"This is your Announcer_"

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TED LANE BREAKS INTO RADIO

BY Henry B. Lent

NEW YORK · THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1945

Lithographed in the United States of America

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DIGGERS AND BUILDERS

CLEAR TRACK AHEAD!

FULL STEAM AHEAD!

WIDE ROAD AHEAD!

GRINDSTONE FARM

TUGBOAT

THE FIRST FIGHTER

FLIGHT 17

AVIATION CADET

AIR PATROL

BOMBARDIER

PT BOAT

SEABEE

AHOY, SHIPMATE!

"THIS IS YOUR ANNOUNCER—"

Photo by Carroll Van Ark

"PLATTER JOCKEY" . . . engineer . . . writer . . . apprentice announcer! Many a young man or woman finds that a beginner's career in radio depends upon learning *all* these jobs.

THIS is a story about radio, one of today's most exciting, most glamorous, professions—a profession which offers challenging opportunities and substantial rewards to those whose special talents qualify them to select it as a life career.

This account of one young man's career in radio does not pretend, however, to be a handbook on how to break into radio, or on how to gain advancement in this highly competitive business. It is merely the story of what happened once to a returned AAF flier by the name of Ted Lane—and of what might easily happen again, to any beginner.

In gathering the facts which enabled him to portray Ted Lane's experiences in radio, the author talked with many announcers, producers, engineers, and radio station executives. Some of these men said that they started in radio in much the same way as that described in this story. Others said their experiences had been different, but agreed that young Lane's career could be considered "typical."

It should be added that for the most part the names used in this book are fictitious, as are the station call letters.

It would be impossible, in this space, to list the many individuals who assisted the author in preparing this book. To express special gratitude to the network executive who painstakingly checked the manuscript for accuracy, would be to slight the scores of others who contributed in different and important ways to making this book possible.

So here it is—a book designed primarily to tell interested readers something about people who work in radio stations, and what they do.

HENRY B. LENT.

Contents

Ted Writes a Letter

TED LANE sat staring at his typewriter and the sheet of paper he had put into it five minutes ago. The paper was still blank, except for the name and address of the man to whom he was writing:

Mr. Harold Hayes, General Manager
Station WXXR
Camden, Conn.

He tapped out Dear Mr. Hayes: and stared at the paper again, wondering how to start his letter.

"Golly!" he exclaimed aloud. "This is the toughest letter I ever tried to write. If I don't tell him all the good things I can think of about myself, he won't be interested in giving me a job in his radio station. And if I lay it on too thick, he'll think I'm just boasting—and the answer will be the same. Well, here goes . . ."

Ted hunched over the keyboard of his Royal portable and started to type.

A long time ago I made up my mind that I wanted to make radio my career.

My plans had to be postponed when I left college at the end of my junior year to join the Army Air Forces. Having served for 18 months in the China-Burma-India area, I am now home again, with an honorable discharge, and am

more determined than ever to go ahead with my plan for getting into radio.

Ted paused to read over what he had typed.

"Maybe he'll think he ought to give me a job just because I'm a wounded veteran," he thought to himself. "I wouldn't want it that way. I want him to hire me because I've got something he really wants."

He glanced down at his ankle. He was glad that the bone had knit so well. It had been badly shattered by Jap ack-ack. But now he scarcely limped at all. And the wound in his shoulder had healed perfectly.

"You're almost as good as new," the Army Air Forces doctor had told him. "But you're through as a fighting man, Lane," he added. "You've done your hitch and you can be proud of your record. Good luck, my boy—and good by!"

Ted had flown west to Casa Blanca in an Army Transport plane, and then across the Atlantic to New York. Now if he could only get this job with his home-town radio station he would soon become accustomed once more to civilian life, he felt sure. He bent over his typewriter again. . . .

I would like very much to come in for a personal interview, at your convenience, to tell you something about myself and to find out if there is a place for me on the staff of Station WXXR.

I would like to become an announcer, eventually, but I'm willing to start at the bottom and try my hand at any kind of job that needs being done. That's my idea of the best way to learn

a business—working from the bottom up. I'll even come as your office boy, and work without pay, if necessary, in return for a chance to get into radio.

"Gee, that sounds corny!" Ted exclaimed to himself as he read it over. He scratched out the last sentence. "I'll have to type the letter over again, anyhow, before I send it."

During my last year in college I was captain of the football team. I was also on the basketball squad and went out for baseball. So I am pretty much at home in the field of sports, and I know the lingo a sports announcer or sports writer would use.

I was also on the college newspaper, one year as a writer and a second year as assistant advertising manager. In this work I became acquainted with many of the town's leading retail merchants.

In my sophomore year I made the debating team, and also took an active part in school dramatics. I have had three years of English and Public Speaking, two years of Spanish, and one year of French. During my service overseas I picked up a few words of Chinese, but I don't suppose that will be of much use to me back here at home.

I have a fairly good background in music, both classical and popular. For six months before I went into the service I played a guitar Saturday nights with Ray Smith's Melody Boys at Jensen's, on the Post Road.

I guess that about sums up my qualifications, Mr. Hayes. It is difficult,

in a letter, to tell you how very eager I am to get into radio—and especially with Station WXXR. So may I come in to see you someday soon?

I shall be very grateful if you will drop me a note—or telephone me at 2607–telling me when it would best suit your convenience for me to come in for an interview.

Very truly yours,

As Ted pulled the sheet of paper from his typewriter, he heard his mother coming upstairs.

"Say, Mom," he called out, "come see how this sounds, will you, please?"

He handed her the rough draft of his letter.

When his mother had finished reading it she said, "It sounds fine to me, son. You tell that Mr. Hayes that if he doesn't give you a job I'll never tune in again on Station WXXR!"

Ted laughed. "That will do it, Mom!" he said, patting her on the arm. "He won't dare turn me down when I tell him that."

He put a fresh piece of paper in his machine, to type the letter again carefully without mistakes.

"I'll get it off in the afternoon mail," he said. "Then we'll sit back and see what happens."

Every time the telephone rang, during the next two days, Ted rushed to it hopefully. But no call came from Station WXXR. And no letter. During the evening he sat by the radio, tuned in to the station's programs. In some vague

way he felt that listening in might help—just how, he didn't know.

On the third day a letter came. "Station WXXR" was printed in the upper left-hand corner of the envelope. Ted tore it open hurriedly, and glanced at the signature on the letter. It was from Mr. Hayes, all right.

"Well, what does it say, Ted?" his mother asked. "Good news?"

"Not exactly," Ted replied, trying to hide the disappointment in his voice. "It's short and to the point. I guess it's just a polite way of saying No. I'll read it to you" . . .

Dear Mr. Lane:
I was very much interested in your letter outlining your capabilities, and only regret that at the present time our staff is quite complete and we are not considering making any additions.
However, if you would care to drop in sometime for a little talk, I should enjoy meeting you. In the meantime I shall keep your letter on file.
Very truly yours,

"H-m-m-m!" Ted's mother exclaimed, with a determined expression on her face. She went over to the radio and snapped off the switch. "I meant what I said. Station WXXR is off the air from now on—at least in *this* house!"

Ted couldn't help laughing, in spite of the discouraging news contained in the letter.

"Let's give him one more chance, Mom," he said. "After all, he's left the door open just a tiny crack. He says I can come to see him. I'm going up to Station WXXR tomorrow morning."

"Mr. Hayes Will See You Now"

TED entered the First National Bank Building, on Main Street, and took the elevator to the third floor. As the door slid open he stepped out, into the reception room of Station WXXR.

He was nervous, but he tried not to show it. If he could only get this job!

When the girl at the desk smiled and asked whom he wished to see, Ted replied, "Mr. Hayes, please."

"Have you an appointment?" the secretary asked.

"Not exactly," Ted answered. But he added, hopefully, "My name is Ted Lane. Mr. Hayes said that if I came up he might be able to see me."

"I'll find out if he's busy," the girl said.

She disappeared through a doorway at the left.

Ted waited, shifting his weight for a while from one foot to the other. Then he straightened his tie and patted down the handkerchief that was tucked neatly into his breast pocket. There was no one else waiting in the lobby. He looked about him to see what Station WXXR was like.

Over by the window there was a radio. It was playing soft music. He went over to it and saw that it was tuned to the station's own wave length—1400 on the dial.

He crossed the room and peered through a large plate-glass window. This was the station studio. There were four men inside, one playing a cello, one a violin, another a clarinet, and still another the piano. Although Ted could hear no sound through the thick glass window, the movements of the musicians were synchronized perfectly with the music coming from the radio set behind him. He knew that they were playing the program which was on the air now.

In a small room separated from the studio by a glass partition, the engineer sat at his control panel facing the musicians. An electric sign over the studio door proclaimed, in shining red letters, "ON THE AIR."

The selection they were playing came to an end. The engineer, doubling as announcer, made a few remarks and then told his listeners the name of the next piece. Ted could see his lips moving, and could hear the words he spoke coming over the radio in the lobby.

"That's Bob Leslie, the WXXR announcer," he said to himself.

He recognized the voice as the one he had heard so often over his radio at home. And now he knew what Bob Leslie looked like.

Just then the receptionist came out of Mr. Hayes' office.

"He will see you now, Mr. Lane," she said pleasantly.

Ted mentally tightened his belt and marched confidently into the inner office.

Mr. Hayes pushed aside some papers he had been looking at and greeted Ted with a friendly smile. They shook hands.

"You certainly didn't lose any time getting up here, did

you?" the Station Manager remarked, with a grin. "Well, sit down and let's get acquainted—although, as I wrote you, there is no opening on our staff right now. If Milton Cross himself walked in, I'd have to turn him down!"

First Mr. Hayes asked Ted about some of his experiences overseas. Ted told him briefly how he had flown P–40 fighter planes, mostly in the area east of the "Hump" that separated India from China. He told Mr. Hayes, too, about the boys he had been working with. They were a grand bunch of fellows.

Then the Station Manager wanted to know more about Ted's college activities—just what he had done on the newspaper, in athletics and dramatics. Ted told him, in detail. He quickly sensed that Mr. Hayes was encouraging him to talk about himself, not only to find out what he had done, but also in order to size him up and to see how he handled himself in conversation with other people. So far everything seemed to be going fine. Mr. Hayes seemed genuinely interested in what Ted was telling him, and that was a big help.

Finally, after about fifteen minutes of general conversation, the Station Manager asked Ted abruptly, "If you had your choice, Lane, would you prefer to come with us or to go with one of the big network stations, like WJZ or WEAF?"

Ted thought a moment. A question like that was a tough one to answer on the spur of the moment. Everyone naturally thinks first of "big-time" stations—and "big-time" companies, no matter what the business may be.

NBC Photo

NEW YORK'S "RADIO CITY," with its tall **RCA Building,** is headquarters for two of the nation's major broadcasting networks.

After a moment's hesitation Ted replied, "I honestly think I'd pick Station WXXR, sir—because I know I haven't enough experience to qualify me for a job in a big station. As a matter of fact, I suppose that even a local station like this isn't very much interested in a fellow like myself, who has never done any radio work before. But I was hoping that I could get some kind of job here—*any* kind of job at all—and learn the business as I went along. If I'm going to make radio my career, I'd like to learn all I can about *all* the jobs that have to be done in a radio station, starting at the very bottom."

Mr. Hayes smiled. "I wish we could give you the break you want, Lane," he said. "You seem to have the right idea about getting started in radio."

He added that many beginners who came in for an interview thought of radio as a "glamour" business, like the movies, where a person could become famous almost overnight and land in the big-salary brackets.

"It's true that some of the big names in radio make a lot of money," he explained. "But most of them worked hard to get where they are today. Perhaps, someday, you will be another Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Fibber McGee—and maybe you won't. All I know is that here, at Station WXXR, there are no big names. We're just a bunch of guys who work hard at the radio business because we love it. Our reward isn't so much the old pay check as it is the satisfaction of knowing that we're running a station that serves a real need in the community. And we like to think that we've built it up into one of the very best stations of its size in the country."

He explained, as Ted already knew, that, while Station WXXR was part of the Blue Network, it was really just a 250-watt local station, covering an area that stretched out for a radius of fifty miles or so from Camden.

"In a way you might compare a station like WJZ, with its 50,000 watts, to a big newspaper like the New York *Times,* which is read by people over a large section of the eastern United States," Mr. Hayes went on. "But Station WXXR is more like a local newspaper. While we do carry some of the network programs and broadcast world news, many of our programs are of only local interest—the sort of things that people who live in Camden, or near by, like to hear. You know the sort of thing I mean: 'Mrs. J. L. Koplitz, of 50 Hudson Street, slipped on the ice this morning and broke her hip. She is resting comfortably in the Hopkins Memorial Hospital.' Or 'The Little Gift Shoppe, at 28 State Street, announces a brand-new stock of boys' and girls' shoe skates, especially priced at $4.95 a pair.' "

Ted nodded to show that he understood the difference. Then Mr. Hayes went on to explain how the staff of Station WXXR was made up.

"There are only eighteen of us," he said, "so we have to double in brass—doing extra jobs that we wouldn't have to do if we were on the staff of a big station. Sometimes it's like a madhouse up here, but," he added with a smile, "we think it's a pretty pleasant kind of madhouse to work in."

He drew a rough diagram to show Ted the various jobs done by the staff of a small radio station. Working under the general manager was the News Editor. Another very important man was the Chief Engineer, with his three as-

sistants. Then came the Program Director, whose job was to select, prepare, and produce the sustaining programs broadcast by the station.

There were three regular announcers, who also doubled as engineers in the control room when necessary. Mr. Hayes said that a great deal of the time an announcer on Station WXXR was just a "disk jockey," changing records on transcribed musical programs. But the announcers liked this job because it gave them a chance to *ad lib*—to say whatever came into their minds, in between the various musical selections. And this was very good training. It gave them a chance to think fast and put their own personalities over to their radio audience.

There were also two copy writers on the staff. Their job was to write the commercials and special announcements.

"The girl you saw in the lobby is my secretary, Miss Mott," continued Mr. Hayes. "She also acts as Traffic Manager, scheduling the time of the various broadcasts so that they don't conflict. And maybe you don't think that's a job!"

The other regular members of the staff included two salesmen and two bookkeepers. The salesmen spent most of their time calling on present sponsors and keeping them happy—and visiting other local merchants and manufacturers, trying to get them to sponsor programs or sign up for station "spot" announcements in between programs.

"In addition to these people," continued Mr. Hayes, "we have several others who appear on various programs, although they are not on the regular staff. One such person is

Shirley Brooks, our movie commentator. Another is Nan Pendleton, who broadcasts to the women of Camden about cooking, child care, fashions, new books, and so on. The third is our musical commentator, Vance Dale, who broadcasts a weekly program of classical music."

Mr. Hayes paused and glanced at his watch.

"You have told me a great deal about yourself, Lane—and I have told you something about our Station. Now then," he said, with a smile, "you say you'd like to become an announcer. Well, I'll be honest with you and tell you that you might just possibly make a good one—someday—when you've had some training. You have a voice that is pleasant, natural, and easy to listen to. But there is only one way to find out how your voice really sounds on the air—and that's to put you in front of a mike. How would you like to have an audition?"

Ted was so surprised and excited at this unexpected question that he almost leaped out of his chair.

"You mean *me?*" he beamed. "Now?"

"Sure—why not!" Mr. Hayes replied.

He picked up his interoffice telephone and called the control room.

"Bob Leslie?" he asked. "You've just switched over to the network program, haven't you?" (Pause) "Fine. If the studio's clear, I'd like to put on an audition." (Pause) "No, not for a sponsor. I have a young man here by the name of Ted Lane. He says he wants to get into radio. Get hold of Frank Dixon. We'll be right in."

He hung up and turned to Ted.

"Frank Dixon is our Program Director," he explained. "I like to have him sit in when we audition applicants. Let's go."

Ted jumped to his feet and followed the Station Manager.

"Gee, this is swell of you, Mr. Hayes!" he began. "I never expected . . ."

"Don't get your hopes up, Lane," Mr. Hayes interrupted. "As I said, we have no opening now; but if a man makes a good impression, I usually give him an audition. That's the only way to know whether we *might* be interested in him if an opening happened to come along." He opened the studio door. "Here we are. Come on in."

Ted followed him into the studio.

"The Mike Won't Bite You!"

TOWARD the front of the studio, near the glass partition which separated it from the control room, there was a table. Over the table was a WXXR microphone, which hung suspended from a slender metal boom. When Ted sat down at the table, the mike was directly in front of his face, about ten inches away.

Frank Dixon, the Program Director, came into the studio. Mr. Hayes introduced him to Ted.

"So you want to be a radio announcer," was Mr. Dixon's greeting. In his hand he held a sheaf of papers, which he laid on the table in front of Ted. "Look these over," he said. "Take your time—ten minutes or so. Mr. Hayes and I will go into the control room to see how your voice comes through. When you're ready to start, just give Bob Leslie the high-sign."

Ted picked up the scripts.

"That first one is a piece of institutional copy, soliciting contributions for the infantile-paralysis drive," Mr. Dixon explained. "The second one is a commercial for the Style Shop. After you've read those two, I'd like to see how you come over as a newscaster. Here is the latest UP news release. And, last of all, here is a musical script, a running commentary for one of our radio concerts. I want to see whether you are familiar with the correct pronunciation of musical terms and names. O.K.—and good luck!"

The two men walked out of the studio. Ted bent over his scripts and read them carefully, one by one. He looked up when he had finished and saw the Station Manager and Program Director standing in the control room—behind Bob Leslie, the announcer. Bob saw Ted looking at them. He flicked a switch on his control panel. A light appeared in the studio, over the window. Ted knew that meant he was now facing a "live" mike.

"Take your time, Lane," came the voice of the manager. "Just let us know when you're ready."

Ted spoke into the microphone.

"I'm ready to start now," he said.

"O.K.—it's all yours," came the reply.

Ted picked up the first script. His hand was trembling. His throat felt dry. Why, this was worse than trying to train the gun sights of a P–40 on a Jap Zero! Never before in his life had he felt so nervous!

He took a deep breath and plunged into the first announcement, but he had read only a few words when Mr. Dixon interrupted him.

"Come up a little closer to the mike, Lane," he said. "It won't bite you, you know," he added with a chuckle.

Ted moved a few inches closer to the microphone and started reading the one-minute announcement again. . . .

No child in America is safe! Not while infantile paralysis, most feared of all diseases, is still at large! Last year the Crippler struck in epidemic force—one of the most savage attacks in history. This year the danger looms again. . . .

Out of the corner of his eye Ted could see Mr. Hayes

and Mr. Dixon watching him from the control room.

"Golly! I hope I don't sound as jittery as I really am!" was the thought that flashed through his mind as he drew a quick breath and continued.

He'd never realized that one minute could be so long! With an earnest inflection in his voice, which he hoped would sway his listeners, Ted launched into the closing sentences. . . .

Support this vital battle! No one knows whose child will be next when infantile paralysis strikes. Don't let it be yours! Before it's too late—join the March of Dimes!

The light flashed off.

"That was very good, Lane," came Mr. Hayes' voice over the loud-speaker. "But try to relax. I can see that you're rather nervous. You were just a little too dramatic in reading that announcement. Now try the commercial."

The studio light flashed on again. Ted's hand was not trembling quite so much as he picked up the script for the commercial. He was already becoming a little more accustomed to having the mike stare him in the face. He recalled what Mr. Hayes had told him during his interview—that an announcer's delivery should be crisp and persuasive, with just the right amount of punch and a friendly, spirited inflection.

"Well, here goes" . . . and he started reading the commercial.

The Style Shop invites you to drop in—whether you're a small, average, or large size. The Style Shop, at 158 Main Street, opposite the Rialto Theater, has your size in sports dresses, blouses, jumpers, and all kinds of women's togs. The

Style Shop's sportswear comes in fine wool mixtures, gabardines, twills, and flannel fabrics—sportswear that is well tailored, smart, and youthful-looking. They come in sizes 9 to 24½ and the colors are lovely—all the new shades and tones that are so popular this . . .

At that point the light flashed off and Mr. Dixon broke into the audition with "All right! All right, Lane! We don't want to start the women stampeding into the Style Shop!"

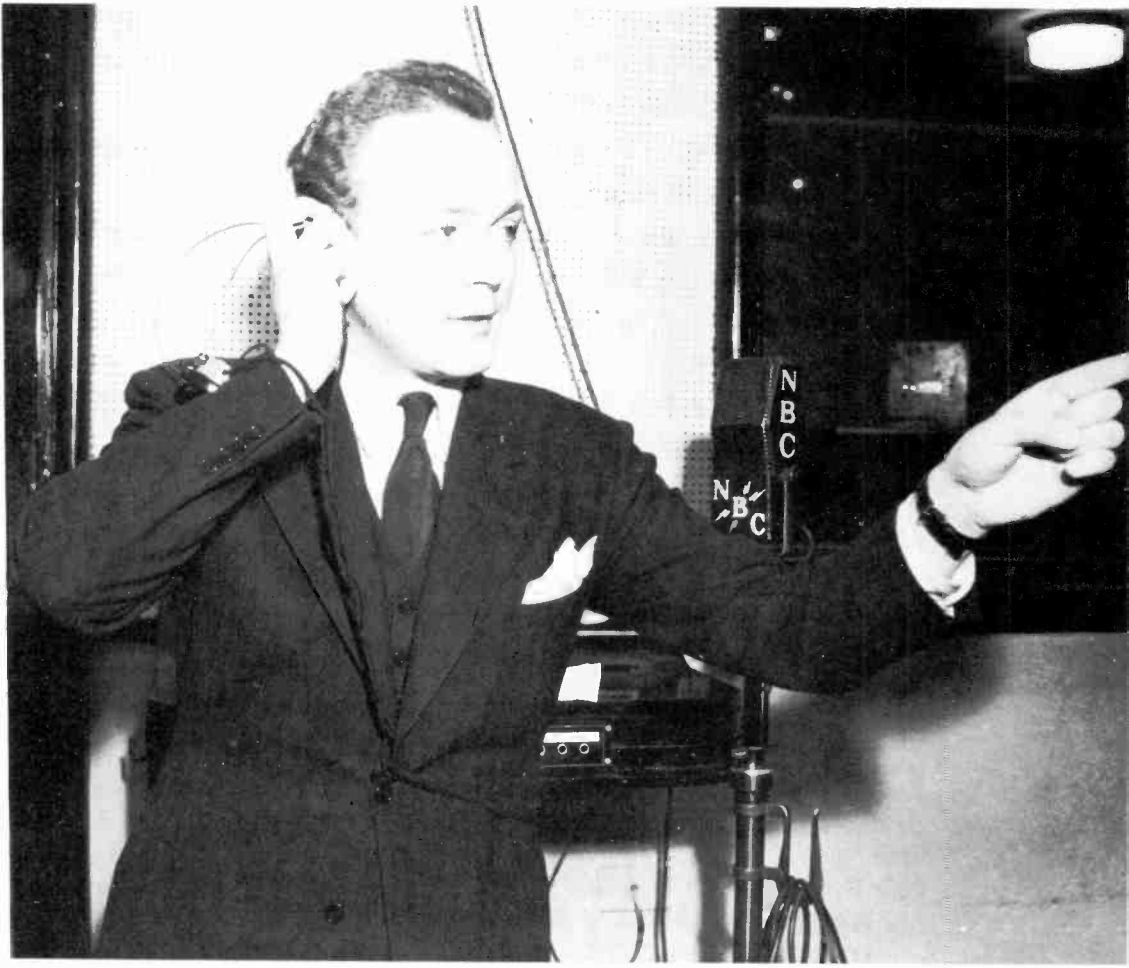
He was kidding, Ted knew. Did that mean that his reading of the commercial was awful? Perhaps it just meant that he had read enough of it so that Mr. Dixon was satisfied. Ted couldn't guess which was the case. He wished he knew.

"Now try the news," Mr. Hayes suggested. "Read it with authority in your voice and an animated expression, as if you were a foreign correspondent at the front, reporting the latest events firsthand. O.K., now—whenever you're ready."

Ted held up the long yellow strip of paper which had just come over the news teletype that morning. . . .

From Admiral Halsey's Headquarters—The American Third Fleet has inflicted new and heavy losses on the Japanese Navy in the China Sea, according to a radio report just received. During the last three days, enemy losses have included two battleships, three heavy cruisers, four light cruisers, thirteen destroyers, twenty-two escort vessels, one submarine, and thirty-one other small combat ships. In addition 186 enemy planes were destroyed.

Following this there were special news flashes from Paris, London, Moscow, and Washington. Ted broadcast the long release to the very end, without interruption. Then he glanced at the men in the control room. But nothing in their



NBC Photo

HAND SIGNAL from director, in control room, to announcer: "You're on the air—start talking."

expressions told him whether he had done well or badly. Bob Leslie, the announcer, winked at him—but that could mean anything! Not good—not bad.

What an ordeal this was! But how important it was to come through with flying colors!

Just one more announcement to read—the one introducing part of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 in C Minor, the *Ruy Blas* Overture by Mendelssohn, and Symphony No. 5 by Shostakovitch.

As Ted's eye raced down the script and encountered such musical terms as *molto allegro con fuoco,* and *presto e vivace,* he was glad that playing a guitar with a swing band had not dulled his deep interest in the world's really great music.

Feeling that he was on familiar ground now, he amazed even himself by breezing through the difficult script without "fluffing" a single phrase or name. With a final deep breath which was really a sigh of relief, he came to the sign-off. . . .

At this time tomorrow we shall present a program featuring Mozart's Overture to the Marriage of Figaro, *and the first and second movements of Sibelius' Symphony No. 2. We cordially invite you to be with us at that time. Until then, this is Ted Lane bidding you a pleasant good evening for the sponsors of "Musical Masterworks."*

"Whew!" Ted exclaimed aloud. He mopped his perspiring brow with his handkerchief. "I'm certainly glad that's over with! I never thought I'd have such a bad case of mike fright, broadcasting to just three people."

He started to get up from his chair.

"Hold everything, Lane," Mr. Hayes said, with a mysterious smile. "There's one more hurdle we'd like you to jump."

Ted sat down again and looked toward the control room expectantly.

"As you probably know," the Station Manager explained, "the greatest test of an announcer's skill is his ability to *ad lib*—to talk about anything and everything if he suddenly finds that he must fill out time."

He reminded Ted that "dead" air is fatal—in radio. For example, when a sports announcer is describing a football game and the referee calls "Time out," the announcer doesn't just sit there wondering what it's all about. If he doesn't know, *instantly,* he starts describing the crowd, the autumn foliage, the exploits of the players, or what happened the last time the two teams met. The important thing is to *keep talking* about something in which the radio listeners are interested.

"So now," the Station Manager concluded, "I'd like to see how well you can *ad lib*. For the next five minutes describe the studio in which you are sitting. Tell me what you see, as if I'd never seen it myself. And make that bare studio sound like the most fascinating place you've seen in years. Start as soon as Bob Leslie throws the switch."

Ted's eye swept the studio. His heart sank. How could anybody *ad lib* for five minutes about this plain, ordinary twenty-by-thirty-foot room! For a moment he was panicky.

He thought seriously of blurting out, "I'm sorry, Mr. Hayes—but I can't do it! I guess I don't belong in radio after all!"

Then something inside him got the upper hand.

"A fine time to quit, you lug!" that inner voice said. "Go

ahead! Talk! Say something! Say anything! But talk!"

