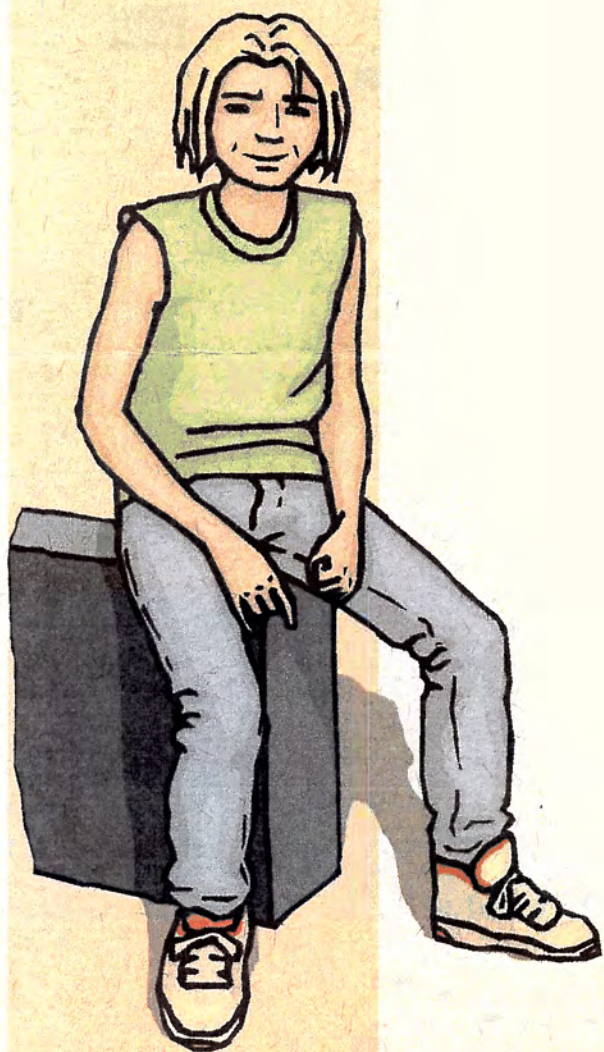




# The Boy

By: **Jim Schock**



**Jim Schock** was an amazing writer.

He wrote his story in the **Broadcast Legends** Newsletter from the Fall of 1997 until the Summer of 2019 in 79 episodes.

We have compiled into one document for your enjoyment.

**Jim Schock** is the author of 64 mystery novels, and a few dozen radio detective shows. He formerly worked in the news departments of KGO and KRON.





## Music From The Rim Of The Universe

By Jim Schock

"Music hath charms to sooth the savage breast,  
To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak."

Whether in soft summer evenings or long winter nights, the Boy would go dancing at least twice a week, sometimes more. He would hold a beautiful girl in his arms and swirl her around as she laughed and held her head that special way. Invariably, he was made giddy by the smell of her hair and astonished by her closeness and vitality. The tempo of the music would change abruptly and they would meld together, swaying slowly in each other's arms. The band leader would smile and sometimes wink at the young couple. It was the most magic of times and the Boy could forget all the cares of the world as he executed intricate dance steps with a series of radiant beauties, each of whom closely resembled Ginger Rogers.

Of course all this dancing took place only in his mind as he lay abed, hands under his head, watching himself and the girl dance on the ceiling of a prairie farmhouse. The music was the only real part, coming, as it did, from a small radio, his sole link to an outside world where people gathered in ballrooms and danced and laughed while live bands played and silver-throated announcers found amusing ways to announce each selection, relying heavily on "musical journeys" and "spirited renditions."

In summer the "musical selections" were light and swingy, and the music would float... no, the music would waft across bodies of water whose sole purpose on earth was to reflect the moon. The Boy and the girl would sit-out the novelty numbers, but once, with the encouragement of Freddy Martin, they jitterbugged up a storm to *Mairzy Doats*. The applause rang in his ears until he fell asleep, untroubled, danced-out.

In winter, as the prairie slept beneath the snow, the bands went indoors, often high-up in skyscrapers that glistened in the star-strung, crystal night. The rooms were in hotels that graced the wide avenues of Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, New York and San Francisco, cities that defined the very rim of the known universe. The music featured sophisticated beguines, arm-flapping sambas, and an occasional (gasp) tango.

Thus the years passed. Years of hardship and loss, years of bleak expectations, years all across the American landscape that fabricated a desperate, bitter clutching at life. Through it all, the Boy survived because he went dancing at least twice a week, sometimes more. His imaginary dancing accompanied and empowered him and sustained him through cheerless times. A lifetime later, it was remembered of the Boy, he never lost his smile.

And, my, could he dance.

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**Jim Schock** can still cut a rug, but practiced other skills in the newsrooms of KGO and KRON. In case you thought you could ID the quote above, no, **Legends**, Shakespeare did **not** write that. It's from *The Mourning Bride*, penned in 1697 by 27-year-old William Congreve, who never listened to a radio, poor man.



# The Romance of Radio

By Jim Schock

Radio was invented for romance, you can bet the farm on that one, the boy told his freckled, farm boy pals.

The first time the Boy put his arm around a girl's shoulder a love song was playing on the radio and it sure helped things a lot, he admitted. Without Russ Columbo's "dulcet tones" he would never have worked up the courage for such a daring act. That it did not lead to even a dry-lipped kiss was not Mr. Columbo's fault, but his own.

When he finally got around to kissing the girl for the first time, he knew for all the world it would not have been possible without the help of Mr. Bing Crosby and the Decca Recording Company, and, of course, WASK in Lafayette, Indiana, a two hundred fifty watter, whose signal reached the shady streets and porch swings of small towns along the Wabash River.

Earlier, at about age six, the first time the Boy heard the National Anthem on the radio, he jumped to his feet and placed his hand over his heart and looked straight ahead until the last note died. Working over her ironing board, mom smiled, but didn't know why. Nevertheless, it was a life-altering experience. So much magic from the wooden box with the emerald-eye glowing at its center.

But the precious stuff, the diamond at the heart of the miracle, was content, the marvelous worlds that sprang forth from far-away places. The husky voice of *Stella Dallas*, who lived in Aunt Minnie Grady's Boston rooming house. The smile in every syllable spoken by Jim Ameche. The tough guys who hung out beneath dim street lights, waiting for trouble in swirling fog of coastal cities. The comedians who made his tired parents laugh — laughter then being a less common commodity. The dreamy, romantic band remotes, baseball games where he could hear the crack of the bat, and the roar of a crowd more than two-hundred miles away.

But it was the living history from the throats of H.V. Kaltenborn, Lowell Thomas, Robert Trout, dozens of others, that captured him most. They seemed to exist right at the swirling confluence of Life and History, reporting vividly in the dizzying presence of the brooding times, illuminated by the lightning flash of events happening in the far-flung capitals of the world. If this was not magic, it would do just fine.

On a dark winter evening that held the promise of an early thaw and a glorious new spring, the Boy decided that once he finished this business of kissing a girl, he would find out more about these men, what exactly it was they did, and how they did it.

That summer, on a moon-and-bug-filled June evening, aided immeasurably by Blue Baron and his Orchestra broadcasting from Chicago, on board a squeaking porch swing, he managed to brush his lips against those of a sweet-smelling girl named Phyllis. It wasn't totally successful, but there, it was done and he was much relieved.

Now he could get on with the real stuff of life to cling to, Radio, which was to prove quite an adventure and, in its way, even more romantic.

- 0 -

**Jim Schock** has lost track of Phyllis, but managed a 35-year career in radio and television. He is now a novelist and screenwriter who has written *THE BRIDGE: A Celebration*, a history of the Golden Gate Bridge.



## *When Henry Aldrich Helped Defeat The Commies*

By **Jim Schock**

On a snow-shrouded winter night, a full moon rose beyond the mountains. The black vein of the river caught its reflection. The boy shivered in the penetrating cold as his sergeants reported heavy losses. The boy could not remember the last time he was warm, and tried to suppress the that soon even his bones would be cold.

At 4:00 a.m. he received orders to pull back to a rear area where there were showers, hot food ... and a radio. The station was Gypsy — AFRS transmitters lashed to trucks to move with the troops. Their signals penetrated the hostile Korean nights to bring comforting icons of America: Bob Hope, Allen's Alley, Fibber's closet. Radio brought Home to the lonely young men whose lives were being spent in a faraway land for reasons few could fathom.

Two days later as he gathered his men to return to the front, his ears rang with their laughter at the bumbly of Henry Aldrich. It wasn't much, but it sustained them and preserved their memories of shaded streets, sweet smelling girls, gas station jobs, and picnics by the river.

The commies didn't stand a chance.

**Jim Schock** enjoyed a 35-year career in radio and television. He is now a novelist and screenwriter.

### WHERE WERE YOU WHEN ...

An overnight guest at a famous cowboy singer's Southland home wobbled unsteadily out to the gardening shed after a lavish party...?

Finding a lawn mower, he dragged it back into the huge family room and went to work.

Awakened by the noise, the host rambled downstairs, where he found the weaving guest pushing the mower through the luxurious shag rug, a cloud of clips flying back over his head.

Stopped by the host, the guest mumbled something almost incoherently about constantly losing his balance during the party in the very deep carpet in his high-heeled cowboy boots.

### OUR NEXT GUEST IS ...

... **Alex** "Man On The Go" **Dreier**, began his illustrious career as a reporter for United Press in 1939.

**Alex** started "going" on NBC radio in 1948, where he appeared for a dozen years before going to ABC, where he kept going for another 15 years.

During his years as a radio-TV communicator, he's been an anchor, commentator, movie actor and a writer, picking up a houseful of awards along the way.

Residing now in Rancho Mirage, near Palm Springs, **Alex** still uses his rich, booming voice and distinctive style in lecturing on all aspects of communications. ■

### THEMES LIKE OLD TIMES ...

By **Jim Schock**

Two Legends, Paul Frees and William Conrad, announced, and often starred in a great radio show that began in 1947. Hear either when you read this:

*"Tired of the every day grind?  
Ever dream of a life of ...  
romantic adventure?"*

*Want to get away from it all?*

We offer you ... "ESCAPE!"

*A broadcast legend  
for 75 years !*





## The Highlight Reel

By **Jim Schock**

The Boy, no longer young, sat in the gathering dark ruminating over a death. The news, so dynamic, so clean-willed, so *precious* had been killed by its own hand. The facts of the story were never what news was about, they were just details. What news was about was Truth. When reporters and producers began creating quotes, inventing sources, manipulating facts, they served not the truth, but a lesser, more evil master — ratings. The benefits of that are not enduring.

He had been there when it gloried — beneath the dark skies of the civil rights struggle, illuminated by the harsh flares of Vietnam. He stood silent as *Taps* echoed over the graves of two dead Kennedys, and tears dampened the American landscape. There were summers of love, winters of discontent, harsh voices, faces of fear, fires of protest, a great tumult and shouting. The beat was the great canvas of America, and the national temper stood at flashpoint. The Republic shuddered and convulsed ... but it survived.

The men and women who captured this history on-the-wing, reported its first rough draft with pencils, typewriters, telephones, film, and videotape, competed with pride, a fierce competition, and all the strength they possessed in their blood and bones. However, they did not create quotes, invent sources or manipulate the facts. They were incredibly bright, hard-working, and humble, and they served the truth.

The Boy smiled at the evening stars. At least he's been luckier than most; he held the memories, however distant and faint. Sadly, they would die with him. He shuddered, not at his own mortality, but at the death of something once so significant. ■ **Jim Schock** is a novelist and screenwriter.

### WHERE WERE YOU WHEN ...

...way past midnight, an out-of-breath person attending the 1972 Radio Television News Directors Association convention in the Bahamas called the Association President to report an horrendous occurrence.

It seems that while the delegate's wife was using a rest room, a monstrous surge of water launched her off the toilet, drenched her beyond recognition, and blew off both earrings.

The RTNDA president first wanted to know if the wife was alright. "Yes!"

"Have you alerted the hotel?" "Yes!"

"Then let me ask just why are you calling me?" "Well, you're the President!" ■

### OUR NEXT GUEST IS ...

...former child actor **John Tomaschke**, who started life in East Oakland.

His early acting days were on the Red and Blue Networks in San Francisco's 111 Sutter Street Building and included Hal Burdick's "Doctor Kate" with Helen Kleebe.

The multi-talented **John** also sings, composes, dances, acts, choreographs, directs and ice skates, appearing in Berkeley Ice Shows.

Retired from show biz, he's concentrating on music and flowers ... violas and violets ... orchids too, at his Hillsborough home. ■

### Our next guest is...

... **Dave Caldwell**, who worked as a KPIX stage manager in 1959 while pursuing a broadcasting degree at S.F. State before becoming a producer/director at the station.

After several years he headed for NBC, Burbank, as an associate producer.

Coming back to KPIX in 1970 briefly, **Dave** then started a 20-year career as a free lance producer.

He retired 5 years ago, but not before picking up a northern California producing and directing EMMY for "Rock Art Treasures of America." ■

*A broadcast legend  
for 75 years !*





## REMOTE NIGHTS

By **Jim Schock**

The boy didn't travel much except to town on Saturday nights, a dusty farming community with high curbs and a two-lane bowling alley. School was four miles away, and sometimes he walked, taking a shortcut through the woods. He didn't mind.

Life was harsh, yet radio remote broadcasts softened the edges, and brought him solace and dreams. He could visualize bandleaders with slicked-back hair, waving their white batons. Handsome men with cashmere voices who sang songs that stuck to your heart. Girl singers with just-brushed smiles. Lively instrumentals that made his toe tap though he could dance not a step. June-Moon songs that seemed to satisfy the mysterious thunderstorms in his young heart. Deep-voiced announcers who never stumbled over words. Thirty-minute bundles of enchantment that came to him with the clarity of a winter night.

He recognized the arrangers, these geniuses who determined the character of a band. Duke Ellington's enormous range, Fletcher Henderson's charts for Benny Goodman. The roundly-soft saxophones of Charlie Barnet, Wilbur Schwartz leading the Glenn Miller sax section with his resounding clarinet. He could distinguish between the six-brass, four-saxophone Artie Shaw orchestra and the eight-brass, six-sax ensemble of Glenn Miller.

He listened to the tremulous music, love songs like chandeliers, lighting his lonely heart on those cold nights. And warming, too, because the Boy heard something else. It was barely there, but he taught himself to concentrate, to bring it forward through the speaker of the living-room radio. It was the sound of people, the buzz, the noise of those who were *there*. He imagined himself with them, smiling, holding a martini, that adventure on a stem. He would catch glimpses of lovers touching just-so, against a background of sparkling city towers. There were the women with slender throats and thoroughbred ankles, men of wide shoulders, shined shoes, all of them possessing the casual grace and easy charm that comes when you know the world is yours — secure that no night need ever be lonely. The music stayed in his head and clung to his heart and changed his life.

Long ago, when live bands played on radio, the Boy collected memories, golden and enduring. They never tarnished, and today they are old and very refined. ■ **Jim Schock** is a novelist and screenwriter.



### VIVA VERNE . . . !

There was a special award bestowed at the Fall luncheon upon the founder of the *Legends*, **Verne Paule**.

Legends Core Group Chair **Bill Hillman** presented the first-ever "Founders Merit Award" to **Paule**, who is stepping down from the Core Group after six years to concentrate on his many other activities.

The framed award reads — *"In recognition of his valuable contributions to the **Broadcast Legends** as the true founder of the organization, giving it its name and investing time and energy in the development of the group to its current stature."*



**BARBIE DUNCAN**  
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**Broadcasters Signing Off**

**Verne Loudon . . .**  
October, Santa Rosa

**Gene Autry . . .**  
October, Hollywood





## OUR SPORTING LIVES

By **Jim Schock**

In the beginning, there was radio, and a legion of gifted announcers who routinely offered verbal Rembrandts, capturing the drama of high-tension moments with their encyclopedic knowledge of the game, and the unforced brilliance of their play-calling. The crack of the bat, the roar of the crowd, contrasted with telling observations. "Mack is in a step at third." "The center field flags are still." "Ricky has a walking lead." The big picture, the subtle minutia, the sunshine and substance of a ball yard, the ballet of a double play, the strategy of a walk, the cosmic influence of an infield pebble . . . O, the wonder of it all.

Radio and TV sports have a marriage made in broadcast heaven. From its earliest, tinny beginnings, today's superb (sometimes too superb) coverage, bringing sports events to listeners and viewers far from the stadium has been a challenge embraced and fondled by broadcasters. To the pure delight of fans, we all watched sluggers **McGuire** and **Sosa** chase, tie, and then overtake the **Babe**. This daily drama, mounted by two of the game's most gallant statesmen, did much to restore baseball's infinite glory.

Sports is about glory and the consummation of shared wishes. Sports is about heroes and heroic deeds, about dynamic memories and remembered cheers, those public moments we hold private, sunlit snapshots that help us survive our darker days. Delivered in color and stereo, or on the car radio, sports broadcasts remind us who we are and what we stand for. They give us hope for the future, someone to root for, and offer our young people, if they choose wisely, superb role models to emulate.

So sit back, relax, enjoy the game. It's life. ■

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**Jim Schock** is a screenwriter and novelist, and former sports producer for ABC-TV.



### "THE HAT"

**Franklin Mieuli** is not known for his sartorial splendor. But he can walk silently into a crowded room and command attention like a movie star. The reason is "The Hat."

For more than 25 years **Franklin** has worn a deerstalker hat, you know, like the one made famous by Sherlock Holmes. There is no occasion low brow or high that will make him change it.

It started in 1974 when a friend gave him a deerstalker and dared him to wear it. **Franklin**, who was then owner of the Golden State Warriors, thought the hat would be fun and it also became a good luck charm. When Franklin wore the hat, the team won. In fact they won the NBA championship that year. **Franklin** and his deerstalker have been inseparable ever since and he's got one for every occasion. ■



**BARBIE DUNCAN**  
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### Save your seat . . .

Your reservation form  
for March 23rd's  
**Sports Special**  
is on page 9.  
Toss It To Us Today !



