "Amos 'n' Andy" was probably the children's favorite at that time, too.

Remember, we still have a great deal to say about old St. Nick around Christmas time and the little tots may still fall for it; but, their older brothers and sisters cannot be fooled by any false whiskers these days.

DO'S

Remember that the features you write for children MUST be, indirectly, approved by mothers. It was the mothers of this country whose vigorous protests against gangster-detective yarns caused the networks to do a "right about face".

Carefully study the likes and dislikes of children. You will go far wrong if you judge present day children on the basis of your own childhood. Times have changed; so have the youngsters.

Check the motion picture likes and dislikes of children. Particularly note how they react to the child stars of the screen. Also, note how they react to the performances of certain adult stars.

Give the children comedy of the right type, and you will be assured a capacity audience of youngsters. It is a well-known fact that all of the hit-comedy-adult-shows of the air have a

DON'TS

Don't write a line until you have made a study of the present day programs aimed at children. There is a new cycle just beginning in this field, and your material must be slanted in the direction of the trend.

Never write "baby talk" material for the youngsters. It may be all right for babies, but, as soon as the present day children are old enough to listen to the radio, they have very little use for old-fashioned bedtime stories.

Steer far clear of the fairy tale type of broadcast. Present day youngsters are fed up on the "cute little elves and fairies". Mickey Mouse is much more of a favorite than Jack-in-the-Beanstalk.

Don't have your child-characters talk like "sissies". Little Lord Fauntleroy types are as popular with most children as a wash back of the ears when they want to go out to play.

DO'S

large following of children. Take a lesson from good old Popeye and remember he is one fellow who can make millions of children like spinach.

Remember that most children are active. They like action. Get in step with the child mind. Don't expect the child to get in step with your program.

Employ sound effects whenever they enhance the action of your program. Children like noise, and react to sound effects.

Test your program ideas on a few children in your neighborhood. A child will tell you the truth, even if it hurts—your feelings.

Never forget that children love to imitate. Radio characters which children imitate are sure to receive plenty of "over-the-fence" publicity. Think of the thousands of children who love to imitate the voice and actions of that old salt "Popeye".

Always keep in mind that most children are hero worshippers. Babe Ruth had millions of youngsters following his every move. To them, he was the "King of Swat", the "Greatest King of Them All".

DON'TS

Never attempt to devote your whole program to educating children. They may have just come home from school and they have probably had enough "teaching" to last the remainder of the day. Radio is a medium of entertainment. Use it as such.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that you must write down to children. Use simple words, but don't write as though all children were simple.

Avoid child characters who have negative traits. Mothers have enough trouble already in stressing the virtues.

Never have your child characters doing things which most other youngsters cannot do. Make your characters regular fellows, but don't have them doing the impossible.

Don't be preachy. Children get enough "Do's and Don'ts" without listening to them on the air.

Steer far clear of complicated plots. Simple plots with plenty of action win the children.

Never belittle the imagination of a child. Many a child lives in a "dream world", and he loves to imagine all sorts of fantastic things.

DO'S

Watch your dialogue. Be sure that it rings true-to-character. Also, see that your characters don't just talk and talk and talk. Have something happen to your characters that makes for conflict.

Remember that dialogue is always more popular with children than music. Watch children as they listen to radio programs. A loud voice or sound effect will always attract their attention.

Feature the daring acts of child heroes. One successful show aimed at children devotes all of its time on the air to glorifying youngsters who have won the spotlight of life through daring deeds.

Study the "funnies" which appeal to children. Cartoonists spend years in learning the likes and dislikes of youngsters, and few are the children who do not follow the "funnies".

DON'TS

Don't imitate other child programs already on the air. Be original at all costs. You will be well rewarded for the extra effort.

THE RADIO MARKET

To the average writer, the radio market presents the greatest enigma of all writer's markets. Hundreds of capable radio writers find that the task of selling material is the one seemingly unconquerable barrier which stands between them and success in this newest of the writing fields.

More plain, unadulterated "bunk" has been written on the ease of selling the radio market than on the simplicity of crashing the lead position in the SATURDAY EVENING POST after ten easy lessons.

Some of this make-a-million-over-night advice has been nothing short of criminal. It is true that a few writers have succeeded in selling their material direct to stations and advertising agencies; but, for every writer who has succeeded, hundreds have failed.

Men who have been in the business of selling radio programs ever since radio started agree that today the selling of a big network program requires super-salesmanship; unless the salesman is lucky enough to be "on the inside" with plenty of friends at court.

Is it any wonder that the average writer is puzzled and baffled when he, himself, attempts to sell his material in the radio market? Most writers are not salesmen. They are accustomed to selling through agents who make a business of selling material. Radio, due to its rapid growth, has produced only a very few reliable and successful agents. Most radio agents have absolutely no standing with program buyers and are forced to work harder to sell one network show than a magazine

agent works to sell a dozen articles to the leading publications.

This straight-from-the-shoulder picture of the present day radio market is not written to discourage writers, but to give them the truth and nothing but the truth. One network program has made many a writer wealthy. There is plenty of gold in "them thar hills" of radio, and one lucky "strike" generally means a small fortune. However, the "prospector" who expects to find "nuggets" on the surface is going to waste a lot of time, money and energy. He must dig hard and deep.

Most writers labor under the misapprehension that radio stations are the best money markets in the radio field. They are actually the poorest. More than eighty-five percent of the commercial programs of the air are produced by advertising agencies. Most of the big advertising agencies controlling the greater portion of the big network shows are located in New York and Chicago.

Very few of the big advertising agencies encourage program ideas or scripts from unknown writers. They are too busy to act as radio script exchanges. Fear of infringement suits also retards these advertising agencies from doing business direct with writers.

Even well known radio writers have to sign what is known as a "release" when dealing with many of the big advertising agencies. Here is a sample paragraph from one of these "releases".

> "I submit this suggestion with the definite understanding that the use to be made of it by you, and *the compensation to be paid me therefor, if any*, if you use it, are matters resting entirely in your sole discretion. This understanding applies

to any use that may be made of this suggestion by or on behalf of any client of yours."

Particularly note that the advertising agency reserves the right to decide what it is to pay for the material "if any". To make matters more difficult for the writer, there are no standard prices for the many types of air material.

If a writer decides that the advertising agencies are too difficult to sell material to, he turns to the radio stations. Only a few stations afford much of a market for scripts and the top price is generally five dollars per script. Many of the smaller stations pay but a dollar a script.

Those who advise writers to deal direct with radio stations point out that there are more than 600 stations in the country and that there is a small fortune if a writer can sell the same script or series to fifty or more of them. Selling fifty stations is easily done—on paper—but in actual practice, it rarely works out.

Offering scripts "wholesale" also invites "piracy" of the writer's program ideas and material. No one writer has the facilities to check all stations. This is not to infer that radio station executives are dishonest; but, to secure sponsors, these stations must in turn present the ideas and material to all possible prospects. All prospects are not strictly honest.

The radio market of today is not the radio market of five years ago. It is constantly changing and it is safe to predict that, before very long, most writers will find it to their advantage to place the selling of program ideas and material in the hands of agents.

In selecting an agent, it is best to choose one who specializes in selling radio material, not one who pro-

fesses to sell all writer's fields and markets. Selling radio shows is a full time job for even the best agents. The agent who boasts a knowledge of all markets rarely ever knows much more about the radio market than the average writer. Radio program marketing is a highly specialized business.

DO'S

Stick to writing and leave the selling of your material to an agent who knows the markets.

Select your agent carefully. Good program agents are scarce and it will pay you well to line up with the right one.

Listen to the advice of your agent if you have a good one. Remember he makes money when you make money, and a good agent will make every effort to secure top prices and protect your interests.

Challenge the "success stories" of the so-called radio syndicates who claim they can sell your material to one hundred or more of the 600 radio stations in the U. S.

Stop, look and listen before you waste hours writing the wrong type of material. A good agent knows the markets and he can tell you what type of material has the best sales possibilities.

Remember that advertising agencies differ in their program

DON'TS

Don't shop your program ideas or radio material around "wholesale". Good ideas and material are scarce and you are inviting "piracy".

Think twice before you go into the business of syndicating your scripts to radio stations. Advertising agencies, not radio stations, are the best markets for program ideas and material.

Never select an agent who sells to all writer's markets. Selling radio shows is a full time job, and a highly specialized business.

Don't make a practice of mailing unsolicited material and program ideas to advertising agencies. Many of the big advertising agencies will not even read your material until you have signed a release.

Never expect to sell an advertising agency by mail. You may use a letter to query re the

DO'S

likes and dislikes just as do magazine editors. You should find out what type of material or program ideas an advertising agency prefers before attempting to sell a program in this market.

Ask your agent to submit your program idea or material in transcription form if possible. Radio scripts are written to be played, not read. A sample audition recording brings your show to "life".

Study a sponsor's advertising before you attempt to sell him a radio program. Then, secure the help of this advertising agency in the event that you haven't an agent.

Remember that a radio program must do more than entertain. If you can combine a good merchandising idea with your show, you have much better prospects of making a sale.

Always keep in mind the fact that advertising agencies prefer "tested programs". No matter how good your program idea, it takes a lot of courage these days to gamble hundreds of thousands of dollars on a new idea.

Study the type of programs on the air and particularly note

DON'TS

interest of an advertising agency in your idea, but most programs are purchased as a result of face-to-face conflabs.

Don't try to sell your material direct to the performer. Most performers have agents and it is best to deal with them.

Don't make a practice of going over the heads of advertising agencies and attempt to sell the sponsors direct. Even if you interest the sponsors, the agency may put the skids under you.

Never be afraid that your radio agent will steal your idea. You have got to tell before you sell, and the safest method is to select a reliable agent who knows the market and is experienced in dealing with program buyers.

Avoid the practice of placing your scripts in the hands of different selling agents. Each agent may quote a different price and submit the feature to the same sources. Advertising agencies then have the advantage of playing one agent against another.