Bob Leslie threw the switch on the board. The studio light flashed on. Ted started to talk. He pretended to himself that he was at home, describing the studio to his mother. As he warmed up to his subject, he became more and more enthusiastic. He talked about the grand piano in the corner . . . the big bull fiddle standing against the wall in its case—too big for the musician to tote home . . . the sound-effect props clustered in the other corner . . . the soundproofed ceiling . . . the announcer at his board beyond the glass partition . . . the clock, whose long sweep hand traveled in short little jerks as it ticked off the seconds . . . the short upright microphone in the middle of the floor, and the other mike suspended from its portable boom . . . the rows of chairs for the studio audience . . . and on and on.

Finally Mr. Dixon's voice came over the speaker. He was laughing.

"All right," he said. "Time's up."

Ted could scarcely realize that he had actually been talking for five minutes about—nothing!

The two men left the control room and motioned for Ted to join them outside.

"Well, how did you like it?" Mr. Hayes asked. "Still want to break into radio?"

"You bet I do!" Ted replied. "But I'm afraid I put on a pretty bad show. I was plenty nervous."

"I could see that," Mr. Dixon agreed. "But if a fellow has potential ability as an announcer, it shows up even through his nervousness. You did very well, as a matter of

fact. I like the way you did the news and I liked your ability to *ad lib*. Your commercial was a little flat and too slow. But you'd improve, with experience. Your reading of the musical script was excellent."

"Well, thanks very much," Ted said as he prepared to leave. "It was swell of you to give me an audition."

Mr. Hayes turned to his Program Director.

"What do you think, Frank?" he asked. "Can't we give young Lane a spot on next week's 'Radio Playhouse'?"

"That's an idea," Mr. Dixon replied. "We haven't completed the cast yet. Wait a moment, Lane, and I'll get a script for you."

He went back toward his own office.

Mr. Hayes explained to Ted that Station WXXR broadcast a half-hour play every Monday evening.

"It's just a sustaining program," he said. "We have no sponsor for it, yet. The actors serve without pay—just for the fun of it, and to get radio experience. Would you like to have a small part in next week's production?"

"Would I!" Ted beamed. "That's the sort of break I've been looking for! Do you really mean it, Mr. Hayes?"

"Of course I do," the Station Manager assured him. "Here's Frank, with the script."

Mr. Dixon handed Ted the script of the play.

"Look it over between now and Monday," he said. "Then come up here for rehearsal at seven-thirty that evening. There are two bit parts in the script that don't conflict with each other. One is a cop and the other is a private detective. Study their lines—and if you work out all right at rehearsal,

you can take them both. They're very minor parts; but it's one way of getting on the air, if you want to do it."

Ted tucked the script in his pocket, shook hands with both men, and literally bounded down the stairs to the street level, two steps at a time. In his excitement he'd forgotten that the building even had an elevator!

Boy Meets "Girl in Blue"

By the time Monday evening finally rolled around, Ted had been over the script of the play so many times that he could almost recite all the lines from memory.

He knew, of course, that it wasn't necessary to learn his lines perfectly because, when the play actually went on the air, the actors would be permitted to read their lines from the script. But he also knew that this might be his big chance, and he didn't want to muff it.

Ted showed up at the studio a little before seventy-thirty on the evening of the rehearsal. Soon the others in the cast began to drift in. There were two sailors from a near-by training station, three girls from the senior class at high school, and an older girl who had played several roles with the local stock company during the summer. Bob Leslie, the announcer, was taking the lead in that evening's production. While they were waiting for the producer to appear, Bob introduced the members of the cast. Some of them were already acquainted, having had roles in the WXXR "Radio Playhouse" before.

Finally the producer himself bustled into the studio. He was a bouncy little man with a friendly, enthusiastic manner. His name was Joe Holmes. Ted learned that during the day Holmes worked in the radio department of a large New

York advertising agency. He wrote radio plays in his spare time, just for the fun of it. By volunteering to help put on the WXXR "Radio Playhouse," he not only had an opportunity to try out his new scripts on a real radio audience but also enjoyed the experience of doubling as a radio-play producer.

The name of this week's play was *The Girl in Blue*—Joe Holmes' latest romantic mystery thriller.

He explained that the first rehearsal would, as usual, be merely for the purpose of reading through the script. The members of the cast found seats near the studio table and prepared to speak their lines, following the script.

"This first time we won't even bother with the mike, or with the sound effects," Joe Holmes said. "We'll read it through just to get the swing of the thing, and to see how the lines go over."

They started. Every once in a while Joe would interrupt one of the actors with a suggestion.

"Put a little more feeling in that line, Mary—you're supposed to be mad," he would say. Or "Bob, the emphasis is supposed to go like this: 'I don't WANT to get married!' Now let's try that scene again."

There was nothing for Ted to do until they came to page six of the script. At that point in the play Marcia, the girl in blue, rams into the car being driven by Philip, the hero of the play. After a spirited argument Philip finally calls a policeman to settle their differences.

Ted's cue was when Philip exclaimed, "All right—I'll show you. . . . [*Calls*] Officer! . . . Officer!"

Ted, who was taking the part of the policeman, picked up from there, like this. . . .

COP: Well . . . what's the trouble here?

MARCIA: Oh, Officer . . . he was, I was . . . we . . .

PHILIP: Officer, this woman rammed my car deliberately.

MARCIA: Why, you cad! You know you backed into me—on purpose!

COP: So that's the story now, is it! Come along with me, young fellow. . . . (*Gently*) I'm sorry, madam, but you'll have to come along, too. You'll have to sign a complaint. . . .

With this line they faded from the mike, and there was a short musical "bridge" as the scene changed to the courtroom.

Joe Holmes was quite pleased with the way Ted read his lines.

"Are you Irish, by any chance?" he asked.

"No," Ted replied, "but my grandfather was."

"Well," was Joe's rejoinder, "you make a wonderful Irish cop. Your brogue sounds like the real McCoy."

As the reading of the play continued, Ted had nothing more to do until they reached page seventeen. But he paid close attention to the way in which the more experienced actors put over their lines. Finally his cue came. The action took place between Philip's father (Mr. Carstairs), Philip himself, and the detective (played by Ted).

SOUND: KNOCK AT DOOR

PHILIP: Come in. . . .

DETECTIVE *(fading in):* Pardon me, sir. . . . I'm Private Detective Costello from the Ace Detective Agency and . . .

CARSTAIRS *(angrily):* Philip . . . tell this fool detective who I am!

PHILIP: You've got the wrong steer, Mr. Costello. You see, this is my . . .

DETECTIVE: Don't give me any of that stuff, mister! Private Detective Costello never follows a bum steer. I been sent over here to prevent a certain party from leaving town . . . and he's coming with me . . . right now!

CARSTAIRS: Why, this . . . this is an outrage!

DETECTIVE: Come on, bud. Come with me. Gentle but firm . . . that's the Ace Detective Agency.

SOUND: DOOR OPENS AND SLAMS SHUT

And that's all there was to the two parts Ted Lane had been given. But, from the way he threw himself into his two roles, you might have thought he was rehearsing for the lead in a Broadway production!

At nine-thirty, with only one hour to go before broadcast time, the sound-effects man came in and the cast prepared to go through the script again. This time they would do it pretty much the way it would sound when they finally went on the air, complete with musical bridges and sound effects.

Pete Adams, the sound-effects man, busied himself over in one corner of the studio, setting up the props and gadgets he was going to use. He had already studied the script carefully and knew just what he would need.

For this "dress" rehearsal Joe Holmes went into the con-

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"YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE MAD—put a little more feeling into that line!" The producer offers suggestions as the members of the cast go through a preliminary rehearsal of the script.

trol room and stood behind the engineer's panel to audition the play. He wanted to see how it came over the control-room speaker. In his hand he held a stop watch, in order to check the running-time of the play.

When everything was in readiness, the engineer flicked the talk-back switch on his board; the light in the studio flashed on; and the actors started to read their lines again, from the beginning.

This time it went off much more smoothly than the first reading. And, with the sound effects thrown in, it seemed much more realistic.

Ted was fascinated by the ingenious way in which some of the sound effects were created. The play opened with the direction SOUND: STREET NOISES. This sound was made from a record which the engineer played on his turntable. There was a jumble of recorded noises: taxi horns, voices, a newsboy calling out his headlines, and, over it all, the muffled roar of traffic.

Whenever the script called for the ring of a telephone, Pete Adams would press a button which rang a bell. Then he would lift the receiver from its holder, with its characteristic click, close to the microphone.

To create the sound of a door opening and slamming shut, he had an actual door, about four feet high, set in a frame. The click of the latch, and the turning of the knob, had to be done in a special way each time, depending upon what character was supposed to be coming into the room—and the mood the character was supposed to be in. Pete kept his eye glued to the script, always ready to pick up his cue on the split second.

NBC Photo

SLAMMING DOORS, crackling flames, crashing walls, ringing telephones, pistol shots—the sound-effects man has these tricks, and many others, up his sleeve.

Whenever the scene in the play changed from one place to another, the engineer would dub in a brief musical bridge on his turntable, and then fade out as the voices came over the mike again. A record was used, too, to give the sound of a car starting or stopping. This was a standard sound-effects transcription in which you could hear the driver step on the starter; then shift gears, from low to second to high.

In *The Girl in Blue* part of the action was supposed to take place in a rowboat, in the harbor. This was a real test of Pete Adams' skill. To make the sound of oars in the water, he turned a small portable typewriter table upside down and, by twisting one of its casters from side to side on its swivel, made a squeaking noise just like that of an oar in an oarlock. With his other hand he splashed about in a pail of water.

Finally there came a spot where he had to make the sound of bailing out a leaky boat. He did that with a paper cup, dipping up water from the pail and splashing it back in again.

When Philip, the hero, punched the villain on the jaw, Pete told him to slap his own face with the palm of his hand for the sound effect. But this sound, when he tried it, didn't come over the mike quite right. The next time he slapped his chest. That sounded better.

Ted was so interested in watching the sound-effects man that he almost missed his cue.

At the last minute Bob Leslie nudged him and whispered, "The cop! There's your cue!"

Ted hurried up to the microphone just as his cue came, and read his lines.

This was great stuff! Ted was having a wonderful time and already was beginning to feel like an old hand at radio acting.

At ten-fifteen the dress rehearsal ended. With only fifteen minutes to go, Joe Holmes bounded back into the studio to give his cast a few last-minute suggestions. Some of the players were marking their scripts as a reminder to correct little mistakes, or wrong timing, that had shown up during the last rehearsal.

The hand on the studio clock moved closer and closer to broadcast time. Now everyone was bustling about the studio, getting ready for the signal to go on the air. Pete was giving his sound-effects gadgets a final checkup. The engineer kept looking at the clock, ready to take the station break at 10:29:30 on the dot. Joe Holmes hurried back into the control room.

Before he closed the studio door, he called back, "All right, kids! Here we go! Make it good!"

The first actors to appear on the "stage" took their position before the microphone. The engineer raised his finger as a signal that he was about to take the station break.

The studio light flashed on. With an air of expectancy the cast listened to the station announcement and identification.

"Good evening, folks. This is your Station . . . Station WXXR . . . in Camden . . . presenting the regular WXXR 'Radio Playhouse.' Tonight's performance is . . . *The Girl in Blue.*" . . .

The production man lowered his finger as a signal for the play to start. They were on the air.

"Ride the Level"

For the next three Monday evenings Ted took part in the WXXR "Radio Playhouse."

As he gained confidence in himself, and became more experienced before the microphone, he was given more important parts to play. And he became well acquainted with quite a few staff members of the radio station.

Bob Leslie, the announcer, took a special liking to Ted and gave him many tips which helped to improve his work.

Bob told Ted that he remembered very well what a struggle it had been for *him* to break into radio. He finally landed a job playing a cornet in a weekly minstrel show broadcast over a small station near Boston. One night the producer of the show failed to make an appearance, so the station's program director told Bob to pinch-hit at the job. He did so well that the following week the station manager put him on the pay roll, starting him in as a "disk jockey" and second-string announcer. After a year at that station Bob heard that one of the WXXR announcers was leaving. He applied for the job, was auditioned, and accepted. That was two years ago.

One evening, after the broadcast, Bob and Ted dropped in at Smitty's lunch wagon on Main Street for a cup of coffee before going home.

As they parted, Bob said, "Tell you what I'll do, Ted. If you want to come into the studio tomorrow afternoon while

I'm on the board, I'll be glad to give you a few pointers. At two o'clock we put on our 'Musical Moments' broadcast—nothing but recorded music, with a few spot announcements, right up until four o'clock. I thought maybe you'd like to see what an announcer-engineer has to do. How about it?"

"That will be swell, Bob!" Ted replied. "Are you sure it will be all right?"

"Certainly," Bob assured him. "I spoke to Frank Dixon, the Program Director, about it. I told him I thought you had real possibilities as an announcer and that I'd like to give you a hand. He agreed. He even said you could take a station break if you wanted to try it."

"Gee, thanks a million, Bob!" Ted exclaimed.

"Oh, it's nothing much," Bob said. "Besides," he added mysteriously, "I have a special reason for wanting to do it. I'll tell you about it sometime. Well, so long. I'll see you tomorrow at two."

The next afternoon Ted showed up at Station **WXXR** a few minutes ahead of time. He went back to the control room. Bob saw him, through the window, and motioned for him to wait for just a moment. The red "ON THE AIR" sign was lighted, and another sign on the door said, "POSITIVELY NO ADMITTANCE." As soon as the red light went out, Ted quietly opened the door and tiptoed inside.

Bob was seated at the control panel, flicking switches and turning knobs. He had just started his station break and was now announcing the "Musical Moments" program. Ted stood there watching him, and trying to figure out what some of the gadgets were. On either side of the announcer, within

easy reach, was a turntable for playing records. Directly in front of him was the control panel, with its array of knobs and switches. In one corner was a steel cabinet about the size of a gym locker. There were knobs on the front of it, and a panel into which two wires were plugged in. Over in the other corner was the loud-speaker—and above it a clock, where the operator could see it by turning his head slightly.

Bob finished his announcement with "And now . . . all you youngsters from nine to ninety . . . the first recording on this afternoon's program is that favorite 'Sweet Lorraine,' as played by the King Cole trio."

He reached out with his right hand and flicked the switch that started the turntable revolving. As the first notes of the song came over the speaker, he flipped the switch that killed the microphone, and turned to greet Ted.

"Hello, there," he said. "You are now witnessing Camden's leading disk jockey going into his routine. This goes on until two-forty-five—then we switch to a fifteen-minute network news broadcast—then back to recorded music again. We can talk while each record is being played. Then, when the news comes on, I'll have fifteen minutes to explain to you how the control panel works. Sit down and relax, Ted."

Bob selected another record from the album and placed it on the turntable at his left—all ready to start.

"The first thing a disk jockey has to know is the difference between his records," he explained. "Most ordinary small platters, like this, are cut laterally. The needle vibrates from side to side to reproduce the music." He picked up a much larger record. "Some of the big-size radio transcriptions, like

this one, are cut vertically. The needle rides the groove with an up-and-down motion."

Ted examined the records closely.

"I'll have to take your word for it, Bob," he laughed. "I can't see any difference."

"Here's another thing about records," Bob continued. "Some of them play from the outside in—and some play from the inside out."

"How do you know which is which?" Ted asked.

"They're all labeled, here in the center," Bob replied. "One thing more," he continued, glancing at the clock out of the corner of his eye. "On the edge of each turntable is this little lever. Shove it over here to 33⅓ for the big disks—and over to the other side, to 78, for the small records."

"Why?" Ted asked.

"That controls the speed. The big platters turn at 33⅓ revolutions per minute—and the small ones play at 78 r.p.m.'s."

"Now you're talking my language," Ted grinned. "At least I know what an r.p.m. is."

Bob turned back to his panel once more. Just as the record ended, he turned the knob on the turntable and flicked the microphone switch to "ON." The light over the window flashed on and he spoke into the mike.

"And that, folks, was the King Cole trio playing 'Sweet Lorraine.' Now . . . for Bing Crosby fans . . . here's a collector's item. It's an old twelve-inch record made by Der Bingle back in his vo-do-de-o days . . . singing the 'St. Louis Blues.' All right, Bing . . . come on in . . ."

And, with his left hand, Bob reached over and started the turntable . . . then he flipped the mike switch to "OFF."

Every once in a while, during this recorded program, a little red light over the panel would shine. That was a signal that someone wanted to speak to Bob on the telephone, which was on the table beside the control board. Usually the call was from some listener requesting him to play a special number.

At one point in the program Bob informed his listeners that he was about to give one of his special one-minute quizzes. This was a commercial which the Station put on for one of the local theaters.

"I will ask you a question over the air," Bob explained to his radio audience. "The first person who telephones me —at Camden 0707—with the correct answer, will be asked a second question, over the telephone. If you get both answers right, Station WXXR will mail you a free pass to the Rialto Theater, where the feature picture this week is . . ." and he named the current film showing at the Rialto.

Then, on the turntable, he played a recorded fanfare in which the trumpets went "tara-ta-tara-ta-ta!"

At the end of the fanfare he announced, "Here is the first question . . . and it's an easy one. To whom does a sailor refer when he speaks of the 'Skipper'?"

The little red telephone light flashed on instantly. Bob picked up the receiver.

"The Captain of his ship?" he repeated. "That's absolutely correct. Now then . . . here's the second question: Mt. Vesuvius is near what city?" He paused to wait for the

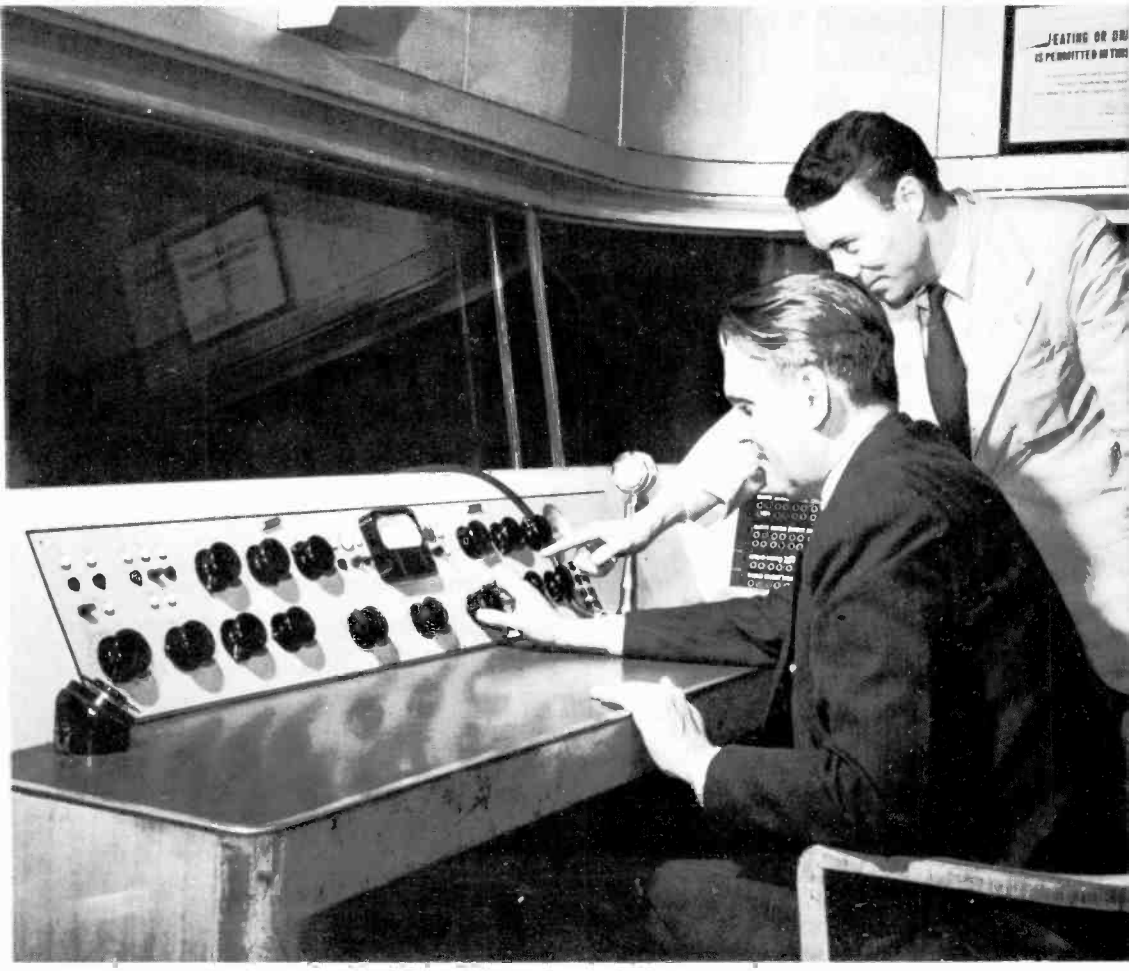


Photo by Carroll Van Ark

"RIDE THE LEVEL!" The dials, knobs, and switches of the control panel lose their mystery once their use is carefully explained.

answer. "Naples? Correct. Madam, you win a free pass to the Rialto Theater! Please let me have your name and address. We'll put the pass in the mail tonight . . ." and he wrote down the woman's name and address.

After playing a few more records it was time for the fifteen-minute news broadcast. Bob announced this fact to his listeners and, just as the second hand on the clock hit two-forty-five, flicked the switch that threw the broadcast over onto the Blue Network line.

"We're on network now," he said, turning to Ted. "We can talk freely, without interruption, for fifteen minutes. Come on over, and I'll show you how to work the control board."

He let Ted sit down in the chair in front of the control panel. Leaning over his shoulder, he explained the various dials, switches, and knobs. In the center of the panel there was a dial in which a slender needle flicked back and forth.

"That's the meter on which we check our program level, or volume," Bob said.

He explained that when someone was talking over the air, as at present, the needle should be kept at a peak of 80 on the dial, as much as possible. For a musical program it should be held to 100 on the dial, or lower. If the operator became careless and let his meter level "peak" over 80, for speech—or over 100, for music—the engineer would usually telephone him from the transmitter room and say, "Watch your level—you're riding it too high!" That meant that the announcer was "overmodulating" the program, causing distortion as it went out over the air. He could correct it by turning his

"fader" dial on the control board, which lowered the volume of the broadcast.

Bob showed Ted where the fader dial was located. He said that it was sometimes called a "pot"—which was short for "potentiometer." There were two other fader dials—one which controlled broadcasts originating outside the studio, and one which controlled the volume of recorded music.

"You turn it to the right to increase the volume of the right-hand turntable," Bob explained, "and to the left for the other turntable."

There were several switches on one end of the control board. One was the switch which threw the station onto network programs. Another was the audition switch, which permitted two-way conversation between the studio and the control room. The other switches were for remote-control broadcasts.

Ted asked what the steel cabinet in the corner was for.

"Oh, that's the jack panel, or patchboard," Bob explained. "It's really nothing but a simplified telephone switchboard."

And he told Ted that if there was a network program on, and the announcer wished to leave the control room for a few minutes, he would merely plug in, or "patch in," the patch cords into the proper jack, thus transferring the program to the transmitter room.

"As soon as you do that," he added, "the program goes directly through the transmitter room, instead of coming here through the control room. Of course, whenever I do that, I have to telephone the engineer in the transmitter room

first and let him know that he's the guy in charge from then on."

By the time he had finished explaining these things to Ted, the news broadcast was almost over.

"Next comes a weather forecast," he said. "And the weather broadcaster for today will be none other than Ted Lane!"

"Who? Me?" Ted asked in amazement.

"Sure—why not!" Bob replied. "Come on over here and sit down."

Ted, very excited over this sudden turn of events, took his place in the announcer's chair, in front of the control panel. Bob handed him a sheet of yellow paper on which the latest weather broadcast was printed.

"Now, all you have to do is this," he told Ted. "When the news ends, flick this switch here and say, 'This is Station WXXR, in Camden.' Then pause. Then say, 'And here is the latest weather forecast for Camden and vicinity.' Then read your lines. O.K.?"

"Well, I'll try it," Ted replied. "I'll never learn if I don't. Here goes." . . .

The Blue Network news commentator signed off. Ted tripped the switch back to the local line, gave the station identification, and then read from the sheet of paper Bob had given him. . . .

The weather for tonight . . . partly cloudy and somewhat colder. Tomorrow . . . overcast and slightly warmer, with occasional showers. For Massachusetts and Rhode Island . . . colder tonight than last night, with lowest temperature about 35. Fresh winds, diminishing during the night. Tomorrow cloudy and somewhat warmer.

NBC Photo

"PERFECT!" As program ends, the director signals his cast that the performance and timing were "right on the nose."

As Ted finished reading the weather report, Bob leaned over his shoulder and spoke into the mike.

"Now, folks, we resume with your favorite program, 'Musical Moments.' The first record is a special request . . . 'Louise' . . . played by Frankie Carl. Come on in, Frankie." . . .

He twirled the dial that started the turntable, and snapped off the microphone switch.

Ted got up from the announcer's chair. A warm glow of excitement swept over him as he realized that he had actually taken a station break and made the weather forecast.

"Gee, Bob—thanks ever so much!" he exclaimed. "Did I do all right?"

"You handled it like an old-timer!" Bob assured him.

Just then Frank Dixon, the Program Director, came into the control room. He saw Ted there and pretended to be surprised.

"Oh, hello, Lane," he said, shaking hands.

"I've been initiating Ted as a disk jockey and announcer," Bob explained, with a grin. "That was Ted making the weather forecast. Did you catch it?"

"Yes, I did," Frank Dixon replied. "To be perfectly honest with you, Ted—that was a put-up job between Bob and myself. I wanted to see how you'd come over as an announcer—and you did all right."

Ted beamed as he thanked him.

"Come up again and try your hand at it," Mr. Dixon said as he turned to leave. "You couldn't get a better man than Bob to break you in," and he winked at Bob as he left.

When they were alone again, Bob lowered his voice and said, confidentially, "I might as well tell what's cooking and why I got you up here today. One month from now I'm leaving here to become Program Director with a New York local station. So I sold Frank Dixon on letting me break you in for my job. It looks as though you'd make the grade all right—but keep your fingers crossed!"

Ted could scarcely believe his ears. At last this looked like the big chance he had been hoping to get!

"So come on back tomorrow, Ted, for Lesson Number Two," Bob added. "I'll let you try your hand at changing records and making *ad lib* announcements on this same program."

"It's a date!" Ted agreed as he turned to go. "Oh, I forgot—" he said. "In all the excitement about my own good news I forgot to congratulate you on the new job *you* have lined up. I think it's swell, even though I hate to see you leave Station WXXR. Well—so long—until tomorrow."

Station WXXR Hires a Handy Man

Two weeks later it happened! Ted Lane was put on the pay roll of Station WXXR!

His salary, to start, was twenty-five dollars a week. That wasn't much, to be sure. Ted knew that there were probably many better-paying jobs in Camden, if he wanted them. *But those other jobs were not in radio stations.* This was the one job he wanted most of all—and now he had it.

When he reported for work that first Monday morning, he passed Mr. Hayes in the corridor. The Station Manager shook Ted's hand and said he was glad that things had worked out the way they had.

"For a while, Ted, you'll be just sort of a handy man around the place," Mr. Hayes explained. "I think Frank Dixon has a few ideas on how to keep you busy—and, of course, you'll get a chance now and then to work at the control panel and as an announcer. Well, good luck—I know we're all going to enjoy having you work with us."

Ted soon found out that Frank Dixon *did* have plenty of ideas on how to keep a young beginner busy. The first job he gave Ted was that of putting the station's library of records and transcriptions in good order.

The records were kept in a special room across the corridor from the control room. On the shelves which lined this

room the records were filed away in an upright position, each in its own envelope.