## Another Radio Flub Meister

By **Jim Schock**

The young man was practicing his baritone on the way to work. People looked at him funny, but that didn't bother him. His spirits were vaulting at the fact it was the first day on his new announcer job. This wasn't a rinky-dink 250 watt, no sir. This was KVOA, Tucson, the mighty Voice of Arizona, radiating 1000 daytime watts (500 night) from a new RCA transmitter. That raw power covered a lot of territory, but not a lot of people. As it turned out that was a good thing.

The shift was 4:00 p.m. to midnight. For the first two hours he wrote copy (five carbons), took couple of station breaks, waved to people departing work, and neatly initialed the log. By eight o'clock, he was alone. He rehearsed his 5-minute newscast three times, and then it was ten-thirty, time for *Music By Request*, a popular show he viewed as the elevator that would carry him to the top.

He opened, promising listeners rewards from his "big stack of wax," and slowly built that bridge between himself and the people *out there* in the crystal, kilocycle night. It was working. The calls were great. His elevator was going Up. As luck would have it, the station General Manager arrived mid-show, with some friends for a nickel tour. The young man smiled at them from his glass booth and turned back to business.

When you deliver copy on the air, something tricky happens. You read the words, but you're thinking about other things — the next button to push, the next record to cue. All this activity puts your listening on a slight delay, so that you're hearing what you say a couple of sentences after you say it.

Then it happened. The Young Man, was blithely reading a spot about a then popular underarm deodorant. They're called anti-perspirants now. Too bad they weren't called that back then, because right in front of the smiling GM and his guests, the Young Man heard himself describe the product as an oderarm deunderant.

His heart slipped into his left shoe. Sweat cascaded in cold rivulets down his rib cage. His career appeared to him as a shooting star. Trembling he finished the spot, gave a time signal, and announced to the whole world out there, they were listening to KOVA, Tucson, Arizona Uh-oh, he got the call letters wrong, too! The GM opened the door to the control room.

"Young man," he said, in his butterscotch voice, "Welcome aboard."

For the next year the Young Man didn't miss Sunday School, not once. ■

## OUR NEXT GUEST IS . . .

. . . a man whose voice these days comes at you from every direction !

**Joe McConnell's** distinctive larynx-product sprouts news and traffic information over a flock of radio and TV stations in Northern California every day.

Bounding out of KVON/KVON in Napa a few years back to the Metro Networks, he's now booming out of KSAN, KNEW, KSFO, KFRC, KABL, KGO AND KGO-TV, KQED, KFOG, KFOX AND KTCT . . . and who knows how many elevators ?

**Joe** also has headed up the Radio-TV News Directors Association of Northern California for the past four years. ■



## Promotions We'd Rather Forget

Remember when channel 4 decided to call their news team "News Hounds" and took promo pictures of the whole crew wearing huge paper mache dogs heads?

Rumor had it that one official even wanted to work a fire hydrant into the hype.

**Art Brown, Jerry Jensen, Frank Johnstone**, et al yelped so loud at the indignity of it all that the idea was hastily dropped. ■



## Radio Justice

By **Jim Schock**

Crooks on the radio never had a chance, the boy knew that. Whether on long summer evenings of soft twilight, or cold winter nights when he huddled by the radio, the good guys always got the bad guys. Despite the lack of surprise, the kilocycle crime fighters fought for justice from a stunning array of venues, all of them magic to the Indiana farm boy.

Criminals in the frozen North would be nabbed by Sgt. Preston of the Yukon, and his dog King, amidst barking and bullets. The Falcon operated out of a swank New York apartment and called all the ladies "Angel." Mr. Keene, Tracer of Lost Persons, reminded him of the Rexall druggist in town. He knew Nero Wolfe must be fat because the announcer ID'd him as a "detective genius who rates the knife and fork the greatest tools ever invented by man." Phillip Marlowe, Chandler's genre-establishing P.I., starred Van Heflin (later Gerald Mohr) as a hard-boiled guy with an iron-core code of ethics.

Boston Blackie, "friend to those who have no friends", made saps of the cops each week. The newspaper ad, "Adventure wanted: will go anywhere, do anything — Box 13", belonged to Alan Ladd as Dan Holiday, a mystery-novel writer. The boy thought he'd like to try that sometime. Bulldog Drummond was always stepping "out of the fog, out of the night" thrilling him, as did Casey, Crime Photographer and Charlie Chan, Crime Doctor. He knew them all, their sidekicks, the "M.O." and their theme songs. He knew the "Fat Man" was Brad Runyon and tipped the scale at 239 pounds. And the most interesting female voice he ever heard belonged to San Francisco detective Candy Mason, ".... telephone Yukon-2-8209."

The first joke the boy heard came from crime radio. It was elegantly simple: "Calling all cars, calling all cars. Be on the lookout for a lady ... green hat, green shoes. That is all."

They don't write 'em like that anymore. ■

**Jim Schock** has written 65 mystery novels. He formerly worked at KGO and KRON, and is now a screenwriter.

### WHERE WERE YOU WHEN...

... the major Los Angeles radio station engineer who had absolutely no interest in sports, was playing 16-inch transcriptions of a delayed vital football game back in the '40s?

He just slapped one huge disc after another on the turntables, paying no attention to order.

Unfortunately the on-the-air, play-by-play account of the high scoring game went from the opening quarter to the third quarter and then back to the second quarter.

Very soon, the station switchboard was nearly melted down by calls from a large number of very confused fans, a few of whom were not even sipping suds.

This possibly is where the yell "Block That Tech!" came from. ■

### KNOW A LEGEND WHO DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT

### "LEGENDS"?

Requirement: A connection with  
with broadcasting for at least  
20 years (even sentencing counts).

#### Contact:

**Darryl Compton**

(650) 341-7420

FAX (650) 372-0279

e-mail: [blegends@aol.com](mailto:blegends@aol.com)

For a Membership Application

Website: <http://people.bayinsider.com/blegends>



## *The Night Traveler*

By **Jim Schock**

It was no longer Jack Armstrong's adventures in far-off kingdoms that attracted the Boy. Now it was music that seduced his ears — music from intergalactic "Sky Rooms" located in kingdoms out there on the edge of the universe called New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Or a musically-mysterious place called the Steel Pier.

As he hunched close to the radio and looked out the window of his prairie farmhouse at the night sky carbonated with stars, he was transported ringside, amid the laughter of beautiful people, beside confident, polished men and shining ladies blessed with big eyes and pretty faces. Here amongst them, he tapped his foot and hummed or kept time with his chin. It was never cold in these places, no one was ever tired, and there was no sadness. There was magic in the people and eternity in the music.

In the nights of his youth his transcontinental imagination sped him from the glittering winter towers of Manhattan, to the lush Pump Room in Chicago, to the patio bandstands of California's warm, perfumed nights.

He wondered if there were others who, huddled close to their radios, joined the charmed audiences, invisible as laughter, became engulfed in the jewel-box settings, the heady sentimentality of the glorious tunes, beguiled by the charm of the band leaders, the sweetness of girl singers, and a consuming enjoyment that eclipsed the darkening, troubled world.

He traveled effortlessly on these nights, borne on the baritone express of golden-throated announcers, swift wherever the music of the bands took him, because the music was the lure, the destination, and the reward. Always the reward. ■

***Jim Schock** is a screenwriter-novelist who once danced to the tunes of those famous bandleaders, David M. Sacks and Aldo Constant.*

### HELP WANTED

A major radio/TV corporation, in an effort to build the confidence of performers, is looking for several specially trained, limited vocabulary parakeets.

Their simple assignment would be to repeat constantly the phrases "My, you look good!" or "My, you sound good!"

The company plans to place the well-fed, caged birds in TV station dressing rooms and just outside radio announce booths.

Contact Dr. Whippet Uhpp, Classy Communications, NY, NY. ■

### KNOW A LEGEND WHO DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT

### "LEGENDS"?

Requirement: A connection with with broadcasting for at least 20 years (even sentencing counts).

#### Contact:

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## ELECTRIC LAUGHTER

By **Jim Schock**

The Boy always marveled that God let electric laughter fly through the sky, be captured by tubes and wires in a box, and released to brighten the darkness of the Depression, and the gray daily lives of himself and his family.

One day he figured out it wasn't God at all. It was a marvelous collection of men and women who dedicated their lives to making other people happy via the radio. In doing so, they created an electric family whose members often were loved and appreciated more than real-life relatives.

He truly believed it was possible for Fibber and Molly to drop by for coffee and a serving of peach cobbler. Or that Red Skelton's Mean Widdle Kid would wander in to lead him to some mirthful mischief. In his heart of hearts he wouldn't mind mixing it up with that smart-aleck Charlie McCarthy; Jack Benny made being a tightwad hilarious; and if Bob Hope did not invent the wisecrack, he perfected it.

Eventually, the Boy realized that more than anything else, he must join that radio family, where one-liners eased pain, where laughter subdued anger, and wherein dark, cold days gave way to the illumination of America's happy hearts, warmed by words speeding through the air on electric wings.

When later he did that, he wrote purposefully, not for an audience of millions, but always for a single, lonely boy, whose very life-force could be made better by laughter. It worked. ■

*Jim Schock is a novelist and screenwriter who once wrote funny lines for Roger Grimsby.*

### *He blows somebody else's horn ... beautifully !*

Most of his friends know that the marvelous trumpet player Tom "Lips" Leps adopted his middle name after years of people mispronouncing his last name.

And most *Legends* who have heard his soaring high notes when his band plays at *Legends* luncheons know that he is a passionate admirer of the great Harry James. "The first record I ever bought was a Harry James number."

He listened to the great man's recordings by the hour. To the ambitious young trumpet man still developing his "chops" it was like hearing the heavenly horn of Gabriel.

So it seemed natural when he became an eager collector of trumpets once owned by Harry James.

And almost nobody knows how he got them.

Well, it seems that James was an irascible cat who could fly into a rage when someone tried to acquire his old instruments. So the resourceful "Lips" got himself introduced to the manager of the James band and found out that the meticulous Harry often found fault with a new instrument after a few months and sent it back to the factory.

"Lips" contacted King Instruments and over the years has become the owner of four treasured trumpets once played by his idol.

It's no wonder he lights up when admirers say he sounds like Harry James. He worked to get there. ■





## ***"To Listen, Watch and Wonder"***

By **Jim Schock**

Early newspaper columnists turned on radio and television sets, and tuned to listen, watch and wonder what was to become of a new miracle of mass communication, where a president could speak to an entire country at one time, and every American could hear opera live from New York City.

For a while, along with their readers, they reveled in the newness and accomplishment of an invention that brought the world into living rooms of rich and poor alike. Once they got over the miracle of it, they turned their attention to Content... that stuff between the commercials.

It was here they provided their greatest service, and survived their greatest test. Their greatest service was discovering and encouraging quality programming. They sat there, wherever it was, listening and watching dozens of programs each week in order to tell us where the gold was buried. Whether it was the funniest comedian, the teariest soap, the sappiest drama, the snappiest news, they roamed the airwaves in relentless pursuit of Content they felt worthy of our attention.

As broadcasting flourished, so did the business of writing about it. In time, a transition occurred. The columnists became critics. They criticized inferior and flawed programs. They criticized mediocre performances and careless production. They stood their watch, though every year there was less and less gold to be discovered. They were our Quality Control.

In addition to providing this gift, they passed the toughest test of all. They survived sponsor and corporate interference. They spoke and wrote with license and latitude, and their words rang out as clear, independent, self-reliant voices.

They were smart and gifted, and because they cared, they were able to cleave out of the slippery mists of rank commercialism, the conscience of the medium.

Where, oh where, would we be without them? ■

***Jim Schock** is a novelist-screenwriter who has written fan letters to Terrence O'Flaherty, **Dwight Newton** and **Bob Foster**.*

### **HELP WANTED**

Major broadcast corporation wants an instructor to train personnel to ignore mind-dulling, super-popular phrases showing up constantly in newscasts and interviews.

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The successful candidate would be able to utilize a simple "soon," "directly," "shortly," or even "anon."

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## THE PEOPLE ON THE RADIO

By **Jim Schock**

September 1939. An early frost had come to the prairie, then vanished, replaced by an ethereal, Technicolor Indian Summer. The Boy gloried in the unseasonable heat, bright vistas of color, the promise of the harvest, and starry nights of static-free radio reception. But most of all, he thrilled to the company of a trio of new friends.

As long as he could remember, unseen trains crossing the prairie had spoken to him of rare and exciting places beyond his tiny dot on the American landscape. Now each night, he would wait eagerly for the train cry on the radio, followed by a mighty organ playing Valse Triste, a somber, chilling theme, suggesting the death that was sure to follow, and then a clock chiming to restore the moment in which he would rediscover his three heroes.

Jack Packard, a square-jaw of silent strength and unfailing courage, named, he imagined, after a car rich people drove. Doc Long, red of hair, Texas-born, a good man who picked locks to help solve crimes. Reggie York, a Brit with impeccable manners, and handy with his dukes, too. These were not imaginary people on the radio they were real to the Boy, as real as the A-1 Detective Agency, the outfit where they worked.

Even in a soft autumn evening, chores done, sprawled on the floor in front of the radio, the Boy who considered himself as brave as his kilocycle companions cringed as he listened to

“The Thing That Cries in the Night,” and “Bury Your Dead, Arizona,” and the excruciating “Temple of Vampires.”

But as he lay there, it came to the Boy that it would be good if he could grow up as alert and brave as Jack, as smart and skilled as Doc, and as polite-but-tough as Reggie. It was a grand thought and he vowed that in later years, after some epic, heroic deed, when they asked him how he did it, he would tell them the truth, that he learned it from his friends on the radio.

**Jim Schock** is a novelist and screenwriter whose latest screenplay, “Pay Per View” is under consideration at Fox.

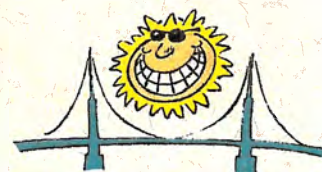


Mystery cont. from page 1.

Michael Raffetto and Barton Yarborough (who played Paul and Cliff on *One Man's Family*) played the original Jack and Doc.

Walter Paterson, also from *One Man's Family* (Claudia's husband, Nicky) was Reggie.

After being off the air, *I Love A Mystery* returned as a 30-minute show, then reverted to its old format (15-minutes/5-days a week) and finally dropped from the airwaves.



### SILVER CIRCLE

Save the date, **Saturday, October 21<sup>st</sup>**, the **Broadcast Legends** will be invited to again join the TV Academy's SILVER CIRCLE for the 13<sup>th</sup> Induction Luncheon at Gabbiano's Restaurant at the Ferry Plaza in San Francisco. Formal invitations will be mailed in September. We had a great time last year celebrating 50 years of Television at the Mark Hopkins Hotel. Candidates for the Silver Circle must have made a significant contribution to Northern California Television during a major portion of their careers – careers that must have spanned at least 25 years in broadcasting.

*A broadcast legend  
for 75 years !*





# The Miracle Workers

By **Jim Schock**

**I**n the bitter days of the Depression, dark companions haunted the streets of prairie towns. Their names were whooping cough and scarlet fever and chicken pox. When one of these visited The Boy, he heard the tap-tapping of the Quarantine signs being posted on the doors of his home. He knew that some people, as he had done, would cross the street rather than walk close to his house.

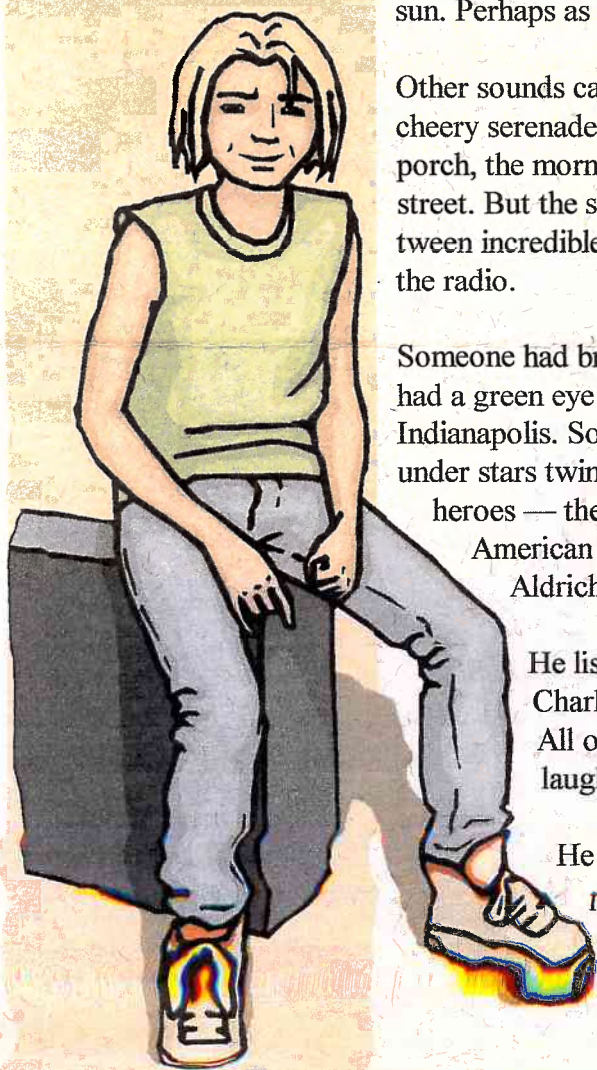
There would be no phone calls. Telephones were not an instrument associated with children. The shades of his windows were drawn as if to contain the sickness within the walls of his small bedroom. The sound of cars rattling past in the night would awaken him, and he would dream of riding somewhere in the bright, clean sun. Perhaps as far as Chicago, the hub of the very universe that enveloped him.

Other sounds came to him — the banging of screen doors, the bark of a dog, the cheery serenade of the milkman's bottles, the thump of the newspaper on the front porch, the morning-evening surge and retreat of people and commerce on his street. But the sound he remembered most between fits and starts of sleep, between incredible bouts of temperature, anguish and calm pain, was the sound of the radio.

Someone had brought a floor model and placed it beside his bed. It hummed and had a green eye you could tune by, and it picked up stations from Chicago and Indianapolis. Sometimes from Cleveland and Cincinnati, too. In the crystal nights, under stars twinkling in the vast, frozen expanse of time, he listened to the great heroes — the men he wanted to be when he grew up, and to others — the antic American boys he wanted to be *before* he grew up. He wished Henry Aldrich lived on his block, and Jack Armstrong were across the street.