Don't make a practice of putting a definite price on your program idea or material until you know that a station or ad-

DO'S

how many use NAME artists. Advertising agencies know that big NAMES are good insurance against the failure of a show. When an advertising agency picks the wrong show, it costs some sponsor plenty of money and it places the agency in danger of losing the advertiser's account.

Consider competition carefully before attempting to sell direct to radio stations. Most radio stations prefer transcription shows instead of taking over the task of casting, rehearsing and directing programs from scripts. Most of the transcription features also have the advantage over script shows because most of the transcription dialogue programs have been tested on other stations.

In submitting a program idea, it is always well to submit it in the form of a radio presentation. Information on the preparation of program presentations is contained in the chapter, "Preparing a Program Presentation".

DON'TS

vertising agency is definitely interested. If a program buyer is really interested in your show, he is always willing to pay a fair price.

Never submit a program idea that in any way imitates another program on the air. If you get the reputation of being an imitator you may even be classed as a "program pirate".

Don't assume that prospective program buyers will see the possibilities of your idea. Make every effort to present the sales points of every idea you go to market with—even the best ideas have to be sold.

THE PROGRAM PRESENTATION

The magazine writer deals with editors who know writing. The stage playwright bargains with show producers who know the theatre. A radio writer has to secure the "yes" or "no" of business men—men who know very little about writing and less about showmanship.

To most sponsors, radio is just another form of advertising. Sales results mean more than just entertainment.

A radio script means little to a business man. That is why most successful program salesmen usually submit a new radio show idea in the form of a program presentation.

Such a presentation should contain a synopsis of the program idea, together with all the reasons why the program will win a capacity audience. It should also clearly point out any merchandising tieups that may be used in connection with the show.

Strange as it may seem, many a show has been sold on the strength of these merchandising tieups alone. A sponsor knows that even his wife will have a hard job in persuading him that he has a poor show if the cash register rings long and lustily. Increased business, not praise letters from listeners, is what the radio sponsor desires and, generally, INSISTS upon securing.

Even if the program salesman has the advantage of a personal interview, it is always wise to submit a "written sales talk" on the merits of the show. Many of the most successful program salesmen suggest that the prospective sponsor read the presentation in the comfort of

his home. Distractions are frequent in a business office. In the quiet of his home, a prospective sponsor is better able to concentrate on the program idea and sales points.

If a program presentation pleases a prospective sponsor, he almost always is interested in hearing an audition of the show. Then, he is in a much better position to judge the possibilities of the program from a business-getting angle.

To audition a show and then submit a program presentation is putting the cart before the horse.

Preparing a program presentation is hard work. It also demands a knowledge of printed salesmanship and merchandising. A writer will do well to have an experienced program salesman or advertising man help in the preparation of such a presentation.

A thorough knowledge of the product to be advertised, as well as the merchandising policy of the prospect's business, is very essential.

Even when submitting your program idea to an advertising agency, it is always wise to submit a program presentation before permitting them to hear your show. They, in turn, will have to sell the prospective sponsor on the idea of spending his good money on the program; your presentation, when correctly prepared, will make it easier for the advertising agency to interest the prospective sponsor.

In dealing with advertising agencies, a writer must remember that it is the business of agencies to plan and produce all advertising for their clients—and radio is as much a part of their job as any form of publicity.

A writer should never expect an advertising agency to present a program idea to any of its clients, unless

the agency is first SOLD on the possibilities of the program. When an advertising agency picks an air flop, it has much more to lose than has the writer of the program. A well prepared presentation of a good program idea stimulates the advertising agency's confidence in the value of a new show. Then, if the advertising agency likes the program audition, it will generally recommend the program to any client who may be in the market for that type of show.

Always use a program presentation in submitting a new program idea.

DO'S

Secure the help of an advertising man when making up a program presentation, unless you are a natural born salesman.

Always prepare a program presentation, even when you have the advantage of a personal interview.

Ask your prospect to read the presentation in the quiet and comfort of his home.

Remember to include a description of any merchandising tie-ups that can be used with the program idea.

Secure as much information as possible re the product and policy of the company if you are planning a program presentation for a certain concern.

DON'TS

Never submit a new program idea in script form. Prepare a program presentation.

Don't include the price of the program in the presentation, unless by "special request".

Avoid auditioning a program until after your prospect has read your program presentation.

Never expect an advertising agency to suggest your program to a client until they have been sold on your idea by a well prepared presentation.

Don't include a sample script in your program presentation. Scripts are made to be played, not read. Suggest an audition if the prospect desires to see a script.

DO'S

Remember that the physical appearance of your presentation is important. It should be business-like and easy to read.

Boil down your story as much as possible. No presentation should be more than a dozen pages. Less, if possible.

Make it a practice to terminate the presentation with a summary.

Be sure to describe your idea clearly. Many writers fail in this direction. Remember, it is not always easy to correctly convey an idea in writing.

Use a good durable envelope when mailing your presentation. Most presentations are written on regular size business stationery. This size, with a cover, is easily crushed in the mail; you should make sure that it will arrive in good condition.

Deliver your presentation in person, whenever possible; especially if you have a pleasing personality.

Make certain that your presentation gives the prospect a clear idea of just how the show unfolds from beginning to end.

Always list the program units; e.g. orchestra, exact number in cast, etc.

DON'TS

Steer far clear of writing and show terms when building a presentation. Talk the language that a business man will readily understand.

Never audition a show and then submit a program presentation. That is putting the cart before the horse.

Don't make exaggerated claims for your program idea. Be conservative without being too modest.

Avoid asking a prospect to read a presentation while you wait for his reaction. Don't attempt to rush his decision.

Never attempt to tell a business man how to run his business in your presentation.

Don't go to the expense of having your presentation printed, unless you are attempting to sell a million dollar show. A neat typewritten job is generally sufficient.

Never enclose or attach a long-winded letter. Make it short and snappy. Get your story in the presentation.

Avoid comparing your new idea with other ideas on the air. Never waste space "slamming" other shows.

DO'S

Never forget to stress the novelty of your program idea if it really is novel. Anything new and novel always has the advantage.

Be sure and mention whether or not the program is to be presented with or without a studio audience. Many sponsors prefer studio audiences.

Make certain that your presentation contains information re the length of each program, the number of weeks the program has been prepared for, and whether or not it is a comedy, dramatic or novelty type show.

DON'TS

Don't try to give the prospect a complete education in what radio has done for other sponsors and what it will do for him. You are writing a presentation—not a book.

Avoid writing your presentation in letter style. Use subheads to call attention to subjects: e.g. "Program Idea", "The Show", "Merchandising Ideas", "Sales Points", etc.

Never mail a presentation to a prospect without retaining a carbon copy of it for yourself.

Don't expect that the prospect will return your presentation. He may; but, generally, presentations are not returned.

PROTECTING YOUR IDEAS

Radio program ideas are about as difficult to protect as a bowl of goldfish at a hungry cat's picnic.

No program idea is ever safe from piracy until it has been developed and put on the air in the form of a program. Even then, if it is unusually successful, imitations will spring up over night.

If you have an original program idea, your best method of protecting it is to get it onto a national network of stations as soon as possible. Even if it is imitated, yours will be credited with being the original; and, in addition to the common law rights secured, you will at least obtain "first money".

All the legal advice and protection in the world will not help you any more than having your idea actually on the air in program form. Even then, you may have to fight to protect your rights.

Always remember that a radio program idea cannot be copyrighted or protected in any way until you have established it as yours by means of the air waves.

After you get the program idea on the air, you can copyright the spoken words by getting a regular, routine copyright certificate from the Copyright Bureau in Washington.

However, copyrighting is really a waste of time and money because anybody, who desires, can steal the best part of your script without fear of consequences. All a pirate has to do is to use different words than are in the original. Lawyers will tell you that the most difficult thing to prove in court is the fact that your idea is *original.*

A writer may secure a little protection by sending a copy of the script and resume of the program idea to himself by registered mail. It may often prove a help in substantiating his claim to prior right to the script and idea. He should leave the envelope sealed. Then, it may be opened in court as evidence that he created the idea and material on a prior date.

One well known writer had a most unusual program idea. He refused to put it on paper through fear that someone would steal it. He felt that his idea was safe as long as he kept it in his head. While he was trying to plan a way to safely sell his million dollar idea, another writer, miles away, developed a similar program idea, sold it to a sponsor, and is today reaping rich rewards. Motto: "You must 'Tell to Sell'."

If it is true that a "Bird in the Hand is worth two in the Bush", a "Program idea on the Air is worth a hundred in the Head".

Ideas have a habit of being born twins, miles apart. When you get a good program idea, whip it into shape as soon as possible. Get the jump on a possible pirate by having your program cast, rehearsed and ready for the air before you even attempt to sell it—or, put your program on a network as a sustaining show and work as fast as you can to secure a commercial sponsor. There are no better ways of protecting a good program idea against piracy—at least, no better known ways, to date.

DO'S	DON'TS
Get your new program idea onto the air as soon as possible over a network of stations.	Don't labor under the misapprehension that you are going to make a million dollars on a

DO'S

Whip your program into shape, so that it may be put on the air as soon as you make an effort to sell it.

Consider the possibility of putting your program on a network as a "sustainer". Once this is done, you can work as hard as possible to commercialize it. You will, at least, establish a common law right the minute the show is heard on the network.

Copyright the dialogue in the regular, routine manner of obtaining a copyright certificate from the Copyright Bureau in Washington, if you desire. It won't protect your program idea against piracy, but it may ease your mind.

Confide your program idea to a limited number of prospective buyers. Make sure in advance that you are dealing with honest men and request that they keep your program idea confidential.

Ask a prospective sponsor or agency to promise that, if they do not buy your program, they will not use it in any similar form. The big agencies will not do this, but some of the smaller ones will.

Carefully study the new release blanks which advertising agen-

DON'TS

new program idea, which you are keeping in your head. You must "Tell to Sell"; or someone with a similar idea may "Tell and Sell" first.

Avoid the practice of shopping your new program idea around. Sending a typewritten description of it to a number of radio stations is inviting piracy. Station executives are generally reliable, but they, in turn, must shop the idea around in quest of a sponsor.