All the "platters" were given special numbers of their own—1, 2, 3, 4, and so on. Then two index cards were filled out for each record. On the first card the record was listed by its title, with the orchestra and vocalist written underneath. And at the bottom of the card the title of the reverse side of the record was entered. Like this:

Title: Star Dust — Record No. 88
Orchestra: Tommy Dorsey
Vocalist: Frank Sinatra
(REVERSE) Title: Song of India
Orchestra: Tommy Dorsey
Vocalist: None

On the second index card which Ted made out each record was listed according to the name of the band, like this:

Orchestra: Tommy Dorsey — Record No. 88
Vocalist: Frank Sinatra
Title: Star Dust
(REVERSE) Orchestra: Tommy Dorsey
Vocalist: None
Title: Song of India

By referring to this alphabetical card-index file, the announcer could quickly find any record he wanted, either by title or by band name.

For the first few days Ted worked like a beaver, cataloguing the station's five hundred records under the new system. Then he got busy on the transcriptions—the big "78" disks. Ordinarily this would have been an even tougher job, because each platter had four or five different selections on each side. But, fortunately for Ted, the transcription li-

brary was in better shape than the record files. After checking the old index cards he simply had to make out about fifty new cards for the transcriptions the station had recently received.

Frank Dixon, the Program Director, liked the way Ted tackled both these jobs. He remembered, all too well, some of the other youngsters he had tried to break in, before. Almost all of them had that same kilocycle gleam in their eye and stardust in their hair. But, somehow, their enthusiasm for breaking into radio cooled rapidly when they discovered that there was a lot of work in a radio station that wasn't the least bit glamorous. One of the boys had quit cold when Dixon set him at the task of cataloguing records. Another had grumbled so unpleasantly at having to bring the continuity and script file up to date that Dixon had fired him at the end of the first week. So it was only natural that he should have his fingers crossed whenever a new man was added to the staff. But by the end of the first two weeks he began to feel very hopeful that Ted was really going to work out all right.

So was Ted. Although cataloguing records wasn't the most exciting job in the world, just *being* on the staff of a radio station made up for it.

For two hours every day he worked with Bob Leslie in the control room. He frequently took station breaks and even did very well at reading an occasional one-minute commercial. Gradually he got over his feeling of nervousness before the microphone. And he found that even the control panel was rather simple to operate, once you lost your terror

Photo by Carroll Van Ark

HOBNOBBING WITH THE MASTERS—Sometimes a newcomer's first job in a radio station is to catalogue hundreds of records and transcriptions.

of its many knobs and dials.

One day, under Bob's watchful eye, Ted took a trick as disk jockey on the "Musical Moments" program. After operating the panel and two turntables for fifteen minutes, he realized what a person really means when he says he's "as busy as a one-armed paper hanger."

Working with Bob in the control room for two hours a day gave Ted an opportunity to pick up a great deal of information which he should know, as an announcer. One thing he learned was how to make visual signals from the control room to the studio, when someone was on the air. For example, if there was a little time left—but not too much—the announcer would make circular motions with his finger, meaning "Speed it up!" Or if it seemed that the program was going to end too soon, the announcer would bring the fingers of both hands together and then move them apart slowly, as though he were pulling taffy. This meant "Stretch it out!" The most frequently used signal was a downward sweep of the finger, which was the cue to "Start!" And the signal an announcer enjoyed most of all was when, at the end of a program, he could lay his finger alongside his nose, meaning "On the nose—your timing was perfect!" A variation of this was a circle, formed by the thumb and forefinger. This meant that the timing and quality of the program was "Just right!"

When not working in the control room, Ted sometimes took over some of Kay Mott's duties as Traffic Manager. There was a big book known as the WXXR "Bible." Kay showed Ted how to keep a record of each day's programs in

this book, entering them as far in advance as possible. The "Bible" was like an "advance dope sheet," showing what radio time was scheduled for the days ahead and how much was still open.

Working from the listing in the "Bible," Ted would then make up a daily schedule called the Commercial Report. On this schedule he wrote in the name of the sponsor, unless it was a sustaining program . . . the name of the program . . . the time of the broadcast . . . and the amount of time.

Another schedule, which was similar, was called the Announcer's Log. This had to be made out each day, and was kept in the control room. The Log showed all the programs to be broadcast that day—from the early-morning sign-on to the sign-off, late at night. And there was a space at the right in which the announcer signed his name as each program ended and went off the air.

One day, when Ted took the next day's Announcer's Log in to Frank Dixon for his O.K., the Program Director asked, "Have you ever written any commercials?"

Ted replied that he had not.

"Well," Mr. Dixon continued, "I want you to try some. As you know, in a station as small as WXXR, everyone has to double in brass occasionally. We have two regular copy writers on the staff—and they're both good. But there might come a time when you'd have to pitch in and do one yourself, in an emergency."

He picked up a short script from his desk.

"Here's what I mean," he said. "Just the other night I happened to drop in after hours. One of our clients—the

Briggs Brass Company—had just telephoned, all in a tizzy. In place of the regular spot announcement—due to go on the air just twenty minutes from then—they wanted to substitute an announcement making a plea for workers to apply for jobs in their finishing department . . . a rush Navy order. Carl Bronson was on the board, and he was too busy to write the new announcement. So I did it myself . . : got the client's O.K. by telephone . . . and it went on the air five minutes later, still warm from the typewriter."

The idea of learning something about writing scripts made a big hit with Ted. Here was an opportunity to try his hand at still another one of the many jobs that had to be done in a radio station.

"It's the Client's Nickel"

JANE WHITE, top-flight copy writer at Station WXXR, gladly agreed to give Ted a few pointers on radio writing.

"I understand you did a bit of writing in college," she said as Ted pulled up a chair to her desk. "Newspaper stuff, wasn't it?"

"Yes—a bit," Ted admitted. "But it was mostly leg work—knocking on doors, trying to persuade local merchants to buy a page of advertising. Usually I was glad to settle for half a page, or less," he grinned.

"Well, that's good background experience," Jane said, with a smile. "I was afraid for a moment that you were one of those bright young boys with a yen for writing for art's sake. You know—the Great American Novel and all that."

Ted laughed. He liked Jane White. She was blunt, but the kind of person who talked to a fellow without pulling any punches or being coy. He made up his mind that he could learn a great deal from her about script writing, if she felt like telling him. And she did. . . .

"Let's get at it this way," Jane started. "There's a big difference between writing for art's sake and writing something that will appeal to the masses. And because radio appeals to the masses, you have to keep in mind the sort of people to whom you're addressing your message. The guy

who operates the elevator. Your family doctor. Joe Doakes, who flips flapjacks over in Smitty's diner. The mechanic who fixes your car. The president of the bank, and all the vice-presidents . . . and the bobby-sox kids. All kinds of people."

That certainly was true, Ted agreed.

"And," Jane went on, "just as a magazine advertisement sells something by attracting people's interest *in print,* a radio commercial sells something by means of the *spoken* word. That's about the only difference. But never forget this: a radio writer is primarily a salesman. The client buys radio time, and pays you to write a script for his program, simply because he has something to sell and he expects your script to sell it for him. When it comes to the commercial in his program, he wouldn't give you a nickel for the finest golden prose unless it helped to sell his product. And I don't have to remind you that it's the client's nickel that keeps a radio station in business!"

Jane told Ted that the best experience any radio writer could have was door-to-door selling, or working behind the counter of a retail store. That kind of training, she said, teaches you how to talk and write so that the customer will want to buy whatever you are trying to sell.

"There aren't any hard and fast rules for writing good radio commercials," she explained. "My experience has taught me that it's best to avoid trying to use a cut-and-dried formula. But there are a few basic principles you should always keep in mind. The number one principle is to catch the listener's interest."

She told Ted to imagine that he had just paid a thousand

dollars of his own money for the right to speak over a public-address system installed in Grand Central Terminal in New York.

"You have some gadget you want to sell," Jane continued. "All right—how would you start?"

"What's the gadget I'm selling?" Ted asked.

"It doesn't matter," Jane replied. "Maybe it's the Improved Lane Mouse Trap, with a patented artificial cheese bait."

"Well," Ted began, after a moment's thought, "first I'd say something that would make people turn their heads and pay attention."

"Sure," Jane agreed. "But attention alone wouldn't be enough. You'd want to get their attention in a way that would build up interest for what was coming next. And a radio commercial has that same job to do."

She reminded Ted that when radio listeners are tuned in on a program they are not thinking about whatever the sponsor may be trying to sell. They are listening to the program in order to be entertained.

"That's why the start of a commercial must be interesting enough to catch their attention," Jane pointed out. "And it must direct their thoughts toward what you have to say."

That made sense, Ted thought. So they went on to Rule Number Two.

"Get your listener's sympathy," Jane said. "Get him on your side—nodding his head and agreeing with what you're saying. Through the radio you are really a guest in his home. Try to use the same tact, sincerity, and good manners that

you'd use in talking to a personal friend."

Another thing that helps, she told Ted, was to give reasons *why* people should do something you wanted them to do.

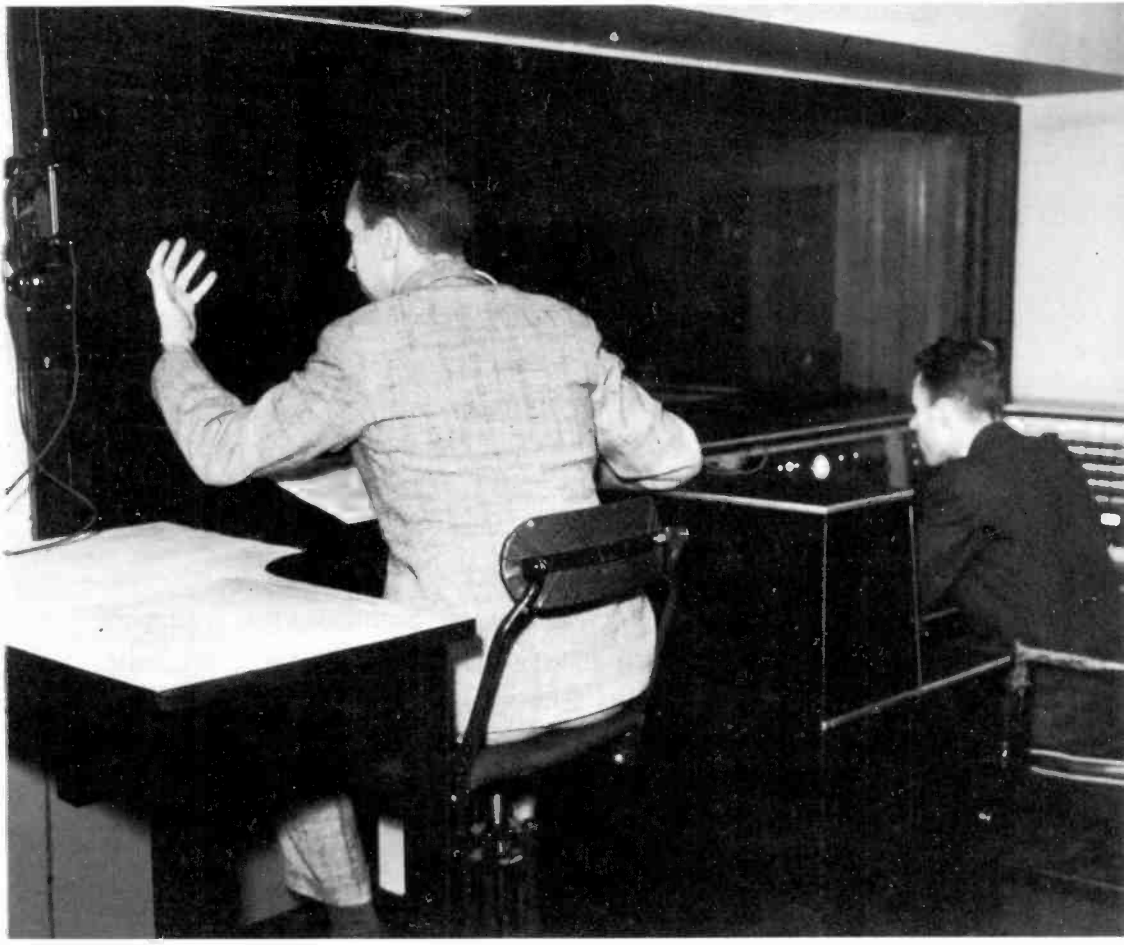
"People don't like the hard-hitting, high-pressure salesman who pounds on the table for emphasis," Jane said. "If you're skillful, you write the kind of commercial that makes people want to say, 'That sounds like a good idea—guess I ought to do it.' "

Above all, Ted was told, a commercial writer should be honest.

"Stick to the facts, Ted," Jane urged. "Don't exaggerate. An honest, sincere commercial is always more convincing. Avoid glowing adjectives and superlatives. If you overplay your hand in just *one part* of your script, the listener either turns to another spot on the dial or says 'Nuts!' and turns thumbs down on the whole idea you're trying to get across."

Ted learned that, in writing a commercial, it was always a good idea to read it aloud, just the way it would sound over the air. Many a script, when put to this acid test, ended up in the wastebasket, where it belonged. For many a word or phrase that looks fine, when you see it on paper, turns out to be a tongue twister on the air. Radio writing, more than any other kind of writing, must be smooth, with the ideas spaced out so that the listener's mind has time to grasp each idea as it comes up.

"And don't be dull in your writing," Jane concluded. "Try for simplicity, yes. But don't make the mistake of thinking that a piece of writing must be dull and uninteresting just because it's simple. Use vivid, fresh expressions. And don't



NBC Photo

"GIVE!! . . . MAKE THAT LINE MORE DRAMATIC!!" The director, from his spot in the control booth, signals a radio actor to put more "stuff" into his lines.

strain to be clever. The clever commercial usually lacks sincerity."

Selecting a number of commercials from her script file, Jane went over them carefully with her "pupil" to illustrate the points she had made.

When they had finished, Ted asked how many words there should be in a one-minute commercial.

"That depends very much on the announcer's delivery and the nature of the script," she replied. "The best plan is to time your script when it's done, by reading it the way you would over the mike. Then, to double-check, count the words. It's pretty safe to figure on 150 to 180 words per minute—or an average of 160."

Jane paused and looked at Ted with a twinkle in her eye.

"Well, I guess that ends Lesson Number One, and you probably won't remember a single thing I've told you," she said. "Now suppose you take a swing at a script about GE home appliances for the Hartman Hardware Store. Here's a General Electric folder that describes the appliances. Take your time and do a good job of it. I don't need it for ten minutes."

This last remark startled Ted a little. He looked at her to see if she was kidding.

Jane laughed. "It isn't in that much of a rush," she admitted, "as long as I get it this afternoon. Come back in an hour and let me see what you've done."

Ted went back to his own desk and, after reading about GE electric washers and ironers, tapped out the following commercial on his typewriter:

Housewives of Camden . . . have you heard about the GE Electric Laundry? Of course you can't get it now, with a war to be won; but when peace returns, you'll find three important parts of the GE Electric Laundry here at the Hartman Hardware Store. There's the GE electric washing machine . . . with its famous Activator Washing Action and the new One-Control wringer. Made in strict accordance with GE standards of precision manufacture, it has a rust-resistant finish, splashless rim, and permanent lubrication. It washes your clothes gently, yet thoroughly. And there's the GE Tumble Dryer that dries your clothes quickly, indoors. And the GE Flat Plate Ironer is one of the greatest labor-saving devices ever invented for women. It enables you to do all your family ironing and pressing easily, quickly, and conveniently. Heat, pressure, and a large ironing surface all combine to make this the most efficient ironer you could imagine. So wait for the day when General Electric can make the complete Electric Laundry again. And you can buy this laundry equipment separately or all at once. Meanwhile why not come in to the Hartman Hardware Store? We'll be glad to give you all the details. Then, as soon as possible, we'll tell you . . . Hartman's has a GE Electric Laundry for you!

Ted took his script in to Jane for an O.K.

She read it carefully and said, "Well, that's not bad, Ted, for a start. But I have a few suggestions. First, you've written it too much from the manufacturer's point of view. You must remember that the housewife isn't interested in knowing whether a washer has a built-in ding-bat or what-not in it. What she wants to know is exactly *how* it can save her drudgery. In other words, *why* should she buy one?"

"I guess I see what you mean," Ted said. "I'll take another swing at it."

"And don't start out by saying 'Housewives of Camden.' That's too trite and hackneyed," was Jane's advice. "Try to

get a fresh, interesting lead that will make them want to listen to see what's coming next."

Keeping these criticisms in mind, Ted went back to tackle the script again. The second time this is what came out of his typewriter:

Do you want to laugh at the rain on washday? Well, that rain won't bother you a bit if you have a GE Electric Laundry . . . as soon as Uncle Sam lets General Electric make them for you. Then you can wash, dry, and iron all in the same room. And you'll find all three important parts of the GE Electric Laundry right here at the Hartman Hardware Store. There's the GE electric washing machine . . . that washes clothes thoroughly with GE's triple-action washing . . . yet washes them gently, never tangling or tearing. And there's the GE Tumble Dryer . . . it tumbles and floats clothes dry and fluffy in a warm current of air. And the GE Flat Plate Ironer will have your clothes ironed in no time. You just sit comfortably behind the GE ironer . . . lay the piece to be ironed on the ironing board and draw the lid over. Then in a few seconds you flip the lid back and that piece of ironing is done . . . easy as that! It'll be a great day on washday when you can have a General Electric complete electric laundry! And you can buy the equipment separately or all at once. Meanwhile why not come in to the Hartman Hardware Store? We'll be glad to give you all the details. Then, as soon as possible, we'll tell you . . . Hartman's has a GE Electric Laundry . . . for you!

Ted took the script to Jane again.

"That's much better, Ted," was her comment. "Now it doesn't sound quite so much like catalogue copy. I'm on my way over to Hartman's right now. I'll take it with me for the client's O.K. And I'll need five more by tomorrow morning. Want to do them?".

"You bet!" Ted replied. "I'll have them by nine o'clock."

And he did.

Ted Takes a "Nemo"

"How would you like to go out on a nemo?" Frank Dixon asked Ted one Friday morning after he had been doubling up with Bob Leslie in the control room for almost two weeks.

"A nemo?" Ted asked, with a blank expression. "Why, sure—but what is it?"

"A nemo is a remote—a program which originates from some point outside the studio," the Program Director replied. "Sometimes it's a banquet, over in the hotel, where somebody makes a speech which we pick up and broadcast. Sometimes it's a basketball game in the high-school gym—or a boxing meet in the Arena. Those would be rather tough assignments for a new announcer to cover, so I've picked an easy one for you."

He explained that every Sunday afternoon, at two-thirty, Station WXXR broadcasted a choral program from one of the Camden churches. It was known as the "Angelus Hour" and was fed to the entire Connecticut Network through WXXR. He gave Ted the script for the following Sunday's broadcast.

"Want to try it?" he asked. "You see, the announcer has very little to do except to introduce the choral selections. But it will be good experience for you."

Ted gladly agreed to act as the announcer on this "nemo," now only two days off.

"That's swell," Frank Dixon said. "Be here at the studio Sunday afternoon at one-thirty. Joe Hill, the engineer, will meet you. He stops here to pick up his equipment. The whole show is in your hands, and Joe's. Good luck, Ted—I'll be listening in."

Ted had already met Joe Hill and liked him very much. Joe, too, was an ex-service man. He had done a fourteen-month hitch as gunner in a Navy patrol bomber based in the Aleutians. Like Ted, he had been mustered out with an honorable discharge and was back again at his old job as engineer in the WXXR transmitter room.

Promptly at one-thirty on Sunday he appeared at the studio, where Ted was waiting for him.

"Hi, Ted!" he called out. "Been waiting long?"

"No, not long, Joe," Ted replied. "I just got here myself."

That wasn't quite true. But he didn't want Joe to know that he had been so excited about going out on his first "nemo" that he arrived at the studio at one o'clock, to be sure not to miss it.

"Well, give me a hand with this gear and we'll be on our way," Joe said. (Everything was "gear" since Joe had been in the Navy.) "I've got my car parked down below."

Ted picked up the stand for the microphone, and the miniature control panel which was used for remote programs. It wasn't much bigger than a portable radio set. Joe lugged the heavy suitcase containing the rest of the equipment. The suitcase had "WXXR" on its side, in gold letters almost twelve inches high.

As they headed toward the outskirts of the town, where the church was located, Joe told Ted that the "Angelus Hour" had been one of his regular assignments ever since his return.

"There's nothing about it that could cause you any trouble," he assured the young, and slightly nervous, announcer. "Carl Bronson, the announcer back in the WXXR studio, brings in the program. Then you take over, following your script. At the end of the half-hour Carl signs off and we're through."

That sounded simple enough, Ted thought. Especially when Joe explained that even if everything went haywire—even if the equipment broke down—it wouldn't be too serious. For the studio always had a "fill" to take the place of a "nemo." In this case Carl had organ music records on his turntables, to take care of any emergency.

When they arrived at the church, Ted helped Joe unload the equipment. The program was to be broadcast in a small chapel which adjoined the church itself.

Ted watched carefully as his friend set up the equipment. First Joe placed the microphone down in front, and strung his long extension wires back to the rest of his equipment, which he set up in the rear of the chapel. He placed his small control panel on a table and connected it to his AC power pack, which he plugged into a convenient electrical outlet. Then he hooked up his "PL" set—the private telephone line which would carry the program back to the jack panel at the studio. From the jack panel, Joe explained, the program went through the studio's control panel, then over the reg-

ular telephone line to the transmitter room, located on the marshes at the edge of the town.

By the time he finished setting up his equipment, the organist and some of the boys in the choir had arrived. They started to rehearse the program, paying no attention to Joe —who continued to bustle about, hooking up his headphones and making last-minute adjustments.

When everything was in readiness, Joe called the announcer at the WXXR studio.

"Just checking the time, Carl," he said. "I've got 1:49:10." He paused. "Right."

His watch was synchronized perfectly with the studio clock.

He slipped his headphones on. By means of these he could "monitor" the program, "mixing" the sound for the correct volume. For example, when Ted would make an announcement against a background of organ music, the engineer could hear both the voice and the music over his headphones and would turn down the volume of the organ music on the control panel so that the announcer's voice would come through clearly.

As the time for the broadcast approached, Joe asked the choir to sing part of one selection in front of the microphone so that he could check his equipment and the quality of the program with the studio announcer.

"Shall I send it through now?" he asked Carl. "O.K." He flipped a switch. "How does it look? Coming in all right—no hum—no hiss?" (Pause) "O.K."

Next Joe asked Ted to try the mike, to make sure that

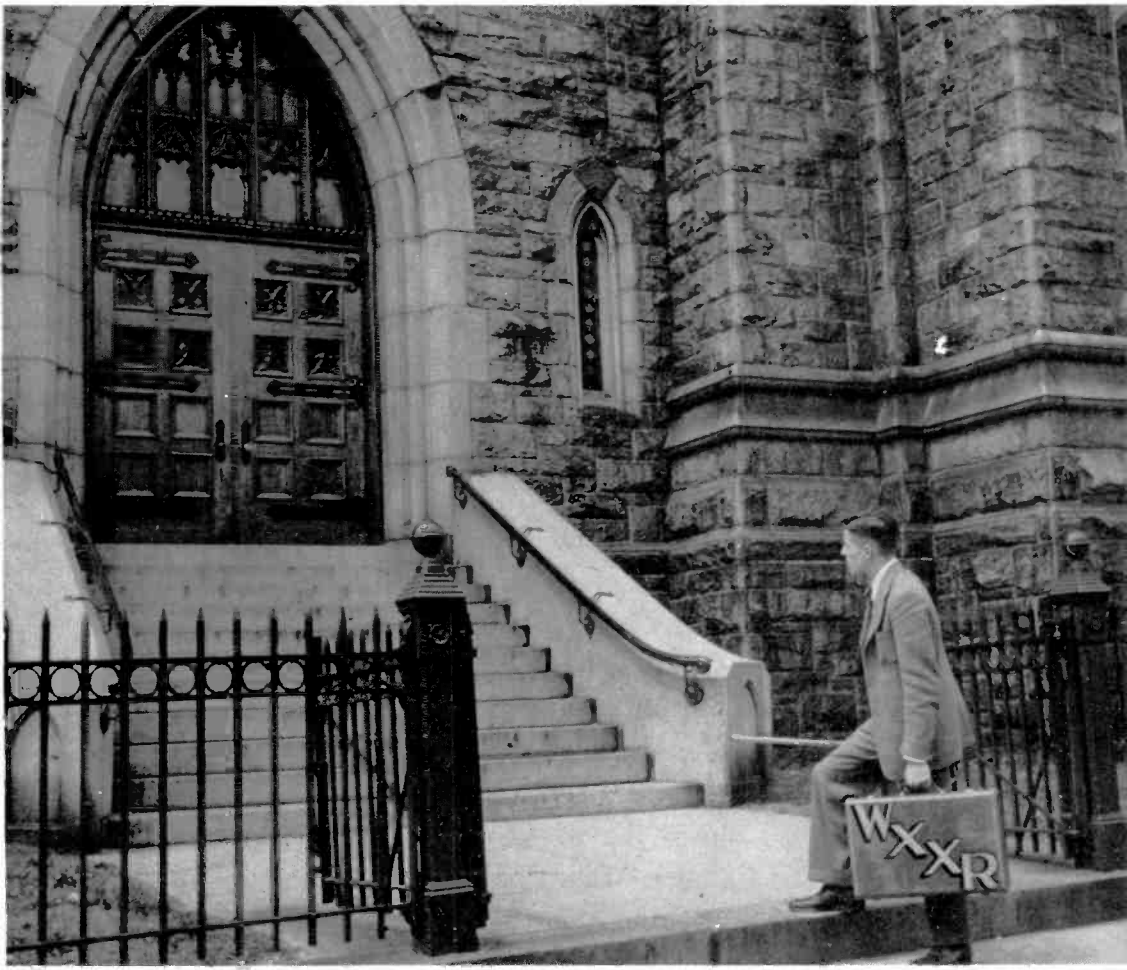


Photo by Carroll Van Ark

"OUT ON A NEMO"—Handling a remote broadcast, which originates at some point outside the studio, is good experience for a beginner.

his voice would come through at the proper tone level. Ted spoke into the microphone. Joe made a slight adjustment on his panel and signaled that Ted was coming through all right.

Now five minutes remained before broadcast time. Now four minutes . . . now three. Ted took his place before the microphone. The choir lined up in a double row behind him. The organist got all ready to start. He kept his eye on the engineer, for his cue.

Joe raised his finger and called out, "One minute and a half!" Then, "One minute!" Then, "Thirty seconds!" Then, "Five seconds—stand by!"

Through his headphones Joe could hear the studio announcer bringing the program in.

Carl was saying, "This is Camden . . . your Station . . . WXXR. The time . . . two-thirty."

Then, sweeping his arm downward, he gave the signal to start, and the organist began the prelude.

At a signal from Joe, Ted came in with, "Good afternoon, friends . . . this is the weekly broadcast of the 'Angelus Hour.' The Camden Male Chorus opens the program with Von Weber's lovely evening hymn, 'Softly Now the Light of Day.'" . . .

As he ended his announcement, the organ swelled into the opening chords of the hymn and the choir started to sing. Ted looked at his watch and timed the singing of the hymn. When it ended, they were right on the nose.

Then he announced the next selection, reading from his script. The organ played softly as he talked. This time, while

the choir was singing, he tiptoed back to the engineer.

"The timing is perfect, so far," he whispered.