He listened to the funny men; Jack Benny, Will Rogers, Fred Allen, Charlie McCarthy, and some whose names he couldn't remember. All of them seemed to dedicate their lives to creating laughter — his laughter — the miracle that restored his health.

He never forgot the medicinal power of radio to change pain, misery, and despair into Truth, Light, Sun, and Laughter, and in his tiny, rapidly-beating heart, he wished it would always be so. ■



**Jim Schock** is a Screenwriter/Novelist who toiled in the television newsrooms of KGO and KRON. **Jim** is presently recuperating from cancer surgery.



**Ben Williams, Bob Lazich, Frank Knight, Del Boubel, Kelly Quinn** and guest actor **Dick Landis**.

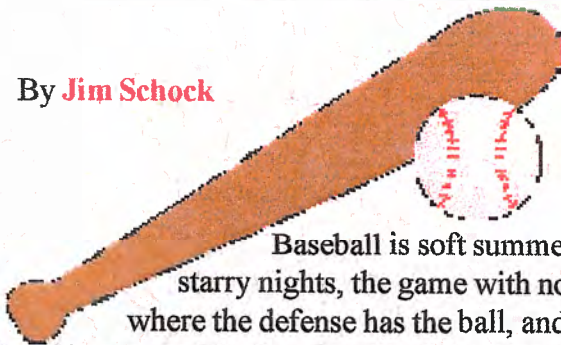
Besides directing the troupe **Knight** did three voices in the play. SPERDVAC was a generous host paying for airfare, hotel and meals for three days.

To say the engagement was a success is probably to understate the case. Suffice it to say: Three performances, three ovations. First on her feet to applaud was **Millie Morse**. The **Legends** made a lot of new friends and had a ball doing it.

(BW)

## DON'T TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME

By **Jim Schock**



Baseball is soft summer days, starry nights, the game with no clock where the defense has the ball, and it is a

million things more. The Boy wondered about baseball. He wondered how in the world you could get along without it. True, the Majors had no team west of St. Louis, and half the people in the whole U.S. couldn't hear big league radio broadcasts.

What he did know was his high school coach would throw BP for him after the rest of the team had gone to the showers. He was only in the ninth grade, but he played Varsity. Whenever he asked for advice, his coach always said, "Don't mess with your tools, son, they're just about perfect."

He had a nickname: "Hoo" because he was a vacuum around second base. That's how it goes in a baseball clubhouse.

The games were fun, and they usually won. He batted over five hundred. A farm accident ended his career at the end of his freshman year, but his love for the game continued because of radio, where golden-throated announcers brought the game to him with stunning reality. The roar of the crowd, the solid crack of the bat, pennants flying, the wind shifting, the cosmic influence of an infield pebble, the ballet of a double play, and even the silences of the game.

Cont. on page 9. See Ballgame.

## BALLGAME continued

Baseball cont. from page 6.

He could close his eyes and see the green grass and the blue-blue sky, the puffy clouds. It was all there: The heroics, the impossible hit or pitch, the excitement of a triple, the most exciting play in baseball. Baseball on the radio was the emotional glue that held America together, everyone knew that.

More than sixty years later, The Boy still revels in radio broadcasts. Baseball is eternal. The noise of the world melts at the call, "Batter up!" For the next three hours, life is going to have purpose. And the rapidly beating hearts of young boys rooting for their team will keep our distracted, complicated, clockwork world going for a long, long time.

**Jim Schock** produced some ball games for ABC-TV a while back. He's currently undergoing chemotherapy and reminds everyone "Pitchers and catchers will be reporting soon."



Our sympathy is extended to **Don & MaryLiz Lincoln** on the loss of their daughter **Pennie**, February 10th, she was 35 and engaged to be married to Steven Bird. She was the office manager at Sutro Tower.

No Host  
Bar



### The *Broadca*

presen

"Take Me Out to th  
with the San Francisco G

**JON MII**

**Tuesday, March 20, 2001, 11:30a.m.-2p.m**

**Reservations: Deli-Plate \$30 - Hot Pla**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Nu

Guest(s) Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Lunch choice(s): Deli-Plate \_\_\_\_\_ and/or B**

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# THE FUNNY PEOPLE

By **Jim Schock**



The Boy believed for a while that Charlie McCarthy was a real person. When he discovered this was not true, it broke his heart – for a full half-day. Then his discoveries began, and he grew to believe that radio was created to make people happy.

In its beginning, "Amos and Andy" was the first hit show on the radio. From them, the Boy learned The Fresh Air Taxi Company consisted of one beat-up cab with no windshield. He made a sign and put it on his bicycle because that was funny. His parents never missed "The Bob Burns Show." He was funny, and during WWII the bazooka was named after his homemade musical instrument of that name.

The funny people who made the Boy laugh included "Easy Aces" with Goodman Ace and wife, Jane. There were many ensemble shows, including "Red Skelton," "Our Miss Brooks," "The Joe Penner Show," "My Friend Irma," "Abbott and Costello," "Ozzie and Harriet," "Beulah," "Blondie," dozens more.



While these were great comedies, the stand-up guys were the no net comedians. Jack Benny spanned the middle distance, but the loners included Herb Shriner, Garry Moore (who began his show with a monologue, Jimmy Durante (ditto), and the Master, Bob Hope.

These evolved through time from Lenny Bruce, Norm Crosby, Phyllis Diller, into Leno, Letterman, et al. As the boy grew up, he learned Americans were strongest when they could laugh. When they could double over and grow breathless laughing, or smile and take a joke inside them, out of the cold, savoring it.

In the end the funny people on the radio brought light and laughter to the Great Depression, to the GI's in WWII and Korea and "Good Morning, Vietnam," to the officers and units in Southeast Asia. Their wit and charm is durable and no matter who you are, they have lightened your burden.

*continued on page 9*

# FUNNY PEOPLE

*continued from page 6.*

Boy, now an old man, smiled as he thought of **Ronnie** performing in North Beach to an audience who has light him out, cherished him because he was one of the funny people.

more things change...

*(note)*

**JS**  
**Schock** is a novelist and screenwriter who formally toiled in the news departments of KGO and KTVN. He has completed six months of cancer chemotherapy and hopes soon to resume his duties as our Legends Secretary.



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**RONNIE SC**

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Guest(s) Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Lunch choice(s): Deli-Plate \_\_\_\_\_ and/or Hot-Plate (**

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# PASSAGE TO A NEW WORLD

By **Jim Schock**

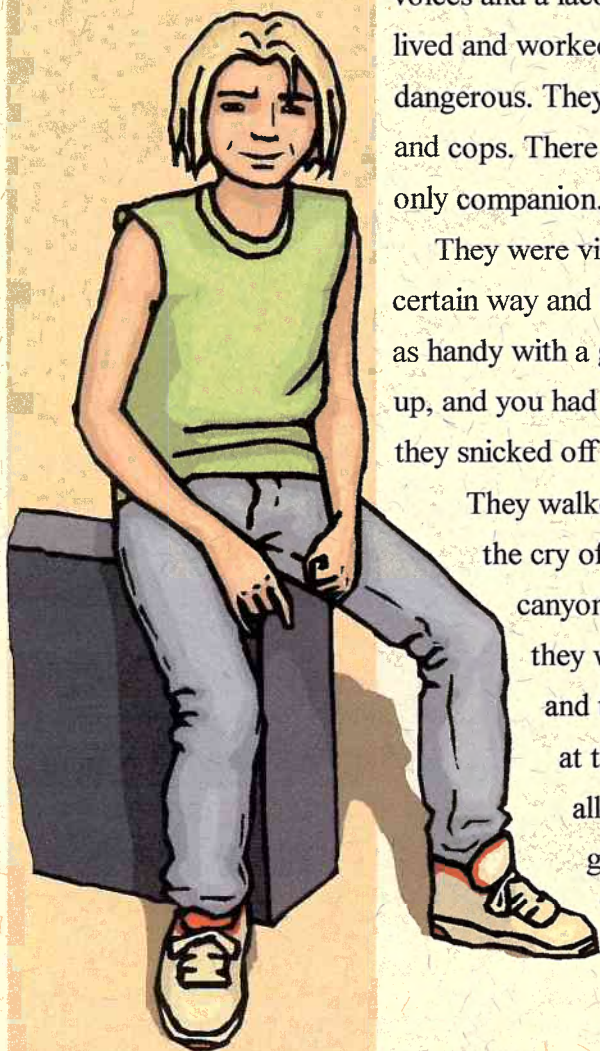
The summer his voice changed, The Boy's taste in radio underwent a glorious transformation that altered the course of his life. He did not desert his faithful kilocycle companions Jack Armstrong, Captain Midnight, the Lone Ranger, or any of the others. Not right way. But on a star-filled July evening with lightning bugs in a neon frenzy, he sat on the front steps of a prairie farmhouse and cautiously entered the world of radio detectives.

It was mysterious and exciting, and it was populated by men with big voices and a laconic way of speaking that told you they'd been around. They lived and worked in an urban landscape that was crowded, speculative, and dangerous. They knew the night people: cabbies, hotel clerks, news vendors, and cops. There were many nights, dark and mysterious, when danger was their only companion.

They were visited by softly sibilant women, usually blonde, who walked a certain way and needed their help. To exist in their hostile world, you had to be as handy with a gun as you were with a bottle of Scotch. You had to get beat up, and you had to muscle a guy now and then. Their guns didn't just fire, when they snicked off the safety, they spit lead, loud and deadly.

They walked eternally alone in the shadows of failed street lamps, while the cry of their souls wailed like a trumpet's moan, cascading off the canyon walls of never-ending skyscrapers. It pleased The Boy that they were brutally fair, genuinely honest men who visited every week and took him to dark places he never dreamed of. His heart jumped at the sound of their voices, and galloped through gunfights in back alleys. They taught him honesty and fair play and influenced him greatly. That fall he began calling girls at school "Gorgeous" and "Angel" and talking out of the side of his mouth.

Oh, the joy of it all.



**Jim Schock** is the author of 64 mystery novels, and a few dozen radio detective shows. He formerly worked in the news departments of KGO and KRON.





# PLEDGE NIGHT

By **Jim Schock**

The boy stood in the frozen winter landscape on a moonless evening and contemplated the cosmos. His young face was illuminated by the faint light of stars burning billions of miles away and dancing in front of his eyes.

As he looked into the great ocean of space, the Boy wondered if radio waves journeyed there. Somewhere, it might have been an old *Popular Science*, he'd read that radio waves left the transmitter and kept traveling on a straight line into space, on and on.

If that were true, you could sit out there on a star somewhere and listen to old radio shows. They would come gliding past and everybody Out There could hear them, plain as ever. The Martians could hear them, and the inhabitants of all the planets in the Milky Way and far, far beyond, all the way to the edge of the universe.

They could hear Andy playing Santa; "Little Town of Bethlehem" on Mr. First Nighter; Margaret O'Brien visiting the North Pole on The Jimmy Durante Show; "Christmas For Sandy" on The Lone Ranger; and even "Back For Christmas" on Escape! All the old shows from all the old times that made you feel good from the inside out.

He wanted to shout to the stars, to tell the people Out There that someday he would write Christmas stories for them, and he would make them laugh and feel joyous and without pain or misery. He would find ways to put something of himself into every program, just a little bit, and it would glide along on the invisible wings of radio for ever and ever.

The boy watched as the stars winked and seemed to understand. Their light touched his skin and he felt it was their way of talking to him, in a star language that bound his heart and spirit with theirs.

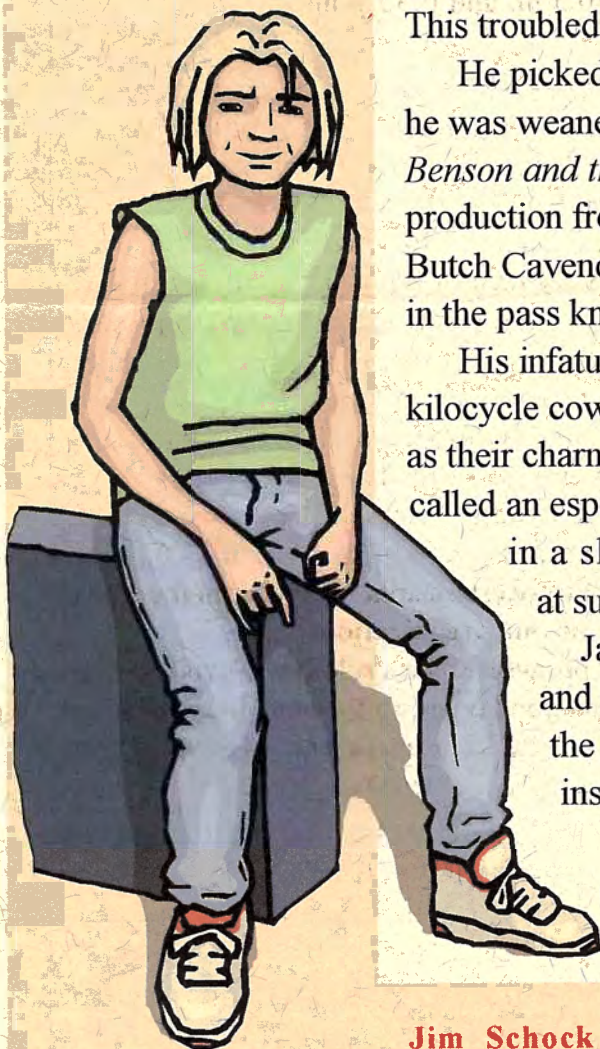
Writing radio shows – he knew in his blood and bones he could do that. He could find uplifting, honest things to say, and hone the truth of words others would speak. The result would bring understanding, and a grand sense of friendship. No one who heard the words would ever be lonely again.

Someone called him to supper. He spun around and ran down the snowy hill, tumbling and laughing, as he realized he had been making promises to the stars, and meaning them. Breathless, he winked back. ■

**Jim Schock** is a novelist and screenwriter who spent 35 years in radio and television. He is also the Secretary of **Broadcast Legends'** Core Group.







## **HEY, COWBOY! NEVER SQUAT ON YOUR SPURS AND ALWAYS DRINK UPSTREAM FROM THE HERD**

By **Jim Schock**

The Boy started calling his classmates “Pardner,” and “Buckaroo,” and referring to the girls as “Miss Judy,” and “Miss Gladys.” He addressed his teacher as “Mrs. Warnecke-Ma’m,” and he was “powerfully proud” to stand and recite, or he would say, “I humbly rise in response to your inquisition, Ma’m.”

What he was doing was driving everyone crazy in his one-room Indiana schoolhouse, and turning every school day into a giggle-fest. This troubled the Boy not in the least.

He picked up his Western Words as he listened to the radio, where he was weaned (as he would say) on *Death Valley Days*, *Bobby Benson and the B-bar-B Riders*, *The Cisco Kid*, and the powerhouse production from WXYZ in Detroit, *The Lone Ranger*, where badman Butch Cavendish and his gang ambushed Ranger Captain John Reid in the pass known as Bryant’s Gap.

His infatuation with the American West, as provided by those kilocycle cowboys, lasted for almost three years. What he perceived as their charm dissipated promptly on a warm March day when he called an especially perky young woman, “Miz Janet,” and announced in a slow drawl that she was “as purty as a speckled pup at sunrise.”

Janet Morrison took severe umbrage with the comparison and spurned the Boy by pointing her tiny, freckled nose into the air and walking past him as if he did not exist. This act instantly rendered his young, farm-boy heart into beef jerky.

The very next day the Boy began tuning in private detective shows on the radio. Those guys knew how to talk to a girl. ■

**Jim Schock** is a screenwriter/novelist who spent many years in the newsrooms of KGO and KRON. His newest script is “Pay Per View.” **Jim** is also secretary of the **Broadcast Legends’** Core Group.

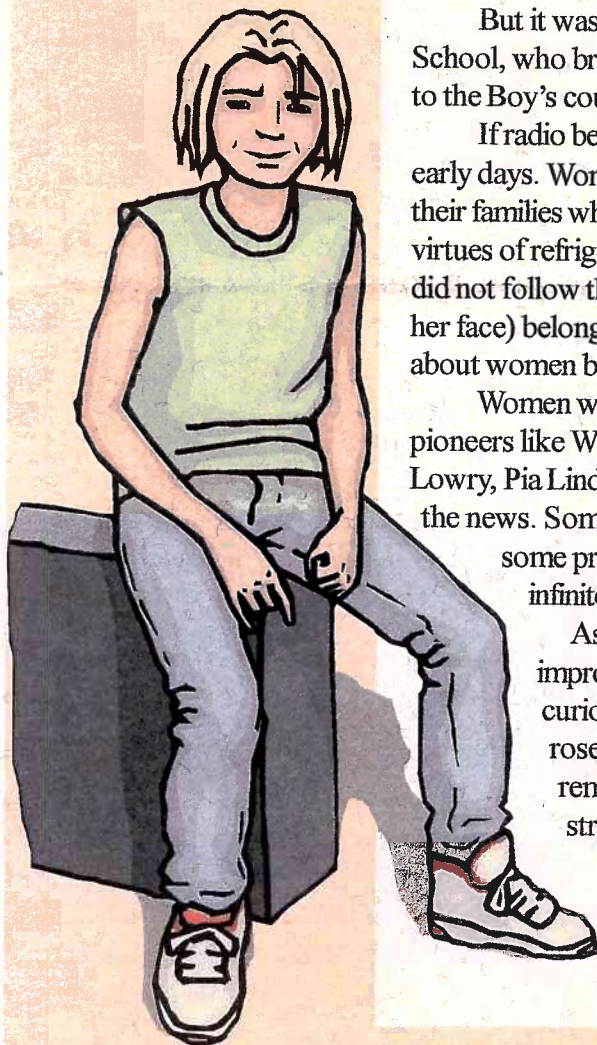




Chicago  
New York

ON AIR

Los Angeles  
San Francisco



# THE WOMEN FOR ALL SEASONS

By **Jim Schock**

The Boy fell in love with the smoky voice of Stella Dallas and all over again with Wendy Warren, Young Widder Brown, Helen Trent, Our Gal Sunday, Candy Matson, Mother Barbour, My Friend Irma, and others. From the beginning, women seemed more real on radio than their golden-throated, silver-tonsiled male counterparts.