Never attempt to "wholesale" your program idea by sending out a large number of sample scripts, unless you are willing to take the chance that your show may be pirated. Syndicating program ideas always puts the show in danger of imitation.

Don't pay your good money to shyster lawyers who tell you that they have a sure-fire way of protecting your program idea against piracy. They may even pirate it themselves.

Avoid the practice of hinting that you expect everyone is out to pirate your idea. Don't challenge the honesty of prospects and expect that they will delight in doing business with you.

DO'S

cies are asking idea submitters to sign. Make sure that you are not signing away all rights to your idea.

Make a practice of sending descriptions of your new program idea by registered mail, whenever you cannot present the idea in person. It will not protect you against having the idea stolen, but it may discourage piracy.

Mail a description of the program idea and a couple of scripts to yourself by registered mail. Leave the envelope sealed. You can open the envelope in court in an effort to establish priority of date re the creation of the idea.

Remember that ideas have a habit of being born twins, miles apart. Don't rush into court until you make sure that you have prior right to the idea—and then, it may be best to think twice before you go into court.

Study infringement cases that have been tried in court. You will discover that very few writers have ever received any amount of satisfaction in bringing a pirate into court.

DON'TS

Don't put your program idea on some small station in the belief that by securing common law rights, you are thus protecting yourself against piracy. Many pirates have a habit of checking small stations programs; when they hear an unusual one, they try to rush it onto a network in just a little different form.

Don't forget that it costs real money to go into court to battle a program pirate. Settle differences out of court, if possible.

Avoid the practice of putting too much faith in verbal promises. Get them in writing when possible. Even a written promise to keep your new program idea confidential will never protect you against radio idea pirates.

Don't labor under the wrong impression that an idea in the mind can be legally protected. It's difficult enough to protect an unusual radio program after you have it on the air.

SAMPLE SCRIPTS

Three of the most popular types of air features are the mystery thriller, the dramatic program and the serial comedy.

Through the courtesy of Austin Ripley, author of the famous "Minute Mysteries", popular radio, newspaper, magazine and moving picture feature, this book presents Part One of the "Minute Mysteries" of the air, "THE STUYVESANT CASE".

One of the most popular mystery features of the air, the radio "Minute Mysteries" series is an outstanding example of a radio show which combines showmanship with salesmanship. The reader of this book will do well to study this sample script carefully, whether he is a professional or amateur writer.

Particularly note the IDEA behind the series. The program has one of the cleverest merchandising tieups of any feature that has ever been heard on the air.

"THE CHRISTMAS BABE" by Chet Grant is also used in this book by permission of the author. It is an excellent example of the holiday type dramatic script, written especially to be broadcast either the night before Christmas or Christmas Day. Particularly note how it gets in step with the holiday mood of the listeners.

Selling a new serial feature by auditioning just one script in the series is a very difficult task. It is like asking the prospective sponsor to judge the merits of a three-act play by a part of the first act.

The portion of the prevue script, "THE GLEASONS", used in this book illustrates the newest method of auditioning a comedy serial by means of a

narrator and excerpts from a number of episodes. In this manner the prospective sponsor is better able to judge the merits of the ENTIRE story, instead of judging the value of the series from just one episode. It is one of the most effective ways of auditioning a serial feature.

A careful study of these three scripts will be worth every minute you give them. Written by three different writers, they pretty well cover the style employed by hundreds of successful air scripters. Particularly note that two of the scripts have the characters' names in the center of the page. They were prepared to be acted by headliners from the legitimate stage.

"The Stuyvesant Case" has the characters' names at the extreme left of each actor's lines. The first radio scripts were prepared in this manner; radio actors, who have never had any stage experience, generally prefer scripts prepared in this style.

Also carefully study the methods employed by the three writers in handling sound effects, announcements and voice instructions to characters. They are handled in a most professional manner.

THE STUYVESANT CASE
by
AUSTIN RIPLEY

(PART ONE)

CAST OF CHARACTERS

GEORGE STUYVESANT .... Middle aged, wealthy broker, hit by depression.
RICHARD STUYVESANT... Nephew of George, 24 years old, money spoiled and reared in luxury. In love with
MONICA WORTHINGTON.. Sensible, young society girl, unspoiled by the wealth she once had.
HIGGINS ..... Stuyvesant's English butler. In family for years.
SERGEANT JOHNSON ..... Typical police officer. Abrupt speech. Belongs to the local police force.
PROFESSOR FORDNEY

SOUND
Door Bell
Door (Opening and Closing)
Automobile (Starting, Running and Stopping)
Thunder
Rain
Telephone Receiver

COMMERCIALS

STUYVESANT CASE

ANNOUNCER: Socony Vacuum challenges you! Challenges you to solve THE STUYVESANT CASE, one of Austin Ripley's famous MINUTE MYSTERIES. This popular newspaper, magazine and moving picture feature is now presented by Socony Vacuum as a series of authentic crime dramas and a novel, baffling radio game. Meet Professor Fordney, the eminent criminologist and apostle of common sense in crime detection. He says that crime is simple. In THE STUYVESANT CASE, he *proves* it. While a scientist of international reputation, he knows that most crimes are solved, not by brilliance or genius, but by common sense. Work with him on this authentic case. Match *your* wits with his—and the criminal's.

In these different crime problems *every* fact and *every* clew is given you. You know everything the professor knows—*as* he knows it. There is only *one* possible solution to each MINUTE MYSTERY and the clew, the *one, single, perfectly obvious* clew, which leads to that solution is given you several times. One of Fordney's few eccentricities is his penchant for telegraphing. He telegraphs everything—even his social correspondence. So listen carefully to the telegraphic report he sends at the end of this broadcast. It will sum up all the action you have heard and again give you the *one, single clew* that broke the case for him. We have said this is a *different* program. Just listen! To the person sending us by Western Union or Postal Telegraph the *first, briefest, correct* solution to THE STUYVESANT CASE we will pay fifty dollars. Pay it TONIGHT! Pay it in LESS THAN TWO HOURS! Here is the FASTEST CONTEST IN HISTORY! Complete, simple instructions for sending your telegrams—which cost only twenty cents in metropolitan Detroit—will be given you at the end of the program. HOW GOOD A DETECTIVE ARE *YOU?* That's our friendly challenge. Listen carefully and let's all FOLLOW FORDNEY!

(PAUSE)

The dark spectre of crime casts its shadow into all phases of life. Thus the opening of THE FAMOUS STUYVESANT CASE takes place in the hallway of the luxurious Long Island mansion of the wealthy George Stuyvesant.

CURTAIN RAISER

HIGGINS: (PAUSE) And will you be home for dinner, Mr. Stuyvesant?

STUYVESANT: No, Higgins,—I won't be back until late tonight.

HIGGINS: Very good, sir. (SLIGHTLY HESITANT) You'll pardon me, sir,—but you're looking a bit worried. Any offers for the Rembrandt masterpiece yet?

STUYVESANT: Worried? Well, who isn't, Higgins! (PAUSE) Yes . . . *one* offer but for less than half what I paid for it (REGRETFULLY) and I might have to take it.

HIGGINS: The insurance on the painting must be quite a burden, sir.

STUYVESANT: Yes, Higgins. The premium on five hundred thousand dollars *is* heavy.

HIGGINS: (REGRETFULLY) Then, sir, if we *must* lose it (EMPHATICALLY) I almost wish it would be stolen! At least you would *profit* by that loss!

STUYVESANT: (LAUGHING ASTONISHEDLY) *Why, Higgins!* Well, it is too bad we have to even think of parting with it, but if we *must*, perhaps (SIGNIFICANTLY) you're right. (PAUSE) But nonsense, Higgins! (PAUSE) Well, good bye.

HIGGINS: Good bye, sir.

BUSINESS.....DOOR SHUTS.

RICHARD (CALLING IN DISTANCE) Oh, Higgins. . . .!

HIGGINS: Yes, Mr. Richard. . . .

RICHARD: (AWAY) Come to the foot of the stairs. . . .

HIGGINS: (PAUSE) Yes, sir . . .

RICHARD: (CLOSER) Miss Worthington is coming over in her car. She'll be here any minute now. If I'm not dressed, see that she is comfortable.

HIGGINS: Certainly, sir. Anything else. . . .

RICHARD: No . . . I . . . hold on though. When will Uncle George be back?

HIGGINS: Not until late tonight, Mister Richard.

BUSINESS.....DOOR BELL RINGS IN DISTANCE.

RICHARD: There! That must be Monica now. (FADING) I won't be long.

BUSINESS.....PAUSE . . . DOOR OPENS.

HIGGINS: Good afternoon, Miss Monica. Mr. Richard will be down in a few minutes.

MONICA: Hello, Higgins. That's all right. (DOOR CLOSES) I want to talk to *you* anyway. Let's step into the drawing room.

HIGGINS: (PAUSE) Yes, Miss?

MONICA: Your son. Is it true he's in trouble at the bank?

HIGGINS: (SORROWFULLY) Yes, it is true, miss. A shortage in his accounts has been discovered!

MONICA: Is he in jail?

HIGGINS: No, miss. Thank God I have almost enough money to make good the discrepancy.

MONICA: I suppose that's the end of the little cottage back there in England that you've dreamed about all these years.

HIGGINS: (REGRETFULLY) Yes, it is. The savings of twenty years gone and now . . . it's too late to start over again. A butler doesn't earn. . . .

MONICA: (INTERRUPTING) Oh, what a shame! But don't give up hope, Higgins. Something may turn up.

HIGGINS: (HOPEFULLY) Oh, I hope so, miss.

RICHARD: (COMING UP) Hello, Monica, darling. Sorry to keep you waiting. All set?

MONICA: Yes, dear.

RICHARD: All right,—let's get started then. (PAUSE) Oh, Higgins, I won't be back until sometime Monday. We're week-ending at the Cameron's, you know.

HIGGINS: Very good, sir.

MONICA: GOOD bye, Higgins.

HIGGINS: Good bye, miss. Good bye, sir. . . .

BUSINESS.....HOUSE DOOR CLOSES.

RICHARD: (PAUSE) Want me to drive, dear?

BUSINESS.....CAR DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES.