"Yes, if it keeps up that way we'll come out all right," Joe replied. "But don't forget—you have a filler if you find you're running short," and he pointed to the place in the script where the chorus could sing another verse or two if necessary.

But they didn't have to fill. At 2:47:50, with the organ playing the theme background, Ted stepped up to the mike for the final announcement. . . .

"You have been listening to the 'Angelus Hour,' which comes to you each Sunday at this time through the courtesy of the Connecticut State Network," he said. "Music on today's program was by the Male Chorus of the Camden Choral Club. Plan to tune in again next Sunday at two-thirty, when our program will be heard once more on your station. Your announcer has been Ted Lane. The 'Angelus Hour' came to you from Camden."

As Ted finished his announcement, Joe held his finger on the switch of his control board while the organ played the theme music of the program. Then, on the split second, he cut his switch and waved his hand as a signal to everyone that they were "Off the air!"

The program was over—Ted's first "nemo"!

Ted helped Joe "break down" their equipment and pack it away for the trip back to the studio. He was half hoping that the engineer would tell him that he had done a swell job.

But Joe's only comment was, "Well, that's over for another week!"

After all, that was enough. Ted realized that radio engineers and announcers don't go around complimenting each other all the time just because a job comes off exactly the way it's supposed to.

"XMTR"

WHEN Ted first joined the staff of Station WXXR, he was puzzled by those initials—XMTR. But he soon found out what they stood for. "XMTR" was the abbreviation for "Transmitter Room"—that mysterious hide-out of the engineers where the music and sound originating in the studio were "transmitted" from the tip of a high steel tower to 1400 on the dials of radio sets.

Ted asked Bob Leslie where the WXXR transmitter room was.

"It's about a mile and a half from here—down by Long Island Sound," Bob replied. "As long as I've been with the Station, I've never been inside the transmitter room. I know all three of the fellows who work there, and I talk to them dozens of times each day—but somehow I've never gotten around to paying them a social visit."

"Well, I'd like to do it," Ted announced.

"That's a good idea," Bob grinned. "Then you can tell me all about it."

Ted knew that Bob was kidding him for being such an eager beaver, but he didn't care. He figured that the XMTR was a vital part of the radio station's operation and he wanted to know more about it. Working closely with the engineers, as he did, he felt that knowing something about their duties might help him to do his own job better.

Several days later, as he was getting ready to go off duty in the control room, Ted got the chance he wanted. Eric Marshall, the Station's Chief Engineer, dropped in at the studio on his way to the transmitter room.

When Ted asked if he might go with him, Eric said, "Sure —why not! It gets mighty lonesome down there in No Man's Land. I'll be glad to have a visitor. Come on."

Eric's car was parked down in front of the radio station. They got in and headed south.

"Why is the transmitter stuck way down here on the mud flats?" Ted asked as they passed through the outskirts of the town.

"There are three reasons," the Chief Engineer replied. "The first reason is because of a ruling made by the Federal Communications Commission. The FCC says that a radio station must build its transmitter some place where it won't 'blanket' the radio sets of more than one per cent of the city's population."

He explained that people who live close by the transmitter often have difficulty getting any other programs on their radios except those from WXXR.

"So we built our transmitter down here on the marshes where not many people live."

"What's the second reason?" Ted asked.

"The conductivity of the ground, and the water, gives us a better signal—and that means clearer reception," Eric said. "If the transmitter were hemmed in by steel-frame office buildings, our signal would be weak and distorted."

"And the third reason?" asked Ted.

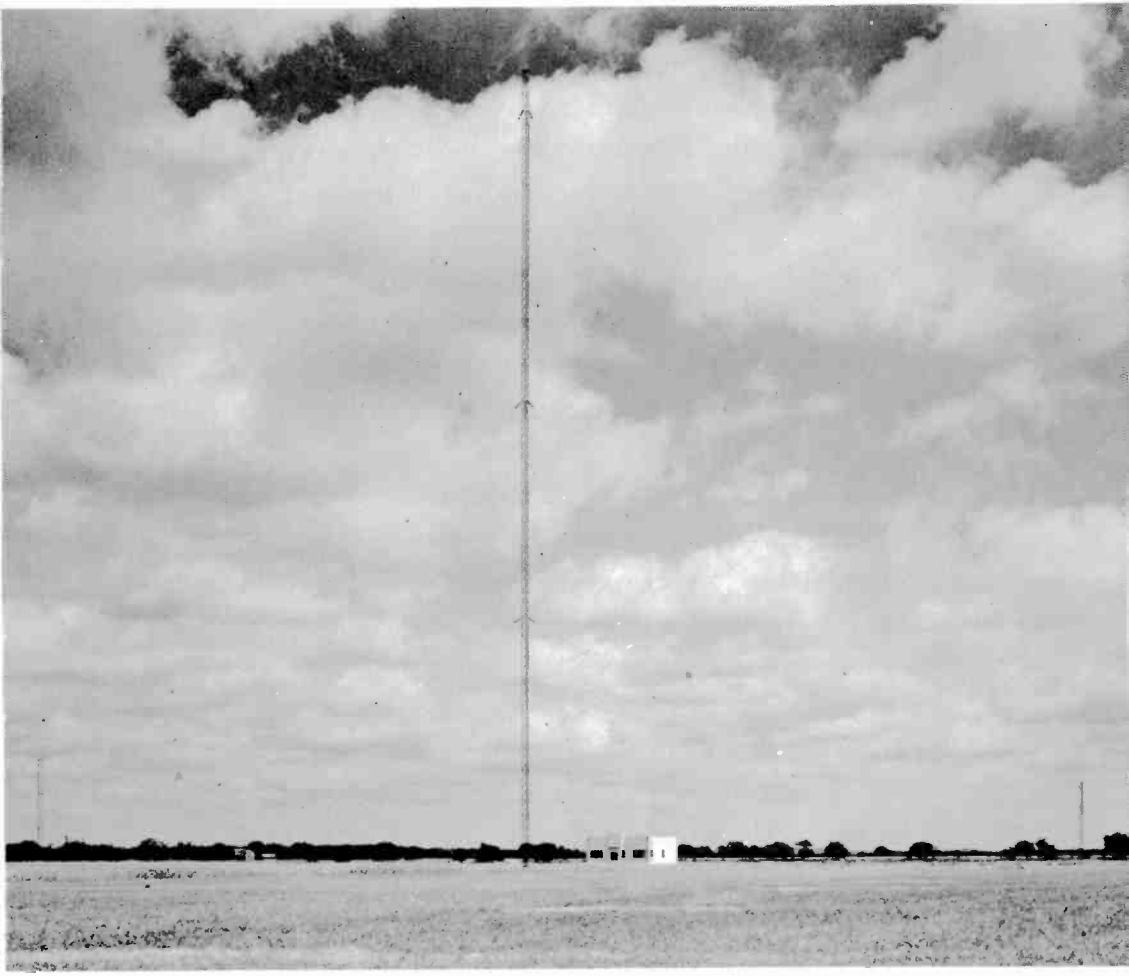


Photo Courtesy KABC

QUESTION: Why is a radio station's transmitter usually situated in a marsh or some similarly remote location? Every engineer and announcer knows the answer.

"Well," Eric said, with a smile, "most people think radio engineers are screwballs—and I guess we are. So they keep us down here out of harm's way."

Ted laughed. "I've heard that most engineers think radio announcers are characters, too—so I guess it works both ways."

Now the road started to cut straight across the salt flats. Ahead of them was the little red brick building that housed the transmitting equipment, with its steel-skeleton tower standing near by like a sentinel. Eric pulled up in front of the building and they went inside. Ted's friend, Joe Hill, was on duty.

"Well, this is an honor!" he exclaimed. "A real live announcer comes to visit us. Welcome to our humble quarters!"

"I just thought I'd find out if that rumor is true, about engineers having the easiest job in radio," was Ted's comeback.

He walked over to the window to get a better look at the tower. It was about 180 feet high from its base to its slender steel tip. As a warning to aircraft it was painted red and white, with lights at the tip for visibility at night.

Connecting the transmitter room and the tower there was a long wooden bridge, or catwalk, built over the marsh. Ted learned that this bridge carried the transmission line which ran out to the tower, and also served as a way of getting to the tuning shack at the base of the tower.

"There are coils in the tuning shack which filter out all but WXXR's frequency—1400 kilocycles," the Chief Engineer explained.

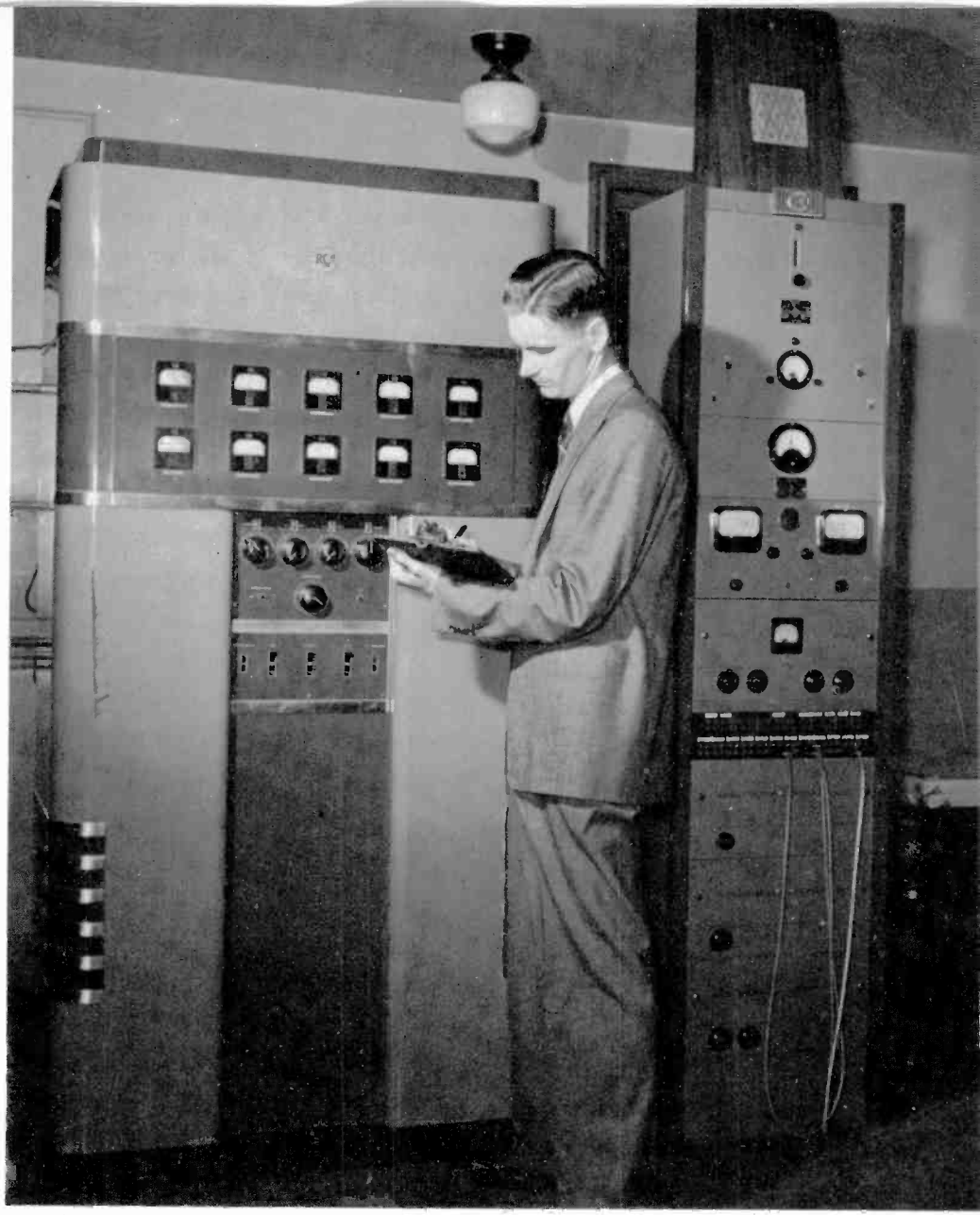


Photo by Carroll Van Ark

"XMTR"—The engineer checks the meters and output of his transmitter for entry in his log.

"Tell him about the ground wires," Joe chimed in.

"Oh, yes," the Chief continued. "There are about 120 copper wires fanning out from the base of the tower in all directions for about 175 feet. You can't see them because they're about six inches under the surface."

Ted turned from the window and went over to a steel cabinet, about seven feet high, which stood in the center of the room. The front of it was covered with dials and knobs.

In response to his puzzled expression Eric said, "That, my boy, is the works! That's the transmitter itself." He pointed to a double row of dials—fourteen of them—near the top of the transmitter. "Those are the meters that show voltage and current—and all these knobs below them are what we use to make our adjustments."

And he launched into a technical explanation of the way in which a radio engineer "monitors" his transmitter.

"Hey, wait a minute!" Ted exclaimed in utter bewilderment. "You're way over my head with all that electrical jargon!"

The Chief Engineer laughed. "I guess it does sound a little complicated, if you're not an engineer," he said. "But it's really just a matter of constantly checking our meters and output. For example, at high tide the water gives us maximum conductivity and our transmitter hits peak efficiency. Too much output—so we pull it down a bit."

"I guess I get the general idea," Ted said, rubbing his chin reflectively. "The program comes in from the studio by wire; goes through the transmitter, out to the tower—and then squirts into the air. Your job is to feed it out just right

—strong, but not too strong. Isn't that it?"

The two engineers laughed at this crude explanation.

"That covers it, I guess," Eric admitted. "But I'd hate to see you trying out for an engineer's license, Ted!"

"Oh, do you have to have a license to operate a transmitter?" Ted asked.

"Sure," Eric replied.

He explained that there were three grades of licenses—first class, second, and third. He himself had a first-class license. The third-class license was easiest to get. All you had to do was prove your citizenship and answer ten questions having to do with the operation of a transmitter. Joe showed Ted, in his engineer's manual, some of the sample questions a fellow is asked when he tries for his license. . . .

"What signals and messages are forbidden by international agreement?" . . . "What should an operator do if he intercepts the word SECURITY repeated three times?" . . . "Is it lawful to erase an entry made in a station log?" And so on.

"What's this about the station log?" Ted asked. "Do you have to keep a log, Joe?"

"We keep two of them," was the answer. "One is the daily station program log. On this log we enter everything that goes off on the air, each day."

He showed it to Ted, spread out on his desk. There was a place for entering the time at which station breaks were made . . . the name of each program . . . the exact time it started and ended . . . and the name of the sponsor. If it was a recorded or transcribed program, that had to be noted too. Also all spot announcements were written in, as well as

chain breaks and the name of the engineer on duty.

"Well, that sort of keeps you busy, I guess!" Ted conceded.

"Wait a minute, guy!" Joe exclaimed. "That's just the beginning. Here's the transmitter log, too. Every half hour we have to check all those meters and make a record of the readings."

He showed Ted the big sheet on which the meter readings were entered. It was covered with figures and decimal points that made Ted's head spin.

"And if you think this is a soft job, just remember that we also have to control the switching of all programs from studio to network . . . monitor our transmitter . . . feed every program . . . mix our sound . . . and, worst of all, see to it that you announcers in the control room don't ride your level too high. It's a dog's life, that's what it is!"

And he shook his head sadly.

"Yes, even when things go all right, it keeps us jumping," the Chief Engineer said. "But you can't always count on their going smoothly." He reminded Ted that Station **WXXR**, unlike some of the bigger stations, had only one transmitter. "When we have a breakdown, it has to be fixed pronto and no fooling!"

Joe said that when the big hurricane struck, power plants went out of commission all through southern Connecticut. Station **WXXR** was off the air from 9:00 P.M. one day until 5:00 P.M. the following day.

"And there wasn't a darn thing we could do about it," Eric added. "The water from Long Island Sound came right

Photo by Carroll Van Ark

RECORDING A NETWORK PROGRAM for delayed broadcast, or a repeat.

up here into the transmitter room. We spent a whole day and night just bailing out to keep from drowning!"

Another time, lightning struck the tower.

"That tower attracts lightning," the Chief Engineer said. "It has protection gaps; but, even so, the lightning gets to us now and then. I remember once when a bolt hit the transmitter and burned out the coils. For about ten seconds there was a bright halo of light—a regular corona—playing around the top of the transmitter itself. The overload switches automatically put the station off the air. But we reset them and were doing business as usual in a few moments.

"Golly, you guys live dangerously, don't you!" Ted kidded.

"And we don't even get any medals," Joe complained.

As Ted prepared to leave the transmitter building, he noticed some equipment over in a corner—a turntable and a small control panel.

"What's that?" he asked.

"That's our equipment for making transcriptions," Eric said.

He told Ted that certain spot announcements, which were repeated day after day without change, were usually recorded.

"And sometimes we pick up network programs for delayed broadcast, or a repeat," he added. "We also record special programs on request. For instance, when Senator Grubble makes a radio speech we always get an order to run off a recording for him. I think he plays the platter

back to himself at home and decides that Senator Grubble is a very impressive fellow."

Ted laughed. "Well, thanks for showing me around," he said. "At least I have a rough idea of what it's all about."

The Chief Engineer offered to run him back uptown in his car, but Ted said he would hop a bus.

The next morning when he checked in at the studio, Bob Leslie said, "What's cooking over in the transmitter room, Ted? Tell me how it works."

"Oh, it's just a little place down in the swamp with a lot of dials and knobs and meters and things," Ted replied, with a shrug of his shoulders. "It's pretty hard to describe what they do down there."

"On the contrary," said Bob, with a grin, "you sadly underestimate your flair for vivid descriptive detail, Ted. After hearing you tell about it, the operation of the transmitter room is crystal clear to me!"

Ted admitted that he didn't understand very much of what he had seen. But he was glad that he had gone down there, anyhow.

"Always Expect the Unexpected"

THE early-morning sky was beginning to fade from black to gray in the east as Ted Lane turned down Main Street toward the WXXR studio. The street lights were still on. Scarcely anybody was about at this early hour. A milk horse clopped by, pulling a rubber-tired milk wagon homeward bound. None of the shops was open yet—not even the drug-store on the corner.

Ted glanced at his watch.

"Six-thirty-five . . . Better hurry."

He walked faster. He didn't mind having to get up so early in the morning. He had been doing it for two weeks now, and was getting quite accustomed to the idea.

For it was just two weeks ago that the regular announcer, Bob Leslie, had left Station WXXR for his new radio job in New York. The day before that happened, Ted was assigned as the announcer on the morning shift—and he'd been doing it ever since. His hours were from 7:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M., when Carl Bronson, the afternoon announcer, took over.

Now, as Ted entered the studio building and was whisked up by the sleepy night operator of the elevator, he thought back over the lucky breaks he'd had. First, that interview with Mr. Hayes. Then the chance to act on the radio show—

and, best of all, Bob Leslie's friendly interest in him and Frank Dixon's willingness to let him try his hand at announcing. Of course, if Bob Leslie hadn't left, it might have been months, or more than a year, before a real break like this had come along. Ted was lucky, and he knew it.

The elevator stopped at the third floor and he got out. As usual, the studio lights were on. Jerry Starr, the WXXR News Editor, always arrived about fifteen minutes before Ted. It was his job to get the early-morning news flashes on the teletype—both UP and local—and edit them for Ted.

There he was, over in the corner by the teletype machine, ripping off the latest United Press dispatch which the clacking keys fed out.

"Hi, Jerry!" Ted called out.

"Hello, son," was the News Editor's greeting. "All set to cheer up the customers on this dark, gloomy morning?"

"You bet!" Ted grinned.

He hung up his coat and hat and went into the control room. Each morning, before the station sign-on, there were a number of routine tasks which Ted had to do. First he had to turn on the control-panel switch—then the "preamp" switches in the jack panel, to warm up the two turntables. Next he made certain that the wires in the jack panel were plugged into the correct slots for playing recorded music, for that was the main feature of WXXR's early-morning program.

When he had done each of these things, he picked up the telephone which gave him a direct wire to the transmitter room.

"Hello, Joe," he said. "Just checking up."

He tapped the microphone with his fingernail.

"Mike O.K.," the engineer reported.

Ted flicked the recording arm of each turntable, and twisted several of the dials on the control panel.

"Everything sounds O.K. down here," Joe said.

"O.K., thanks," Ted replied, and hung up.

The hand on the studio clock was moving closer and closer to sign-on time. Ted put a recording of "The Star-Spangled Banner" on the left-hand turntable and set the needle in the groove, all ready to start. At 6:58:15 he started the turntable and the strains of the national anthem came over the control-room amplifier. Then, exactly one-half minute before seven o'clock, he faded out the music and made the standard sign-on announcement. . . .

"Good morning . . . this is Ted Lane speaking in behalf of Station WXXR, in Camden, Connecticut. WXXR is owned by the Camden *Daily Record* and operates on an assigned frequency of 1400 kilocycles by authority of the Federal Communications Commission." (Then, after a slight pause, as the second hand of the clock swept up to the hour mark) ". . . The time . . . seven o'clock."

Just before Ted finished his sign-on announcement, Jerry Starr burst into the control room. In his hand he held a sheaf of yellow teletype releases. Some of them were marked up, where he had shortened them or changed a few words. Others were just the way they had come over the teletype.

Ted grabbed them and, facing the microphone, said, "Station WXXR now brings you the latest overnight news flashes

from the war theaters and the home front . . ." and he started to read the news.

At seven-five, on the dot, he finished the newscast and, while he worked the control panel with his left hand, he placed a Bing Crosby record on the right-hand turntable with his other hand, and started it.

Then, fading out the recorded music and snapping on the microphone switch, he announced, "This is Station WXXR bringing you the 'Old Commuter' program of recorded music. The time is now . . . six minutes past seven o'clock . . . time for that cheery cup of steaming hot coffee before you leave home for the office or plant. And, though it's a little on the dark and dreary side outdoors this morning, here's Bing Crosby to brighten things up with his new recording of 'Could It Happen to Me?' Take it away, Bing!" . . . and Ted turned his fader dial to the right to increase the volume.

While Bing was singing, Ted selected the next record and put it on the other turntable. Then he signed his initials on the Announcer's Log opposite the five-minute news broadcast which he had just made. This was a strict station rule, and there'd be trouble if he ever forgot to sign for each program as soon as it was finished.

The "Old Commuter" program ran from 7:05 to 7:43 A.M. every day. As each record finished playing, Ted announced the correct time. This was important, too, for he knew that many listeners tuned in from long habit simply to find out the exact time, so they could set their watches.

There were four or five one-minute commercials spotted on the Announcer's Log, too. These had to be thrown in

wherever convenient and, as he read each one, Ted signed his initials on the log so that the client would know that his message had gone on the air—and the exact time it went on. One of the commercials was for the First National Bank, urging folks to start a savings account. Another was for the Hot-Shot Auto Supply Store, advertising a bargain in car batteries and other accessories.

Every few minutes the News Editor would pop in with the latest news flashes for the next news broadcast. There were times when Ted felt that being an engineer-announcer on the early-morning shift was a job for three or four men, not just one! He was constantly scanning news releases . . . changing records . . . "riding his level" by twisting the dials and the control board . . . keeping one eye on the clock, and the other on his meter . . . signing the log . . . making sure to work his commercials in . . . *ad libbing* before and after each record . . . choosing the next record. There wasn't much time to relax on this job!

At seven-forty Jerry rushed into the control room waving a sheet of yellow paper.

"Here's the weather report, Ted," he said.

Ted ran his eye over the report and looked at the clock. Two minutes to go. At seven-forty-two he faded out the record that was playing and gave the weather report. . . .

"For Camden and vicinity . . . overcast in the forenoon . . . changing to light drizzle this afternoon. So, folks, better wear your rubbers and take your umbersol when you leave home this morning. You may need them before the day is over."

He looked at the clock. Half a minute left. He repeated the weather forecast.

Then, at seven-forty-five, on the split second, he cut in the Blue Network news commentator, Dudley Hackett, for his famed "News around the World" broadcast.

Ted heaved a sigh of relief as he hit the Hackett program "right on the nose." Now, for fifteen minutes, Station WXXR would be on the Blue Network wire—a breathing spell for the local announcer. But only a brief breathing spell—for, in a few moments, Ted knew that Dudley Hackett would pause in the reading of the news to allow for "chain breaks." When this happened, it was Ted's cue to cut into the network program with a short local announcement.

On this particular morning the mid-program cut-in went perfectly—timed just right. But as Hackett ended his news roundup and the Blue announcer started his sign-off, Ted suddenly realized with dismay that the network announcer was reading the exact message that he himself now held in his hand to read when the network program went off the air! It was an announcement urging people to remember that this was Paper Salvage Day, and that they should tie up their old newspapers and magazines for the trucks which would pick them up.

Ted was in a spot! It would never do to repeat the announcement, word for word. So, when the Blue Network announcer finished, Ted decided that the only way to save an awkward situation was to *ad lib*.

Switching from the network to local, he told his listeners, "And that's mighty good advice, folks of Camden! Be sure

to heed the words of the announcer you just heard . . . for waste paper is one of the most vital materials in this war. The newspapers and magazines you tie up and turn in today will be made into cardboard cartons for medical supplies to be shipped overseas . . . and for shell wrappings to protect the heavy ammunition we send to our fighting men."

Then, with one eye on the clock, he wound up by reminding his listeners once again to get all their waste paper ready for the collectors.

As he started the turntable, at eight o'clock, to continue the recorded music program, Ted heard a chuckle behind him. It was the News Editor, grinning from ear to ear.

"You pulled yourself out of that one nicely, son!" was Jerry's comment. "I thought for a moment that you were trapped. In radio it's a good rule always to expect the unexpected. Then you're not so apt to lose your head in a tight spot. You handled that one like an old-timer!"

Ted gave him a grateful smile and held out his hand for the local news items which Jerry had brought in.

He always looked forward to reading the local news flashes. You never knew just what was coming up. Sometimes the news told about somebody you knew, or had heard of. All sorts of newsworthy events took place in the old home town. On this particular morning there was a typical assortment. Some boys had broken into Hart's Clothing Store and the police were working on the clues they had picked up. Old Mrs. Mathers, a widow who had been living on charity for years, died leaving a fine fortune of $7800 tucked away in her mattress . . . and eight cats. The Fire Department was

laying plans for its Benefit Show, to be given three weeks hence. An unidentified man dropped dead on the corner of Walnut and Ninth streets. The police had asked Station WXXR to broadcast a description of him. And so it went. . . .

From eight-forty-five to nine there was more recorded music. Shortly before nine Ted saw Nan Pendleton whisking by the control-room window. Nan was the station's "Personal Shopper." Every morning, for half an hour, she put over a program of special interest to local housewives. She would tell about bargains to be found in the stores . . . new, smart styles in clothes . . . appetizing new food recipes . . . and all that sort of thing.

Starting with Nan Pendleton's program, Ted's morning always eased off a bit. For then somebody *else* did most of the talking and, except for spot announcements, his only job was to operate the control panel. The rest of his shift was nicely broken up by Blue Network programs . . . and at one o'clock Carl Bronson always came on to relieve him.

Ice . . . Bacon . . . and Bridges

EVEN though Ted had now been on the staff of Station WXXR for a long time, he never lost his interest in the Monday night "Radio Playhouse" shows. He remembered, gratefully, that playing those two bit parts in *The Girl in Blue* had been his first real break.

And so, ever since then, he had made it a point to drop around to the studio on Monday evenings. Sometimes he took part in the show, to add to his experience. Other times he merely came to watch the producer, Joe Holmes, so that he could learn more about the job of casting and directing radio shows.