Writers were kind to women, idealizing them, giving them the emotional burdens to carry while their men were catching bad guys or plodding off to lunch-bucket jobs. The lives of private eyes were enhanced by the presence of molls, babes, dames, angels, widows and secretaries. Without exception, all were exceptional in some physical way they were able to portray in the single dimension of radio, with voices like honey on warm toast that said forget about tomorrow.

**Wow!**

But it was Eve Arden, the former Eunice Quadens of Mill Valley's Tamalpais High School, who broke the mold. She was sassy, bright, sardonic and scriptfully attracted to the Boy's cousin, Ira Grossel, who played Biology teacher, Mr. Boynton.

If radio began to realize the qualities of women, television forgot all about it in the early days. Women were relegated to wives and moms, preparing balanced meals for their families while cautioning them against tartar buildup. Miss Americas extolled the virtues of refrigerators. While women began to impact society, their roles on the tube did not follow the trend. The legs of Peter Gunn's switchboard operator (we never saw her face) belonged to Mary Tyler Moore, who later challenged programmers' ideas about women by starring in a sitcom about a single woman with a career.

Women were assuming careers in local broadcasting, too. Led by true-grit pioneers like Wanda Ramey, Jane Riley, Belva Davis, followed by Kate Kelly, Terry Lowry, Pia Lindstrom, Isabel Duron, and others. Women began gathering and writing the news. Some wrote backwards on weather maps, some sat at anchor desks, and some produced, directed and even photographed programs of searing truth and infinite wisdom.

As women's face-time increased on television, the quality of the product improved. News was transformed by their insightful reporting, their natural curiosity, and their willingness to cover any story, any place, any time. Many rose to national prominence and became stars of their networks. Others remained in their hometowns, and reported on events that occurred on the streets where they lived.

Throughout his life the Boy listened and watched and beheld the wondrous works of women in broadcasting, and marveled at their skill in helping him understand the darkness and light of his ever-changing world. ■

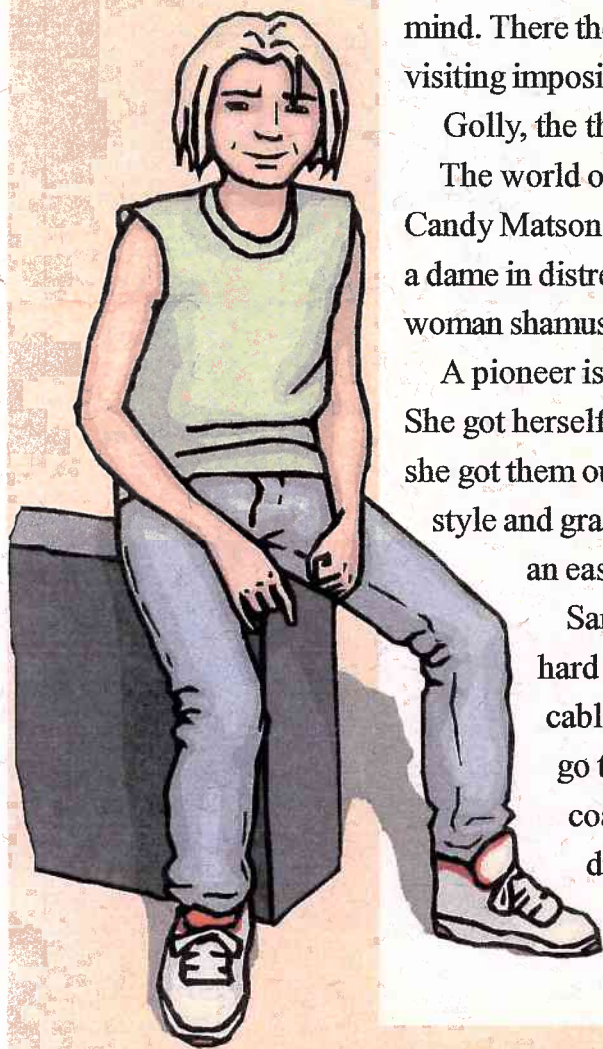
**Jim Schock** is a screenwriter-novelist who worked in the newsrooms of KGO and KRON a long time ago.





## *A Dame P.I. No, Really*

By **Jim Schock**



Private Eyes on the radio were always, well, Guys. The Boy knew that. The style and concept of each was enduringly created by the burnished baritones of actors whose skill defined the characters and imbued them with tenderness beneath a tough exterior, hearts of gold often betrayed, and a genuine but vaguely defined Code they lived by between brawls, gunfights, and frequent sappings behind the ear.

The Boy listened breathlessly as deep, manly voices and a few sound effects etched their hardboiled, dangerous adventures in the theater of his mind. There they were, beneath fog-shrouded streetlamps, in dark alleys, visiting imposing mansions, penthouses, waterfront dives, or the morgue.

Golly, the thrill of it all.

The world of radio detectives changed for him on June 29, 1949, when Candy Matson hit the airwaves. Candy wasn't a secretary, or a rich client, or a dame in distress. Candy was It, the Operative, the P.I., the Shamus. A woman shamus – what would they think of next?

A pioneer is someone who does something first. Candy sure qualified. She got herself an office, a gun and a telephone. People in trouble called her, she got them out of trouble and put bad guys in the clink. She did so with style and grace, like most private eyes, but she also had charm, poise and an easy laugh that made the Boy want to meet her someday.

San Francisco was way out there at the edge of the universe, hard by the big ocean, perched on hills so steep you had to take a cable car, whatever that was. But he promised himself he would go there and he would listen to the fog horns and snug his trench coat a little tighter when he stepped up to a phone booth, dropped a nickel in the slot and asked for "YUkon 2-8209."

What he would do if she answered? He didn't have a clue. ■

**Jim Schock** is a screenwriter-novelist who worked at KGO and KRON a long time ago. His newest screenplay is "Vampire Bob."





## THE MUSIC OF THE NIGHT

By **Jim Schock**

The Boy noticed holiday-time radio was different. For one thing there were a lot more commercials about things to buy. He paid scarce attention to them. He had never even been to the stores that advertised, or even to the cities that contained them. Expensive presents were not part of his holiday celebration. He did not mind. Who had time to play with all that stuff anyway?

The music, that was something else, and his young heart jumped at the sound of Jingle Bells coming to him from Chicago's famed Pump Room. Each time he heard LeRoy Anderson's Sleigh Bells he laughed at the trumpeting horse-whinny at the end. But it was the resonant power and stirring majesty of great choirs singing in vast cathedrals that touched him to the core.

After listening to such a broadcast on a December night in the first third of the last century, the Boy donned his jacket and boots and walked outside, past the woodshed and barn to the summit of a small hill that offered a view of the hundred or so acres from which his family scratched a living.

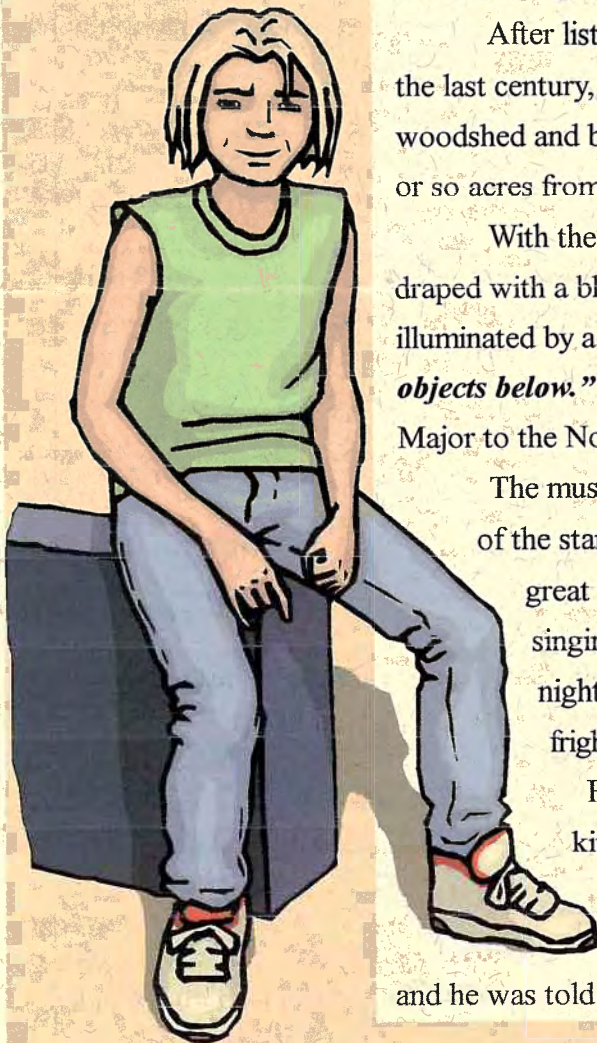
With the Messiah still ringing in his ears, he looked across the land that was draped with a blanket of snow punctured by black stalks of corn sticking through, illuminated by a full moon that, as the poem said, *"... gave the lustre of midday to objects below."* He could not see to the east so his eyes followed the edge of Ursa Major to the North Star where it twinkled like a Christmas card.

The music inside him swelled out and raced over the countryside. The glory of the star-bright night shaped his tiny universe into a giant cathedral, and the great voices rose majestically to drift among the stars. A choir was singing from him and to him and the pure notes exploded into the cold night air and vibrated his small frame. The sound grew so powerful it frightened him, but he did not move until the night grew silent once more.

He retraced his steps and when he returned to the warmth of the kitchen he was asked if he had been talking to the stars again. "No sir," he said, "I was listening to them."

A large, kind hand patted his little tow head and he was told to get ready for bed. ■

**Jim Schock** is a former broadcast news producer and executive for ABC-TV and KRON, and he's Secretary of the **Broadcast Legends** Core Group. You may reach him at: [JimSchock1@juno.com](mailto:JimSchock1@juno.com)





# THE GET YOU STARTED GUYS

By **Jim Schock**

The Boy first imagined radio hosts sitting in small rooms in cities of glass, introducing musical records in a way that spoke right to you. They were velvet-voiced gods whose musical selections wafted over the plains and lakes and rivers and dusty country roads to emerge from tiny radio speakers next to his ear.

The great Wizard of Oz provided no better magic.

On soft August nights a hayride close to a girl with sweet-smelling hair; a buttery old moon; breezes that carried a memory of the river; a portable radio was the instrument to galvanize a topsy-turvy heart and render the innocent kisses of youth. From our tower in the sky, straight from the blue, here's Blue Baron and... *Stardust*.

The connection of moon, tune, June, and swoon was broken one autumn when the Boy went to live with relatives in town. It was a house where everyone listened to the radio during breakfast for the news and weather. These announcers spun platters, and twirled turntables and... talked. They were upbeat and bright. They made bad jokes that made you laugh. They read strange stories from something called the wire services. They sang Happy Birthday to little old ladies.

They played requests for guys at the creamery and sent special greetings to the gang down at Walgreen's. They mentioned real people's real names; the girl at the candy counter in Woolworth's; and the fastest bagger at the Piggly Wiggly Market.

The Boy considered them ambassadors for a better day and marveled at how they brought sunshine to gloom; laughter to the moody; news and weather to the curious; music to the toe-tappers; greetings to the shut-ins; applause to the do-gooders; recognition to the unrecognized; advertisements to the shoppers; emotional support to the emotionally unsupported; surprise, delight, laughter, advice, and friendship to listeners far and wide, few of whom they ever met.

One of them closed his daily (M-F) program with, "Be good to your dog, nice to your friends, and great to yourself." Another thanked the Boy for the loan of his ears every morning. Aw, shucks.

Imagine... people who could make you happy just listening to them. It must be the greatest gift in the world. They were the *get you started guys*, and he loved the way they primed the day, got you out and on your way, tra-la, tra-la. Yippee-skippee!

He hoped they would go on forever,  
like sunshine. ■

**Jim Schock** is a novelist-screenwriter and former ABC-TV News Bureau Chief.

His latest novel, *Stealing Elvis*, has just been sent to his agent.

**Jim** may be reached at [JimSchock1@juno.com](mailto:JimSchock1@juno.com).





## THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE RADIO NIGHT

By **Jim Schock**



It never occurred to the Boy that the radio could scare him. Radio was jokes and weather in the morning, soap operas in the afternoon, adventure shows after school, news in early evening and variety at night.

At night, that was Real Radio.

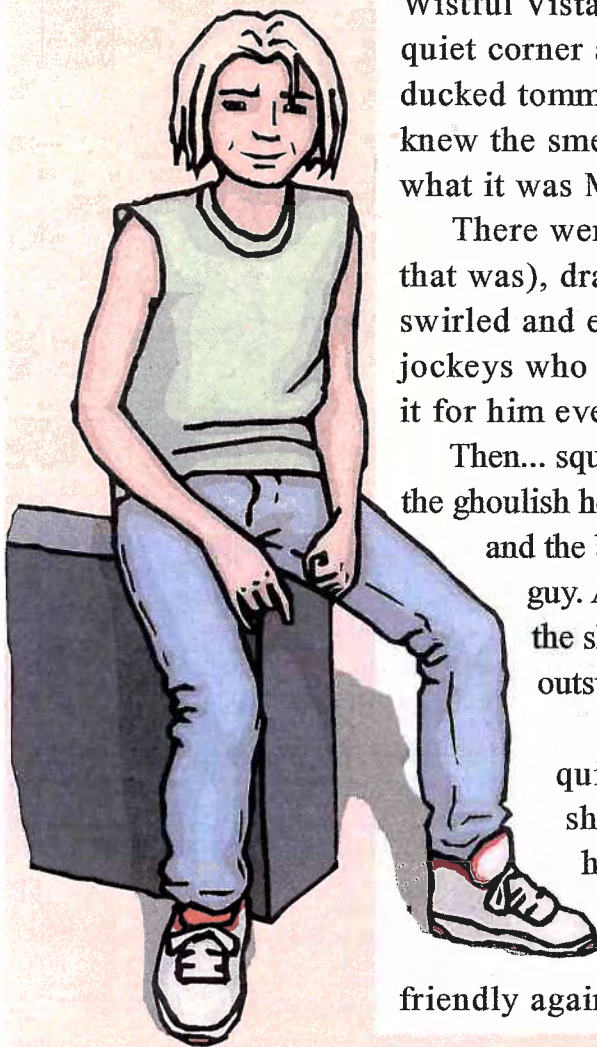
Whether in the early dark of winter or the fading light of summer, nighttime radio was an airwaves wonderland available to everyone just for tuning in. It illuminated his young mind, creating entire magic carpet worlds using only words and sounds. It took him to new places. He lived across the street from 79 Wistful Vista, went down to the vault with Mr. Benny, sat in a quiet corner at *Duffy's Tavern*, screeched around corners and ducked tommyguns on *Gangbusters*, hung out in Dodge City and knew the smell of *Gunsmoke*, though he never discerned exactly what it was Miss Kitty did for a living.

There were comedies that tickled his funny bone (wherever that was), dramas that captured his breath, dance programs that swirled and eddied around his young heart, and, finally, disk jockeys who owned all the music in the world and played some of it for him every night.

Then... squeeeek... along came the dark shows. *Inner Sanctum* with the ghoulish host, Raymond. *The Whistler* who stepped into the shadows, and the boy avoided shadows for a long time, lest he bump into that guy. And *Lights Out*... "when dogs howl, and evil is let loose on the sleeping world." Argh! Finally, there came "radio's outstanding theatre of thrills," *Suspense*.

The shows there began with everyday situations that quickly shattered into not-so-ordinary trouble. And the show that scared him the most, that made him put his head under the covers and roll into a tiny ball, that show was... "The Hitch Hiker." Eeek!

After that it was a long time before nights were friendly again. Double eeek!

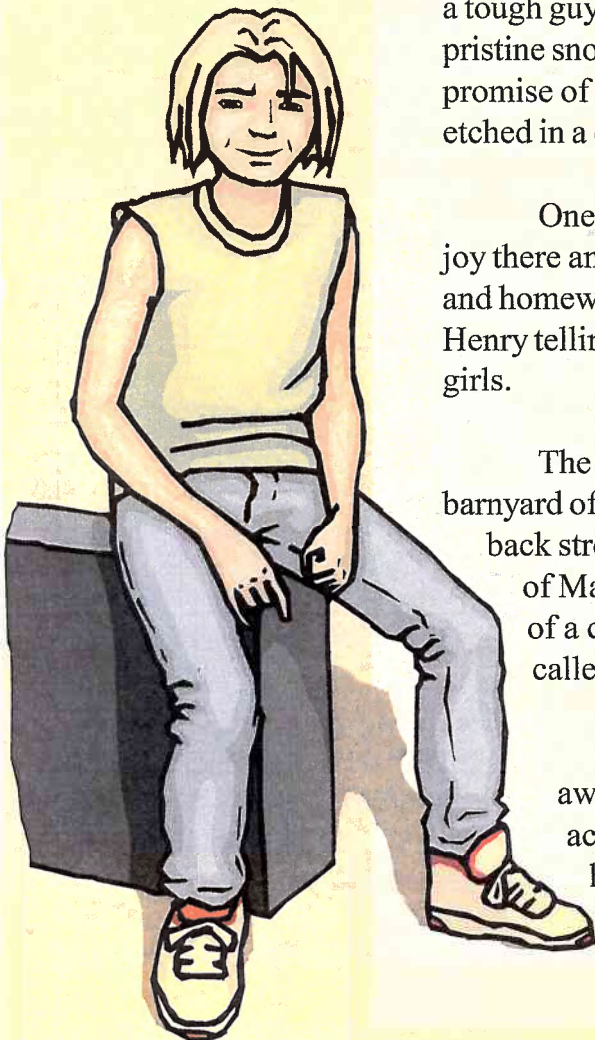


**Jim Schock** is Secretary of **Broadcast Legends**. He formerly worked in newsrooms at KGO and KRON and was Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News West Coast. He now writes novels and TV movies.



# Voyager

By **Jim Schock**



Sometimes the Boy sat beside the radio without moving a muscle, despite the roiling emotions that bubbled inside him. It was so real, so close. He could see the great train pulling into Grand Central Station and he could see all the bustling people at this end-of-track crossroads of the world.

Sitting beside Jack Armstrong in a speedboat chasing some henchmen, he could taste the musty spray as they sped over the dark waters of the lake and a cloud the size of Indiana crossed in front of the moon. He held no fear, no terror, no creepy-crawly emotions – only the adventure, the excitement, the breathless thrill of it all.