MONICA: If you like. . . .

BUSINESS.....CAR STARTS . . . SOUND OF RUNNING IN BACKGROUND FOR FOLLOWING.

MONICA: (PAUSE) Well, Dick. . . .

RICHARD: Yes, dear. . . .

MONICA: I've thought it all over,—just as you asked me to.

RICHARD: Oh, let's not talk about it now, Monica. Not until after the house party.

MONICA: I'd rather not wait. We should have faced this thing months ago. (PAUSE) Stop the car a minute, will you?

RICHARD: (IMPATIENTLY) All right, if you say so. (CAR STOPS) BUT I think we ought to hurry on—it's going to storm.

BUSINESS.....SOUND OF APPROACHING THUNDERSTORM BEGINS AND GROWS LOUDER IN BACK OF FOLLOWING DIALOGUE.

RICHARD: Then you still feel the same about our getting married?

MONICA: Yes,—even more so,—if that's possible.

RICHARD: But we just *couldn't* be happy in that sort of life. Love in a cottage *sounds* wonderful, but it wouldn't do for either of *us* and you know it. Let's be sensible. Money,—*lots* of it *is* necessary to our happiness.

MONICA: (DISCOURAGEDLY) You gave me my ring two years ago and we're still "just engaged"! Don't you see, Dick, if we're ever going to be married, it will *have* to be love in a cottage, —at least for a while.

RICHARD: That wouldn't work out, Monica. (PAUSE) Won't you wait just a little longer?

MONICA: No, Dick. You just won't see it my way so . . . (PAUSE) here's your ring.

RICHARD: (SHOCKED) Darling! No . . . no . . . I won't take it. You're not really *serious!* I'll get backing somehow for this new deal of mine and then. . . .

MONICA: My mind is made up, Dick. . . .

BUSINESS.....CAR DOOR OPENS . . . THUNDER LOUDER.

RICHARD: All right. . . .

MONICA: (FRIGHTENED) Get back in the car, dear . . . where are you going?

RICHARD: (DARN MAD) Back to the house. . . .

MONICA: (DISTRESSED) But it's starting to rain!

RICHARD: (LITTLE AWAY) Rain? What do I care!

BUSINESS.....RAIN FALLING.

MONICA: (WAILING) What about the house party?

RICHARD: House party? (LAUGHS BITTERLY) After this? That house party can go straight to blazes.

BUSINESS.....CAR DOOR SLAMS SHUT . . . CLAP OF THUNDER AS STORM BUILDS UP AND DOWN AND FADES INTO PHONE HOOK JIGGLED IMPATIENTLY SOUNDS OF STORM IN BACKGROUND.

HIGGINS: (EXCITEDLY) Hello! Hello! (JIGGLES PHONE HOOK) Operator! Operator! Oh, why doesn't she answer. (JIGGLING) Operator!

RICHARD: (COMING UP) What's the matter, Higgins?

HIGGINS: (STARTLED EXCLAMATION) Oh, . . . Good Lord, Mr. Richard! I didn't hear you. How you startled me!

RICHARD: Why, you're shaking like a leaf. What's the matter?

HIGGINS: But what brings *you* back here, sir,—and soaked to the skin?

RICHARD: Never mind that. What's the matter here?

HIGGINS: The Rembrandt's been stolen!

RICHARD: *What! The Rembrandt? Gone?* And it's worth half a million dollars!

HIGGINS: Yes, sir! *Stolen!* I'm phoning the police now!

RICHARD: Hold on a minute. Let's have a look first!

BUSINESS.....HANGS UP PHONE RECEIVER.

HIGGINS: (FADING) Very well, sir. . . .

RICHARD: (IMPATIENTLY) Well, hurry up. Open the door! (DOOR OPENS)

HIGGINS: (PAUSE) There you are, Mister Richard!

RICHARD: Good heavens! Cut right out of the frame. Look . . . that big chair and pedestal have been knocked over on the hearth!

STUYVESANT: (CALLING IN DISTANCE) Higgins!

RICHARD: (STARTLED) Who's that?

HIGGINS: It sounds like the master, sir. . . .

RICHARD: Uncle George?

STUYVESANT: (AWAY) Higgins!

HIGGINS: Yes, sir!

RICHARD: But I tho't he'd gone to the city!

STUYVESANT: (COMING UP) Higgins! (PAUSE) Where are you?

HIGGINS: (CALLING) Here, sir . . . coming, sir. . . .

STUYVESANT: (CLOSER) Where the *blazes* have you been, Higgins? Good heavens, man,—what's the matter? You're white as a sheet.

HIGGINS: It's the Rembrandt, sir! *It's been stolen!*

STUYVESANT: The Rembrandt! *Stolen!* Let me see . . . (PAUSE) *Good God!*

RICHARD: Easy, Uncle George. Here. Let me give you a little brandy.

STUYVESANT: No . . . no . . . there's not time for that. We've got to get Fordney here immediately. Fortunately he's week-ending at the Westcotts.

HIGGINS: (NERVOUSLY) *Professor* Fordney, sir?

STUYVESANT: Yes. Get him on the phone right away and ask him to come at once.

TRANSITION

STUYVESANT: Well, professor?

FORDNEY: (COMING UP) I have just finished talking to your butler, Stuyvesant. He says he was alone in the house when he

heard a heavy, crashing noise which seemed to come from the study. He hastened down from his room and when he reached the study he found the Rembrandt gone.

STUYVESANT: Yes, that's what he told Richard and me.

RICHARD: Any clews yet, Professor?

FORDNEY: Sergeant Johnson is looking over the study now, Richard. I've been admiring your place here, Stuyvesant. Permit me to compliment you. The soft green carpeting and hangings you've used thruout this floor certainly set off to advantage these priceless art treasures of yours. By the way, the Rembrandt was insured, of course?

STUYVESANT: (HESITANTLY) Why . . . yes . . .

FORDNEY: For how much?

STUYVESANT: Why . . . for . . . five hundred thousand dollars.

FORDNEY: By the way, Richard. Higgins tells me he didn't know you were in the house until you startled him while he was at the phone.

RICHARD: That's right. As I told you, I'd left the house with my fiancee, Monica Worthington, but I came back alone. Got thoroughly drenched in that rainstorm, too.

FORDNEY: You let yourself in?

RICHARD: Yes. And just as I shut the front door I heard a crash, the same noise Higgins heard, probably. The storm was making so much racket I couldn't tell where it came from so I went thru the four rooms in the front of the house to see if anything were wrong. Then I came across Higgins in the music room,—phoning. (MEANINGLY) He was pretty excited!

FORDNEY: I suppose he was.

BUSINESS.....DOOR OPENS . . . VOICES AD LIB-ING IN BACKGROUND.

FORDNEY: Well, sergeant, are you thru in the study?

JOHNSON: (COMING UP) Yes, professor.

FORDNEY: And what did you find?

JOHNSON: Well, this young man's muddy footprints are on that nice green carpet. . . .

FORDNEY: Yes, I checked them, Sergeant. . . .

RICHARD: (COOLLY) Certainly,—I told you they were mine, Professor. You see I went over the room pretty carefully as soon as I discovered the theft. In my hurry to get in out of the rain I didn't stop to wipe my shoes and . . .

FORDNEY: Naturally not. . . . Anything else, Sergeant?

JOHNSON: Yes, Professor,—funny thing—*both* windows in the study were closed but the drapes at one of them were *rain soaked!*

FORDNEY: You say both windows were . . . but no matter. Anything more?

JOHNSON: You bet there was! I found the butler's fingerprints on that plain handled dagger on the desk. And some such instrument was used to cut the picture from its frame!

FORDNEY: What! The butler's fingerprints?

HIGGINS: (WORRIED) But I assure you, Professor, I haven't touched that dagger since I tidied the study this morning.

FORDNEY: And Miss Worthington,—any word from her yet, Stuyvesant?

RICHARD: (HESITATINGLY) Why . . . I . . . she . . . she . . . hadn't arrived at the Camerons when I phoned.

FORDNEY: H'mmm . . . quite. Well, Stuyvesant, I'd like to get off a telegram to headquarters.

STUYVESANT: Certainly, Fordney. (FADING) Come along. The phone is in the next room.

TRANSITION

ANNOUNCER: AND here is the telegram Fordney sent Inspector Kelley:

GEORGE STUYVESANT'S HEAVILY INSURED REMBRANDT STOLEN FROM STUDY FIRST FLOOR REAR HIS LONG ISLAND HOUSE CARPETED AND DECORATED THRUOUT IN SOFT GREEN AS SETTING FOR PRICELESS ART COLLECTION STOP STUDY WINDOWS CLOSED BUT DRAPES AT ONE RAIN SOAKED STOP STUYVESANT IN FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES STOP HIS NEPHEW, RICHARD, SAYS RETURNED TO HOUSE ON FOOT DURING RAIN STORM STOP BELIEVE HIM AS FOUND HIS MUDDY FOOTPRINTS IN STUDY STOP BUTLER'S PRINTS ON DAGGER POSSIBLY USED TO CUT PICTURE FROM FRAME STOP RICHARD SAYS ON ENTERING FRONT DOOR HEARD CRASH AND AFTER INVESTIGATING FOUR FRONT ROOMS CAME UPON EXCITED BUTLER WHO REPORTED THEFT STOP MONICA WORTHINGTON, RICHARD'S FIANCEE, WHO WAS AT HOUSE EARLIER IN DAY, NOT YET LOCATED STOP YOU WILL UNDERSTAND WHO STOLE THE REMBRANDT

(signed) JOSEPH FORDNEY

(PAUSE)

Well, who stole the Rembrandt? Fordney is confident he has solved the case. Have you? Just answer these two questions: Who stole the masterpiece and what is the one single clew which indicated that person's guilt to Fordney. Have the first word in your telegram the name of the person who stole the Rembrandt. Then give the single clew which proves that person's guilt. If you think YOU know, send a Western Union or Postal telegram in ten words or less to White Star, WJR, Detroit. To the person wiring the first, briefest, and correct solution to THE STUYVESANT CASE, White Star will deliver FIFTY DOLLARS—TONIGHT! FIFTY DOLLARS IN CASH, BY MESSENGER! Here is THE FASTEST CONTEST IN HISTORY! The first word in your telegram must be the name of the person who stole the painting. Then state the clew which solved the case for Fordney. You don't have to explain your reason—just state it clearly. Telephone

or take your telegram to the nearest Western Union or Postal office. The exact time you SEND your wire will be stamped on the telegram and that is the time which counts—not the time we RECEIVE it. You may send your ten word solution by Western Union or Postal for only twenty cents in metropolitan Detroit—a few cents more outside that area. EVERYONE has an equal chance in this game of MINUTE MYSTERIES. YOUR telegram, for example, may be sent long after the first CORRECT one is filed, but if yours is BRIEFER, then YOU will win the FIFTY DOLLARS. SPEED is important, but BREVITY and ACCURACY more so. We told you before this was a *different* program. Just listen! Socony Vacuum will be back on the air again at 9:45 TONIGHT, on this same station with a dramatization of the solution of THE STUYVESANT CASE and the announcement of tonight's prize winner who will already have that FIFTY DOLLARS to spend TOMORROW! Join us then and learn whether YOU had the correct solution. See how Fordney proved his case. But, now hurry and get off YOUR telegram. Here's a thrilling new game that answers the question HOW GOOD A DETECTIVE ARE YOU? Join us at 9:45 tonight, this same station, and FOLLOW FORDNEY to the answer and the name of tonight's prize winner.