One Monday night, just after the "Radio Playhouse" had signed off, Ted was about to leave the studio when he heard someone calling his name. It was Frank Dixon, the Program Director. Joe Holmes was perched on the edge of Dixon's desk. The two men were in a serious huddle about something. Ted went over and joined them.

"Say, Ted," Frank Dixon said, "you've been coming around pretty regularly Monday nights for these shows, haven't you?"

"I've never missed a night," Ted replied. "But I haven't always had a part. Most of the time I just come up to watch you direct the show, Joe," he added, turning to the advertising-agency man.

"Have you learned anything?" Joe asked with a good-natured grin.

Before Ted could answer, Frank Dixon surprised him by saying, "How would you like to try your hand at being production man on next week's show?"

"That would be swell!" Ted beamed. "But . . . what about Joe, here? Will that be O.K. with you?" he asked.

"It certainly will!" Joe assured the young announcer.

And he explained to Ted that his company was sending him to Hollywood to direct a new radio show they were about to put on.

"I may be gone two or three weeks—maybe longer. So it's all yours, Ted, if you want to take a swing at it."

So Ted got his first chance to act as production man at WXXR. Before Joe Holmes left, that night, he gave Ted a dozen copies of the script for the following week's show. Ted went home and sat up until two in the morning reading the play.

The next afternoon when Carl Bronson relieved him in the control room, Ted pitched into his new extra duties as producer. The first job was to cast the play, for it was important to select actors who best fitted the parts to be played.

Having studied the play the night before, Ted now had a pretty good idea of the types of actors he needed. Frank Dixon gave him an index file containing about fifty cards. On these cards were listed the names of amateur actors—and a few semiprofessional players—who lived in Camden or near by. All of them were eager to appear on the WXXR "Radio Playhouse" program, without pay, for the expe-

rience it gave them. Ted ran through the cards, studying the comments which were typed under each name.

He soon found one which seemed to be just what he wanted for the leading role. "Jack Benson," the card told him, was a "senior in high school . . . pleasant, mature voice, pitched rather low . . . has played on WXXR programs several times . . . very good . . . use whenever possible." Ted jotted down Jack Benson's telephone number. Now for the leading feminine role. . . .

He sorted the cards. "Caroline Payne," one card announced, was a high-school girl who "shows great promise . . . good poise . . . but voice inclined to be 'ready' . . ."

A "ready" voice, Ted knew, was one which sounded too much as though the person were "reading" a script instead of impersonating a character with acting skill.

"Too bad, Caroline—some other time."

Ted picked out another card instead.

Finally he had selected actors for every part . . . with a couple of "spares." But he found that he didn't need the spares. When he telephoned his actors, one by one, asking them if they would take part in next Monday's show, they all jumped at the chance.

So far, so good. The play was cast. Job Number One was done. Now to get the sound effects worked out. . . .

With marked-up script in hand, Ted went into the studio and selected certain mechanical props which he knew would create the sound effects he needed. The slamming door was an old reliable stand-by. So was the telephone. Now then . . . wooden blocks for the horse's hoofbeats . . . crackling cello-

Photo by Carroll Van Ark

CLOPPITY-CLOP! Beating these rubber plungers against the chest gives the sound of a galloping horse. For galloping down gravel roads—well, that's what the box is for.

phane to make the sound of fire . . . and the kettledrum for thunder.

The rest of the sound effects would have to be selected from the library of records. Ted went through the card index file. Here was one he needed. It was filed under "Ice" and had several "cuts" on each side. One cutting was the sound of putting ice in a pitcher. Another was like it, but added the sound of liquid being poured on the ice. Another cutting gave the sound of ice cubes being put into two glasses . . . then filling the glasses with liquid. Ted found the record and laid it aside.

The next one he selected was catalogued under "Bacon." That would be good for the breakfast scene in the play. The first cutting was the sound of bacon frying, close up. The next cutting on the record was that of coffee percolating, with the hiss of frying bacon in the background. That was the one Ted needed. Then he selected three others. Now he had all his sound effects lined up.

The next job was to choose the proper records for his musical bridges . . . to indicate a change of scene. It was important to select music that was keyed to the mood of the play's action. Soft, sentimental themes to introduce love scenes . . . harsh, mystic music to convey suspense . . . gay, lilting melodies for the lighter, comic parts of the play. Ted picked out the appropriate records and set them aside. Now his mechanical and technical preparation for the play was finished.

When Monday evening finally rolled around, the cast arrived, as usual, about seven-thirty. From here on, the

work of the production man was more or less routine. Ted had been through it all many times before, but always as an actor, never as the producer.

First he had the cast read the play, each one taking the part which Ted had assigned. As they finished the first reading, Ted was satisfied that his play was well cast. All of the players seemed well fitted and in character for the roles he had given them.

Now, at eight-thirty, Ted herded the cast into the studio for the first "talk-over" rehearsal. For this rehearsal the microphone was not used. The actors merely went over their lines, aloud. From time to time Ted would interrupt with informal criticism.

"Be more vigorous and emphatic in that spot, Jack," he would direct. Or, to another, "That's supposed to be a comedy line, Jane. Be more exuberant . . . you're playing it too straight."

Then came the dress rehearsal, using the microphone. For this rehearsal Ted went into the control room, as Joe Holmes himself always used to do. With stop watch in hand he timed the program, jotting down the number of minutes on the edge of his script as the rehearsal progressed.

Most of the time he just listened to the actors without watching them, in order to judge the effectiveness of their delivery. He knew that the radio audience would not be able to see the actors, either—so he realized it was good directing to make certain that the play was coming over in its most effective form for the ear alone. Occasionally he would give some direction or suggestion through the "talk-back" micro-

phone which connected the studio with the control room.

"Stand closer to the mike, Tom." . . . Or "Don't slam the door so hard. After all, Jane is just leaving the room—not trying to knock the house down!"

As the dress rehearsal ended, Ted hurried into the studio for a last-minute conference with his cast.

"We ran about half a minute over," he informed them. "So I'm making a tentative cut, here on page fourteen of the script. Watch me closely, Jack, when you get to your cue on this page. I'll signal you if we have to use the cut." He glanced at the studio clock. "Nine-fifty. Everybody set?"

Yes, they were all ready to start. Ted hurried back into the control room and stood behind the announcer, ready to cue the show. The actors knew that they must keep their eyes on their production man for their initial cues, and as each musical bridge was played. It was his job to indicate when the music should be faded out and when the first line should be spoken.

Ten o'clock! The announcer brought in the program and then started the turntable for the introductory music. At a signal from Ted he faded out the theme song. All the actors were watching Ted for their cue. He held his finger up. As the music faded he swept his arm downward, pointing at the studio mike . . . the signal which told the cast, "You're on the air!"

Wanted: an Idea

One morning as Ted was signing off his disk-jockey program and getting ready to switch over to the Blue, someone tiptoed into the control room. Completing the switch-over, Ted looked around and saw that his visitor was Fred Murray, of the WXXR sales staff.

"Hi, Fred!" he greeted him. "Haven't seen you around lately. How are things going?"

"Things are booming, platter boy," the salesman replied with a smile. "My only complaint is to find available time to sell. Almost everything's taken. Incidentally that's what I'd like to talk to you about. Will you do me a favor, Ted?"

"Sure—name it!" Ted answered.

"Well, I have one spot left—at ten forty-five, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays," he explained. "I think I can sell it to Dean's Fur Shop on a thirteen-week basis—if I only had an *idea* for them. Tom Dean wants some kind of a musical program with an idea back of it—and a singing commercial. How about putting the mighty brain to work on it?"

"I'll try," Ted agreed. "I'll have some time when I go off, at one o'clock. If you want to drop back later in the afternoon, maybe I'll have something for you—but I'm not making any promises."

"What a pal!" Fred exclaimed. "I knew you'd come to my rescue. Well, so long—I'll be seeing you about four o'clock."

After lunch Ted went to his desk and racked his brain, trying to think up an idea that Tom Dean might buy. Dean said he wanted a musical program—but he couldn't afford to hire a band, or even an instrumental trio. Obviously, then, it would have to be recorded music.

"A musical program—with an idea behind it." Ted turned the problem over and over in his mind. Suddenly he got a flash. He snapped his fingers and exclaimed aloud, "I have it! We'll give him the 'Band of the Week'! Fifteen minutes a day, three days a week—all the music each week to be by the same band. The first week we'll make Harry James and His Orchestra the 'Band of the Week' — then Tommy Dorsey, Charlie Spivak, Artie Shaw; then Benny Goodman, and so on. That's not such a bad idea, maybe. Now for that darn singing commercial." . . .

He got out a pad of paper and a pencil.

Let's see . . . what rhymes with furs. Stirs . . . hers . . . prefers . . . slurs . . . curs . . . purrs . . . burrs . . ."

For half an hour, Ted made one false start after another, and scratched out each one. Finally he got going and had just finished the commercial when Fred Murray came in.

"How's it going, Ted?" he asked. "Got the big idea?"

"I've got one, but I don't know how good it is," Ted replied.

And he told the salesman about the "Band of the Week" program idea.

"Say, that's not bad at all!" Fred exclaimed. "The beauty of it is that Tom Dean can merchandise an idea like that."

Fred explained that they would get posters printed up,

with the band leader's picture for each week, telling people to listen in.

"We'll put them in Dean's window and all over town. He'll like that. That's a swell idea, Ted. Now how about the singing commercial?"

"Well, I've got one; but I think it's pretty corny," Ted admitted. "It's something that three girls could sing together in harmony, like the Andrews Sisters. The tune goes like this . . ." and he showed Murray how the melody went—"da-da-da . . . de-do . . . da-da-de-do," adding, "Here are the words. . . .

"Mrs. Hi-Style wears Dean's furs,
But you don't have to envy hers!
Here, for much less than you think,
You'll find muskrat, sable, mink,
Squirrel, seal, and many such . . .
Soft and lovely to the touch . . .
Stop in and buy a coat today—
We'll gladly give you months to pay!"

Fred took the commercial in his own hands and read it over again.

"Well, that's not exactly Tennyson; but I think Tom Dean will like it," he said. "I'll go see him tomorrow morning and let you know how I make out. Thanks a lot, fella."

The next day, as Ted was turning the board over to Carl Bronson, Fred Murray came into the control room beaming all over.

He slapped Ted on the back and exclaimed, "Come on—I'm buying you lunch today!"

"Oh—Tom Dean bought the idea, did he?" Ted asked.

"He was crazy about it!" Fred replied. "He thought the 'Band of the Week,' with printed posters for the store windows, was a stroke of genius—and you ought to have heard him trying to sing that commercial! He wants us to get the three girls and make a cutting today, if possible."

"That's swell—congratulations!" Ted said.

"You're the guy who did it," Fred insisted. "I didn't even have to sell it. He *bought* it!" Then he added, "At first Dean wanted to go on an evening spot with the program. But I pointed out that it was much smarter to go on in the morning, when more women are listening. After all it's the women he wants to reach—and morning time is cheaper than evening time. So he bought the whole package, as is. We start next Monday morning. Now grab your hat and let's go. The lunch is on me!"

And so the days and weeks at Station WXXR passed quickly for Ted Lane. This was the sort of job he had wanted for a long time. And from the comments occasionally dropped by the Station Manager and Program Director, he felt that he was making good at his job. In fact, everything was going even more smoothly than he had dared hope at the beginning. Almost *too* smoothly.

A few months later, however, something happened—something that suddenly brought Ted face to face with having to make An Important Decision.

But that's getting ahead of our story. . . .

"WXXR Jockey to WJXX"

THE decision Ted had to make was this: Should he, or should he not, leave his job at Station WXXR and move to a larger station? It all happened this way. . . .

One afternoon, after his shift in the control room was over, Ted hopped a train to New York to have dinner with Bob Leslie, former announcer at WXXR. He met Bob, as agreed, in the reception room at the Columbia Broadcasting System studios, on Madison Avenue.

The magnificence of the place almost took his breath away. Soft luxurious carpets . . . chrome and plastic trimmings . . . and an atmosphere that Ted didn't realize existed outside of the movies.

"That's quite a joint you work in, Bob," he exclaimed as they sat down to dinner in a near-by restaurant.

"It's a little fancier than WXXR, I'll admit," was Bob's rejoinder. "It's the Big Time, all right . . . just the sort of thing I've been shooting for ever since I broke into radio. By the way, Ted—how are things back in Camden? I hear that Frank Dixon is leaving for KOA, in Denver. Is that true?"

Ted said that he had heard the rumor, but didn't know whether or not it was so.

"Well, that's the radio business," Bob reflected. "You have to take the breaks when you get them, and you can't always

wait until they come your way. Usually you have to dig them up yourself. Have you gotten any offers yet, Ted?"

"Not a nibble," Ted replied. "I did hear, once, that the advertising agency Young & Rubicam had made an inquiry about me—wanted someone to make a transcription. But nothing ever came of it. As a matter of fact, I've been so busy learning the business, I haven't even thought about changing jobs. I think WXXR is a swell station."

"Of course it is," Bob agreed. "But I was just thinking—you've been there quite a while now. If you ever want to get with a network station here in New York, you ought to take the next step up the ladder before too long. There's a lot to learn in this business, and WXXR, after all, is only a 250-watt station—a local 'coffeepot.' You'd get a lot of valuable experience if you could crash a 5000-watt station."

He asked Ted if he ever read the trade papers—the magazines that publish news about the radio business. Ted said that he did.

"That's good. It's smart for a fellow in our business to read them all," Bob advised. "That's the best way to keep posted on what's going on. And run your eye over the Help Wanted ads, too. You never can tell when something pretty good might open up for you."

Although Ted liked his job at Station WXXR, he realized that Bob was right. It was a fast-moving business and the fellow who got ahead was usually the one who could recognize a break when he saw one and was smart enough to take advantage of it. Ted decided that from now on he would read the trade papers more carefully.

When he left Bob to catch the ten o'clock train back to Camden, he stopped at a Grand Central newsstand and bought the latest issues of three leading trade magazines.

On the way home he breezed through *Radio Daily* first. It was chock-full of news about new radio programs, news of the advertising agencies and their radio accounts, changes in station personnel, and so on. After a few minutes he put it aside for a more careful reading later on, and turned to his favorite magazine—*Variety*. This trade paper covered the entire amusement world . . . the theater and movies, as well as radio. Its lively, terse headlines and sprightly editorial style had always caught Ted's fancy.

In the columns of *Variety* a radio schedule was a "sked" . . . a program with an extremely low audience rating was a "flopperoo" . . . the period of time for which a program was "skedded" was a "slot" . . . television was "video" . . . a radio performer's salary was "moola" . . . and a radio network was a "web."

For example, under the headline, "Switcheroo Ups WOR Quizeroo to MBS Web," Ted learned that one of the quiz programs on Station WOR had proved so popular that it was being shifted to a more important spot on the entire Mutual network.

Finally Ted put *Variety* aside and started to leaf through the pages of *Broadcasting—the Newsmagazine of Radio*. On page four he read about a curious Los Angeles gopher (now deceased) who nibbled through the main power line into the transmitter of KFAC, knocking the station off the air for almost two hours.

Then he read an article telling about a survey which had been conducted to find out just how early the people in various towns got up in the morning—facts of great interest to *any* platter jockey like Ted who had to run an early-morning program.

Remembering Bob's tip about reading the Help Wanted classified ads, Ted then turned to page fifty-four. He ran his eye down the first column. One station wanted a transmitter engineer . . . another needed a continuity writer . . . and a station in Utah was eager to get an announcer, preferably an ex-service man.

There was nothing that especially interested Ted until he started down the second column. Then one of the small classified ads fairly jumped off the page at him. . . .

Wanted: [it said] *Announcer-newscaster, with some production experience, by 5000-watt basic network station in southern New England city, population 150,000. Write, stating qualifications, to Box 123, c/o* Broadcasting.

That night when he got home, although it was after eleven o'clock, Ted sat down at his typewriter and wrote a letter to Box 123, outlining his experience at Station WXXR. It was 1:00 A.M. when he ran down to the corner to mail it. Two days later he received a reply, asking him to come in and see the Station Manager at Station WJXX, in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

P.S. *He got the job.*

No More "Doubling in Brass"

IN MANY ways Ted hated to leave Station WXXR.

Even when Frank Dixon, the Program Director, told him that he was making a wise move, Ted wasn't too sure. He knew that Dixon, too, was leaving WXXR. So Ted didn't value his opinion as highly as that of some of the others on the staff. But he felt much better about changing jobs when Mr. Hayes, the Station Manager, gave him his official blessing.

"I'm terribly sorry to lose you, Ted," Mr. Hayes said. "But, to be perfectly honest, if I were in the same spot I'd do exactly what you're doing. I'd just like to say that you've done a grand job here. I've never regretted taking you on. In fact, if you'd had a little more experience in station operation, I'd be tempted to try to keep you here by offering you Frank Dixon's job. But I don't think you're ready for an assignment like that, yet."

Ted knew that that was so. He wasn't qualified to take on the responsibilities that went with the job of Program Director. But he was pleased and flattered to know that Mr. Hayes had even thought about it.

"You'll find that you can really go places up at WJXX," the Station manager continued. "It's a wonderful opportunity for you. As a matter of fact, the Station Supervisor,

Jim Caldwell, is an old friend of mine. I gave you a good send-off when he telephoned me the other day."

Ted thanked him.

"Well, so long, Ted—and the best of luck," Mr. Hayes said. "Don't forget your friends here at WXXR when you get into the Big Time," he added as they shook hands.

Ted promised that he wouldn't.

Before Ted actually reported for work at Station WJXX, he spent several days there familiarizing himself with the setup and what his duties would be.

Mr. Caldwell turned him over to Stan Jones, one of the Station's veteran announcers.

"There are probably a lot of things you'd like to know about Station WJXX," Stan said that first morning. "So ask me any question you want to and I'll try to answer it."

The first thing that Ted discovered was that Station WJXX maintained a much larger staff than the 250-watt station in which he had been working.

"We have four regular announcers," Stan Jones explained, "and two more to take care of special events. The Chief Engineer is a man you'll get to know very well. He's a Scotchman by the name of Graham McCleod. We all call him Sandy—and so will you, after you know him. He has ten licensed operators working under him."

Ten engineers! That seemed like a lot. But one reason for it was the fact that WJXX was a 5000-watt station—part of the Yankee network—and was on the air from six o'clock each morning until one o'clock the following morning. That

required a larger staff of announcers, and engineers too.

But the biggest difference, it seemed to Ted, was in the physical setup of the station. Located on the top floor of Bridgeport's Hotel Biltmore, it covered a much larger floor area than Ted's former station. And, instead of having just one studio and control room, WJXX had *three* studios, an announcer's booth, and a big control room for the engineer.

The first time that Ted accompanied Stan Jones into the announcer's booth, Stan noticed his puzzled expression.

"What's the matter, Ted?" he asked.

"I was just wondering," was Ted's reply. "Where's the control panel?"

Stan laughed. "There isn't any, my friend," he said. "Your days as a combination announcer-engineer are over. Up here the announcer never touches a dial. That's strictly the engineer's job and"—pointing to the next booth—"it's all done in there."

Ted peered through the glass partition which separated the two booths. There sat the engineer, in front of a huge control panel that reached from the floor to the ceiling. It was a combination control board and jack panel, with all the familiar knobs, switches, dials, and the all-important volume meter.

"You mean the announcer doesn't have to ride his own level or pay any attention to volume control?" Ted asked hopefully.

"That's right," was Stan's rejoinder. "All you have to do is start and stop your turntables—and announce." He pointed to a pair of electric buttons mounted on the table be-

side the announcer's microphone. "When you have an announcement to make, you simply press that first button. That punches you in. You're on the air, with a live mike. The engineer does all the rest. Of course," Stan added, "you have to keep the standard Announcer's Log—but the job of announcing, here, isn't the three-ring circus it probably was down at WXXR."

Unlike the personnel at WXXR, each person at WJXX was more of a specialist. There was less "doubling in brass." If you were an engineer, you twirled fader knobs and rode the level. If you were an announcer, you announced. And that was that. The best part of it all, Ted thought, was the fact that as an apprentice announcer at WJXX he was starting on the pay roll at forty dollars a week. No wonder he was enthusiastic about his new job, from the very start.

When Ted met the Chief Engineer, he learned another interesting fact about WJXX. This station was one of the first—perhaps the very first—to use a "directional" antenna system. Ordinarily a radio station's sound signals spread out from the transmitter in circles, like ripples in a pond when you toss a pebble into the water.

"But we were getting too much interference from one of the Baltimore stations," Sandy McCleod explained. "And there wasn't much we could do about it. Not until we worked out the directional antenna system."

Then, instead of covering a vast *circular* area, the signals from the transmitter spread out in the form of an ever-expanding figure eight—strongest over the areas where the station's listeners wanted clearer reception, to overcome in-

terference from the Baltimore station.

The day before Ted was scheduled to start his new job he had a long talk with Mr. Caldwell, the Station Supervisor.

"I'm sure that you're going to like it here, Ted," Mr. Caldwell said. "But at first it may seem a little strange to you. You'll find, as you go along, that things are done on a larger scale in a 5000-watt station like WJXX. Don't misunderstand me," he hastened to add. "You've come from a splendid local station. I have the greatest admiration for the fine operation my friend Hayes has built up in Camden. But here, in a larger city, I think you'll get a slightly different picture of radio and how it serves both the client and the public. As a part of the Yankee network, our standards are necessarily high—and I know that you are the type of man who can help us maintain those high standards."

He told Ted that, in the beginning, he would start on the evening shift, from seven until midnight.

"Until midnight?" Ted repeated. "But I thought that WJXX was on the air until one A.M."

"We are," came the reply. "But after midnight we're always on network—with nothing but station breaks. Being goodhearted fellows, our engineers use transcribed station breaks after midnight, so the announcer doesn't have to sit around for an hour just to cut in with his call letters."

That was a fine idea, Ted thought. But he decided that he would work until the final sign-off at one o'clock—at least while he was new at the job.

"I'm putting you on the evening shift because that's the easiest one on which an apprentice announcer can break into

the job," Mr. Caldwell explained. "During those hours our programs are mostly network, with only an occasional live show."

He told Ted that eventually he would be shifted to the busier morning spot.

"But first we'll give you a little time to learn the ropes," he added. "You take over tomorrow evening at seven, when Larry Brooks, the afternoon announcer, goes off. And good luck!"

Ted thanked Mr. Caldwell and went into the outer office to look over the schedule for the following evening . . . his first assignment as an announcer on a 5000-watt station!

"Give It More Gabriel Heatter!"

THAT first evening at WJXX, Ted had a few bad moments. The worst spot was at six-fifty-eight when Larry Brooks made his final entry on the Announcer's Log and left the booth with the remark "It's all yours, Ted—carry on!"

Ted glanced at his program schedule. The first thing to be done was a station break at 6:59:30. He walked over to the announcer's mike. Now the hand on the clock was creeping closer and closer to the time for his announcement. At 6:59:30, on the dot, the engineer in the next booth faded out the music that was coming in over the network. Ted pressed the button. The red light over the window flashed on. He was on the air.

"This is Station WJXX, Bridgeport, Connecticut." (He had hesitated for one horrible second. From force of habit it had been on the tip of his tongue to say, "Station WXXR, Camden, Connecticut!") "The time is now seven o'clock . . . and we bring you Gordon Selby, with the latest Yankee network news." . . .

Ted pressed the other button. The red light went out. The mike was dead. He was off the air. Selby's voice was coming over the amplifier. Ted went back to the announcer's table, signed his log, and glanced again at his program schedule. Nothing to do now for fourteen minutes and a half. Then there would be another station break.

And that was pretty much the way he spent the entire first evening—and many evenings thereafter. Sometimes, to relieve the monotony, there would be a five-second commercial, or even a full-minute announcement. And at nine-forty-five, every other evening, he had to go into big Studio A to "bring in" a live musical program with a half-minute announcement.

Recalling the busy days at Station WXXR, when he used to be an announcer, platter jockey, and engineer, all at the same time, Ted began to wish that he could be transferred to the morning shift, where he would have greater responsibilities.

But, at the start of his third week on the evening shift, Ted was given an additional assignment—one which promised to keep him busy for many weeks to come. The job—to produce a weekly fifteen-minute dramatic program. That, in itself, sounded easy—until Mr. Caldwell explained to him all the things that had to be done. . . .

It seems that a private preparatory school in the near-by town of Fairfield was now offering its students an elementary course in radio broadcasting. And Station WJXX, always willing to support worth-while community projects, had agreed to cooperate by giving the students some practical experience.

The program, which was scheduled to go on the air every Monday evening at eight-fifteen, was called the "Junior Newscasters." With a cast of five or six youngsters it was a dramatization of heroic episodes in which boys and girls of The Allied Nations had distinguished themselves in some unusually courageous way.

"These boys and girls of the Brookdale School have even written their own scripts," Mr. Caldwell explained to Ted. "Here's the first one—for next Monday night—and it's rather good. But it needs a great deal done to it, Ted, and that's where you come into the picture. Each script will have to be rather drastically rewritten to adapt it for radio presentation. Think you can handle it?"

"Yes, I think I can," Ted replied. "Right now, just at first glance, I see a few things it needs."

So Ted took the script and went to work on it. Remembering some of the simple rules he had learned in school dramatics, and his later experience with the WXXR "Radio Playhouse," he revised the script so that it would be more effective over the air. Two days later he showed it to the Program Director, who approved it with a few very slight changes.

Now, with only three days to go, Ted had many things to do. First he had the typists make a dozen copies of the script. Then he spent an hour or two in the Music Library selecting the transcriptions for the introduction and the many musical bridges.

The next job was to check his sound-effects props. The scene of the main episode was laid in an Army Air Forces hospital. The principal role was that of a thirteen-year-old Italian girl who had been severely injured in a German air raid. The other characters were American pilots, a colonel, and a major. For this particular play not many sound effects were needed.

At six-forty-five on Monday evening two boys from the

school appeared at the studio. They were Ted's sound-effects "men." After swinging the microphone boom around into position, Ted coached the two boys in making the sound of realistic footsteps, to represent the colonel and the major approaching the bed on which little Yvette was lying. Mounting a low wooden box about six feet long, the boys walked toward the mike.

"I'll step into the control room and see how it comes over," Ted said.

They did it again.

"O.K.," Ted motioned.

Then he had them practice dropping half dollars into a jar on the table. This was the sound effect to be used when the American fliers all agreed to pitch in to buy Yvette some pretty clothes and a doll to cheer her up.

Now it was seven o'clock. The actors, and some of the youthful audience, were arriving. As soon as the entire cast and the two boy announcers were present, Ted had them all run through the script to determine whether the characters were well cast. This was done before a dead mike.

This was the first time any of the youngsters had ever been on the air and Ted soon discovered that he had to cope with one bad case of mike fright. The little girl who was playing the part of Yvette was so nervous that she read her lines in a small squeaky voice which frequently broke altogether. Using all his diplomacy and tact, Ted finally enabled the jittery young actress to gain more confidence in herself. But there was one hurdle she just couldn't get over. The script, at one point, called for a prolonged, cheery laugh. Every

NBC Photo

NBC Photo

THE KISS YOU HEAR over your radio is sometimes "the real thing"—and sometimes just the sound-effects man.

time Yvette tried to laugh, her mouth opened but no sound came out. Finally, Ted asked one of the smallest boys in the audience to step up to the mike.

"Let's hear you laugh, sonny," he said. "If your voice isn't too low, perhaps we can dub it in here where Yvette is supposed to laugh."