He could be invisible in a corner as Philip Marlowe questioned a tough guy. Half an hour later, he rode with Sergeant Preston through a pristine snowscape as he watched forest shadows lengthen with the promise of a starry winter night. This time the moon rose, sharply etched in a cold purple sky beyond a snowy peak.

One evening he hung out with Henry Aldrich, but there was no joy there and he knew he could tell Henry a thing or two about teachers and homework. He would be all too happy to do so in exchange for Henry telling him a thing or two about that unfathomable other sex, girls.

The Boy knew Tombstone and Dodge as well as he knew the barnyard of his own farm. Radio, the great geographer, showed him the back streets of Hong Kong, the pyramids along the Nile, the canals of Mars, the angry storms of the Sulu Seas, and the foggy streets of a city out there on the western rim of the continent – a place called San Francisco.

It was not until years later he realized these magic, far away places were created using only something called a script, actors, and a few sound effects. When the realization came, he simply shook his head and chose not to believe it.

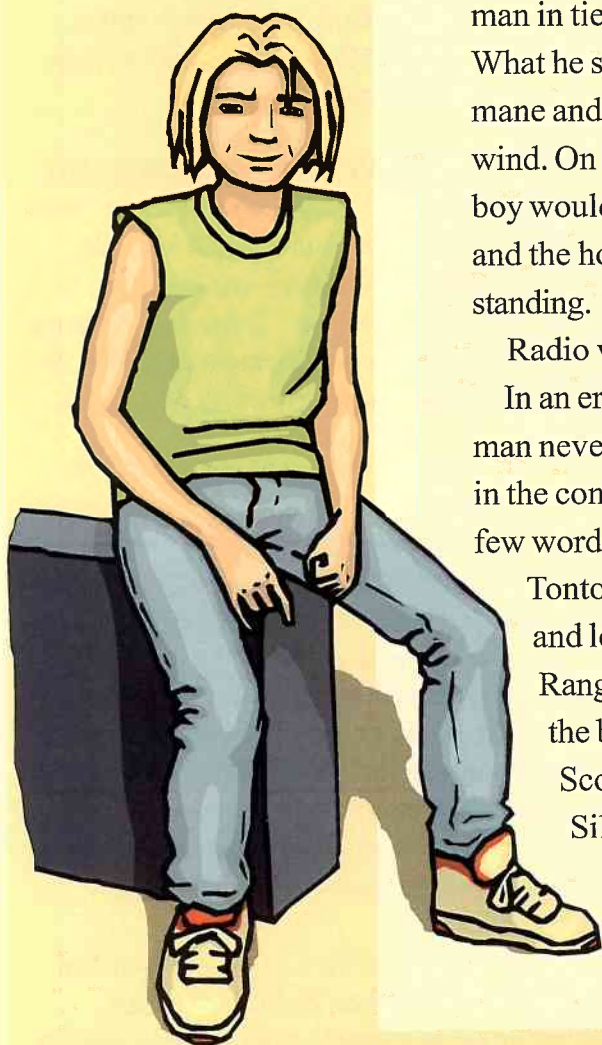
**Jim Schock** is a novelist-screenwriter with chair-time at KGO and KRON News and as Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News, West Coast. His newest screenplay, "Vampire Bob" has been optioned by Disney





# Silver Bullets, Golden Memories

By **Jim Schock**



The boy listened to a lot of heroes on the radio. All of them raked his curiosity, made his eyes widen, and his heart race with their daring exploits in the pursuit of truth and justice. But there was only one who made him hold his breath. The Lone Ranger. He was the real thing; the man. Caped and masked crusaders were a dime a dozen, and so were their gimmicks and sidekicks, but he stood head and shoulders above the rest.

Like his bullets, he was pure and shining.

The Lone Ranger didn't have *just* a horse, he rode the great horse Silver, a mighty steed who lived up to his billing because his gallop produced thundering hoofbeats. It mattered not to the boy that a man in tie and suspenders created the sound with coconut shells. What he saw when he listened was a flashing white horse, long of mane and tail, deep through the chest, who could run a hole in the wind. On his own Indiana farm, tilled and cultivated by horses, the boy would often say to one of his draft animals; "steady, big fella," and the horse seemed to pull harder, stand taller and snort in understanding.

Radio was a more powerful force than most imagined.

In an era of "redskins," "injuns," and "brutal savages," the masked man never set to adventuring in the early days of the old west save in the company of his faithful indian companion, Tonto. A man of few words, handy with his dukes and skilled in the ways of nature, Tonto was a role model for integration, conservation, friendship and loyalty. And the boy noticed a strange thing. Despite the Ranger's soaring, "Hi-ho, Silver, Awaaaaaay," Tonto always let the big guy showboat while all he said was "Get 'em up, Scout," and his pony went stride-for-stride, side-by-side with Silver superhorse.

What a team! The bad guys never stood a chance. ■

**Jim Schock** is a former television news executive who now authors books and screenplays. His newest writing adventure is a long historical novel, "Radioland," which will be completed next year.

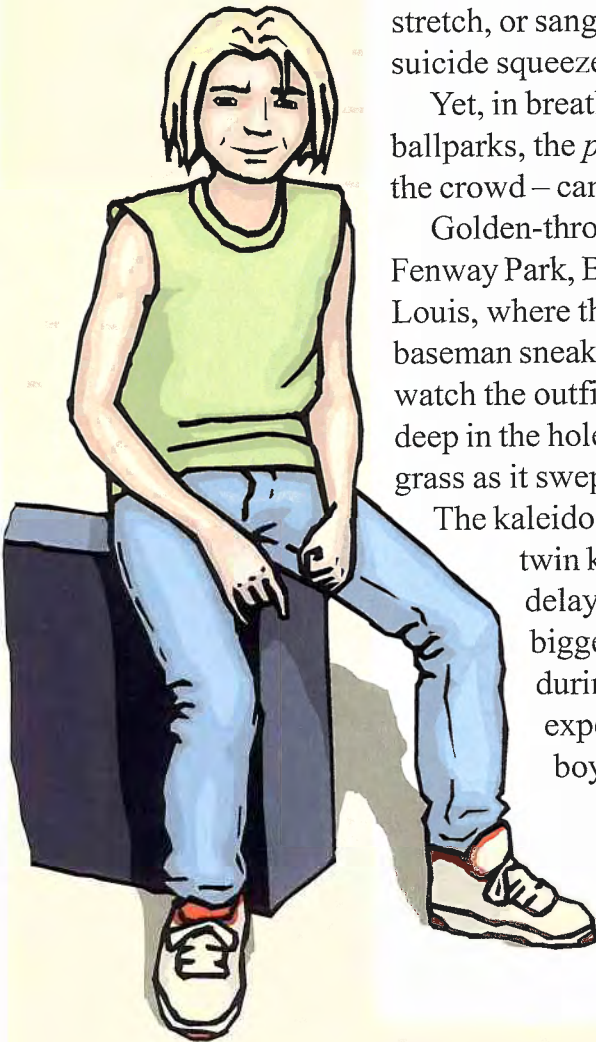






## Watching Baseball

By **Jim Schock**



In spring, after the winter thaw, the farm Boy would finish his chores, gather a sawed-off broom handle from the woodshed, find smooth stones about the size of a pullet egg and smack them into the last light of the lengthening day.

Of course, it wasn't a broom handle and they weren't stones. It was a Louisville Slugger and they were Wilson baseballs and it was autumn, the last of the ninth, two on, two out, seventh game of the World Series. Always.

By the time he was eleven, he had batted in the game-winning RBI more than seven hundred times and was batting 1.000. His hits arched gracefully into the soft Indiana twilight and cleared the orchard fence as cleanly as any major leaguer's smash sailed into the stands in centerfield.

Of course, the Boy had never been to a major league baseball game, never saw a major leaguer, nor a centerfield. He had never taken a 7<sup>th</sup> inning stretch, or sang "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," and the science of the suicide squeeze was as foreign to him as the journeywork of the stars.

Yet, in breath-holding tension, the pitches, the crack of the bat, the ballparks, the *plop* of the ball in the catcher's mitt, the surge and retreat of the crowd – came to him in vivid, all-seeing words from the radio.

Golden-throated, silver-tongued men brought games from Ebbets Field, Fenway Park, Briggs Stadium, and from his favorite team way out west, St. Louis, where the Cards ruled. He could smell the popcorn, see the second baseman sneaking in behind the runner taking a lead off the keystone sack, watch the outfielders adjusting for a lefty, see the blur of the shortstop going deep in the hole, watch the baseball, clean and white against the green-green grass as it swept across the field to catch the batter by a half-step.

The kaleidoscope included snap throws, frozen ropes, tall cans of corn, twin killings, intentional passes, pitchers who were human rain delays, Portsiders, sinkers, aspirin, chin music, Mooses, players no bigger than a pound of soap after a week's wash, circuit clouts and, during sensuous slow moments in the no-clock game, prodigious expectoration by players, coaches, managers, umpires and bat boys. God, it was magic!

The Boy saw it all, breathless,  
caught-up, watching it all right there on the radio. ■

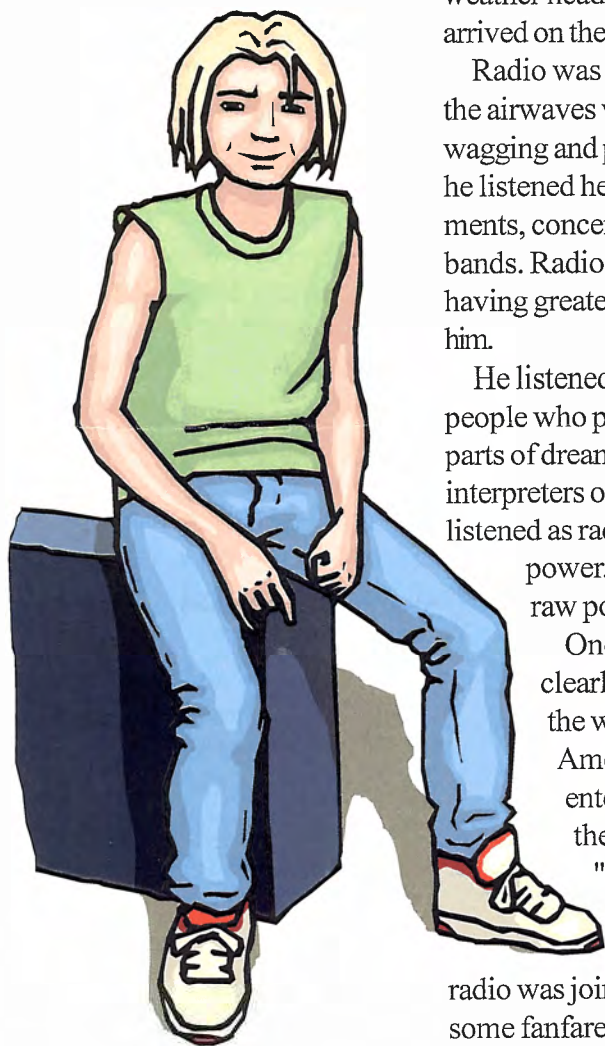
**Jim Schock** worked for NBC and ABC network news organizations, and locally at KGO and KRON, "back in the days of 'SOF at eleven.'" He is presently writing a historical novel, "Radioland." You may contact him at [jimschock1@juno.com](mailto:jimschock1@juno.com)





# OH THE GLORY OF IT ALL

By **Jim Schock**



In the beginning, the boy listened to radio in order to learn about things outside the boundaries of his Indiana farm. The nearest station was in Lafayette and it broadcast news of events from two counties and 40 miles away, practically the edge of his known universe.

Every time he listened, he learned from words spoken by articulate men and women and emanating, he imagined, from somewhere over the rainbow, but actually from a tower sitting in a cornfield, a tower that brought forth a gusher of news -- announcements of local interest, reports of accidents, of speeches by people passing through, ball games from far off cities, and weather headed down from the Great Lakes. The glory and richness of it all arrived on the invisible wings of radio.

Radio was a welcome visitor night and day, and the people who inhabited the airwaves were friends and neighbors. Radio was a big, friendly dog, wagging and panting its way into his life and the lives of those around him. As he listened he became aware that radio was growing beyond local pronouncements, concerts by high school music teachers and a few records of famous bands. Radio was becoming more serious and more organized and, he sensed, having greater impact and influence, though these words were not known to him.

He listened and in his no-nonsense, farm-boy way understood that the people who planned, organized and controlled radio were made up of equal parts of dreamers, businessmen, engineers, programmers, innovators, and keen interpreters of an ever-widening world. Few transitions are smooth, but he listened as radio turned from a novelty to a business as it grew in strength and power. Not only the power of the station's personalities, but in radio's raw power to accumulate and hold an audience.

One day during a summer walk under a blue-blue sky, he saw clearly years into the future what radio would become in the history of the world. It would become the first common, shared experience of all Americans. It joined them together with news, information, and entertainment that allowed a boy in Indiana to hear and think about the same things as boys in, say, New York or California. The word "network" had such a magical ring and suggested such vast, benign power that he giggled out loud at the prospect of such immensity.

He smiled and skipped along, happy in the knowledge that radio was joining America and Americans together and it was doing so with some fanfare, some hope, some anticipation, and some pride. For a miracle this big, that's all anyone could ask. ■

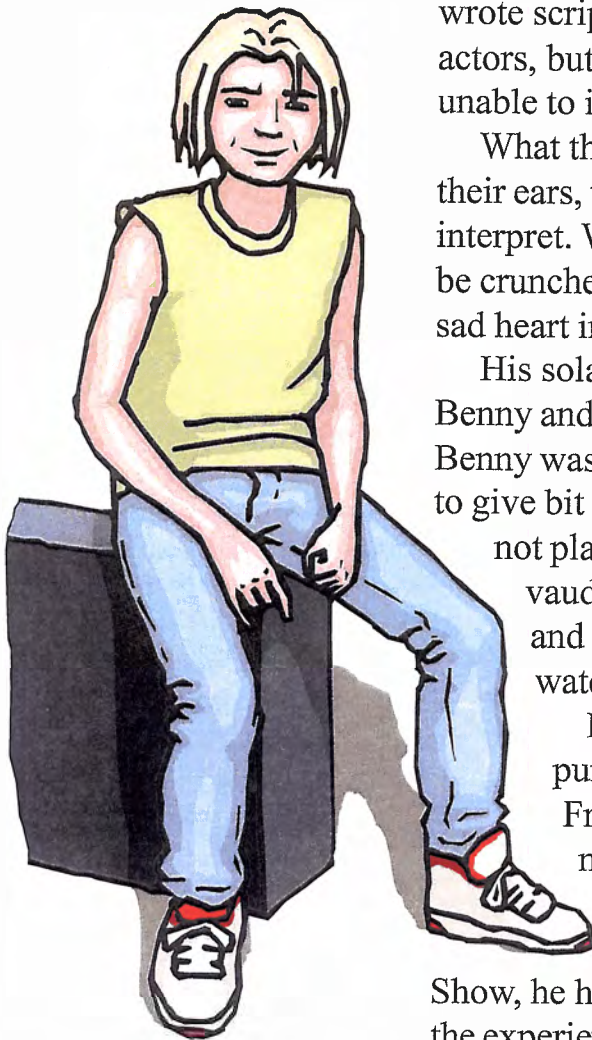
**Jim Schock**, an alumnus of KGO and KRON news departments, now writes screenplays and novels. His current "under construction" project is an historical novel, "Radioland." You may reach him at [JimSchock1@juno.com](mailto:JimSchock1@juno.com).





# LEARN AND LIVE

By **Jim Schock**



Radio, the first common, shared experience for Americans, respected the dual challenge of the medium. It would bring some news, some adventures and some laughs, and the audience would bring their emotional and intellectual filters. The result was an honest exchange... until one day that marvelous sharing stopped.

Inspired by the world radio brought to him, the Boy left the farm and ventured into the cold canyons of commerce, first in Chicago and then in New York. He expected to meet the kings of creativity, but he was greeted by Ratings and other evils. He wrote scripts meant to be heard though emotions supplied by actors, but instead his scripts were read by people who were unable to interpret news, adventures or jokes on paper.

What they did believed was that an audience brought only their ears, that listeners were mere sponges, with no ability to interpret. Worse, they were not listeners, they were numbers to be crunched. This crushing change purchased and installed a sad heart in the Boy.

His solace came on Sunday nights at seven when Jack Benny and Company came into the living rooms of America. Benny was the first star to let others make fun of him, the first to give bit players punch lines, the first to understand he was not playing to the audience in the studio the way other vaudevillians did, but to the audience of mom and pop and a kid or two sitting before the radio in their homes watching the radio.

Benny was the only comedian to make silence a punch line, and to get laughs from "Now cut that out!" From 1932 to 1965, Jack Benny proved comedy was more than jokes, it was character. He was a marvel of the medium and his legacy is sweetest of all.

Today when the Boy listens to a Jack Benny Show, he hears jokes as funny as the day they were written and the experience is a time machine of mutual exchange and infinite charm. ■

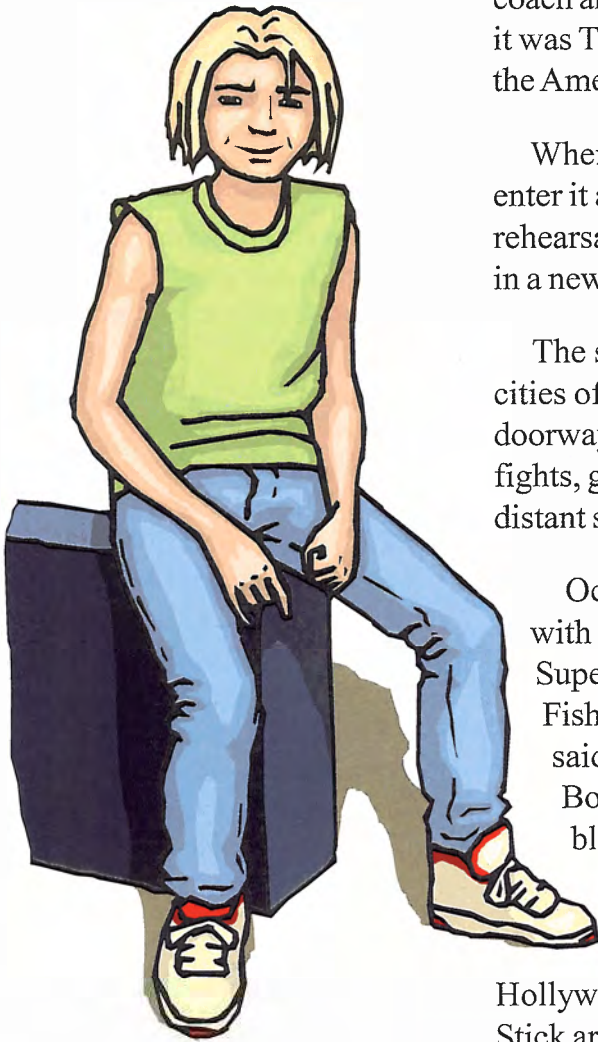
Novelist and screenwriter **Jim Schock's** career in TV included stints as West Coast Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News, and as news producer at KGO and KRON. His current writing project is a feature film, "Vampire Bob: A Comedy With Some Bite." You can reach him at [JimSchock1@juno.com](mailto:JimSchock1@juno.com).