END

"THE CHRISTMAS BABE"
by
CHET GRANT

PLAYING TIME . . . 24 MINUTES

CAST
MARY . . . Femme lead of "The Nolans"—vaudeville hoofers
JOE . . . Male lead of the same team
HOTEL CLERK
SHEPHERD
THREE MEN

SOUND
Musical Background
Automobile Running
Door Slam
Hotel Clerk's Desk Bell
Car rumbling over rough road
Auto Horn
Latch Click
Chimes
Mixed Voices (Crowd effect)

MUSIC.....ORGAN.....15 SECONDS

ANNOUNCER: It is late afternoon the day before Christmas. A battered little car, buffeted by the wind and coated with piling snow, bucks its way across the frozen prairie somewhere in the Middle-West, its blunt nose pointed unerringly towards New York and home. Huddled close together for warmth, Joe and Mary Nolan, better known as the vaudeville team of "Nolan and Nolan", are driving back from Hollywood to Broadway sadder but wiser, and dead broke. The cold is intense and as the car pushes farther out into the vast frigid endlessness of the snow-swept flats, Mary seems for the first time to be frightened. . . .

SOUND.....WAILING WIND . . . ENGINE.

MARY
Do you think we'll make it, Joe?

JOE
Sure, don't worry. We'll make it. How do you feel, kid?

MARY

I feel fine, Joe.

JOE

You're going to be all right?

MARY

I think so, Joe. Only it seems like we're not getting anywhere, just riding and riding.

JOE

I know. These prairies are sure wide open places. Gee, this is a regular blizzard. Feel that car pull.

MARY

I wish we'd stayed in Montevista.

JOE

But we couldn't waste a whole day like that, Mary. Not with the baby coming and everything. We've got to get you to a decent hospital.

MARY

(Shaky voice) It's getting dark. Joe, do you honestly think we'll get to Palmerston?

JOE

Sure, Mary. There's nothing to worry about, kid.

MARY

But, we might get off the road onto a side-trail. Then we'd head out into the prairies somewhere and freeze to death.

JOE

Say, whoever heard of a hoofer gettin' off the road! What kind of trouper talk is that? Good hoofers are always on the road.

MARY

Not this kind of a road, they don't.

JOE

Gee, this is a rotten way to spend Christmas Eve.

MARY

Well, there'll be snow for Christmas anyway.

JOE

Yeah. Too much! If I had that guy Berry out here, I'd stuff it down his throat.

MARY

Don't forget Mr. Wyatt and Mr. Paul.

JOE

THEM! The Three Wise Guys from the East! Well, they played us dirt all right, calling us out to Hollywood to make a picture and then giving us a raw deal—Brrrr! I hope there's plenty of heat in that hotel at Palmerston.

MARY

I guess you'd better find the hospital in Palmerston, too, Joe.

JOE

What!

MARY

I think your son's going to be born on Christmas Eve, Joe.

JOE

But, Mary, not way out here.

MARY

Tell that to the stork!

JOE

But, Mary, you told me he wouldn't be flying around here for three or four days.

MARY

That was before I started riding in this hack. You know, it isn't exactly a pullman.

JOE

No, and it's not a maternity ward either. Gee, I hope there's a hospital in Palmerston. Sit tight, kid. I'm going to give this wreck a little more gas. I've got to be in Palmerston before night.

SOUND.....ENGINE SPEEDS UP . . . FADES OUT . . . FADES IN.

MARY

Joe, I think we're lost.

JOE

Don't be silly—we're on the right road.

MARY

But, Joe, you said that we ought to reach Palmerston before night and it's been an hour since you turned on the headlights.

JOE

Snow's slowed us up. It's like driving blind.

MARY

Don't you think you'd better get out and see if we're still on the right road? If we ever get lost out here, we'll freeze to death.

JOE

Okay, kid, if it'll make you feel any better.

SOUND.....MOTOR IDLES.

JOE

I'll wipe off the windshield so you can see that Palmerston Hotel when it shows up. It's as big as a city block. You're cold, aren't you, kid? Gee, your face is like ice. Well, here I go.

SOUND.....CAR DOOR SLAMS . . . WIND ROARS.

JOE

(To himself) Gosh, it's blowing worse than I thought—so cold I can't tell whether that's cement or frozen ground—Can't see anything. No signs. No fences. If I am off the right road, what's Mary going——. But I can't be, this must be the right road——. What a God-forsaken place! ——*(Suddenly remembers there is a God)* God! Why, sure! God! He'll help. *(Hoarsely)* God! This is Joe Nolan. You prob'ly

don't recognize me. I'm a hoofer and I've never had no need to call on you before. But Mary's in the car there and she's needin' your help. God, you've got to get us to Palmerston. You got to. You can't leave Mary out here on the prairie—Please, God, don't let us down—Well, I guess that's all. I can't do any more.

SOUND.....CAR DOOR SLAMS . . . REDUCE WIND . . . ENGINE ROARS.

JOE

Wow! What a night! Well, we're still on the right road, Mary. You can't fool an old hoofer like me. I just saw a sign that said Palmerston in letters a foot high.

MARY

Joe, I think the storm's getting worse.

JOE

Yeah, but it won't be long now. Come on, give me one of those million dollar smiles.

MARY

I'm smiling, Joe.

JOE

That a gal, Mary. Ever since this family hit the skids in Hollywood, you've been smiling hard luck right in the face. I guess it would have been better if we'd never seen a preacher. Then you'd be—

MARY

Don't say things like that, Joe. We were doing all right when we got married. It's just hard luck, that's all. You'll see, we'll be on the Big Time yet.

JOE

But look at you. Riding across the country in a wreck that should be in a museum. No bookings. No home. Practically no money. And a bum hoofer for a husband.

MARY

Gloomy Joe! You forgot to mention the baby. He ought to make your load of sorrow complete.

JOE

My cup of joy would be complete if I had Wyatt, Berry and Paul out here fighting this storm. I'd make those Three Wise Guys from the East get out and push this buggy all the way to Palmerston. I'd—*(shouts)* Mary! Lights! Over there to the left. It's the Palmerston Hotel!

MARY

Where? I don't see—Oh, yes! Yes, I see them!

JOE

We made it, kid, we made it! Didn't I tell you I'd get you here? Baby, do those lights look good! All lit up like a Christmas tree. I'll bet there's plenty of celebrating going on in there tonight. Let's go!

SOUND.....ENGINE SPEEDS UP . . . FADES OUT . . . WIND FADES OUT. MUSIC FADES IN . . . VOICES . . . LAUGHTER.

VOICES

ANOTHER ROUND OF THE SAME, WAITER.
YES, SIR.
A BIGGER CROWD HERE THIS YEAR.
BUSINESS IS BETTER. MONEY WILL—
OH COME ON, DON'T SPOIL THE SHOW.
SAY, IF YOU GET A CHANCE I WANT TO—

SOUND.....FADE OUT ORCHESTRA . . . FADE IN DESK CLERK'S BELL.

CLERK

Boy, room 755—Good evening, Mr. Berry. Glad you are with us again this Christmas. Mr. Wyatt and Mr. Paul are waiting in the dining room—

SOUND.....CLERK'S BELL.

CLERK

Boy, 208—Good evening, Miss Kent. Good evening, sir. A wicked night.—Yes, what may I do for you?

JOE

Let me have the cheapest room you have. Double.

CLERK

I'm sorry, but we're full up.

JOE

You mean you're all sold out?

CLERK

To the roof.

JOE

But listen, I've got to have a room. My wife's sick. She can't travel any farther.

CLERK

I'm sorry. There isn't a room to be had. I even had to give up my own room. Probably I'll have to sleep on a billiard table.

SOUND.....CLERK'S BELL.

CLERK

Boy, 621—*(Addressing Joe)* This place is packed with every big shot in Hollywood and New York. Even Berry, Paul and Wyatt are here. They're the wealthiest—

JOE

I know them. In Hollywood they're called the Three Wise Guys from the East. If Berry hadn't fired me a couple of months ago, I wouldn't be beggin' for a room for my wife. I could give her—*(Pleads)* Listen, Clerk, can't you—

CLERK

I couldn't give you a room, mister, if you were rich enough to buy the hotel. It can't be done.

JOE

Well, maybe I can take my wife to the hospital, and—

CLERK

Hospital! Say, mister, this is a prairie resort. One hotel and a half dozen stores. The nearest hospital is 20 miles east of Colver.

JOE

But my wife can't—

CLERK

The best thing for you to do, Mister, is to go on until you come to a tourist camp—They're strung along the road for the next ten miles. They're heated, too, and you might be lucky enough to find a doctor at one of them.