The boy laughed. But, alas, in spite of his small size, his voice had already started to change. It was a distinctly masculine chortle, ending in a funny squeak. So, as a last resort, Ted deleted the laugh from the script.

From time to time, as they ran through the script, Ted coached the young announcers and actors in how to make their lines more effective.

"Get a little more Gabriel Heatter quality into that line!" he would say. "Give it more emphasis, and don't drop your voice at every pause." The boy tried again. "That's better."

In one spot, where the narrator was supposed to be reading a letter from a soldier overseas, Ted showed him how to use an ordinary glass tumbler as a filter. By speaking his lines into the tumbler, the narrator gave them a more dramatic quality which was very effective.

"Now we'll run through it again for timing," Ted told his cast.

They did. Ted marked the time on the margin of the script as they went along.

When they had finished, he said, "We're running about one minute over. We'll have to make a few cuts."

On page two he told them to cut the line starting, "I expect to walk out of here." Out came the musical bridge in

NBC Photo

"YOU'RE ON THE AIR!" The director, from his booth, signals the actors to start the show.

the middle of page three. On page six he cut another entire paragraph. Ted knew that these cuts might make the show run a little short, but that was safer than having it run too long. He had a "cushion"—a margin of safety. For, if necessary, he could always stretch out the musical transcription that was played just before the sign-off.

With only ten minutes left before broadcast time Ted went into the control room to go over the script with the engineer. Wherever the script called for music, the engineer scribbled "ET" on the margin—for "Electric Transcription." Then he would add "Up and out" to indicate at what point the music should fade out . . . or "Under" to indicate that it should be faded down to provide a faint musical background for the announcer's lines. Where the script called for "FOOTSTEPS . . . TO HALT," the engineer wrote the word "Live" to remind himself that the footsteps would be made by sound-effects men, not by transcription.

Two minutes to go! Ted bounced back into the studio and gave his cast a short pep talk.

"We're all set," he said. "Now remember . . . don't *read* your lines . . . *live* them! For the next fifteen minutes you are Air Force officers and pilots. And you, Yvette, are a little Italian girl in a front-line hospital." Turning to the "colonel," he said, "Don't you get too close to the mike, Johnny. You sometimes act as if you wanted to eat it . . . and all your *p*'s and *b*'s come out like machine-gun bullets."

Johnny promised to remember.

"And, above all, watch me for your cues. Don't speak a word . . . anyone . . . until I cue you. All right—let's go.

And if you're half as good as I know you're going to be, the show will be terrific!"

The boys took their positions around the microphone as Ted hurried from the studio into the control room. Now began the job of actually producing the show. . . .

Ted stood in the control room where the cast could plainly see him. In his left hand he held the script. At 8:14:30 the network program, which preceded theirs, ended. After a moment's pause Ted swept his right hand downward and pointed at the young student announcer in the studio. This was the boy's cue. He swung into his announcement. . . .

"This is a program for the Americans of tomorrow . . . the boys and girls who must carry on the brave heritage their gallant forefathers sacrificed so much to gain . . . and keep! This is a program for the men and women of tomorrow! Listen to the 'Junior Newscasters'!"

As the boy in the studio ended his announcement, Ted motioned to the station announcer—in the booth at his right. The announcer started his turntable and the introductory music came over the amplifier. Now, turning toward the engineer, Ted motioned him to increase the volume of the music . . . hold it . . . then fade, and out. Then, facing the studio again, he gave the cue for the play to start.

The youngsters went at their job almost like professionals. Gone was the nervousness some of them had shown during rehearsal. Nobody missed a cue nor fluffed a line. It was a grand performance!

Even Ted, who had expected to experience a slight case of jitters at producing his first WJXX show, did nothing

of the sort. He was too busy to feel nervous! But he did breathe a sigh of relief when the boy announcer signed off with . . . "Join us next Monday night at eight-fifteen for another 'Junior Newscasters' program."

Ted signaled the turntable operator for the musical theme song . . . and glanced once again at the clock. The show was over . . . right "on the nose"!

An Idea Pays Off Again

At Station WJXX, Ted found further evidence that in radio, as in almost any other business, people are willing and glad to pay a premium for *ideas.*

One day a WJXX salesman happened to mention the fact that the Men's Shop, on East Main Street, would sign up for a weekly five-minute spot if somebody could think up a good idea for a radio program. Remembering how successful his "Band of the Week" idea had been, in Camden, Ted cudgeled his brain to see if he could come up with another good idea. . . .

The Men's Shop . . . clothes for men . . . shirts . . . ties . . . socks . . . suits . . . sportswear. . . . What idea would be most suitable? Well, take sportswear. Why not a program featuring personalities in the world of sports? Certainly that would appeal to men. Let's see . . . each program could sketch the record of some colorful personality in sports, both past and present. You could call the program "The Sports Parade." No, that wasn't too good. Maybe it could be called "The Sports Scrapbook." Yes, that was better.

Ted tried out the idea on the salesman. He liked it.

"I'll take it down to Mr. Morse, the manager of the Men's Shop," he said. "Morse is a great sports fan himself. I think he'll go for this idea, Ted."

And he did. But Mr. Morse wanted to see a sample script. So Ted wrote one . . . featuring Lou Gehrig, the famous baseball player. Some of the facts he found in the *Dictionary of Sports* and in Spalding's *Yearbook*. Others he dug up in the newspaper file at the public library.

When the script was ready, Ted went to the Men's Shop with the WJXX salesman. They sat down with the manager of the store and explained the idea in detail. Then Ted read his Lou Gehrig script.

"It sounds good to me," Mr. Morse said when Ted had finished. "But I was wondering—can you work out any kind of merchandising tie-up to go with it?"

"I think so," Ted replied. Then, after a few minutes' thought, he said, "How about this, Mr. Morse—for each program you could get some posters printed up, showing the picture of the sports headliner on that particular program and reminding folks to be sure to tune in. A line in big type at the bottom of the poster will say that the program is sponsored by the Men's Shop."

Mr. Morse liked the plan as Ted and the salesman outlined it. They figured out many places where they could count on putting the posters each week. Then he signed up—with the understanding that Ted would write and broadcast each script himself. That suited Ted fine, for it meant an extra five dollars a week for him! It was agreed that each script, with the accompanying commercial, was to be submitted for approval three weeks in advance. This would allow time, too, for printing up the posters advertising the store's program.

As their first meeting came to an end, Mr. Morse took Ted aside and said, "I think our program will do us a lot of good. I just hope you can write all your scripts to the same high standards as this first one."

"I think I can," Ted assured the client.

"And, by the way," the store manager added, "now that you're on my pay roll, you're entitled to a twenty-five per cent discount on anything in the shop."

Boy, was that good news! Ted thanked Mr. Morse and told him that he would take him up on that generous offer at an early date.

Well, the program finally got under way and the response was far greater than any of them had anticipated. Many old customers mentioned "The Sports Scrapbook" when they came into the Men's Shop during those first few weeks. And quite a few new customers came in as a result of having heard the program and the commercials.

Ted was riding high. That extra five dollars a week was mighty welcome. He thought of it every time he sat down to write another script for the Men's Shop. And, thinking of that extra income, he tried hard to make each script better than the one that had gone before. He wanted to keep that money coming in every week. In fact, he thought to himself, it would be a fine idea if he could double that amount, or triple it. But how? . . .

Then he got another idea. There was a boxing match scheduled for the following Friday night. So one morning he made a trip over to the Sports Arena and asked to see the manager.

After introducing himself as the sports announcer for the Men's Shop on Station WJXX, he said, "I have a proposition to make—a proposition that will benefit us both."

"O.K., let's have it," the manager said.

"Well, it's this," Ted replied. "I'll give your boxing match a plug on my Wednesday-night program if you'll let us hang up a banner in the Arena giving our program a plug."

"That's fair enough," the Arena manager said.

And they shook hands to close the deal.

Mr. Morse, of the Men's Shop, didn't suspect a thing about the arrangement Ted had made—not even when Ted included a plug for the boxing match in his next program. But when the store manager went to the Arena that Friday night and saw the banner hanging high over the ring, he thought it was a grand idea. And, as business in the store continued to increase as a result of Ted's program and his merchandising ideas, Mr. Morse was more and more pleased with his advertising over Station WJXX.

Naturally Ted was pleased, too, at the way things were shaping up. But he had even more reason to congratulate himself when, one Monday morning, Mr. Morse strode into the station and calmly announced that he would like to sign up for *three* five-minute spots a week, instead of one.

Together he and Ted went to see Mr. Caldwell, the Station Supervisor. While they were discussing the matter and going over the station time schedule, Ted kept thinking of the fifteen dollars extra it would mean for him each week.

No wonder he was sitting on top of the world when Mr. Morse finally took out his pen and officially signed the new

Photo by Carroll Van Ark

SPONSORS BUY IDEAS, not air waves. This clothing store manager likes the script shown him by the two radio station representatives. Will he sign the contract? They hope so!

contract which Mr. Caldwell's secretary had drawn up!

Then, as the client turned to leave the office, he made a special request. He suggested to Mr. Caldwell that, since the program had become so popular, he thought that a picture of Ted should be on each of the posters, together with that of the program's featured athlete. Mr. Caldwell agreed that it might be a good idea.

But even that wasn't enough glory for one day! When Ted opened up his copy of the Bridgeport *Post* that evening, he got an even bigger thrill. There, smack on the right-hand sports page, was his photograph with this two-column head: "New WJXX Sports Program Big Favorite with Local Fans."

An Idea had paid off again!

"Dialing for Dough"

One morning, several weeks later, Ted was busy selecting transcriptions in the Music Library when Mr. Caldwell's secretary told him that the boss wanted to see him. Ted hurried into the Station Supervisor's office.

"Sit down, Ted," Mr. Caldwell said, with a friendly smile. "I'd like to talk to you for a minute."

Ted wondered what was coming next.

"You've been with us quite a long time now," the manager continued. "How do you like WJXX?"

"I like it fine!" Ted exclaimed. "It's working out better than I dared hope it would."

"Well, that's the way we feel about you too," came the reply. "You've shown us that you have initiative, imagination, and a capacity for hard work."

Then he told Ted that he had been thinking for some time of changing him over to the morning shift, but so far there hadn't been an opportunity to do it.

"Next week, however, our regular morning announcer, Al Dorn, goes on his vacation. When he returns," Mr. Caldwell went on, "we're going to give him a chance at the job of assistant Program Director. So here's the proposition I'd like to make you: starting next Monday, you take the morning shift—for two weeks. Then, if you work out all right, the spot is yours for keeps."

Ted was delighted. He thanked Mr. Caldwell and promised to do his very best to earn the morning assignment on a permanent basis.

"It's a tougher spot, as you know," the manager cautioned him. "You'll have fewer network programs piped in—and more live programs to handle. The toughest one will be the fifteen-minute program 'Dialing for Dough,' at eleven-fifteen, five days a week. About ninety per cent of that show is *ad libbing,* but I'm sure you can swing it. That program, by the way, has the highest rating of any fifteen-minute show on our entire network. But it's all yours—and good luck!"

Ted was elated as he left Mr. Caldwell's office. What a break! Not only would he get that favorite morning shift, but he would be the master of ceremonies on the popular "Dialing for Dough" program.

It was true, he knew, that this program enjoyed a very high rating. During the past few months he had followed program ratings carefully. For he knew that clients, as well as the station itself, used these ratings as a yardstick to measure the effectiveness of their programs. A high Crossley, or Hooper, rating pleased everybody concerned. And a low rating was very bad news!

When Ted tried to find out how the Crossley and Hooper services actually obtained their rating figures, nobody at the station could tell him very much about it.

"Their systems are both very hush-hush," Larry Wood explained one day. "Both Crossley and Hooper base their findings on telephone calls made while a program is on the

air. For example, if a program has a Hooper rating of twenty it means that twenty per cent of the homes they called on the phone were tuned in to that particular program."

There was one fact about the "Dialing for Dough" program which impressed Ted even more than its high Hooper rating. At first it was a deep mystery. . . .

Why was it that every day, from eleven-fifteen to eleven-thirty—ever since "Dialing for Dough" had been on the air—the Bridgeport telephone company received 23,000 *fewer* telephone calls than usual, just during that fifteen-minute period? The answer, he discovered, was very simple. People didn't like to use their telephones while that program was on the air because, if their line was busy, they might miss a chance to win some money. That was easy to understand when you knew the idea on which the entire program was based.

Ted had sat in on a number of "Dialing for Dough" programs, but, even so, he found it difficult to conceal his excitement that first Monday morning as the time drew near for him to take over the broadcast. At eleven the audience began to arrive. The girl in the reception room ushered the visitors into big Studio A. There were about thirty people, that first morning.

At eleven-five Miss Denise Keller arrived. She was the person who had thought up the idea for the "Dialing for Dough" program, and owned all the rights to it. She took part in each program, playing "straight man" to the master of ceremonies.

From eleven-five to eleven-ten Denise and Ted went into a huddle, checking over the telephone numbers they would call when the program got under way. The lucky telephone numbers were selected each day according to a secret system which Denise had worked out. Nobody knew, in advance, what the numbers were.

At eleven-thirteen Ted and Denise went into the studio and took their places across from each other at a small table. The microphone was suspended between them, so that they both could talk into it. On Ted's side of the table was a telephone, with a direct wire to a special operator which the telephone company assigned to the program each day.

Now the hand on the studio clock was approaching eleven-fifteen. Ted raised his hand, cautioning the studio audience to be absolutely quiet. Eleven-fifteen! The red light flashed on. Ted dropped his hand as the program's theme song came over the amplifier. They were on the air.

Against the background of music Ted signed on the program—mentioning the sponsor, which was a big local bakery. . . .

"Welcome again to 'Dialing for Dough'! Yes, folks . . . the makers of Marvel bread invite you to join them again for fifteen minutes of fun and luck. On the last program, if you were listening in, you know that we paid forty-three dollars to Mrs. Louise Kennedy, of Fairfield Avenue. Forty-three dollars! Now who will be the lucky winner today?"

At this point Ted explained that all telephone numbers were selected by a secret method known only to himself, Miss Keller, and the head of the station.

Photo by Carroll Van Ark

"HERE WE GO—DIALING FOR DOUGH!" A good radio idea can cause people to do strange things. While this program is on the air, 23,000 people make a point of *not* using their telephones!

"We have no control over the way in which the numbers are picked. It might be yours . . . or yours . . . or yours . . . or even mine!" he added with a chuckle. "We call them just as they come. And here's how it works. If we call your telephone number, and you happen to be listening to the program, all you have to do is repeat the password for the day and you win three dollars. That's easy, isn't it? Today's password is . . . 'The Marvel loaf is bread at its best.' If we call your telephone number and you don't happen to be tuned in to this program . . . well, we're just as sorry as you are. But when that happens, we send you a consolation award of one dollar for your trouble in answering the phone. Now . . . everybody ready? Here we go . . . dialing for dough."

Denise handed Ted a slip of paper. He glanced at the number written on it and started to dial the number.

"The first number, folks, is 2–5907. Here we go . . . dialing for dough!"

He finished dialing the number and held the receiver to his ear. A girl wrote the number down on the blackboard back of Ted so that everyone could see it. Several seconds passed.

"No answer, Ted?" Denise asked.

"Not yet," Ted said, pretending to be a bit worried. "I guess there's nobody home. What a shame! Mrs. Harold Payne, of Myrtle Avenue, isn't there to get our call. But we'll give her a few seconds more. Maybe she's out in the yard hanging up her Monday wash."

Denise laughed. Then, turning to the studio audience, she gave a signal.

Everybody joined in a mournful, prolonged "Oh-h-h-h!" . . . sympathizing with poor Mrs. Payne for having missed out on the first three-dollar award . . . and Ted reluctantly hung up the receiver.

"What's the next number, Denise?" he asked. "We're not getting off to a very good start this morning, are we!"

Denise handed him another slip of paper.

Speaking into the mike, she said, "Here it is, Ted. And the password—don't forget that, folks—the password is 'The Marvel loaf is bread at its best.' "

Ted took the number.

"Here we go . . . dialing for dough!" he announced again, as he started to click off the numbers on the dial of the telephone.

The girl at the blackboard wrote down these numbers, too, as he called them off.

"And this time we're dialing for five dollars, instead of three! The amount goes up two dollars every time, until somebody wins the jackpot."

He held the receiver to his ear, waiting for an answer. Everyone in the audience leaned forward expectantly. In the meantime Ted and Denise *ad libbed* . . . and suddenly an answer came.

"Hello!" Ted beamed. "Is this Mrs. Bostwick? Good morning to you, Mrs. Bostwick! This is Ted Lane, of Station WJXX, dialing for dough. Are you by any chance listening to our program?" he asked. There was a brief pause. "No? Oh, that's too bad!"

Once again, at a signal from Denise, the studio audience

groaned "Oh-h-h-h!"

Ted continued, over the telephone, "We wanted to send you a check for five dollars, if you'd been listening in and could repeat the password for Marvel bread. We're terribly sorry, Mrs. Bostwick. But we're sending you a check for one dollar, anyhow—as a consolation award. And better luck next time! Good-by!"

He hung up.

Then he and Denise *ad libbed* again for a few minutes, building up the fact that on the next call the award would be the magnificent sum of seven dollars instead of five. When Ted called the third number, the woman who answered had been listening to the program and knew the password. She said she had written it down on a piece of paper when she first tuned in, so she wouldn't forget it. At a signal from Denise the audience cheered. In an animated tone of voice Ted congratulated the lucky listener and told her that she would receive a check for seven dollars on the following day. Then, seizing the opportunity to work in another plug for the sponsor, he asked the housewife if she ever used Marvel bread.

"That's fine!" he exclaimed when she replied that it was her favorite bread. "And where do you usually buy it, Mrs. Koplitz?" he asked. "At the Bridge Street Market? Well, that's simply fine. That's a very good store. And is this the first time we've ever called your number? Oh, it is, is it? And you're pretty excited over your good fortune, I can tell! Well, we're glad your number came up, Mrs. Koplitz. We'll send you the seven dollars right away. We're glad, too,

that you like that rich, wholesome, wheaty Marvel bread. Well . . . good-by, Mrs. Koplitz . . . and, once more, my hearty congratulations!"

On the next call the "pot" was reduced to three dollars, as at the beginning. But this time it built up to nine dollars before the person who was dialed could qualify to win it.

Ted glanced at the studio clock. It was eleven-twenty-nine. So, with a few *ad lib* remarks to Denise about the amount of money they had awarded that morning, he motioned to the turntable operator to play the theme song, and signed off the program with an invitation to the listening audience to tune in again tomorrow, at the same time, to "Dialing for Dough"!

As the studio audience filed out, Ted turned to Denise and exclaimed, "Whew! How'd it go?"

"You were a magnificent master of ceremonies, Ted!" she replied. "The idea may be corny; but, at least, it's not canned corn, the way you put it over!"

"Oh, you're just fishing for compliments on what a bright girl you were to have thought up the idea," Ted kidded. "You know it's a swell program—and so do I. Let's see if we can't push that Hooper rating up another ten per cent during the next two weeks. If we do, I'm on the program for keeps."

"That's a deal!" Denise agreed. "We'll do it, too—you mark my words."

And they did.

"Please Advise Immediately. . ."

EVER since Ted had been with WJXX he had kept up his friendship with Bob Leslie, the former Camden announcer who was now with CBS in New York. For he knew that it was because of Bob that he had been taken on at WXXR in the first place—and it was Bob again who had given him the idea of changing to a larger station.

Every now and then, when he could spare the time, Ted hopped an express to New York to have dinner with Bob. It was always stimulating to talk with someone who was with a key New York network station. Ted always returned from these visits more and more determined that someday he, too, would land a network job in New York.

One evening when the two boys met for dinner, Bob had a friend with him. His name was Jim Montgomery. He was a producer with Station WXZ, of the big Universal Broadcasting Company in the RCA Building. From the questions he asked Ted during dinner it was obvious that Bob had told him a great deal about Ted's career in Camden and Bridgeport.

"What are your plans, Ted, beyond WJXX?" Jim asked.

"Well, I'd like to get a job in New York with one of the big networks, like you and Bob," Ted replied. "Either as an announcer or as a production man. I think that producing programs is what I'd like to do eventually."

Both Jim and Bob agreed that he was getting a good solid background at WJXX, doubling as announcer and producer.

"One of these days, something may break up at WXZ," Jim said. "If it does, and I think you'll fit in, I'll do my best to see that you get a chance at it," he promised.

Ted thanked him.

"Would it do any good for me to send you a transcription of my voice?" he asked. "Then you'd have some idea of how I sound on the air."

"No, that wouldn't get you anywhere, I'm afraid," Jim replied. "We don't operate that way at WXZ. You just sit tight. I'll let you know if anything turns up."

Ted went back to WJXX and "sat tight." Every day, for a week, he half expected to hear the good word from Jim Montgomery. But when the second week passed, and then the third, without word from New York, Ted came to the conclusion that he could write off Montgomery's promise as just the usual routine interest that an experienced and friendly radio man so often shows in a youngster who's coming along.

Two months passed. By this time Ted had dismissed the whole thing from his mind. Then, one afternoon, there was a telephone call for him . . . from New York. It was Bob Leslie.

"Are you still interested in getting a job in New York?" Bob asked. "Well, something may be opening up over at WXZ. I got a call from Jim Montgomery today. He says they expect to lose a couple of announcers soon, so the Chief

Announcer is going to put on a competitive audition Saturday morning at ten o'clock. Jim wanted to know if you were interested. Can you make it, Ted?"

Could he make it! Ted almost jumped through the telephone in his excitement!

"Take it easy, guy," Bob chuckled over the phone. "He's not offering you a job—just an audition. And there will be plenty of high-class competition on hand, I imagine. But, if you want to take a crack at it, Jim says to report at Studio 6C in the RCA Building at 10:00 A.M. Saturday. And good luck!"

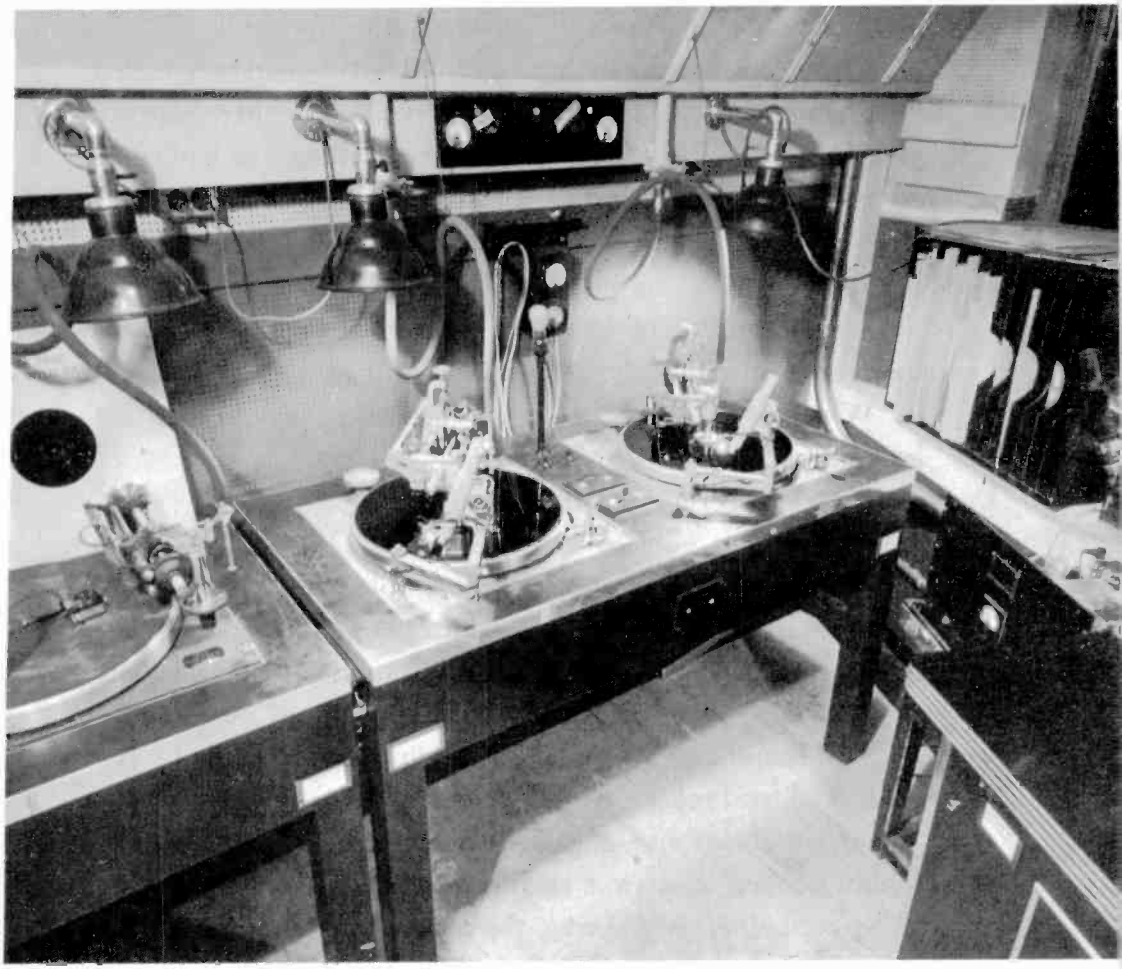
Ted was one of the first to arrive at the audition studio that Saturday morning. There was only one other fellow waiting when he got there.

The Chief Announcer's secretary gave them both a preliminary application form to fill out while they were waiting. Soon others arrived. By ten o'clock there were a dozen hopeful applicants clustered outside the studio, all trying rather unsuccessfully to give the impression that they were not the least bit nervous.

Finally Mr. Fred Abbott, the Chief Announcer, joined them. There were two men with him. He introduced them as his assistants. Then he handed each of the applicants a sheaf of scripts.

"There are ten widely assorted pieces of copy here," he said. "After you've had an opportunity to look them over, we'll start the auditions."

His secretary gave him a list of the applicants' names,



NBC Photo

MANY RADIO PROGRAMS are recorded as they come over the air—sometimes at the client's request, or for a delayed rebroadcast.

and he and his assistants disappeared into the studio.

About fifteen minutes later Mr. Abbott's secretary called out the name of the first applicant on the list. "Mr. Murray Goodwin." Goodwin, a cheerful chubby fellow who had come all the way from Trenton for the audition, stood up and went into Studio 6C. The other victims gave him a smile of encouragement as he passed.

Five minutes went by. Ten. Fifteen. Twenty. Finally a messenger brought the secretary a slip of paper.

"Which is Mr. Ted Lane?" she asked, looking at the group.

"I am," Ted replied, standing up.

"You're next," she said, with a smile. "Go right in."

Ted entered the studio. It was empty. But through the glass partition of the control booth he could see the Chief Announcer, his assistants, and the engineer. Mr. Abbott spoke to him over the talk-back microphone as he came in.

"Ted Lane?" he asked. "Just sit down at the table by the mike, Ted, and relax."

Ted sat down and laid the scripts on the table. But he couldn't relax. That was asking too much.

"Now, before you start," the announcer suggested, "tell us a little about yourself, Ted. That's the best way for us to get acquainted."

The light over the window flashed on, indicating that the table microphone was open. So Ted started to talk. He told the WXZ men about his early ambition to get into radio . . . how he started by playing the part of a cop in the WXXR "Radio Playhouse" show . . . was finally hired to do odd jobs

in the station . . . received training as an apprentice announcer and disk jockey . . . tried his hand at writing commercials . . . helped produce their sustaining shows . . . and so on. Then he briefly outlined his career at WJXX, ending with the information that he was now master of ceremonies on their "Dialing for Dough" program.