# THE REAL SUPERMAN

By **Jim Schock**



The real Superman is not Clark Kent.

The Boy learned this secret after he left the farm. During and after college, he spent an apprenticeship at local radio stations, writing everything from bowling alley commercials to dramas he created himself.

In Indiana it was Coach's House, heralded as "...a weekly half-hour of wit and wisdom from Centerville's own Bud Barkley, coach and inspiration to generations of young men..." In Arizona, it was Tales of Old Tombstone, "...stories of men and women of the American West who lived in 'the town too tough to die'."

When the Boy made the transition to television, he did not enter it accompanied by the harp glissando of drama in a rehearsal studio, but to the crushing pound of teletype machines in a newsroom.

The stories he wrote and reported were real. Stories from cities of darkness, harsh sounds, homeless forms coughing in doorways, fleshy night trade, dime bags, gay bashing, family fights, gang violence, and the cry of babies under cold and distant stars.

Occasionally there was relief from the miseries of the day with a feature story. It was during one of these the Boy met Superman. There he was, swimming from Alcatraz to Fisherman's Wharf, in handcuffs. "He's not even out of breath," said the Boy, hurrying to the interview. When it came time the Boy asked, "How do you do it?" The man in the trademark blue jumpsuit smiled.

"Diet and exercise, especially exercise," said **Jack LaLanne**. Years later, when he was awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, he added, "I'm going to live to 150. Stick around and find out." The Boy is sticking. ■

Screenwriter and novelist **Jim Schock** is a former network Bureau Chief who also toiled in the newsrooms of KGO and KRON.

His newest screenplay is a comedy, "The Zoom Zoom Girls."





# WHEN TELEVISION MEANT SOMETHING

By **Jim Schock**



**Jim Schock** worked in the newsrooms of KGO and KRON and served as ABC-TV News West Coast Bureau Chief. He has just completed a new novel, "Your Local News." You may reach him at [1JimSchock@sbcglobal.net](mailto:1JimSchock@sbcglobal.net)

The Boy, who was no longer young and now had children of his own, sat down with them one morning in front of the TV set and discovered a world of television about which he knew nothing: Kids Shows.

His sons actually shushed him when he began to talk. "Please, Dad," said David, "we're watching Miss Nancy!" Shut up he did and watched with them. It was quite something, because the men and women on these programs had no glamorous sets, very few props and precious little budget, yet they were able to create something memorable every show, every day.

The legion of broadcasters who spoke gently to the kids in the studio and to the kid-viewers at home, gained their rapt attention and provided moms with a few minutes of rest for which they were abundantly grateful.

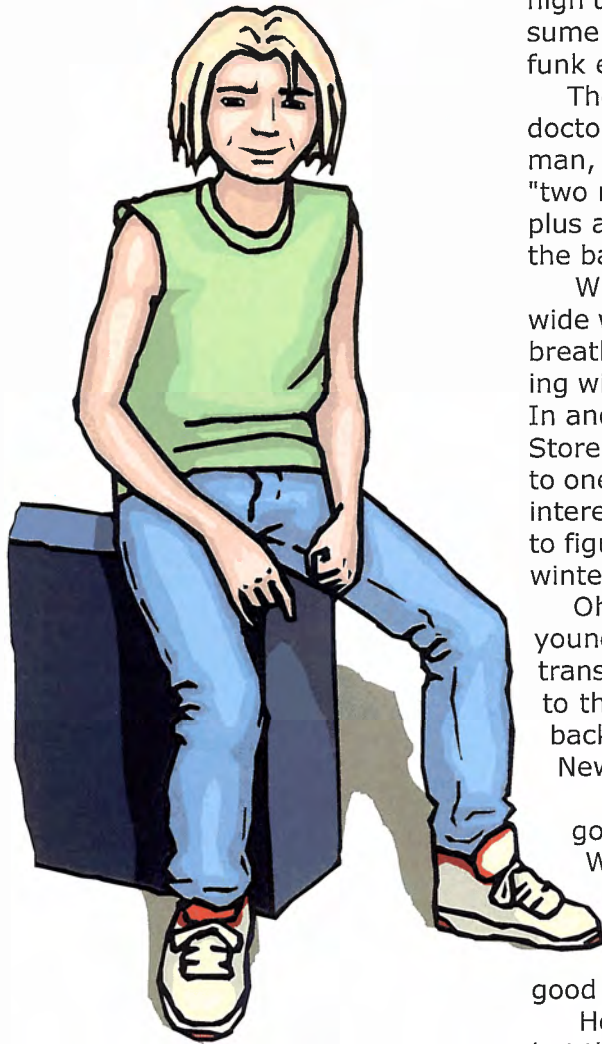
The kid show geniuses took young viewers on wonderful adventures and taught them worthwhile things. How to make friends. How to be polite. How to share and have fun together, the concept and execution of teamwork. Vital, life-enhancing things that young minds were enthralled to learn.

They were the best of television's pioneers because they helped a new medium realize its true potential: To enlighten and inform and to educate and be gentle about things, so the kids and moms who watched could go out in the world and carry those sharing-caring qualities with them. Hard to remember now, but in the beginning, TV had a conscience, and we were taught wonderful things by kind, wholesome, quiet voices and we are all made better for their sweet, quiet ways and their never-swerving dedication.



# Rx: Radio

By **Jim Schock**



The Boy was not yet seven years old when he was sentenced to a month or more of home confinement. In fact, his house was tagged with QUARANTINE signs indicating person or persons inside were captives of chicken pox. He wondered if everyone knew it was he the disease had stricken.

There would be no school. No baseball. No walks by the river nor treks through the woods. There would only be his tiny room with the high window through which he could only catch a passing cloud or now and then and at night, a racing moon.

Crushed by loneliness and inactivity accompanying a high temperature and boredom which threatened to consume him before the dreaded pox, he sank deeper into his funk each day.

Then something wonderful happened. Something the doctor hadn't ordered. His Uncle Myron, the town handyman, appeared with an abused Kent Atwater radio sporting "two new tubes and the latest superheterodyne chassis," plus a hundred foot roll of copper wire that would stretch to the barn for an antenna.

When it was ready, he turned the knob and the whole wide world rushed at him with such force it removed all breath from his small chest. In an instant he was adventuring with Jack Armstrong across the world in the Sulu Seas. In another he was sitting on the steps of the Jot 'em Down Store, listening to Lum and Abner crochet another solution to one of the town's itchy "perdickimints." News didn't interest him as much as Farm Reports as he lay abed trying to figure out how somebody bought corn next winter that was still growing in the ground this summer.

Oh, the places those programs took him! His fevered young mind clouded with the cooling mist of radio drama, transporting him from sickbed to spaceship, from quiet farm to the siren-scorched streets of Bigtown. Once he threw back his bedcovers and jumped up to defend Grover's Mill, New Jersey against Martian invaders.

His experiences with his friends on the radio kept him going, helped him forget his illness and his frailty.

Whether it was Henry Aldrich or Captain Midnight, the Lone Ranger or Corliss Archer, the good guys always caught the bad guys, the well-meaning always triumphed over the mean and petty, and honesty and a good heart were the coin of radio's realm.

He knew they were just radio shows played by actors, but they brought him comfort and respite and helped to mend his affliction and for that he would be forever grateful.



**Jim Schock** is a former TV news reporter, producer and executive who is recovering from recent open-heart surgery. He wishes to thank all the **LEGENDS** whose e-mails, phone calls and hospital visits helped him endure his recent encounter as radio did in the story above. You can contact Jim at: [1JimSchock@sbcglobal.net](mailto:1JimSchock@sbcglobal.net)



# That Thing He Did

By **Jim Schock**



One day in the early 1940s the Boy turned on the radio and a new kind of truth marched out of the speaker on a strong voice that so vibrated with conviction it commanded and held his total attention. It said, "This... is London."

The voice came on at 6:30 p.m. Central War Time on the big speaker of the living room radio where the Boy lay flopped on the floor, a J.C. Penney-clad, Keds-shod bundle of concentration. He couldn't help but be captivated by: "This...is London. There are no words to describe the thing that is happening... the courage of the people... the flash of the guns rolling down the street... the stench of the air raid shelter..."

It did not take long to realize the voice was not the only power, the words worked a magic, too. Together, they etched the landscape of a great city under attack. So clear were the reports, he could see the bombs explode. No movie, no radio drama ever reached the depth of impression Edward R. Murrow's news essays provided.

After the war, the Boy listened to Murrow's popular broadcasts as he reported the grim injustices of a busy, confident, cocky America rushing forward to regain peacetime momentum.

Murrow's corporate supporters began to waffle as the man with the big voice and big conscience put America under the harsh light of his investigations. As his support system began to crumble around him, he left CBS and became Director of John F. Kennedy's U.S. Information Agency, including the Voice of America, but his gifts were underused there.

The Boy was later to write a novel, *The News Merchants*, in which he said, "...and while it was the cigarets that killed him, it was CBS who tore out his heart."

Now, when he hears the coarse, careless cacophony of news/entertainment, the Boy turns off the radio and remembers the time when he heard that strong voice painting truth and pictures in his mind. Nobody does that anymore. ■

**Jim Schock** worked in local newsrooms at KGO and KRON and served as Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News West Coast until he left the business to write novels and screenplays. His latest project is "Green Man Running," a one-hour drama pilot. You may reach him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com).



Cont. fm. page 5 **Rod Sherry**

He says his career highlights are too many to have a single favorite, but the thrill of interviewing **Eleanor Roosevelt** as a young man stands

## Ben's Mail Bag Rod Sherry

out and interviewing **John F. Kennedy** and covering stories with both **Bobby** and **Ted Kennedy** at different times. And there was **Adlai Stevenson** who was impressive and a whole slew of others that light up the past as the most important people of their times.

The Mail Bag forgot to ask if anything ever matched the fiery drama

of the Hindenburg disaster. Rod lost his wife Martha two years ago. He lives in retirement in Santa Rosa. ■

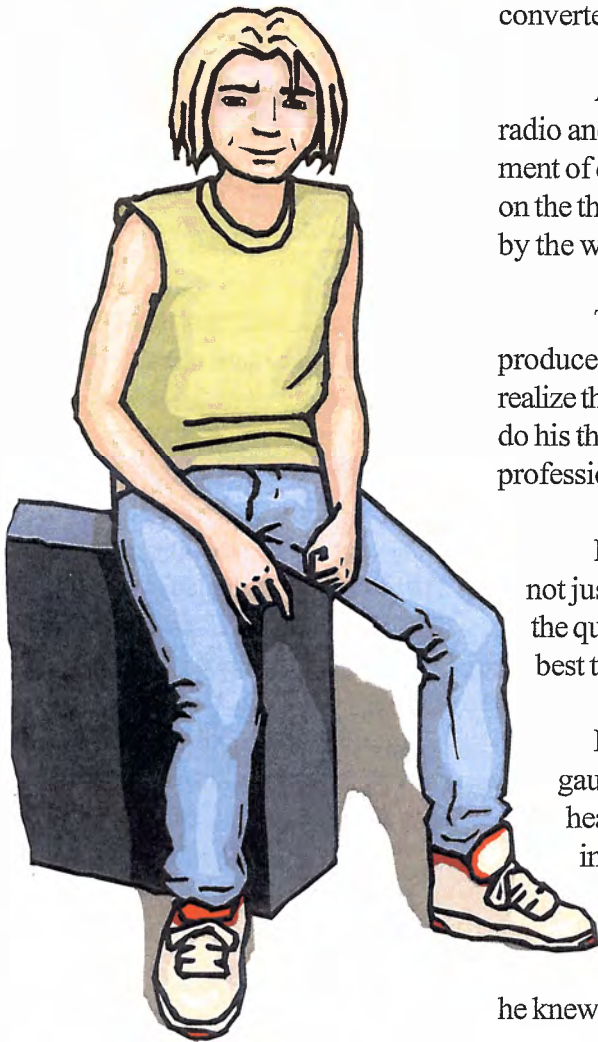


Editor's Note: **Ben Williams** has a lengthy history as a newspaper journalist as well as an impressive 25 years at KPIX as a TV News Reporter.



# The Power of the Past

By **Jim Schock**



As The Boy survived middle age and beyond he fussed about life and the turmoil of broadcasting he was leaving behind. He would miss the action, the tension, even the daily problems his body had converted to ulcers. He'd given his all, for damn sure.

As he was leaving that long hallway of a career that began in radio and ended in television, he knew his task now became the enjoyment of dappled sunlight, easy-going days of recreation and catching up on the things he'd missed because his life energies had been consumed by the work place he drove to every day.

Ten minutes before his retirement and the little ceremony that produced a gold watch and shadowy memories, The Boy came to realize the momentous gift his family had given him – lending him fully to do his thing, to make programs, to meet the harsh demands of his profession daily. For years.

In a life-altering flash he saw their sacrifices and realized it was not just his worry and sweat that made radio and television great, but the quiet dignity of his family who allowed him the freedom to be his best toiling in murderous pressure at the station.

His mind filled with remembered victories over deadlines, gaudy successes and noisy celebrations, but now in the quiet of his heart, he realized the gift he had so long ignored: His family's immense love, sharing him with a workplace they did not fully understand the often terrible demands upon them all.

He looked at his family's faces, at the proud light in their eyes, he knew he would dedicate his life making it up to them. ■



**Jim Schock** toiled in KGO and KRON newsrooms and was Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News West Coast until he decided to go straight. His newest novel, *Stealing Elvis* is making the rounds in NY.

You can contact Jim at: [1jimschock@sbcglobal.net](mailto:1jimschock@sbcglobal.net)



# The Ticket

By **Jim Schock**

It was beyond a rule; it was a commandment. The only thing you were allowed to touch in a radio station was a doorknob or a telephone. Everything else was the province of Engineers and you better by-damn have a First Class Phone.

He quickly perceived this to be a major career wall. He spent his summers luxuriating in great novels, poetry and literature. It never occurred to him to study potentiometers instead of Proust, vacuum tube theory instead of Antoine de Saint-Exupery or modulation parameters in place of modern poets.

How was he ever going to get on the radio if he didn't have a First Class ticket?

The solution appeared in an advertisement in *Broadcasting*, bible of the airwaves, where he learned that for three hundred dollars he could get that golden ticket. Problem: three-hundred dollars was about two-thirds of all the money in circulation at that time.

Following a high-decibel discussion with his then-employer, he was able to borrow the sum which he promptly deposited into the hands of the C. Turner Webb School of Radio Broadcasting, located one floor up over a walk-in dentist.

He attended classes two nights a week, studied assiduously and took the exam three months later. He failed.

Took it again. Failed again.

Third time. Flunk city.

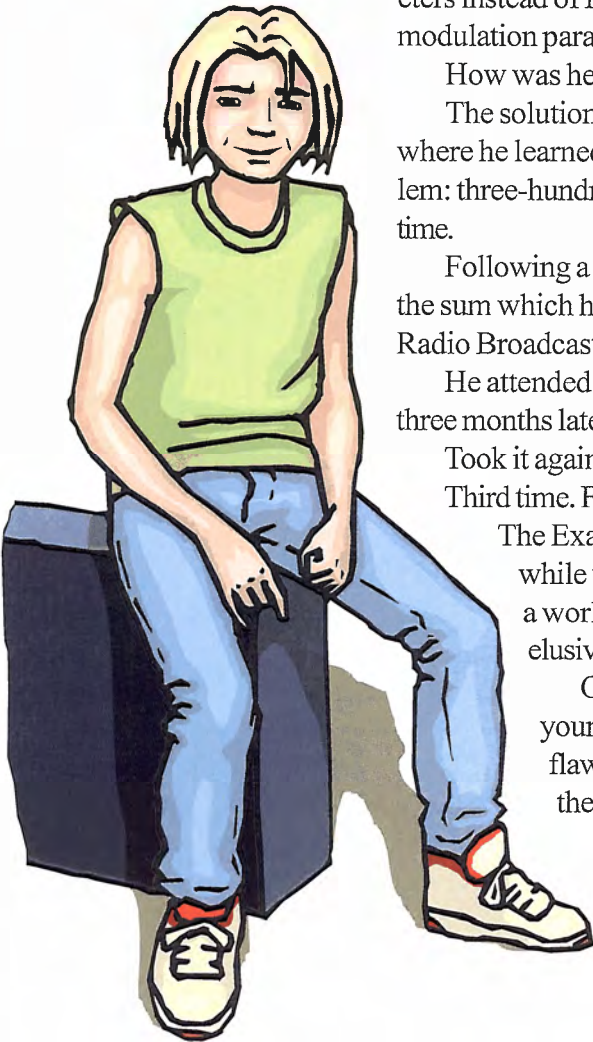
The Examiner, a kindly man with a voice as large as his belly, noticed that while the Boy showed no aptitude for the finer points of engineering, he was a world-class whiz at Morse Code, a requirement for acquisition of the elusive license.

On his fourth failure, the Examiner took him aside and engaged the young man in an hour of back-and-forth telegraphy and his execution was flawless. He gave him a passing grade and he gave him valuable insight to the industry by circling an ad in *Broadcasting*:

WANTED: DISK JOCKEY 10P-Mid. Create and build own audience! Run own board. Must have F.C.C. Phone. Some Sales. All inquiries confidential. No drifters, no drinkers.