JOE

Thanks. By the way, when you see that Berry guy, you tell him Joe Nolan stopped by and left his regards. Tell him I hope he chokes on a wishbone.

CLERK

Okay, mister. Be careful you don't drive off the road. There's plenty of side-trails up ahead and this is no night to get lost.

JOE

(Addresses Mary) All right, kid. We've got a little more drivin' to do.

MARY

Oh, Joe, we can't go out into that storm again.

JOE

We've got to, Mary. This place is crammed to the eaves with celebrating yahoos and there isn't a bed where a man can let his sick wife sleep—How you feeling, kid?

MARY

Okay, Joe.

JOE

Wait a minute. Let me turn up your collar, soldier. All set? Come on!

SOUND.....WIND ROARS . . . CAR DOOR SLAMS . . . WIND REDUCED. ENGINE STARTS. FADES OUT. MUSIC.

MARY

Shouldn't we have reached those camps by this time, Joe? We're going all right, aren't we?

JOE

Going straight as a die, kid. We'll see them pretty soon. *(Talking to himself)* Nice night to be huntin' for a tourist camp so you can have a baby in comfort. Just because two months ago a big four flusher named Berry had the power to write me off the payroll. We'd still be in the Big Time if it wasn't for that officious mug and those other two Wise Guys, Wyatt and Paul. But what do they care now if I'm broke or if you—

SOUND.....HEAVY RUMBLING OF THE CAR.

MARY

Joe! We've lost the road! We're on a side-trail!

JOE

Nonsense, we couldn't lose it.

MARY

But we have, Joe.

SOUND.....HEAVY RUMBLING OF THE CAR.

JOE

What a break—now how did I—

MARY

Joe, stop the car and turn back.

JOE

I can't, Mary. The road's too narrow and choked with snow. The car might go into the ditch.

MARY

But, Joe, you've got to get back onto the main road. You've got to!

JOE

Now, now, don't worry, kid. Maybe this leads out to the main road again.

SOUND.....(RUMBLING).

MARY

Joe! Joe—I—I—can't stand it any longer. I—I—I think I'm going to faint.

JOE

Don't faint, Mary. Not here, not here. Mary! Listen, you can't—What was that? Mary, look—a house! Hear me? Kid, it's a house. We've found shelter.

SOUND.....ENGINE STOPS . . . HORN.

JOE

(Talking to himself) They must all be in bed. Mary! Mary! Poor kid, she's out like a lamp. I'll carry her in. *(Grunts)* Easy now. There!

SOUND.....CAR DOOR SLAMS . . . WIND ROARS . . . LATCH CLICKS . . . DOOR SLAMS . . . WIND REDUCED.

JOE

(Calling) (Away mike) Hello—hello—anyone home?

SOUND.....FURNITURE MOVING.

JOE

(Talking to himself) A chair—there you are, Mary. Now, where's those matches?

SOUND . .....MATCH STRIKING.

JOE

(Talking to himself) There! Ah, here's a lamp on the table —Lord, what a musty place—Lucky there's blankets on this bunk—Gee, it's cold. Come on, Mary, I've found a bed for you. Nothing to brag about, but it's a bed. Can you hear me, Mary?

MARY

(Weakly) Yes, Joe. You've found me a bed.

SOUND.....MUSIC . . . SNAP AND CRACKLE OF FIRE . . . WAILING OF WIND.

JOE

Not much of a stove, but it throws plenty of heat all right. Nice and warm, Mary?

MARY

Joe, I'm frightened.

JOE

Now, don't be like that, kid. This isn't the time to be scared. We'll make out all right. I guess it won't be the first time—

SOUND.....LATCH CLICKS. WIND ROARS. DOOR SLAMS. WIND REDUCED.

SHEPHERD

Wal, makin' yourselves right at home, aren't you?

JOE

Is this your place? We lost our way—

SHEPHERD

I understand. It's a terrible night. I'm a shepherd. I was down to the fold with my sheep when I saw the light in the window and came up to see who my visitors were. You folks are welcome to what little comforts I have here.

JOE

Thank you. This is my wife—she's sick. She's going to have a baby.

SHEPHERD

She is? Wal, why aren't you doing something about it? Where's the hot water? Why aren't you making her comfortable?

JOE

Mister, you don't mean to tell me you know about—babies?

SHEPHERD

Wal, I know about lambs and there ain't much difference, I guess. Besides, I helped my wife bring our two boys into the world forty years ago and I guess the proceedin's ain't much different than they were then.

JOE

Gosh, I was ready to—

MARY

(Weakly) Joe!

SHEPHERD

Man, you talk to your wife while I set about preparin' things.

JOE

You feeling all right, Mary? Anything I can do for you?

MARY

Just hold my hand, Joe. I like to have you near me—Joe, say you love me.

JOE

I love you, Mary.

MARY

Never leave me, Joe.

JOE

Of course not, Mary. You feeling all right?

MARY

Yes, Joe. I'm not half so scared as you are. You're shaking like a leaf.

JOE

I can't help it, kid. If you'd married a guy with brains and luck, you'd be in a big, swell hospital right now.

MARY

But it wouldn't be your child then, Joe—Somehow, I'm not scared anymore. Isn't it strange that our baby should be born on Christmas Eve in a shepherd's hut with the snow falling, falling softly outside. I'm glad because no other babies will be born tonight quite like ours. I can close my eyes and out there in the wind I can hear voices singing that Christmas song I sang when I was a kid. Listen, Joe—

SOUND..... WAILING WIND FADES INTO CHORUS SINGING 'SILENT NIGHT'. AFTER VERSE AND CHORUS SOFT MUSIC OF 'SILENT NIGHT' FORMS BACKGROUND FOR NEXT SIDES.

MARY

Hear it? Isn't it beautiful, Joe?

JOE

Beautiful, Mary. What was that other one, something about a manger?

MARY

This one, Joe?

(Sings softly) Away in a manger,
No crib for his head;
The little Lord Jesus
Lay down his sweet head.
The stars—

JOE

Don't! Don't sing anymore, Mary. Our child won't have any crib either, kid. He won't have anything.

MARY

Kiss me, Joe. Hard—Now call the shepherd. Quick! Oh quick, Joe!

SOUND.....SOFT BACKGROUND MUSIC RAPIDLY BECOMES LOUDER UNTIL MOTIF IS TAKEN UP BY CHIMES WHICH PEAL THROUGH A FULL VERSE AND CHORUS.

SHEPHERD

All she needs now, man, is plenty of sleep. She's going to be all right.

JOE

I don't know how to thank—

SHEPHERD

Pshaw! You don't owe me any thanks. She deserves all the credit. Look at that fine son she's given you. Mister, you've got something to be proud of and work for now.

JOE

Yeah, but if it hadn't been for you, I'd—

SHEPHERD

Shhhh! Sounds like a car.

SOUND.....MUFFLED ENGINE . . . ENGINE STOPS . . . FEET STAMP . . . LATCH CLICKS . . . WIND ROARS . . . DOOR SLAMS . . . WIND REDUCED.

SHEPHERD

Come in! Come in, gentlemen!

BERRY

Thank you. Good evening, sir. We lost our way. Got off the main road. I didn't want to drive on a night like this, but these fools would go chasing through the worst storm in years to look for a dancer and his wife who—

JOE

Well, well, if it isn't the Three Wise Guys from the East. I tho't you boys were celebrating Peace on Earth and Good Will toward Men.

WYATT

Joe Nolan!—Paul! Berry! We've found them. Joe, where's your wife? Is she all right? The clerk at the hotel gave Berry your message. We started after you at once, but got off the road. We had just about given up hope when we saw the light from the window there. Is she—is she all right?

JOE

Mary's fine, but no thanks to any of you. This shepherd helped her. But what do you Three Wise Guys from the East want with us?

BERRY

I'm afraid I was a little hasty a couple of months ago, Nolan. At least the boys have made me believe I was, and we have been hunting for you to ask you to come back. I don't think it's necessary, but the boys have increased your salary. Of course we'll expect more—

WYATT

Shut up, Berry. You talk too much for your own good. Come over here and see what Paul and I have found. Joe, you're going to get a double raise in salary on the strength of this baby alone. You're to be congratulated. Here's the first honest-to-goodness Christmas baby I've ever seen. Paul, did you ever see such a well-shaped head in your life? And, man, look at that fist, would you!

MARY

(Weakly) Joe!

JOE

Hello, honey. You're supposed to be asleep. You mustn't wake up.

MARY

What is it, Joe?

JOE

A boy-baby, Mary.

MARY

I'm glad—But I mean, who—who's out there with you, Joe?

JOE

The Three Wise Guys from the East, Mary. They're adorin' your child.

MUSIC.....ORGAN.....15 SECONDS

END

"THE GLEASONS"
by
RALPH ROGERS

ANNOUNCER:

This is a special prevue script of "The Gleasons", a brand new, mirth provoking domestic comedy of the air, featuring that well-known stage and screen star, JAMES GLEASON and his wife, LUCILLE WEBSTER, who in that famous role of Emma Shannon won the lasting plaudits of New York Theatre goers when she co-starred with her husband in that hilarious three-act comedy stage hit, "The Shannons of Broadway".

And now, before we present "The Gleasons", may we digress just a moment to call your attention to the fact that this special audition script is a prevue of the ENTIRE SERIES and not just one "hand-picked" episode.

Those whose business it is to pick the future stage successes of Broadway would never think of judging the merits of a THREE act play by the FIRST act. The authors of "The Gleasons" believe it is just as inconsistent to ask you to judge the merits of a THREE YEAR radio serial by ONE EPISODE.

Therefore, this novel prevue, patterned after screen prevues, presents "scenes" selected from among 468 humorous episodes, together with a narrator's resumé of the WHOLE story.

—and, now, we present the first "scene" from the first episode of "THE GLEASONS".

MUSIC: "THEME NUMBER"..... *(Fanfare Wedding March and Home Sweet Home)*

NARRATOR *(On cue) (As "Theme Number" swings into Home Sweet Home)*

Our story of "The Gleasons" opens in that year of our Lord in which newspapers report millions following the horses, other millions betting their hard-to-get dollars on the chasers of the mechanical rabbit and still other millions betting on waltz-time pugilists and in-the-bag wrestlers—yes, the time is the PRESENT, the place, the modest little Gleason home *somewhere* in "Gambling America".