"That's a good program, too," Mr. Abbott interrupted. "It's given you plenty of experience in *ad libbing*, which is a fine thing for any man to have. Well, Ted, this has all been very interesting. Now, if you wish, let's start on the scripts I gave you to read. First try the commercial for motor oil. Pace it just the way you think it should go. All right . . . whenever you're ready."

The light flashed on. Ted held the script before him in a hand that was none too steady. Once again that familiar feeling of panic swept over him. It was maddening to think that even after his previous experience as an announcer he should still be a victim of mike fright at an important time like this!

He started to read. His voice quavered slightly on the opening sentence. Then he felt that he was really getting into the swing of it. But, when he was only halfway through the script, the studio light flashed off.

"Pardon me, Ted," came Mr. Abbott's voice over the speaker. "You're doing rather well, but I know you can do better. Don't be nervous, my boy. We're all old-timers here together. Forget that it's an audition. Pretend that you're at your mike back at WJXX. And if I may make a suggestion . . . don't give it quite so much pressure. Assume a

more friendly tone of voice. Don't try to be dynamic—just be human."

The light flashed on again. Ted started the commercial over from the beginning. His momentary nervousness had disappeared now. This time he read the script the way he knew it *should* be read.

When he had finished the motor-oil commercial, Ted launched into a piece of institutional copy about National Boy Scout Week . . . then did a long news broadcast. From time to time Mr. Abbott or one of the other listeners in the control booth would interrupt with a minor comment on his delivery. But Ted felt that his audition was going well. When he had finished seven of the ten scripts, the telltale light over the window blinked out again.

"That's good, Ted," Mr. Abbott said. "I think you needn't read any more of them. Thank you very much. I'll see you when you come out."

Ted picked up his scripts and went out the door next to the control room. Mr. Abbott stepped outside to speak to him.

"Thank you for coming in, Ted," he said. "We like your work very much. Incidentally, Jim Montgomery spoke very highly of you before you came in. Right now," he added, "we're not positive just what our needs are going to be. And, of course, we want to hear the other boys who've come in for an audition. But if anything should happen I'll drop you a note."

Before Ted caught the noon train back home, he telephoned Bob Leslie at CBS and told him how the audition

had gone, and what the Chief Announcer had said.

"That sounds good!" Bob exclaimed. "I'll keep my fingers crossed for you, Ted—and if I find out any inside dope from Jim I'll pass it along."

Three days later a letter came for Ted. In the upper left-hand corner of the envelope was "Office of the Chief Announcer, Station WXZ, Universal Broadcasting Company, RCA Building, New York City." He tore it open. He skimmed through the brief message. This was it! This was the good news! He read the last sentence of the letter once more to make certain he was not just imagining the whole thing. It was true!

> Kindly advise us immediately if you can report for work on the Announcer Staff of Station WXZ on Monday the fifteenth.
>
> Sincerely yours,
> Frederic C. Abbott

Floating Studios and Dancing Rays

TED turned west off Fifth Avenue and walked through Rockefeller Plaza to the towering RCA Building.

He felt very much like the Country Mouse coming to visit his city cousin. It was hard to realize that it wasn't all just a dream . . . that he was really Ted Lane, an announcer for the big New York network station WXZ, on his way to work with the thousands of other busy New Yorkers who were hurrying along the sidewalks this bright sunny morning of Monday the fifteenth.

But when he reported at Mr. Abbott's office he found that it was all true. They were expecting him. The Chief Announcer welcomed him cordially.

"We're mighty glad to have you with us, Ted," he exclaimed as they shook hands.

Then he told him something about his duties as a WXZ announcer.

"I won't go into a long dreary speech about how different things are at a big 50,000-watt station like WXZ," Mr. Abbott went on. "You'll find that out soon enough." But he told Ted that the Universal Broadcasting Company, until recently, had been a part of the National Broadcasting Company. "Now it's an entirely separate broadcasting system," he continued, "although we still share the RCA Building and use many of the NBC facilities."

He suggested that perhaps the best way for Ted to get a clearer picture of the Universal setup would be for him to take the regular NBC tour. He told Ted that new employees usually took the tour before they started to work.

"It's sort of an indoctrination course for our new people," he said. "When you come back, we can have a little talk and you can meet some of the other people on the WXZ staff."

So Ted took an elevator down to the main lobby of the RCA Building and went to the desk where tickets were being sold for the NBC tour.

The tickets cost sixty cents each.

"Please present your tickets at the desk on the mezzanine," said the girl who was selling them. "Tours start every twenty minutes. The complete tour takes about one hour."

Ted walked up the broad carpeted staircase to the spacious mezzanine. There were already about twenty people waiting for the next tour to start. It seemed to Ted that most of them were visitors from other cities, in New York to "do the town." Among them was a scattering of service men . . . a tall lieutenant in the Army Engineers Corps, with his pretty wife . . . two sailors . . . a curly-headed lieutenant wearing the wings and insignia of a bombardier of the Twentieth Air Force . . . two Navy Waves . . . and a Chinese Army pilot. More people kept joining the group. Now there were about thirty-five people and it was time for the tour to get under way.

Their guide was a girl in a neat blue NBC uniform. (Before the war, Ted learned later, the tours were always conducted by NBC pages . . . college graduates who were taking

the two-year training course given by the National Broadcasting Company. But for the present this job was being done by girls, who received special training as NBC guides.)

After requesting that no one smoke while making the tour, and announcing that it was forbidden for anyone with a camera to take photographs, the guide ushered the group into an elevator which took them all up to the fourth floor.

The first stop was before a door marked 4B.

"This is one of NBC's forty-six studios," the guide told them. "Unfortunately this studio is not in use at the moment, but we'll go in and have a look."

The door opened onto a large glass-enclosed observation balcony, with rows of seats just like those in a theater. And there, below them, was the biggest radio studio Ted had ever seen. It must have been fully fifty feet square—big enough to accommodate an entire symphony orchestra. At the far end of the studio was the familiar glass partition; behind it was the control room, for the engineer and director.

The guide informed them that the lighting system used in the studio was very unusual. There were so many lights, and they were so spaced, that they threw no shadows. Thus, no matter how a musician sat or stood before his music rack, his body never threw a shadow over the musical score.

"But even stranger than that is the fact that this is a *floating* studio," the guide told them. "The entire room not only is insulated and soundproofed but is actually suspended from padded girders. No steel touches steel, no wood touches wood. This makes it impossible for the rumble and vibration of street traffic to penetrate into the studio."

Photo by Carroll Van Ark

THE TOWERING RCA BUILDING in New York . . .
home of two of America's largest radio networks.

Outside, in the foyer, she showed the visitors a large cutaway model of a typical NBC "floating" studio, in which the layers of insulation and the method of suspension could be clearly seen. What a difference, Ted thought, between these great modern NBC studios and the tiny hole-in-the-wall cubicle which was the heart of a 250-watt local station such as WXXR! It was exciting to think that from now on he would be working for a broadcasting company which boasted the last word in modern facilities and equipment.

As the tour progressed, and one eye-opening discovery followed another, Ted was glad that he was not just an outsider like the others who were making the tour. They would go home and tell their friends about the wonderful things they had seen, but with Ted it would be different. He was an "insider" now, and these things he was seeing were just a preview of what his job and his surroundings would be like with Universal.

The next stop was outside the famous NBC newsroom. Through the window the visitors could see the monitor panel with its rows of buttons for bringing in overseas broadcasts. One button was labeled "London" . . . another "Paris" . . . another "Rome" . . . and another "S. Pacific." Over each button was a row of three small lights, each a different color. The guide explained what they were for. When the white light over the "Paris" button was on, for example, it meant that the channel between Paris and the New York studio was open. When the green light flashed on, it was the signal "Stand by, Paris!" And the red light meant "You're on the air, Paris!"

NBC Photo

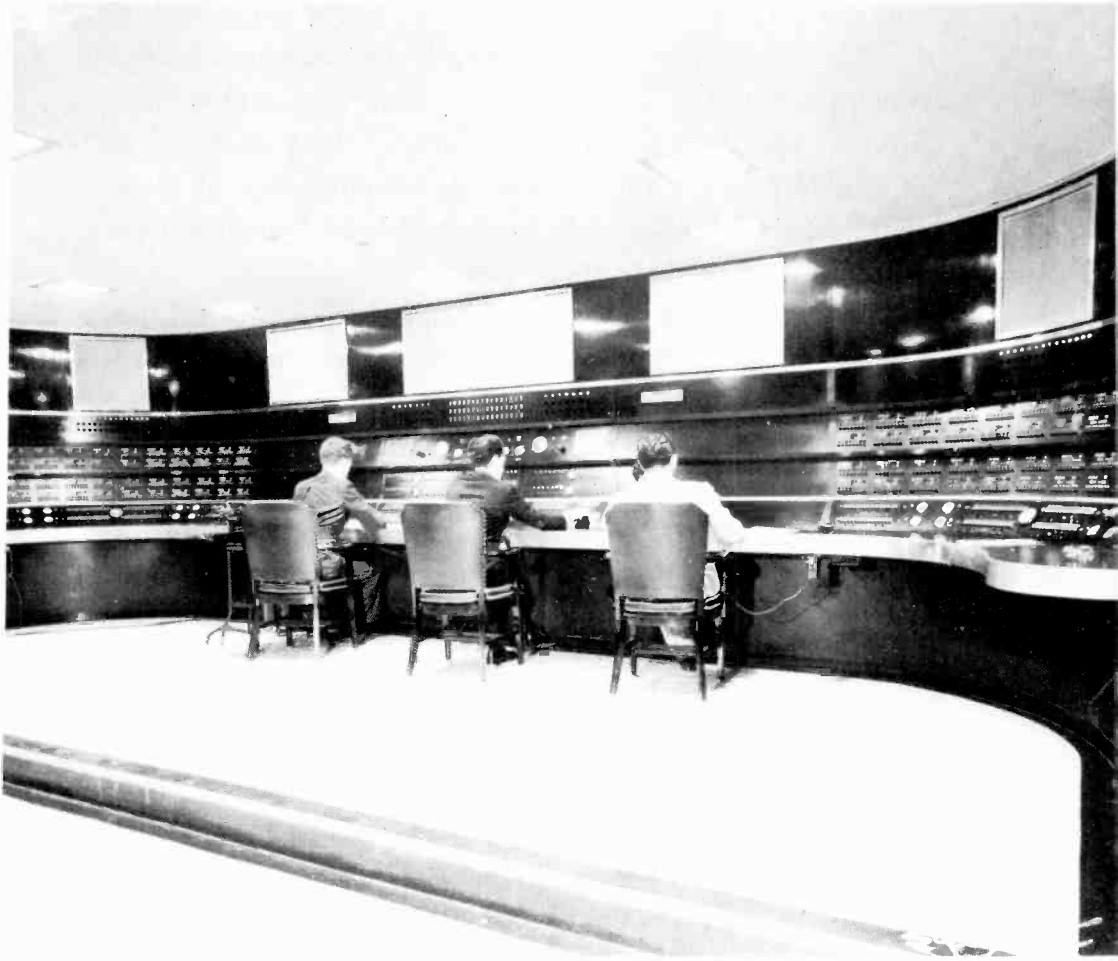
"GOT THE TIME?" Five clocks outside the news broadcasting studio show what time it is in other parts of the world.

Beyond the monitor room was a small glass-enclosed studio for the use of the New York newscasters . . . Don Goddard . . . H. V. Kaltenborn . . . Lowell Thomas . . . and John B. Kennedy. Right now Kaltenborn was broadcasting from the studio. With his script resting on the green table in front of him, he was talking into the microphone—making slight gestures with his left hand to emphasize what he was saying.

At a signal from the guide the group moved on to a window which looked into the teletype room, adjoining the newsroom. Along one wall of this room was a battery of teletype machines, clicking merrily away as they fed out the yellow sheets of paper from the International, United, and Associated Press and Radio Services. As they watched the machines, one of the news editors tore off a dispatch from one of the AP teletypes. Hurrying over to the newscaster's studio, he rolled up the dispatch and inserted it in the cylindrical slot under the window. Kaltenborn reached back, took it, and, after scanning it hastily, broadcast the red-hot dispatch to his radio audience.

As the guests turned to leave the news and teletype rooms, the guide called attention to a row of five clocks on the wall over the glass partition of the newscaster's booth. The first clock showed New York time. The second showed London, or Greenwich, time . . . the third, Moscow time . . . the fourth, San Francisco time . . . and the fifth, Manila time.

The next stop was the one which interested Ted most of all. This was the master control room, on the fifth floor. As he stood with the others in front of the thirty-five-foot plate-glass window watching the engineers at work, he couldn't



NBC Photo

NERVE CENTER OF A NETWORK—Here, faced by row after row of control buttons, three operators "monitor" all programs, feed some of them to other stations in the network.

help thinking of the dinky three-foot control panel back at Station WXXR, which once seemed so complicated to him. What a difference! Here, at NBC, were rows and rows of buttons, dials, and knobs. You'd almost think it would be impossible for only three engineers to manipulate all those complicated controls, but the guide told them that there were only three men on duty at one time.

"This is the nerve center of NBC and the Universal networks," she said. "These three engineers monitor each program that goes out, and they feed the programs to the other stations in the networks—both domestic and foreign. The foreign programs are short wave."

She said that in case of national emergency, if there was an important announcement to make, the engineer at the master control panel could instantly cut all programs off the air. The studios in which the programs were originating wouldn't even know that they had been cut off.

Each block of ten or fifteen buttons, all along the panel, represented one studio. The switch-over from one program to another, or from one station to another, was always made automatically. The engineer would set his controls for the switch-over about ten minutes in advance, without having to hurry frantically at the last moment. Then, when it was time for the switch-over . . . presto! the controls clicked into place and there it was!

"On this control panel," the guide explained, "the engineers can send out fourteen different programs at the same time, including three short-wave overseas programs."

Beyond the master control room was the recording room

Harold Stein—ABC Photo

NEWS FLASH! It appears first on one of these teletype machines. If important enough, your regular program is cut off the air and news is announced over "live mike" shown at left.

with its battery of twenty recording machines. Ted asked the guide if all programs were recorded.

"No," she replied. "Only in case of some very important news event. But we make cuttings of most commercial programs, on the clients' order. Clients like to keep the recordings on file. Then, if some legal question should arise concerning the program, it's a very simple matter to play it back to see what really went out on the air."

One of the most fascinating exhibits on the tour was in a large darkened glass case beyond the recording room. When the guide flicked a switch, the visitors saw something which appeared to be a giant radio tube. And in the tube was a pulsating bar of green light, about ten inches long. On closer examination Ted saw that the bar of light was really made up of two parallel bars of light, very close together.

"This is a cathode ray," the guide explained. "It is a way of showing you how sound *looks*."

She spoke into a microphone which had been installed in front of the glass case.

"I will now ask some of you to call out the name of your home town and you can see how it looks as a sound wave."

The words she spoke into the mike made the two light rays dance up and down in jagged streaks.

One of the sailors called out, "Baltimore!"

The guide turned to the microphone and said, "Baltimore, Maryland."

Once again the green rays of light jerked up and down, following the inflection and modulation of her voice. Everyone laughed at the amazing antics of the cathode ray.

Others called out their towns: "San Francisco" . . . "Philadelphia" . . . "Grand Rapids, Michigan" . . . "Indianapolis" . . . "Ridgewood, New Jersey" . . . and, not to be outdone, the Chinese pilot gave them "Chungking, China." And one of the sailors added, "Brooklyn, New York" . . . which got a big laugh.

Each city, as it was spoken into the microphone, made the light rays do a different kind of dance. And when the announcer snapped her fingers into the microphone and then clapped her hands sharply, those cathode rays really went to town!

Herding the group into the elevator again, the NBC guide took them to the ninth floor.

"I warn you," she smiled, "that what you are about to see now will destroy some of your illusions about your favorite radio shows. Do you still want to see it?" she asked.

Everybody did—so she went into a small studio which resembled an announcer's booth. The guests stood outside, watching her through the glass partition.

"You all listen to the Lone Ranger, I suppose," the guide said through the loud-speaker. "Well, here's Silver, his horse."

She took two rubber plungers such as plumbers use to open up a clogged drain. Clopping them down rhythmically against the table top, she produced a perfect imitation of Silver thundering through the canyon with his fearless master.

Next came an imitation of bacon sizzling in a pan. To produce this sound effect she simply crinkled a wad of cello-

phane, close to the mike. And you could almost smell that crisp bacon frying!

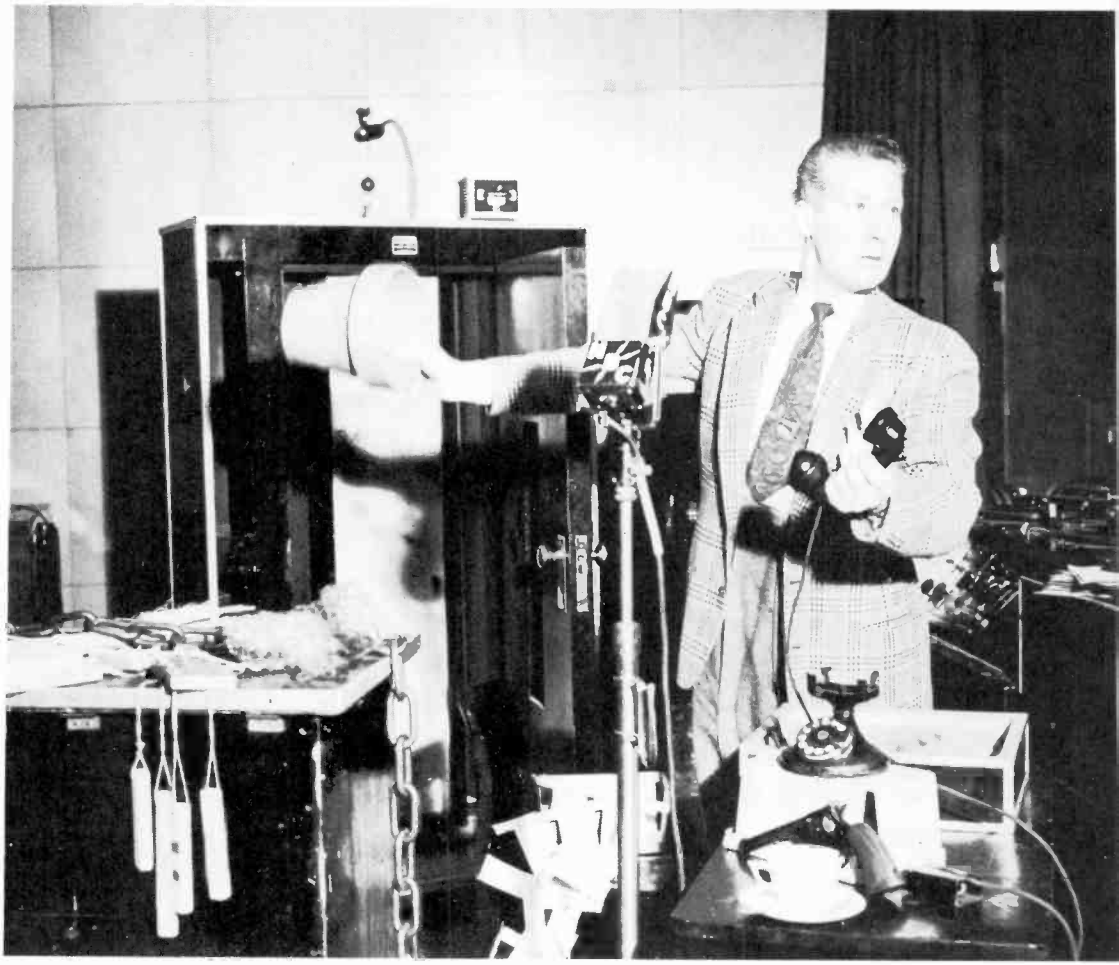
Then came the sound of rain, which was made by dropping kernels of rice on an automatic endless belt of stiff fabric. And thunder—created by thumping a large sheet of tin which was suspended from the ceiling.

To the amazement of her guests the guide then reproduced a dozen or more sound effects which they had all heard over the radios at home many times—including recorded transcriptions of trains, barnyard noises, automobiles, and many other familiar sounds. This was all old stuff to Ted, of course, but he enjoyed watching the faces of those who were discovering the secret techniques of sound effects for the first time. Most of them had an expression which seemed to say, "Well—what d'you know about that!" Now they felt that they had really been behind the scenes at a radio station.

The next, and final, stopping point of the tour disclosed a development in radio that was new even to Ted. Television! First the guide let them all look into a special studio which had been set up for demonstrating television programs. She told them that the dazzling lights overhead threw out quite a bit of heat, which made it uncomfortable for anyone who was taking part in a television broadcast.

"They're as bad as klieg lights on a movie set in Hollywood," she added.

Beyond the studio with all its lights was another studio containing five television sets. The guide told the group to split up so that they could gather in smaller groups around the television sets.



NBC Photo

IT'S HARD TO STUMP a sound-effects expert. Name the noise you want, and he'll find *some* way to produce it realistically over the air.

"Now we'll actually put on a television demonstration for your benefit," she said. "But I need three volunteers. Who will volunteer?"

A man from New Jersey raised his hand. So did one of the sailors.

"Fine!" the guide exclaimed. "And how about you, lieutenant?" she asked, beckoning to the Chinese pilot.

He grinned and joined the other two volunteers. All three went into the television broadcasting studio with the guide.

Ted edged up close to one of the television sets to see what he could see. Suddenly the ten-by-ten inch screen lighted up. The guide's voice came over the speaker of the set.

"Step this way, sailor—right under the lights."

As he did, his image appeared clearly on the screen. He smiled and ran his fingers through his curly hair.

"What's your name, sailor?" came the interviewer's voice.

"Terry O'Shane," the seaman replied.

You could see his lips move as he spoke. Watching him, so lifelike, there on the screen, was almost like having him with you in person, in the same room.

"How long have you been in the Navy, Terry?" he was asked.

"About a year and a half," Terry replied.

"Would you say that was about a year and a half too long?" came the question.

The image on the screen laughed.

"Oh, no—only about one year and five months too long. I enjoyed the first month!" They both laughed at that. "But I'm staying in," Terry added, "until the whole mess is cleared up."

NBC Photo

A RADIO STUDIO can be a two-by-four cubbyhole or a mammoth hall such as this specially designed studio at Radio City, which can accommodate an entire symphony orchestra and audience.

Then, after a few more questions, the sailor "walked off the screen" and the gentleman from New Jersey appeared. There were the usual questions and good-natured banter—then the pilot from China stepped under the lights and appeared on the screen. In response to the interviewer's questions he gave his name, said that he had a wife and daughter back in China, and that he had been flying for China for eight years. As the interview ended, the guide let the three volunteers slip back into the studio to watch and hear *her* on the television screens.

When she rejoined the group she told them that this was just a preview of things to come in the years ahead.

"Eventually, the screens in home television sets will be as big as home movie screens," she promised them.

Ted was greatly impressed by the television demonstration. Here, he thought to himself, lies the greatest future in radio. He hoped that his career would soon be entering a phase that would enable him to find out more about the wonders of television. Perhaps someday, if he was lucky, he would be able to work in television for the Universal network.

As he stood there turning these thoughts over in his mind, he suddenly became aware of the fact that everyone else had left the studio. He hurried out and caught up with the group as they were all piling into the elevator. Back once more on the mezzanine, the NBC guide made a little farewell speech . . . and the tour was over.

"That's the biggest sixty cents' worth in New York City!"

exclaimed the man from New Jersey. "Thanks, miss!"

The guide smiled and waved good-by to them all. Ted went down to the main lobby for an elevator that would take him up to Mr. Abbott's office.

"Weather: Sunday and Warmer"

"YOU'RE the new announcer who's starting this week, aren't you?"

Ted turned. The man who had addressed him was one of the veteran WXZ announcers—a man whose name and voice were known to millions of radio listeners. As soon as he spoke, Ted knew that this was the same voice he had heard so many times coming over at 680 on his dial . . . "This is Station WXZ . . . your announcer is Don Franco."

They shook hands.

"Yes, I'm Ted Lane, Mr. Franco," Ted said. "I'm very glad to know you."

"Welcome to WXZ, Ted," the famous announcer said. "But let's forget the formality. The people I work with call me Don."

He told Ted that Mr. Abbott, the Chief Announcer, had been called into a conference with a client.

"Before he left, he asked me to show you around a bit and introduce you to some of the other announcers. We might as well start here."

In a large anteroom next to Mr. Abbott's office there were four or five WXZ announcers sitting around waiting until it was time for them to go on the air. Don Franco introduced Ted to the group. Ted knew most of them by name or repu-

tation, but it was rather exciting to meet them in person and to know that from now on he, too, was one of them.

"Let's stroll around to some of the studios and take a look at what's going on," Don suggested.

That sounded like a swell idea. They took an elevator down to the fourth floor. The first stop was at one of the small "stand-by" studios, in which one of the announcers was monitoring a network show originating in Chicago. There was an electric organ in the studio. In case anything happened to throw the Chicago program off the air, it would be a simple matter to fill in with organ music until the next program was scheduled.

Since the announcer's only duties were to check off each musical number used on the program, Ted had an opportunity to ask questions and learn how the equipment worked.

The control panel was quite small, with various buttons clearly marked. The three most important controls were the row of buttons in the upper left corner. One was marked "Studio," and was used to put the studio itself on the air. The second one was tagged "Announce" . . . and the third was "Nemo," for programs like the one now coming over.

Don showed Ted how to check his channels for the program cue.

"This green light on the panel is known as the *carrier* button," he explained. "When it flashes on, it means that the channel is clear for this studio."

The stand-by announcer pointed to another button on the control board.

"Never punch this one," he said, smiling, "or your name's

mud." He told why. "This equipment was originally built and used by NBC—and that button there rings the famous NBC chimes. We don't use chimes for time signals on WXZ . . . so, no touchee!"

Ted laughed and said he'd do his best to remember never to punch that particular button.

Over the control board was a small studio clock. The red sweep hand was the one to watch, to see whether the program was going to run short, run over, or end on the nose. Suddenly, as they sat there talking, a short "beep" sounded over the studio speaker.

"That's the first beep," the stand-by announcer explained, glancing at the clock. "It's an automatic signal that warns us the program will end in two and a half minutes."

Sixty seconds later there was another "beep." The announcer put on his headphones.

"A minute and a half to go," he said.

Then came the third beep.

"Half a minute left."

Exactly at 10:14:30 the program ended. The announcer threw the switch that killed his control board and took off his headphones.

"And that's all there is to it, except for making out the top sheet," he said to Ted.

The "top sheet" was the WXZ name for the announcer's log. It had to be filled out for each program. Then it was sent to the continuity department for filing. When the top sheet was all filled out, it provided a permanent record of the program: title of program . . . point of origination . . .

day and date . . . scheduled time on and off . . . and actual time on and off. (If a program was a few seconds late in starting, it must be shown on the top sheet—together with the reason for the lateness.) The sheet also told whether the program was a sustaining program or a commercial . . . the name of the sponsor . . . whether it was a station or network show . . . the time the station call letters were announced . . . name of the announcer . . . and so on.

Ted paid careful attention to the manner in which the top sheet was filled out, for he didn't want to do it wrong on his own programs.

After visiting the stand-by studio, Dan Franco took him to one of the big audience studios such as Ted had seen on his NBC tour.

In these big studios, where the well-known production shows were put on the air, the announcer's stand was at the back, adjoining the control booth. Don explained that it was located there so that the announcer could easily keep an eye on the producer of the show, for his cues. The producer always ran the show from the control booth.