The Boy exulted. What a glorious, stardust business! To celebrate he mailed in his personal subscription to *Broadcasting* that very day.

TO BE CONTINUED. ■



**Jim Schock's** stardust career path went beyond spinning records and he spent much of his professional life in broadcast news.

He welcomes emails from Legends at [jim@schock.com](mailto:jim@schock.com)



# Meeting the Night People

By **Jim Schock**



After he received the piece of paper that said he was a radio engineer, The Boy received his shift assignment – 4:00 PM to 12:00 AM. For the first four hours he would write commercials, file records, change the paper and ribbons in the wire machines, write more commercials. Beginning at 8:00PM he would take the station breaks, read 15 minutes of tacked-up news at ten, and at 10:15PM become the host of Music-By-Request, *tah-dah*.

A real-life Disk Jockey! Playing music for the masses! He had worked on an open that included the phrase “...from our magic turntables high in the sky over Tucson...” Woo! He shuddered in anticipation.

He was “handed” the M-B-R Show by the outgoing host who was glad he would be able to have dinner with his family instead of being stuck alone in a locked up radio studio on the second floor of a building behind the downtown Post Office.

That first moment, he looked at the silver microphone, closed his eyes and imagined his voice radiating out from the top of the transmitter, 1000 watts daytime, 500, nighttime, to a massive audience. My goodness.

In the incredibly short span of a week The Boy discovered it wasn’t like that at all.

No, it was talking to one or two people at a time. It was playing upbeat tunes for “the gang at the Central Drive-In.” It was spinning romantic platters for star-crossed lovers, or old tunes requested by hospital nurses to soothe ill patients. It was creating a place where people could mutually embrace him and the night and the music to become less lonely for an hour forty-five. It was a place for night people toiling as others slept. It was a listeners’ kilocycle bandstand offering a common, shared experience, the comfort of music and song that chased isolation and loneliness for a little while.

It was all that and more and within a week The Boy discerned that radio was not a mass-audience medium, but an intimate, invisible connection between strangers.

That was the real magic. There was a lot more to learn.

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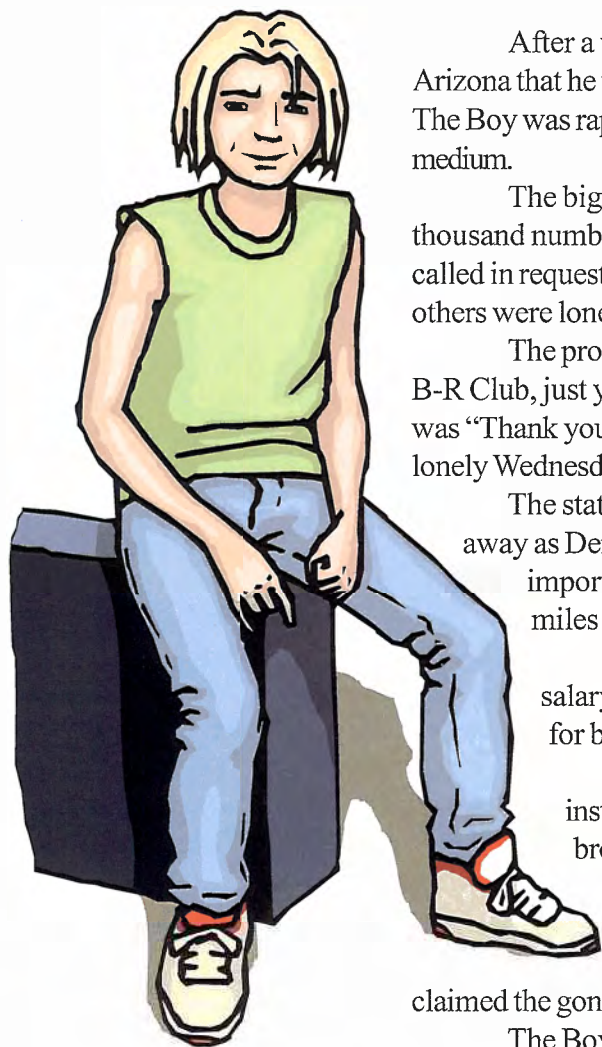


**Jim Schock** spent time in newsrooms at KGO and KRON and served as Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News West Coast. He is working on *Radioland* “a big novel that spans 1934-1950.” You may contact him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com)



# Meeting the Night People II

By **Jim Schock**



After a week as a disk jockey at a thousand-watt AM-er in Tucson, Arizona that he told listeners was “...your radio station in the midnight desert sky,” The Boy was rapidly discovering things no one had ever told him about the medium.

The biggest surprise was that there were no crowds. Those cost-per-thousand numbers on the rate card were made up of one or two people who called in requests, mostly for love songs. Some were comfortable in their solitude; others were lonely and it was easy to tell the difference.

The program, “Music By Request” he shortened to “...our exclusive M-B-R Club, just you me and the radio.” His most-used response following a record was “Thank you, Frank, for helping Joe and Sally be together with you on this lonely Wednesday night.” Lordy, he was shameless.

The station had a longer reach after sunset and could be heard as far away as Denver. Because station management felt cards and letters were important, The Boy allowed letters or postcards that traveled the most miles to have a request at the same time every night for a week.

The mail count quadrupled and the spot rate doubled, but his salary remained stagnant. He was to learn this was a standard practice for broadcasters.

Looking for more mail (and that elusive raise), The Boy instituted a Friday night “Bells Are Ringing For Romance” to give broadcast Romance Ratings of undergrads attending the UofA.

For this he rigged a ship’s bell and announced, “Ann Jones of the Tri Delts and Tom Ross at Acacia House are a... DING ... DING...DING *three-bell romance*.” Despite denying it, listeners claimed the gongs were the equivalent of “getting to first base...(etc).”

The Boy dropped the romance ratings and management’s response was to replace him, restore the gimmick, and raise spot rates again. No program had ever garnered 200 cards and letters per week and the experience taught him a longer-lasting lesson: It is never the quality of your work that counts; it’s only the Ratings.

He decided then he preferred typewriters to microphones.



**Jim Schock** spent typewriter time in newsrooms at KGO and KRON and served as Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News West Coast. He is writing a new novel, *Radioland, 1934-1950*.

You may contact him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com).



# The Boy and the Dream Machine

By **Jim Schock**



The only thing the Boy knew about Korea was from wire copy he read M-F evenings on the radio before he began playing unabashedly romantic songs for listeners “from our ballroom in the sky” – the second-story studios over a coffee shop behind the main post office.

It was radio. It wasn't supposed to be real. Everyone knew that.

Then one day he received a request, not from a listener, but from Uncle Sam offering an all-expense-paid trip across the Pacific and the Sea of Japan to the land of rice paddy daddies.

From sunny mild days in Tucson to the harsh winter in “Frozen Chosen” where phone flirtations and wounded egos were replaced by fire fights and wounded men and where you had to dig foxholes even after you learned what they meant by “night soil.”

Cold, miserable, far from home – pain and fear sapped the energy of the troops. Mail call helped. The Boy watched soldiers take a letter and just hold it without opening it and put inside their field jackets, safe and dry, knowing it was a ribbon of reality to a far-off fantasy place called home.

There was something else. Something big and warm and wonderful, a miracle called Armed Forces Radio. Not fancy, just a semi truck sitting somewhere with a portable transmitter stick outside. But for troops listening on new-fangled “transistor” radios purchased during R&R in Tokyo, it was a pipeline from battlefield to a back yard, a beach or a bandstand.

AFRS broadcast memories of love and promises and all the things you might never see again – home, family, friends, a girl so sweet her kisses made you want to hold her tight and live forever.

Radio ceased to be a jukebox, it was sanity in a mad, bad world that reminded you of the things that counted in Life, the pursuit of happiness moving to the front of the line.

The Boy reminisced with the best of them, over songs that spoke to his heart and of a girl and of spinning platters at good old KVOA. Radio removed some of the pain, some of the loneliness and all of the doubt about how life was supposed to be. It was real.

Under the ocean of stars that filled the black nights, in the snow and bitter cold, The Boy listened and swore that if he survived he would never think about radio in the old way again. ■



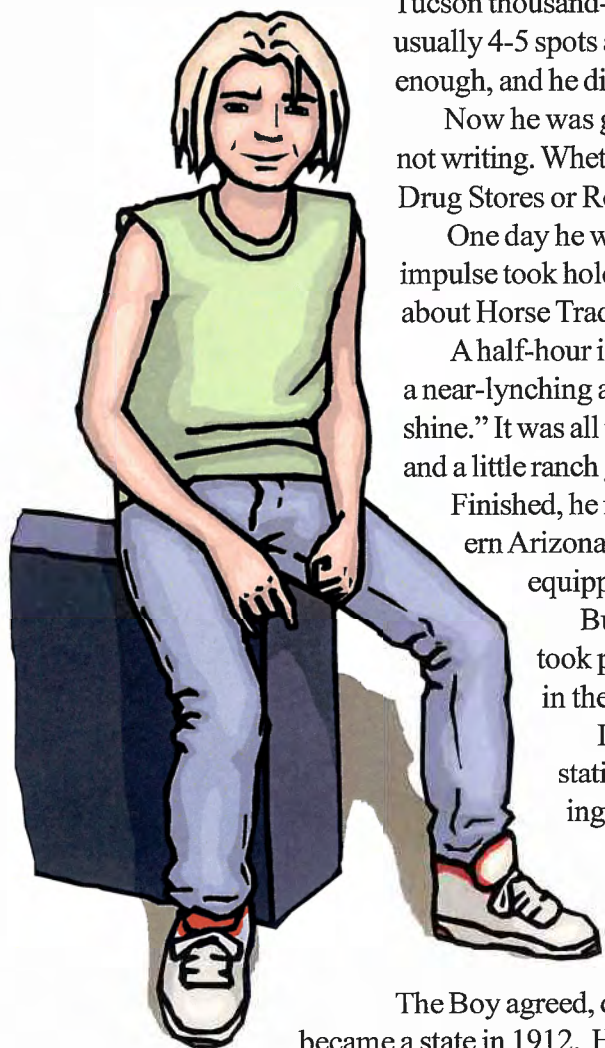
**G.I. Jim** in Korea over fifty years ago. He says, “All I can tell you is ‘The Boy’ went to Korea and was never heard from after that. Someone or something else took his place.”

You may contact him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com).



# The Boy

By **Jim Schock**



# The .44 Caliber Typewriter

The Boy found himself spending more time at a typewriter than a microphone at his Tucson thousand-watter. When he began, it was usual for announcers to write copy, usually 4-5 spots a shift. These 60-second local-advertiser commercials were easy enough, and he didn't mind doing them, but the rest of the staff hated such work.

Now he was grinding out as many as 15 to 20 per day, each of which was typing not writing. Whether it was Levy's Department Store, Buffum's Restaurant, Martins Drug Stores or Ronstadt's Hardware, there was not a challenge in a carload.

One day he was extolling the virtues of Horse Trader Ed's Used Cars when an impulse took hold of his skinny teen body, and he wrote a half-hour adventure show about Horse Trader Ed's grandfather in the days of the old west.

A half-hour in radio content is 22 minutes, but he managed to get in a bank robbery, a near-lynching and "a purty little gal as cute as a speckled pup in the morning sunshine." It was all there, thrills, chills, tough hombres, lots of gunshots, a wise old Indian, and a little ranch gal virgin whose singing could make grown cowboys weep.

Finished, he read it, exhilarated, then returned to reality and let everyone in Southern Arizona know that each one of Trader Ed's used Showroom Specials came equipped with a brand new set of recapped blackwall tires.

But he kept the script, re-conceiving it as a "show within a show" that took place on the stage of the Birdcage Theater in not-faraway Tombstone in the 1870's. It worked.

It worked, but the GM hated it. The Sales Manager hated it. Even the station receptionist with the bad complexion hated it. He thought of renaming it "Mein Kampf Out West" but decided to go out and sell it himself.

Within a month he had a taker – the regional beer company who insisted each time a customer approached any bartender in any saloon in Tombstone in 1870 he would ask for the sponsor's beer by name.

The Boy agreed, despite the fact the brewery did not come into existence until Arizona became a state in 1912. He got together station's announcers and recruited a high school singer for \$5 to sing a copyright-free song every week, the exact sum he was paid to write, direct and produce the show.

"Tales of Old Tombstone" was a hit and for three months the station sold six spots a week and kept all the money – less the \$5 The Boy passed on to the singer. And then a light came on.

The light revealed he owned the show. The station had never signed any agreement, it had merely let him use the staff as actors. The Boy jumped on his trusty steed, a cleverly-disguised 1939 Plymouth, and headed up to Phoenix where he sold the show to the Mother station of the Arizona Network of five NBC affiliates.

He got a salary of \$45 a week and 5% of the gross sales. It wasn't a fortune, but with his first month's paycheck he went to Trader Ed's and bought a newer Plymouth with four brand-new recapped blackwall tires, and he drove off the lot straight to the girl singer's house and proposed.

She turned him down.

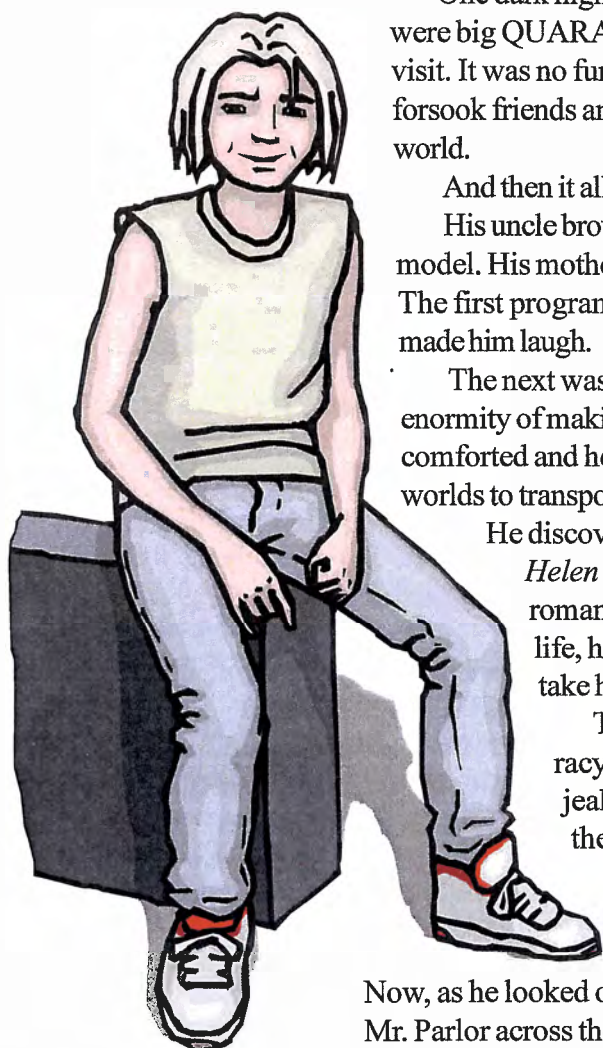
**JIM SCHOCK** had a long career in writing and producing for radio and television. He also worked in the newsrooms of KGO-TV and KRON-TV and served as West Coast Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News.





# The Boy

By **Jim Schock**



# Rx Radio

One dark night The Boy was felled by the Whooping Cough and there were big QUARANTINE signs on all the doors of the house and no one could visit. It was no fun. At night he wept and had bad dreams. He neglected food, forsook friends and phone callers. He was the loneliest nine year old in the world.

And then it all changed.

His uncle brought him a “bedside” radio, a miniature of the living room model. His mother plugged it in and rested it on a sturdy chair at his bedside. The first program he tuned-in was *The Breakfast Club* and **Don McNeill** it made him laugh.

The next was **Arthur Godfrey**. And then it was a flood, the joyous enormity of making radio friends. These real people and fictional characters comforted and healed him. Voices and a few sound effects created entire worlds to transport him.

He discovered *Stella Dallas* and the true meaning of sudsy misery. And *Helen Trent*, a show that made him wonder what affliction kicked romance out of women’s lives at 35. After a week of Portia facing life, he wanted to suggest she get the hell out of Parkerstown and take her wimpy kid with her.

The Boy even pretended he could dance and could do the racy “Continental” on *Luncheon With Lopez*, worried over the jealousy of *Lord Henry* toward his *Gal Sunday* and laughed at the only funny soap opera, *Lorenzo Jones and his wife, Belle*.

Somewhere between Arthur Godfrey and *Stella Dallas*, he discovered he was getting well, eating his vegetables and cleaning up his plate. Recovery was setting in.

Now, as he looked out window, he began to make radio people of his neighbors. Mr. Parlor across the street didn’t just sweep his sidewalk each morning; he was

Super Sweeper who swept crime from the streets of Lafayette, Indiana. The men on the ice delivery truck were from the Secret Arctic Army that sought out and saved lost, thirsty desert travelers.

The milkman was Dr. Health who delivered bottles of secret formula laced with vitamins so the youth of America could grow straight and possess superior height and intelligence. The paper boy was Nicky News who could tell you what was happening anyplace in the world in a flash.

Radio became friends anywhere you landed on the dial, the airwaves a propeller-driven magic carpet where you could create dreams without even closing your eyes.

When he was well again, he had to relinquish his daytime visits from radio people to rejoin his school chums. He liked that, but he always wondered if *His Gal Sunday* ever fled *Black Swan Hall* and dumped that wealthy and titled English guy.