—and we might add that everything isn't going any too smoothly in the married life of Jimmie and Lucille—no, there's no fly in the ointment—it's HORSES, HORSES and more HORSES—listen:

JIMMIE

Who—whoa there—hold your horses—you're in the wrong stall.

LUCILLE

(Firmly) Horses, Horses, HORSES! If you mention HORSES just once more, I'll—

JIMMIE

Awww, there you go—kicking over the traces again just like that "mudder" who was always "scratching" herself.

LUCILLE

(Firmly) What do you mean—WHO'S like a mother whose always scratching herself?

JIMMIE

Awww, I didn't say anything about a mother scratching herself—I said, a mudder —mudder—*(Spells out)* M U D D E R—that's a horse that's fast on a muddy track. Say, I'll *betcha* that—

LUCILLE

(Mimics Jimmie) I'll betcha—I'll betcha—I'll betcha—that's all I hear morning, noon and night—you've got HORSES and BETTING on the brain and you've got to get them off or—

JIMMIE

All right—all right, but it says right here in the book—see, right here on page one—it's in the stars and you can't change the stars, can you?

LUCILLE

(Sarcastically) Do the HORSES know that?

JIMMIE

Awww, don't be silly. Who ever heard of a horse reading a book—you believe in astrology, don't you?

LUCILLE

When the *horses* take up astrology and they read the same book you're reading, then you can bet all you want to, but—

JIMMIE

Awww, but it says right in the book that the science of astrology has been known in India for hundreds of years and—

LUCILLE

—and we're still in the United States and so are the horses you want to bet on.

JIMMIE

Awww, be reasonable—listen to this—*(Reads)* The application of the laws of nature are ever present—just because we fail to observe or see certain—certain—certain FEN-om-mer—

LUCILLE

Just because we fail to observe or see certain, what?

JIMMIE

Er—er—certain *FEN*-ome-mer—

LUCILLE

Could you possibly mean, *Phenomena?*

JIMMIE

Yes--yes—that's it—*phenomena. (Reads from book again)* Just because we fail to observe certain *phenomena* around us does not mean that there is no such thing—we can't see the infra—the--the infra red ray with the naked eye, but—

LUCILLE

I know—I know—"You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him win a race."

JIMMIE

Awww, please—this is important—look, it says right here on page two—*(Reads)* "The same is true of the Cosmic rays and where is the man or woman who would dare to say that the Moon has no influence upon the earth, its inhabitants and its vegetation."

LUCILLE

You'll be telling me next that all horses are *vegetarians?*

JIMMIE

Could you possible be meaning *veterinarians?*

LUCILLE

I'm thinking just what the horses must be thinking.

JIMMIE

What horses?

LUCILLE

The horses you've been putting your money on lately.

JIMMIE

Okey—okey—here's the answer on page three. *(Reads from book)* "In horse racing, it has been found to be the ultimate insofar as guidance toward winners is concerned—" *(stops reading)*—of course that refers to AS-TRO-OLOGY--

LUCILLE

But I'm referring to HORSES and BETTING and all you've been doing is betting and losing, betting and losing and—

JIMMIE

Yea, but TOMORROW'S *the* day! See, it says so right in the book. Listen—"The sun is in the sign of Virgo, personal matters with the opposite sex may be attended to—lively upheavals in the market—avoid disputes with—

LUCILLE

(Firmly) What's THAT got to do with HORSES?

JIMMIE

Please—will you wait—I'm coming to that—listen—*(Reads again)* "Play a mixture of favorites and long shots and be sure to keep away from the landlord"—there's the answer—there's the answer—

LUCILLE

(Sarcastically) Play a mixture of favorites and long shots and keep away from the LANDLORD—that's just what we'd have to do if I'm ever foolish enough to let you bet the RENT MONEY.

JIMMIE

Awww, I know I've been losing—but—but—well, I—I—didn't have the right system.

LUCILLE

I've heard that before somewhere!

JIMMIE

Okey—okey, but *now* I've got the *stars* with me—I CAN'T miss—I CAN'T MISS—it's in the HEAVENS.

LUCILLE

But the horses you're betting on are right here on EARTH!

JIMMIE

All right—all right, smarty! You need more proof, huh? I wasn't going to spill this, but I'm going to convince you that my new system is right if it's the last thing I do.

LUCILLE

What's the little red book for?

JIMMIE

Just take a peek—go ahead—just take a peek at those figures—right there—right there!

LUCILLE

(Reads) Four hundred—six hundred and fifty—two hundred and fifty—

JIMMIE

Go on—go on—now look at the other page—take a good look!

LUCILLE

(Reads) Two thousand eight hundred dollars and eighty-five cents—one thousand three hundred dollars and ninety cents—

JIMMIE

Them's the totals—that's what I cleaned up last week.

LUCILLE

(Surprised) You—you won all that—I thought you told me that you haven't bet a cent recently.

JIMMIE

Well—er—er—well you see—I bet but I didn't!

LUCILLE

You bet but you didn't?

JIMMIE

That's it—I bet but I didn't—they were MIND BETS—I was just testing out the new system—you see, I picked 'em but I didn't bet any money on 'em—them figures is "paper profits" I'd made if I bet.

LUCILLE

IF, you'd bet—but you didn't!

JIMMIE

Awww, but I wanted to make sure I had the right system first! You see, here's the way I work—I lie down, go to sleep—just after I read the list of the day's entries, see? Then I dream and I see the winners in my DREAMS.

LUCILLE

From bad to worse!

JIMMIE

Now—now—that's not all—I've discovered I'm psychic!

LUCILLE

PSYCHIC or PSYCHOPATHIC?

JIMMIE

Maybe it's psychopathic, but I think it's what they call psychic—you know, when you see things before they happen—maybe, I'm what they'd call a "snoozing psychic".

LUCILLE

A what?

JIMMIE

A "snoozing psychic"—you know, because I only *psych* when I dream.

LUCILLE

I think I get what you're driving at. I work my head off in town to bring in the money for you to bet and you stay at home all day and sleep and dope and dope and sleep—very clever!

JIMMIE

Awwwwwww, but you know how *easy* it is for me to fall asleep—and I *always* dream.

LUCILLE

(Sarcastically) You may be able to pick them "on paper", but if you ever bet a nickle on a horse, the only things you'll see in your dreams will be *nightmares.*

JIMMIE

(Gets real peeved) Okey—okey—if that's the way you feel. I've told you about the stars—I've told you I'm psychic when I'm asleep—I've showed you how fool-proof my new system is and yet you're going to let me right down. *(Bitter)* And, a real wife is supposed to stand right by her husband's side—

right by her husband's side—Well, let me tell *you* something—When those horses get away from the post tomorrow, I'm going to be right there—right there! ! ! MUSIC: *("Horses—Horses—Horses" or some other number).*

NARRATOR: (On cue) (After a few bars of music)

And so this up-to-the-minute comedy of married life gets off to a "flying start" on the newest "Hobby Horse" of America's millions—that "Hobby Horse" which is more talked about today than even golf or bridge.

Yes, "The Gleasons" ride hard and fast on "horses" for the first few episodes and then comes a thrilling, laughable climax to the race track background—a climax which makes for many more humorous episodes to follow.

So, on with another scene from the big race track episode—the episode which completely changes the lives of Jimmie and Lucille. Here we are at the race track—the big race of the afternoon is on—the horses are tearing down the home stretch—here they come!

BUSINESS: (Loud cheers of crowd)

VOICES: Come on Flagpole—come on Flagpole!
Let her out—let her out!
Come on Black Flash—come on Black Flash!
Get up on her neck—get up on her neck, you boob—

MORE BUSINESS: *Horses hoofs (in distance)—(closer)—(closer)*
Horses hoofs good and loud—as they flash by the finish line.

MORE BUSINESS: *(Loud crowd noise) (Loud cheers)*

MORE BUSINESS: *(Loud cheers diminish to babble of voices as the race is over)*

LUCILLE

(Disgustedly) Well, there goes our RENT MONEY!

JIMMIE

(Dazed) I—I—I—I still can't believe it.

LUCILLE

Come on—come on—it's all over.

JIMMIE

(Dazed) I—I—I still can't believe it.

LUCILLE

(Sarcastically) And you picked "Running Water" on the nose—you should have given her a handkerchief.

JIMMIE

(Dazed) She didn't even finish—she didn't even finish. I guess she broke the barrier so many times she tired herself all out before the race.

LUCILLE

Well, come on—come on—don't stand there in a daze—we can't do anything about it now.

JIMMIE

(Still in a daze) I—I still don't believe it.

LUCILLE

Jimmie, I don't want to rub it in, but I want you to promise me something. Just ONE THING!

JIMMIE

(Dazed) Sure—sure—WHAT?

LUCILLE

That you'll NEVER bet on a horse AGAIN!

JIMMIE

I promise.

LUCILLE

NEVER, NEVER again as long as you live?

JIMMIE

NEVER—NEVER AGAIN, so help me—NEVER AGAIN.

LUCILLE

All right—now let's go over across here—I want to telephone to Aunt Emma—oh, I feel so guilty leaving her at home alone the first day she arrives to stay with us.

JIMMIE

HOW long—how long is she going to stay with us?

LUCILLE

Only a month or so.

JIMMIE

Only a month or so—I thought she might just stay a couple of *weeks* or two?

LUCILLE

But you know how Aunt Emma loves to stay with us.

JIMMIE

Yeah, I know—I know. Say, I just thought of something—wait—wait 'til I look at my little red book—I thought so—I thought so!

LUCILLE

What's wrong now?

JIMMIE

Look—I had the RIGHT HORSE in the RIGHT RACE on the RIGHT TRACK. but I picked her to win on the WRONG DAY! Look, it's right in the book—

LUCILLE

Jimmie, what did you just promise me?

JIMMIE

I know—I know—but it says right in the book—*(Reads)* "The Virgo is in the Heavens, play the long shot to win the 29th—today's the 28th—I should have bet TOMORROW.