Ted knew that it would probably be quite a while before he would be assigned to a big evening show, but he was glad for the opportunity to get a preview of the studio setup.

"We'd better be getting up to the newscasting studio now," Don Franco said. "I have to give a newscast in about ten minutes."

The next morning Ted was given a list of temporary announcing assignments. He was now a regular WXZ announcer! But, except for the thrill of knowing that, at last,

he was a network announcer, Ted found that the routine of his job was not much different from that at Station WJXX in Bridgeport. It was mostly a "button-pushing" job, to start with.

For example, on the Daily Program Operations Schedule from which each announcer worked, this is what Ted found he had to do on his first day at Station WXZ. . . .

At nine he had to read a one-minute soap commercial. Then, from 9:01 until 9:14:30, his job was to monitor a network program originating in Washington, D. C. This was followed by station identification call letters and a half-minute commercial on a breakfast cereal. After that there was nothing to do until 9:29:30, when he had to read a short commercial for a well-known salad oil.

At nine-thirty Ted was scheduled to open the popular "Early Bird" musical show, which originated in Chicago. This was a network show. At 9:59:30 he signed off the program. Then, at 10:24:30, he had to take a local station break . . . and at ten-twenty-five he brought in another network show. At 10:29:30 there was another station break. And at ten-forty he had to read a five-minute newscast. And so it went. . . .

For the first week everything went along perfectly, without a hitch. The Chief Announcer even called Ted into his office one morning and complimented him on getting into the swing of his new job so well. Ted was beginning to feel rather pleased with himself. One of the things he appreciated most was a postcard from his old boss, Mr. Hayes, of Station WXXR, in Camden. Mr. Hayes had heard Ted on the air,

and had taken time to write and wish him good luck.

But during his second week at WXZ Ted pulled a boner. To be sure, it wasn't a very serious mistake. He wasn't even called on the carpet for it, as he expected he would be. But several of the other announcers kidded him plenty!

It happened on a Thursday, when Ted was reading the weather forecast. The typed script in his hand said, "Tomorrow . . . sunny and warmer." But, over the air, Ted read it like this: "Tomorrow . . . Sunday and warmer." The minute he said it, he realized the slip he had made. He caught himself quickly and corrected the report by saying, "Tomorrow . . . Friday . . . will be sunny and warmer."

He was hoping that none of the other announcers had been listening in over the office loud-speaker. But no such luck! They had been—and for weeks they never once let Ted forget it!

"It's in Your Lap!"

One day, after Ted had been at Station WXZ for several months, he was hurrying through the main lobby of the RCA Building for a bite of lunch when he bumped into Jim Montgomery, the WXZ producer. Jim had just wound up a rehearsal for the Texaco show and was going to lunch. So they went down to the RCA cafeteria together.

Weeks later, recalling that chance meeting with Jim Montgomery, Ted thanked his lucky stars for it. For, as a result of that half-hour lunch with the friendly producer, Ted made an important decision: he agreed that at the first opportunity he would give up his job as WXZ announcer and switch over to the station's production department.

"You realize, Ted, that you'll have to take a cut in salary to begin with," Jim reminded him.

"Sure, I know that," Ted replied. "But I've made up my mind that I want to be a producer of radio shows. I think I'll come out ahead in the long run. And it's what I enjoy doing most."

"Fine!" Jim exclaimed. "I don't think you're making a mistake. I'll get to Abbott this afternoon and ask him how soon he thinks he can replace you on the announcer staff. Perhaps you'd better speak to him first. I hope you can

start working with me three weeks from now, when the new Alan Johnson show starts."

And that was exactly the way it worked out. Starting as Jim Montgomery's assistant on the popular new Alan Johnson show, Ted gradually assumed more and more of the responsibilities of producing the show.

On this assignment he came into contact for the first time with top-flight advertising agency men, who worked as representatives of their clients. Although it was Ted's job to produce the show, the Smith & Gorham advertising agency had assigned one of their radio men to supervise the program. His name was George Garrett. He sat in on all rehearsals with Ted. They worked together, as a team.

For five or six weeks everything ran smoothly. Ted was getting into the swing of things and already was beginning to feel like a veteran producer. The show's Crossley rating kept inching up, point by point. The client was happy . . . Alan Johnson was riding high, knowing that he was the network's coming radio comedian . . . in fact, there wasn't even a tiny cloud on Ted's exciting new horizon.

Then one day Jim Montgomery called Ted into his office.

"Brace yourself for some good news, Ted," he said. "At least, I hope you'll think it's good news. Starting with next week's show I'm throwing the whole Alan Johnson program into your lap."

And he explained that he was hopping the five o'clock plane for Hollywood, to direct the new Bob Hope show which was booked for the Universal network.

"I've taught you everything I know about the job of di-

recting a show," Jim continued. "Now it's up to you to carry the ball. I have all the confidence in the world in you. You've demonstrated that you have a flair for showmanship . . . you're tactful . . . you get along well with Johnson, in spite of his occasional temperamental antics. The others on the cast like to work with you . . . the agency men like you . . . so do the writers, and the client. I don't see how you can miss. So it's all yours, from here on in . . . and good luck!"

They shook hands and Ted left Jim's office walking on air! Could he swing the job, single-handed? It was one thing to produce a show knowing that an experienced production man was standing by, in case anything went wrong. But it was quite another thing to realize that the sole responsibility rested on your own shoulders. . . .

Three days before the next show was scheduled to go on the air, Ted called his preliminary rehearsal. Everybody was there except the guest star, Eddie Cantor. Another member of the cast dubbed-in Cantor's lines, for it wasn't necessary for an old trouper like their guest star to make an appearance until the last two rehearsals, just before the broadcast.

For two hours, that first day, Ted had the cast run through the script, just to familiarize themselves with the lines and situations. Not even the band was there for this preliminary rehearsal.

Then, at the end of the second hour, a WXZ guide brought in a "pickup" audience . . . stenographers who weren't busy at the moment . . . a few other members of the WXZ staff who could spare the time . . . and a handful of visitors who happened to be making a tour of the studios. Ted made a

NBC Photo

EDDIE CANTOR cups hand over one ear to cut down on orchestra volume so he can hear his own voice more clearly. This is a general practice among radio singers.

little speech to the audience, explaining that he would like to have them all act as guinea pigs. "We'd like to try out the show on you folks," he said, "to see if the gags go over. So don't laugh at the jokes just to be polite. If they're not funny, we want to know it so that we can fix them up in time for the broadcast."

So they ran through the script once more. Ted studied the reaction of the audience carefully. Both he and the script writer jotted down notes on the margin of their scripts whenever a gag fell flat. Sometimes a joke fell flat on its face simply because of the actor's inflection or timing. That could easily be remedied. Others were a matter of wording . . . and one gag went completely over the heads of the audience.

"I never did like that one," Ted remarked to the script writer. "Let's cut it."

"O.K. with me, Ted," the writer agreed. "It's strictly corn, anyhow."

When the rehearsal ended, the audience applauded and filed out. Then came a huddle in which the script received a final polishing . . . and the preliminary rehearsal was over.

Ted became tense and excited as Thursday finally rolled around. The show was to go on the air at eight o'clock.

Rehearsal was called for one o'clock that afternoon, in Studio 6B, where the show would eventually be broadcast. For a solid hour the cast ran through the script again. Ted and the agency production man listened to it from the engineer's booth, off stage to the left. Every now and then Ted would cut in on the talk-back mike with a suggestion. . . .

"Try that gag again, will you, Alan?" he would say. "I'd

like to see you bear down on it a little more. It gets a laugh because of the way you mug it, but this isn't television. The humor of it depends entirely on your voice and inflection."

The comedian cheerfully tried the gag again, and then a second time. Now everyone was satisfied that he was getting out of it everything that the writer had intended.

At another point Ted interrupted with, "That line you just read, Alan . . . 'As for me, I like the simple things.' Sock that word *simple* . . . because it's important. It leads into the next gag."

And so it went, for an hour. At two o'clock Ted broke off the rehearsal.

"All right, folks," he said. "It's shaping up swell. That will be all for now. The band is taking over the studio for an hour to rehearse its numbers. Everybody be back here at three-fifteen for the dress rehearsal."

While the band rehearsed, Ted, George, and the script writer labored over the script together once more, making slight cuts, additions, and changes. In the meantime the band, under the direction of the leader, Woody Reid, went through its numbers, paying particular attention to the cues and timing, as indicated in the script. For example, the opening theme instructions were . . . MUSIC . . . THEME—HIT HARD AND HOLD FOR FIVE SECONDS . . . APPLAUSE . . . FADE UNDER. Later there was a musical bridge bringing in the first commercial. Then a popular number sung by the "Swingy Ditty Boys" . . . then a musical bridge indicating a change of scene in the program . . . another bridge for a commercial . . . then an orchestral number . . . another bridge,

for the hitchhike announcement . . . and the final theme.

"I'm worried about that hitchhike," Ted said to George. "The last time, when the show ran over for eighteen seconds, we had to jam through the hitchhike and cut our sign-off short."

Ted knew that clients could be very touchy about the way a hitchhike announcement went over. A "hitchhike" was usually a thirty-second announcement tacked onto the end of a program, advertising another product made by the client. For example, if a client manufactured dental cream and also an after-shaving lotion, he would probably devote his main commercials to the dental cream, but would mention the after-shaving lotion in a thirty-second hitchhike commercial.

So Ted and George agreed that, regardless of whether or not the show was running overtime, they would cut in with the hitchhike at eight-twenty-nine.

"After all," Ted grinned, recalling his session with the script writer at Station WXXR long ago, "it's the client's nickel."

At three o'clock the orchestra ended its rehearsal. The cast was starting to drift in for the final dress rehearsal of the show. The client, J. L. Morgan, usually showed up for the dress rehearsal. Ted looked up just as he came into the studio with several friends. He hurried over to greet him, and escorted the party to the client's booth above the auditorium. From this vantage point they not only could watch the show but could hear it piped in just as it would sound when it was broadcast.

Ted went back onto the stage.

NBC Photo

THE TALK-BACK MIKE in the control booth enables the director at a rehearsal to prompt the actors during rehearsal.

"All set, everybody?" he asked. "How about you, Alan? And where's Eddie Cantor? He said he'd be here at three-fifteen . . . and it's three-twelve now."

Just then the famous comedian came bustling in.

"Hello, everybody!" he said. "Sorry to be late. I got mixed up with an NBC tour and ended up in the wrong studio. They threw me out, so here I am."

He shook hands with Ted, George, and Alan Johnson.

"All right, let's go," Ted directed.

He and George slipped into the control room and sat down at the table overlooking the stage. With his script on the table in front of him, and stop watch in hand, Ted raised his finger, ready to cue the opening line of the show.

The next time the sweep hand of his watch hit twelve, he dropped his hand in a quick downward movement. The announcer, watching him, opened the show. . . .

"Mr. Johnson . . . Mr. Alan Johnson!" . . .

The sound-effects man caught his cue and crashed several tin cans and a cowbell onto the stage . . . whereupon Alan Johnson chuckled into the microphone and said, "Yes, folks, here we go again!"

As he spoke his line Ted pointed to the orchestra leader, who directed his band to swing into the opening bars of the theme song . . . and the show was on!

Now came one of Ted's most important jobs. In addition to giving all the cues, listening to the way the program was coming over, and marking his script for still more last-minute changes after the dress rehearsal, this was his only chance to *time* the program . . . and time it to the split second. He kept

his eye on his watch almost constantly, and marked the timing along the margin of his script as he went along. As a double check on the timing, George marked *his* script too.

At one point in the show Ted stopped his watch for a five-second allowance in over-all time. This was because Eddie Cantor couldn't resist the temptation to turn back from the mike with an *ad lib* to his friends in the control booth. What he said was funny, but . . . well, Ted would have to tell him not to pull that gag when the show actually went on the air.

Halfway through the program Ted glanced up at the client's booth. Mr. Morgan and his friends were beaming. That was a good sign. They liked the show. Nothing could be more discouraging than a dead-pan client at a dress rehearsal.

Everything clicked perfectly, right to the end. At 3:43:30 Ted cued the band for the hitchhike bridge . . . and then ended the show at 3:44:30 on the nose. He turned to George.

"We're sitting pretty," he said.

"Yep—right on the button," George replied. "Now, if old J. L. doesn't make too many changes on us, our worries are over."

"J. L."—Mr. Morgan—always liked to go into a huddle with his producers after the dress rehearsal. He was a client who wisely preferred to audition his shows without having read the script in advance. This way, he believed, he could judge the effect more accurately, just as the audience would eventually judge it when it came over the air.

Ted asked Eddie Cantor to accompany him to the client's booth to meet Mr. Morgan and his friends. Eddie agreed.

They all had a pleasant chat, and Mr. Morgan admitted he couldn't think of a single thing he didn't like about the show.

It went on that evening at eight o'clock, exactly as rehearsed—and Ted's "Alan Johnson" problems were over until time for rehearsals for the following week's program.

"Stand By! . . . Action! . . . Camera!"

PRODUCING radio shows appealed to Ted more than anything else he had done in radio up to this time. Once, during the winter, he had flown to Hollywood in response to an urgent telegram from Jim Montgomery. They had worked out there together for several weeks before bringing a new Universal show East.

But it was still Ted's secret ambition to get into television, eventually. Whenever he had any spare time in the evening, he almost always went up to the WXZ television studios.

Chic Newell, who was WXZ's Television Manager, encouraged Ted to come up whenever he wanted to, and even took time during rehearsals to give him a few pointers on producing television shows.

"Television is still a new art," Chic told Ted one evening. "We're learning new tricks and techniques as we go along."

He said that television had added a new dimension to radio . . . *sight* . . . just as when talking movies first came in, years ago, and added the new dimension of *sound* to the old-fashioned silent movies.

"Television offers a big challenge and opportunity to anyone who gets into it right now and helps with its development," he continued.

"It certainly has opened up a whole new art in the field of radio entertainment," Ted agreed, "when listeners can

see their favorite radio performers as well as *hear* them. And it's a wonderful thing for a sponsor to be able to show his product over the air."

"Right," said Chic. "A person with a television set can look at a new washing machine or any new product right in his own home, without even bothering to go to the store to see what it looks like."

"Buying new products that way will be as easy as ordering them out of a mail-order catalogue," Ted said.

"Sure—only better," added the Production Manager. "Lots of sponsors will be able to demonstrate their gadgets right in your living room, by television."

"People will even be able to sit at home in the old easy chair and watch football games and horse races!" Ted exclaimed. "I'd certainly like to get into the television end of this business!"

"If you really mean that, Ted, how about coming up here and working with me?" Chic asked. "I'm in it up to my neck. I could certainly use an assistant."

This was the chance Ted had been hoping for ever since he first became interested in television! He talked it over, the next day, with his friend Jim Montgomery. Jim was all for it.

"I hate to lose you, Ted," he said. "But, if you've got your mind set on getting into television, this is the break you want, and you'd better take it. Chic is a grand guy. You'll enjoy working with him."

So, three weeks later, Ted's transfer to the television department of WXZ was arranged, and he started his production training under Chic Newell's direction. He discovered,

right at the start, that putting on a television show was basically the same as producing an ordinary radio show, but there was always that important new dimension of *sight* to reckon with. In a way it was more like producing a sound movie. The chief difference was that a movie was always filmed to form a permanent record, while a television show was a one-shot affair . . . a single showing that evaporated into thin air when it was over.

In the beginning most of the shows on which Ted worked were sustaining programs, without sponsors. But that didn't bother Ted, for he was gaining valuable experience. Finally Chic Newell let him take over the entire responsibility on a couple of half-hour shows.

After Ted had been in television for about three months, a new sponsor signed up for a half-hour program every Tuesday—and Ted got the assignment. This was the big opportunity he had been waiting for. He knew that not only Chic Newell but all the WXZ "brass hats" would be watching his work with special interest now. He *had* to do a bang-up job . . . or else!

The sponsor was the big New York men's clothing store, Kent-Dawson, Inc. The show which the WXZ program director and his staff sold Mr. Kent was a variety show called the "WXZ Television Follies." It was designed primarily for the entertainment of boys recuperating in Army and Navy hospitals, most of which were equipped with television sets. But it was a show with a broad appeal, bound to be entertaining to anyone who had a television set.

As the evening for the first show drew near, Ted spent most of his time in the studio—going through preliminary rehearsals with the cast. By Tuesday the show was shaping up nicely; but, with only one final rehearsal left, there were still plenty of rough spots to be smoothed over.

The show was scheduled for eight o'clock. Ted called the final rehearsal for seven. And what an hour of frantic last-minute work that was!

He was lucky in having an experienced announcer as Master of Ceremonies on this show. Walter Glenn was an old-timer in WXZ television—if anybody could be called an old-timer in an art so young.

Some of the actors in this first show had never appeared in television before. One of them, in particular, found it quite an ordeal. His act was an impersonation of well-known people. First he did Bob Hope, then Hildegarde, and W. C. Fields—ending his skit with a speech by Winston Churchill to Parliament, against a recorded background of "God Save the King."

The boy had had quite a little radio experience, so it wasn't just plain mike fright that made him flub his lines so badly.

"Somebody should invent a new word to describe television jitters," Ted thought to himself as he patiently rehearsed the nervous impersonator in his act.

But you would understand, if you tried it, why you might be a bit nervous if you were appearing in a television broadcast for the first time. To begin with, there was the glare, and the heat, thrown out by the hundred-or-so bright lights over your head. Then there were two huge klieg lights

Dumont Photo

ON THE SPOT! The television star must stand under hot glaring lights . . . must face the dangling microphone, Klieg lights, and television cameras. Otherwise, it's a cinch!

focused on you from different angles. These spotlights, like those used on movie sets in Hollywood, were mounted on rolling platforms and were operated by two girls dressed in blue WXZ "fatigue" uniforms. In addition to the lights the huge glaring lens of the television camera stared at you like a one-eyed monster, sometimes moving to within a couple of feet of your face—for a close-up. And, as if that weren't enough to make you feel like a third-degree victim in a police-court line-up, there was always the microphone dangling in front of your face from the end of its ten-foot steel boom!

Another thing that bothered some of the performers was the fact that in television they couldn't read from scripts. They had to memorize their lines, or else *ad lib.* Only the Master of Ceremonies could use a script. This was because he was sitting at a table and his script was lying on the far corner of the table, out of range of the television camera.

Now, with only half an hour to go before broadcast time, two WXZ girl ushers were letting in visitors who were lucky enough to have tickets. At seven-thirty the five rows of seats at the back of the studio began to fill up. At seven-thirty-two they were completely filled, and the doors were closed.

Some of the visitors didn't come to the studio at all. They had tickets which entitled them to sit in the WXZ Television Theater, which adjoined the studio. The theater, which had a television screen measuring about four feet by six, held fifty people. Watching the show on the screen was very much like watching a movie.

In addition, there were two smaller rooms for clients and their friends. Each room accommodated six people, who

could watch the show over a small "home" television set.

To anyone who had never sat in before on the production of a television show, those last minutes of rehearsal presented a scene of utmost confusion. Camera and light operators were constantly calling out to Ted for last-minute instructions or suggestions . . . or rushing over to him with their scripts for a hurried conference . . . and, all over the studio, attendants were busily adjusting lights, boom mikes, and cameras—or just hurrying about, shouting orders to anyone who would listen.

Unlike a regular radio broadcast, where the producer cued his performers from the control booth, the director of a television show remained right in the studio, where he could supervise one "set" after another, just as on a movie lot. For the show was staged on a number of different sets scattered here and there around the studio, and not on one big stage.

Now it was almost time for the broadcast. Ted signaled the control room and the "Stand by" light flashed on in the studio. A sudden hush, like the calm before a storm, came over everyone in the studio. The people in the audience craned their necks to see what was going to happen next. The operators stood by their equipment. Walter Glenn, the Master of Ceremonies, took his place at the announcer's table. And two of Ted's assistants moved over to the set where the first act in the show would be shot.

Two minutes left!

"Close the sound doors!" Ted called out. Then, "Stand by!" At 7:59:30 he raised his hand, to attract the attention of the engineer in the control booth. Then, in quick succes-

sion, "Signal is on!" . . . "Lights up!" . . . "Camera!" . . . "Action!"

The show was on!

The operators focused their klieg lights and television camera on Walter Glenn as he launched the program with a welcome to the audience, especially to the boys in the Army and Navy hospitals . . . "Presenting . . . the WXZ Television Follies! . . ."

Then, against a musical background, Walter introduced the first act—a scene from the early days of radio, when WXZ was a little dinky station in a three-story building on Sixth Avenue, right by the elevated railway.

"This will bring back memories of those old-time crystal sets and cat whiskers, boys" the M. C. said laughingly. "We'll now take you to that first WXZ studio, where you'll see and hear Dapper Dan Picton giving out with that current favorite, 'Alexander's Ragtime Band.' ". . .

As he finished his announcement, the lights and camera and boom mike moved over to a set in the opposite corner of the studio, where "Dapper Dan" Picton was swinging into his act. Dressed in a loud checked coat, a broad straw skimmer, yellow vest, and bright red bow tie, Dapper Dan started to sing, clutching a dummy microphone in his hands and swaying back and forth in rhythm with the music. To the audience in the studio it was obvious that the actor was not really uttering a sound. He was merely moving his lips. The voice and music were recorded. But the effect must have been very realistic to people who were watching it on their television screens.

Dumont Photo

"STAND BY! . . . ACTION! . . . CAMERA!" Television, having much in common with the production of talking movies, has borrowed many of its techniques from Hollywood.

Suddenly the sound-effects man started to blow a Klaxon horn, and jangle an old-fashioned streetcar bell . . . and from a turntable in the engineer's booth came the recorded sound of an elevated train roaring by. These sounds were supposed to represent the conditions which used to plague the broadcasters in WXZ back in those days. Poor Dapper Dan feverishly mopped his brow as the sound effects almost drowned out the music. But he kept on singing, with an agonized expression on his face. It was a good act.

Then, at a cue from Ted, the lights and camera and mike picked up the Master of Ceremonies again, who introduced the next act.

"Now we'll show you how a famous New York cover girl gets her picture taken for a magazine cover," Walter explained to the television audience.

The equipment was now focusing on a beautiful model, Marilee Turner, who was sitting in a red plush chair against the white studio wall. First a make-up man deftly went to work on Marilee's face . . . a touch of rouge . . . then powder . . . mascara . . . and just a trace of eyebrow pencil. Then a stylist, with a few swift motions of her hands, swept the model's hair up in a becoming roll in front, adjusted the drape of her gown, and put on matching earrings and necklace. Now Marilee was ready to have her picture taken. A well-known commercial photographer and his assistant came onto the set, with a color camera. After fussing with lights and shading and pose, the way photographers always do, they actually took her picture.

Then—and this was Ted's idea—the television camera was

pointed at a cardboard easel which had been set up near Walter Glenn's table.

"Now that you've seen this beautiful cover girl on your television screen," the M. C. announced, "we thought you'd like to have your own pin-up picture of glamorous Marilee Turner. And here it is." . . .

As he spoke, an attendant placed an eight-by-ten-inch photograph of Miss Turner on the easel, and the television camera transmitted it over the air.

"If you'd like to have one of these beautiful photographs," the M. C. continued, "just send me a postcard, in care of the 'WXZ Television Follies,' RCA Building, New York City, and I'll put it in the mail for you."

As he finished, Ted cued the engineer for a musical transcription . . . then, fading it under, he signaled the announcer for the mid-program commercial. The flood lights and camera focused on Walter again. He and Ted and the client had agreed that it would be in keeping with the tone of the program to kid the commercial a bit.

So Walter laughed into the mike and started . . . "Let's see . . . what comes now. Oh, yes . . . the commercial. By the way, I see our sponsor sitting here in the studio audience this evening, so I'd better make it good. Here goes . . . *(then, in a mock serious voice)* . . . 'Kent-Dawson is now featuring a complete line of men's tweed sports jackets.' *(He looked up, as though questioning the unseen sponsor.)* No? He didn't like that one. Well, how's this? . . . 'Kent-Dawson is now showing a complete line of men's overcoats.' *(He gave another inquiring glance off stage.)* Not that, either,

Mr. Kent? Well . . . *(with a chuckle)* . . . how's this? . . . 'Kent-Dawson is now featuring a complete line of men's lightweight raincoats.' Ah! I have the client's O.K. on that one, folks. And no wonder! This is the third straight day of rain here in New York. Raincoats you need . . . and raincoats we have! Now, let's get on with the show. . . ."

The next act was a Tahitian dance done by a girl in a native costume, complete with beads and grass skirt. Then came a juggler . . . and a man with a talking crow.

The crow was stubborn and, at first, refused to talk. Ted glanced nervously at his stop watch.

"Come on, crow . . . talk!" he muttered under his breath, wishing that he could wring the bird's neck. "We're running over!"

Finally the crow emitted a few hoarse "Caws" and Ted cued Walter for the sign-off. As the hand on his watch hit 8:29:30 Ted swept his arm downward, ending the show. The engineer faded out the theme music and the "WXZ Telesion Follies" were over. And Ted's worries were over, too . . . until the following week.

Chic Springs the Big News

THE television department of WXZ grew by leaps and bounds. Chic Newell had added four more assistants during the past six months. Now there were twelve sponsored shows a week, instead of just one. And several of the more promising sustaining shows were on the verge of being snapped up. Television had come of age.

Ted had never worked so hard in his life, nor enjoyed his work more. He was certain now that television, more than any other job he had done in radio, was the field in which he wanted to utilize his talents. He was grateful, too, for the thorough training Chic Newell had given him. They had been a grand team—mostly, Ted believed, because Chic was such a swell guy to work with. He had continually thrown more and more responsibility upon Ted—not only in production but in staff meetings and conferences with the clients.

Even if Chic had not frequently gone out of his way to let Ted know how pleased he was with the way things had turned out, Ted had the feeling that comes when you know you've tackled a hard job and done it well.

But, even so, he was not prepared for what happened one morning when Chic called him into his office. . . .

"Close the door, Ted, and sit down," Chic said.

Then, with a mysterious air, he picked up his telephone and called his secretary, who sat just outside his office.

"Miss Connery? Tell that man he can get busy now." He turned to Ted. "That's about a little job I wanted done. I almost forgot about it."

For the next twenty minutes Chic rambled on about nothing in particular. Ted began to wonder what was back of it all. They talked about the days when Ted had been a WXZ announcer, and then about his experiences as a producer of radio shows. Then Chic abruptly switched the topic of conversation to Hollywood . . . the people they had both met out there and worked with . . . famous radio and movie stars . . . and, finally, the climate. All this time Chic kept glancing back of Ted toward the closed door of his office.

At last Ted could hold himself back no longer.

"Come clean, Chic," he said, with a grin. "You've got something on your mind, but I'll be darned if I know what it is. Let me in on it, won't you?"

Chic laughed. "You win, Ted," he confessed. "I called you in here for a very special reason. I can tell you now, and I'll make it short. I had a meeting with the brass hats yesterday and everything's all set. Here's the pitch. . . . I'm leaving WXZ next week to head up the new television station KCF out on the West coast and . . ."

He got up from his desk, walked over to the door of his office, and opened it.

There, on the outside panel, was a legend which the sign letterer had been working on as they talked. In fact, he had just put the finishing touch on the last letter.

Ted stared at it and almost had to lean on Chic's desk for support. . . .

Chic reached for Ted's hand and shook it.

"Don't take it so hard, guy!" he grinned. "You've earned the job. Congratulations—and good luck!"