LUCILLE

But you just promised you'd NEVER, NEVER bet again.

JIMMIE

But it wasn't my system that's wrong—my system is a winner.

LUCILLE

Jimmie, you said that a wife's place was by her husband's side—I gave in and let you bet the rent money but—

JIMMIE

Yeah—but—you still have two dollars and fifty cents of the rent money left, haven't you?

LUCILLE

No—I forgot to tell you—I spent it.

JIMMIE

Then—then we're dead broke?

LUCILLE

We won't have a penny until I get paid off next week—wait—here's a telephone right over here—I *must* call up Aunt Emma—have you got a nickel?

JIMMIE

Not a cent—I bet everything, didn't I?

LUCILLE

But you promised to hold out the bus fare.

JIMMIE

Oh yeah—oh yeah, that's right—here, here's a nickel—now we'll have to go home on the street cars.

LUCILLE

Hold my pocketbook while I telephone.
BUSINESS: *(Noise of dropping of nickel) (Dial numbers as Lucille dials home number)*

LUCILLE

(Telephones after dialing) Hello—hello, Aunt Emma? This is Lucille—yes—yes, Lucille—can you hear me now?
(Surprised) What? A man called at the house? He what?
(Gets excited) Yes—yes—yes, I'll be right home—all right—all right—I'll be right home. Goodbye—goodbye.
BUSINESS: *(Noise of receiver as it's put back on hook)*

JIMMIE

(Shocked) What—what's the—what's the—what's happened? You look—you look—

LUCILLE

(Excitedly) Ohhhhhh, Jimmie—ohhhh, it can't be true—it just can't be true! *(Starts to sob)*

JIMMIE

There—there—stop the crying—what can't be true?

LUCILLE

(Sobbing) What Aunt Emma said—she says a man is going to give me $100,000 for the ticket—

JIMMIE

What ticket—what ticket?

LUCILLE

(Sobbing) The—the ticket I bought on the big sweepstakes race a few days ago.

JIMMIE

Well, that's nothing to cry about.

LUCILLE

(Crying) But—but—I'm crying for joy!

JIMMIE

(Dazed) A hundred thousand dollars—say your ticket must have drawn a favorite.

LUCILLE

(Crying) That's—that's what I did with that two dollars and a half—the man who sold me the ticket said the money went for charity.

JIMMIE

(Dazed) Well—well—why—why didn't you tell me you bought the ticket?

LUCILLE

(Sobbing) I—I was going to, Jimmie—I was going to tell you all about it—and all about the *dream* I had last night—I dreamed that the ticket I bought was on a horse who won $250,000—

JIMMIE

You—you—you dreamed that last night—and that syndicate bird is offering you 100 grand—can you imagine—can you imagine that—and I thought I was the "dope dreamer" of this family—*(fades from mike)* can you IMAGINE THAT—and I thought I was the "dope dreamer" in this family.

MUSIC: (PLEASE GO 'WAY AND LET ME SLEEP) or some other number.

NARRATOR: *(On cue) (After few bars of music)*

No, Lucille didn't sell the ticket for any $100,000 to the syndicate and when her horse won the big sweepstake race, she won $250,000. And now comes a brand new slant to our story of "THE GLEASONS". What happens when a family, down to practically their last cent, wins a big sweepstake prize? What will happen to Jimmie and Lucille? Episodes to follow find the pair deluged by promoters with get-rich-quick schemes—Jimmie falls for a few, but Lucille's commonsense in financial matters saves the day time and time again.

Then, Lucille falls too—not for any get-rich-quick scheme; but almost overnight she "goes society" from the moment her check for $250,000 arrives. She buys a big house, three new cars, a number of dogs, hires servant after servant. All goes well until she tries to educate Jimmie to the ways of society. Let's go on with this prevue of "THE GLEASONS" and pick up a scene from an episode which takes place shortly after Lucille goes SOCIETY.

JIMMIE

Okey—okey, Lou, but—

LUCILLE

JAMES! You musn't refer to me anymore as Lou. In the future, you MUST call me Lucille.

JIMMIE

Okey, Lucille, but listen—

LUCILLE

James, how many times have I told you NOT to use that horrible word, "okey" —it's vulgar—and you must NEVER say, "Listen", as you do—

JIMMIE

As I do? I haven't done anything.

LUCILLE

Impossible—just impossible!

JIMMIE

Awww, Lou—I mean, Lucille—I talk just as good United States as the rest of that—

LUCILLE

What did you say? What did you say, James?

JIMMIE

Awwww, cut out that James stuff, will you—you've called me Jimmie for the past twenty-eight years and if it's good enough for twenty-eight years, it's—

LUCILLE

I guess you forget that we're rich now—we're in the upper strata.

JIMMIE

Up where?

LUCILLE

Upper strata.

JIMMIE

How far up?

LUCILLE

Away up. We're people of culture and money; and people of culture and money do not converse in unrefined English.

JIMMIE

Awwwww, but listen, Lou—

LUCILLE

But what?

JIMMIE

But LUCILLE—I—I—

LUCILLE

That's a little better—you MUST learn to speak in a more refined manner. By the way, I've engaged Professor Archibald Applebottom to teach you how to speak.

JIMMIE

Who?

LUCILLE

Professor Archibald Applebottom.

JIMMIE

(Loud laugh)

LUCILLE

What are you laughing at?

JIMMIE

Never mind—never mind!

LUCILLE

Well, you know that Professor Applebottom is a great English professor. He'll teach you to speak in no time.

JIMMIE

Awwww, but I've been speaking ever since I was a year-and-a-half old—my mother taught me.

LUCILLE

But not the English language the way Professor Applebottom teaches it.

JIMMIE

Who wants to speak English—United States has been good enough for me for a long time—and I'd just as soon continue to speak United States.

LUCILLE

But James, you must improve your—

JIMMIE

Go on—go on—the next thing you'll be wanting to get someone to teach me how to breathe.

LUCILLE

There—that reminds me—I knew there was something I wanted to speak to you about—it's about your breathing.

JIMMIE

My—my—my breathing?

LUCILLE

Yes, your breathing. Professor Applebottom will teach you how to breathe—I've noticed that you breathe thru your mouth all the time and—

JIMMIE

Awwww, that bird would take the breath away from anyone.

LUCILLE

Not so loud—one of the servants might hear you.

JIMMIE

You—you mean, I was breathing too loud? *(Loud breath)*

LUCILLE

Oh, you do so try my patience—remember, it's as Professor Applebottom says—"Mind thy Speech Lest It Mar Thy Fortune." Now repeat after me:

"Alas, a lass is sometimes false
Of faults a maid is made;
Her waist is but a barren waste
Though stayed she is not staid."

JIMMIE

(Hearty laugh) Awwww, I couldn't say all that without breathing.

LUCILLE

I didn't say you had to stop breathing.

JIMMIE

Oh, I can breathe, huh?

LUCILLE

Yes, but if you don't think you can say that one—try this:

"Beer often brings a bier to man
Coughing a coffin brings
And too much ale will make us ail
As well as other things."

JIMMIE

(Hearty laugh) Awww, I see, the A-L-E rhymes with A-I-L.
(More hearty laughter) I like that about the ale.

LUCILLE

All right—now close your mouth and breathe deeply, thru your nose.

JIMMIE

What? I can't speak if I close my mouth—you had your mouth open when you said those words.

LUCILLE

Oh, you're just hopeless.

JIMMIE

Maybe I am—but I'm not the only one that's hopeless—you might as well know it now—I just fired that valet you hired yesterday because—

LUCILLE

(Exasperated) You—You FIRED Meadows!

JIMMIE

(Getting peeved) I fired him. I'm not "renigging" on calling you Lucille and doing all this other stuff, but I'll be darned if I'm going to let anyone treat me like a little kid and dress me twice a day.

LUCILLE

Do you know what you're saying!

JIMMIE

(Getting steamed up) I sure do! I've been dressing myself for the past forty years and I'm darned if I'm going to let anyone start putting my pants on now.

LUCILLE

JAMES!

JIMMIE

(Going full blast) Besides he put those new pants on back side to, the other night, and then tried to tell me—

LUCILLE

James, if you MUST know, Meadows has put trousers on the BIGGEST people in society.

JIMMIE

I don't care if he's put pants on Marlene Dietrich, you can't wear pants backside to and—

LUCILLE

But you've never worn trousers like your new ones—everyone in society wears—

JIMMIE

Maybe that's the matter with society—maybe they got their pants on backside to.

LUCILLE

Ridiculous!

JIMMIE

Of course, it's ridiculous to wear pants backside to—and after forty years of putting my pants on and taking them off, no bottle-faced, stiff-necked valet is going to tell me that I don't know the difference between the front and the back of my pants.

LUCILLE

Meadows knows best.

JIMMIE

But it won't be best for me if I put my pants on backside to and I'm not going to let any flatheaded valet or anyone else tell me I don't know the front from the back of a pair of pants—I'll wear skirts first.

LUCILLE

James, you go right upstairs and have Meadows put on that new gray suit and—

JIMMIE

I will not—no sir—

LUCILLE

James—JAMES! Where are you going?

JIMMIE

OUT!

LUCILLE

James—come back here! *(Slight pause)* James, if you walk out that door, you'll walk out of my life FOREVER.
BUSINESS: *(Door slam)*

LUCILLE

(Sobs) Oh, Jimmie, Jimmie! Oh, he's gone—he's gone!
MUSIC: (GOODBYE FOREVER).

NARRATOR: *(On cue) (after a few bars of music)*

Yes, Jimmie walked out, and following episodes nearly lead to the divorce court; but sanity wins and Lucille finally admits that Jimmie does know the front from the back of a pair of pants. This scene from a "Society Episode" gives one a rough idea of the humorous happenings during the first "Society Days" of "The Gleasons". It's just one humorous situation after another at this stage of the series, and one of the funniest is "The Gleasons" at the Presidential ball at Washington, the reception to Count Whiskerwisk and the society tour of the United States, during which Jimmie and Lucille appear at timely gatherings featured in the days' news.

END