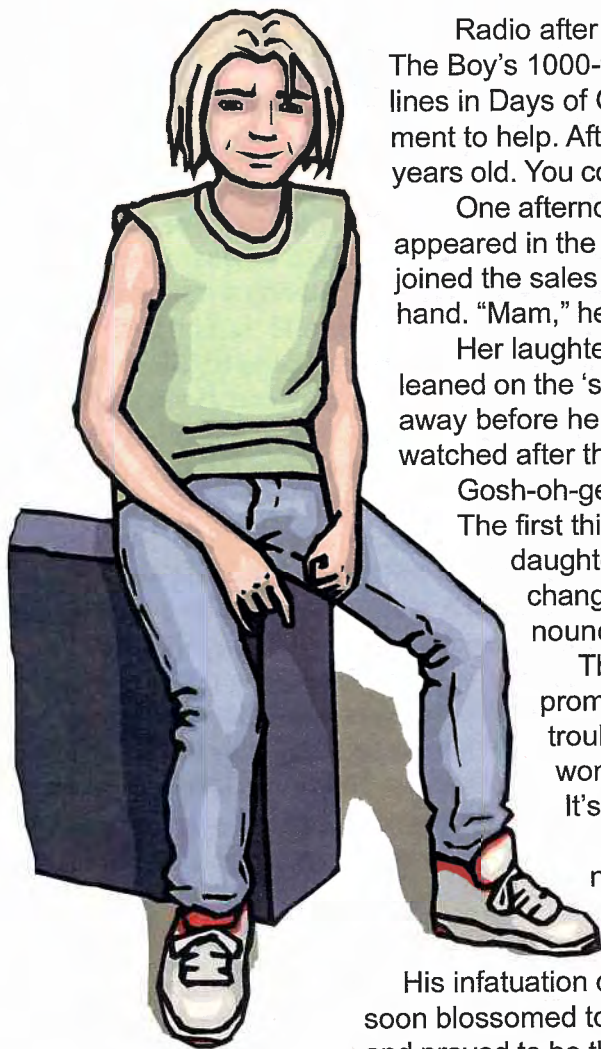
**Jim Schock’s** radio career spans stints from 250-watters in small towns to radio network dramas. He also served as West Coast Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News. You may e-mail him: [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com).





# THE BOY: THE DISTAFF STAFF

By **Jim Schock**



Radio after WWII was mostly a man's world and that was certainly true at The Boy's 1000-watter in Tucson. When he needed a female voice for a few lines in Days of Old Tombstone, he asked the lady from the accounting department to help. After every performance, he sent her flowers. She was sixty-two years old. You could do anything in Radio.

One afternoon he was bent over his steaming Underwood when the GM appeared in the doorway with a beautiful woman and announced she had joined the sales staff and would also be Talent. The Boy stood to shake her hand. "Mam," he said.

Her laughter made his temperature rise. "And nice to meet you, sir." She leaned on the 'sir' and The Boy, 17, clearly heard bells. The GM guided her away before he could summon action to match his raging hormones. As he watched after them, his heart slipped into his left shoe.

Gosh-oh-gee.

The first thing he did was write her a great role as the storekeeper's daughter in the next episode of his radio drama. He even let her change a line, a courtesy he never extended to any of the announcer-actors.

Then he began to write her into commercials. And some station promos. People began asking him why he was going to all the trouble. His reply was always the same, "There aren't many women on the radio; their voices command attention and respect. It's very good for business." Not everyone accepted that.

The private reason, of course, was that he could spend time near her. Unlike the guys, she never came in with a hangover, her office didn't smell like an ashtray, and her laugh was a bubbling brook that ran straight into his heart.

His infatuation drove him to create a 15-minute show, Question of the Day that soon blossomed to a weekday strip on the Arizona Network of five NBC stations, and proved to be the undoing of his one-way, unfulfilled love affair when she

moved to the bigtime up in Phoenix.

He sat down and wrote four straight Days of Old Tombstone scripts in which the beautiful women in town were gunned down by desperadoes. Then the sponsor stepped in and demanded a halt to all that broadcast bloodshed.

It was the first time The Boy tried to write his way through a broken heart, but it wasn't the last.

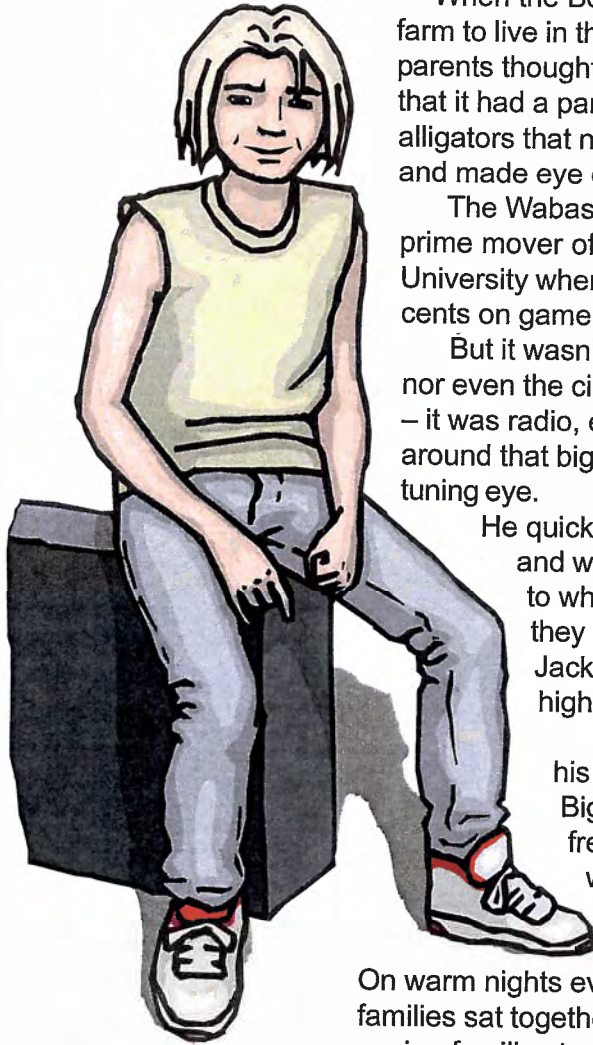
**Jim Schock** went on to write network radio and television dramas. He also worked in the TV news departments of KGO and KRON, as well as serving as West Coast Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News. He welcomes Legends' email to [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com).





# THE BOY: Radio as a Fireplace

By **Jim Schock**



When the Boy was entering the sixth grade he was sent from the farm to live in the city 40 miles away, Lafayette, Indiana, where his parents thought the schools would be better. It was a city in the sense that it had a park with the tallest slides he had ever seen, and some alligators that never moved, even when he got on his hands and knees and made eye contact through the heavy steel bar and wire cages.

The Wabash River ran through it, as did two railroads, then the prime mover of commerce in America. Across the river was Purdue University where the Boy hawked football programs for twenty-five cents on game day and kept a nickel for each one he sold.

But it wasn't the river, or the railroads, or selling football programs, nor even the circular slide, or sleeping alligators that intrigued him most – it was radio, especially the way city folks seemed to build their lives around that big piece of living room furniture with a cyclops green tuning eye.

He quickly learned that boys in his class ran home after school and with no chores to do, sat in front of the radio and listened to what they called adventure shows. At first the Boy thought they were silly, but eventually succumbed to the brash charm Jack Armstrong and the boys from Hudson High when they hightailed it off to the Sulu Seas.

His mother liked to read the *Chicago Tribune* and it was his duty to leave the supper table and hie on down to the Big Four Train Station and buy one – for three cents – fresh off the behemoth exhaling steam on the shiny rails where bundles of newspaper were tossed off.

The Boy returned home in the descending twilight, a magic time when the streetlights sprang to life.

On warm nights everyone's doors and windows were open and entire families sat together listening to the radio. He did not understand why, but seeing families together, dad in his chair, mom on the couch, her hands busy with sewing, kids scattered on the floor, and everyone quiet and listening – this picture made him smile. Perhaps it was just the quiet dignity of a family at peace and the radio was like a fireplace, offering the warmth of entertainment, music, and news of the day.

Many years later when he thought back on those days, it came to him that except for motion pictures, radio was the first common, shared experience for everyone, that it wasn't merely that stations were connected, but that radio connected the people he saw with others all across the wide, free landscape of America.

If radio can do that, he decided, it was a pretty wonderful thing.

**Jim Schock** went on to his own adventures in radio writing and producing. His career also included stops at KGO and KRON Newsrooms, and a stint as Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News, West Coast. You may contact 'The Boy' via email, [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com)





# THE BOY: A Relative Christmas

The Boy was facing a dilemma. The Program Director of KVOA, a Tucson thousand-watter, asked him to come up with something, anything to fill the three-to-five afternoon slot between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The Boy's first reaction – eek!

Soap operas were over, newscasts didn't start yet, disk jockeys were relegated to late-evening hours, adults were working, except for moms who were engaged in domestic tranquility that involved kitchen stoves, ringer washing machines, wet mops, ironing boards and... Hold on!

He had an idea right there on the office carpet. He'd create a show where people called Santa with their wish lists. He detailed the raw commercialism of it to the PD and the Sales Manager, adult men who drooled at the chance to sell dollar spots in the dead zone of afternoon radio, M-F.

Fleshed-out, it would consist of a "Santa type" taking faked phone calls from homemakers, as wives and moms were called then. Actually, they would be the "girls" who worked at the station 'calling' from a filter mic in Studio B.

The Boy wrote five two-hour scripts (less commercials), planning to rehearse for a week, after which he would supply wish-lists from which the ladies and host could ad lib. The most asked question from management was, "Who's the host?"

"I'll get back to you on that." After polling the entire announcing staff, his idea came down with the flu. Nobody wanted to do it. Nobody. And he knew that if the PD assigned someone, they'd be terrible and the show would fail.

Although he was still a teen, the Boy had never failed, but now... He left the station to go for a walk. Many men in the southwest wore western hats, and walking down the street he spied a man in a new Stetson and in his hatband was a jaunty felt Santa with two tiny bells attached that jingled as he walked. Bingo!

The Boy ran back to the station, rushed to his typewriter and in ten minutes created Santa Fe Claus, a former North Pole resident, who retired to Tucson to escape the North Pole's harsh winters, harsh springs, harsh autums, and harsh summers.

He's Santa's brother and his job in the big guy's Workshop was taking those lists, checking them twice, etcetera, etcetera.

Now he'd be happy to take calls, make sure the young'uns were not naughty but nice, and suggest this sort of demeanor could result in a payoff on Christmas morning.

"There's more," he said during his three-minute pitch to the GM and PD, "Public Service announcements, not as commercials, but advice from Santa Fe to remind listeners of the true meaning of Christmas by aiding the needy, the shut-ins, and underprivileged folks."

"The true meaning of Christmas is to sell spots," said the PD. The GM, a kindly man, looked at the Boy as if to question whether he accepted that thesis.

"I'll pretend I didn't hear that," the Boy said, warming himself in the General Managers forthcoming smile.

"Cowboy Claus" as the local papers began to call the Boy's radio character, was a huge success and the program quickly became the talk of the town of 30,000 listeners. Two days before Christmas the Boy received a special public service proclamation from the Mayor, and that year some department store Santas began wearing Stetsons.

The power of radio was just beginning to dawn on him.

**Jim Schock** worked in radio and in the news departments of KGO and KRON, and served as ABC-TV News West Coast Bureau Chief. He wishes everyone Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. . You may contact 'The Boy' via email, [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com)





# THE BOY: Remembrance of Times Past

The gray clouds that brought the cold spring rain broke open, and shafts of silver sunlight persuaded the Boy to collapse his black umbrella and cast his face to the sun. He was not alone in his eagerness to seek something bright on a day steeped in the frozen sadness that accompanies the death of a friend.

Ther relief among the mourners was palpable as barren trees sparkled with clinging raindrops. Pinched faces welcomed the warmth of the March sun. Everyone solemnly observed the ritual of a colleague's passing, even as the brightening day tried to lift their spirits. The Boy felt the atmosphere change from damp sadness to the warm realization that his deceased colleague was not gone, but would always be remembered in the hearts of the broadcast family.

A deep involuntary breath surprised him as a kaleidoscope flashed and echoed in his mind of the man they had come to put in the ground on this shuddering day. The Boy succumbed to the onrush of this personal newsreel, of the adventures he shared with a friend whose unbridled spirit and talent always inspired him.

He saw the sixties when they worked in the same newsroom, and covered the Hunters Point riots, and chased Hippie stories, seeking a little truth and light in the hedonistic Summer of Love, the flower children, and age of aquarius, where it all was comin' together or comin' apart, it don't matter, man.

That era transformed San Francisco from its staid reputation as a financial center to a city of new dynamics. His mind raced back to their coverage of topless bars, discos, LSD, the waft of pachouli, and the emergence a new music culture of whiskey-hoarse free souls singing songs, not of June and moon, but of the new culture, high spirited and high strung, a wail against perceived injustices.

Later, they were working for different TV stations during the time of the Zodiac murders, the Patty Hearst/Symbionese Liberation Army, the Moscone-Milk murders, the opening of BART, the return of ferries on the Bay, and the growing presence of the Castro.

After that came what they dubbed "The Age of the Consultants," that transformed broadcast news from the modest task of gathering, processing, and disseminating the events of

the day. Consultants brought in Mr. Blow-Dry and Ms Lip Gloss, wise-guy

weather  
events they

guys and gals, and created sports anchors who were trained to be bigger than the covered. Police blotter reporting ruled the day. It was not a good time and it still isn't.

As the torrent of memories raced through him, the Boy began to smile, remembering how he and his old friend talked shop, reported, and wrote about the changing culture with the fierce fascination of a time when anything could happen and usually did.

They played fair with the facts and held up a daily mirror of a world that was ever-changing and challenging, and they always tried to get it all, get it right, and make deadline. When his friend asked the Boy, "What's it all about? Tell us."

The Boy smiled and said, "When we're good, journalism is literature in a hurry. These are the reporting bones historians will pick over after we're gone."

They both laughed and had another drink, and another cigaret, and another sigh at the end of another busy day in a long adventure that neither of them acknowledged would ever end.

**Jim Schock** is a novelist and screenwriter who worked at KGO-TV and KRON-TV, and served as Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News West Coast. He welcomes email from **Legends** Members at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com)

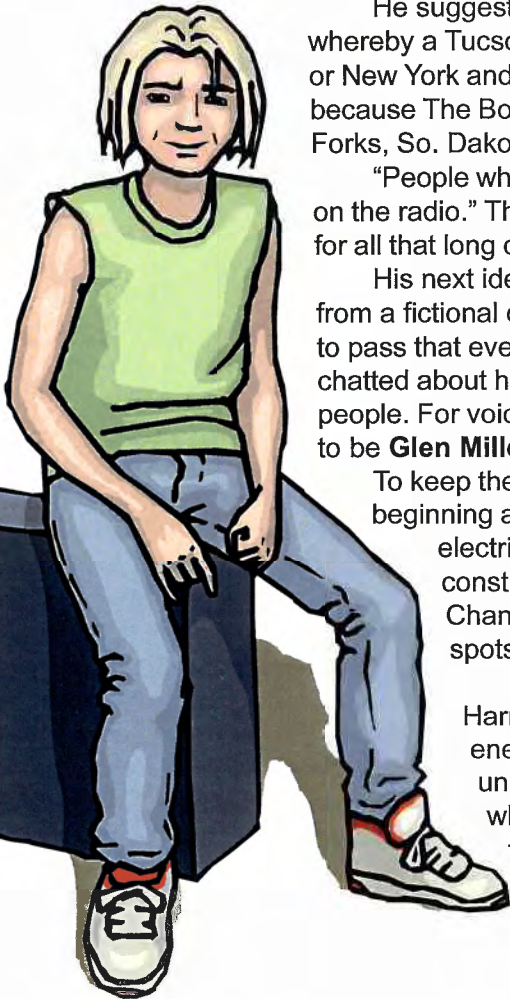




# THE BOY: Moon, June, Swoon, Incorporated

On The Boy's seventeenth birthday, the GM raised his salary to fourteen dollars a week and advised him that he would no longer have to maintain the card file for the station's record library.

Wow! Now he would have time to work on ideas for new programs, create fresh new ideas for the 1000-watt world of Amplitude Modulation radio broadcast over a small town and thousands of acres of uninhabited high Sonoran Arizona desert.



He suggested a dozen shows, including *People To People*, a show whereby a Tucson chef, for example, would call a counterpart in New Orleans or New York and explore the differences in cuisine and prices. They liked it because The Boy convinced the Mayor of Tucson to call the Mayor of Grand Forks, So. Dakota in November to discuss the weather.

"People who listen to the radio don't like to hear people on the telephone on the radio." The Boy perceived that as GM-Speak for "We don't want to pay for all that long distance."

His next idea was for a weekly two-hour music show. It would emanate from a fictional dude ranch that featured famous bands of the day. So it came to pass that every band with a hit record stopped by and the bandleaders chatted about how much they enjoyed playing there, the weather, the nice people. For voices of famous people, he wire-recorded friends who pretended to be **Glen Miller**, **Harry James**, the **Dorsey** brothers, **Gene Krupa**, et al.

To keep the FCC happy he wrote an announcement that aired at the beginning and end of each show: "Professional entertainers' voices are electrically transcribed by proud Tucsonians," a phrase that could be construed to praise the local engineers, not the fake entertainers. Chancy, yes, but it worked like a charm. High ratings, premium-rate spots, buzz around town – a perfect scam.

Perfect until the FCC announced it wasn't happy at all. And Harry James' lawyer say the bandleader was unhappy and threatened to sue. And people were unhappy they'd been duped. And the unhappiest of all was the GM who ranted about make-goods, to which The Boy replied, "I'll fix it." When the GM asked how, The teenager smiled, "Second person."

The GM had no idea what that meant so the youngest member of the staff sat down and calmly wrote the introduction to a new 2-hour Saturday night show called *Make Mine Music*.

ANNOUNCER: "It's Saturday night and you're in the imaginary ballroom Good in the foothills overlooking the lights of Tucson, Arizona, spread out below like jewels spilled on a magic carpet. You close your eyes and see it and you hear **Harry James** saying, 'Hi to all my good friends in Tucson, we have a wonderful show for you tonight, let's start with my theme song, *Ciribiribin*.'"

The Boy sent ET airchecks to the FCC, **Harry James'** attorney, and to the GM's brother, the station attorney. The show became a hit all over again. The FCC was happy. **Harry James'** legal eagles were happy. The audience was happy and all that made the GM happy.

The Boy smiled. He knew what it was and they didn't. It wasn't about deceiving listeners, or impersonating celebrities without permission, or violating broadcast law. No, it was much simpler than that. It was about providing two hours of make-out music on Saturday Nights.

**Jim Schock** can't remember if he ever wrote in second-person again, but he did go on to network radio and TV drama. He also toiled in news departments at KGO and KRON, as well as serving as West Coast Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News. He welcomes Legends emails at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com).

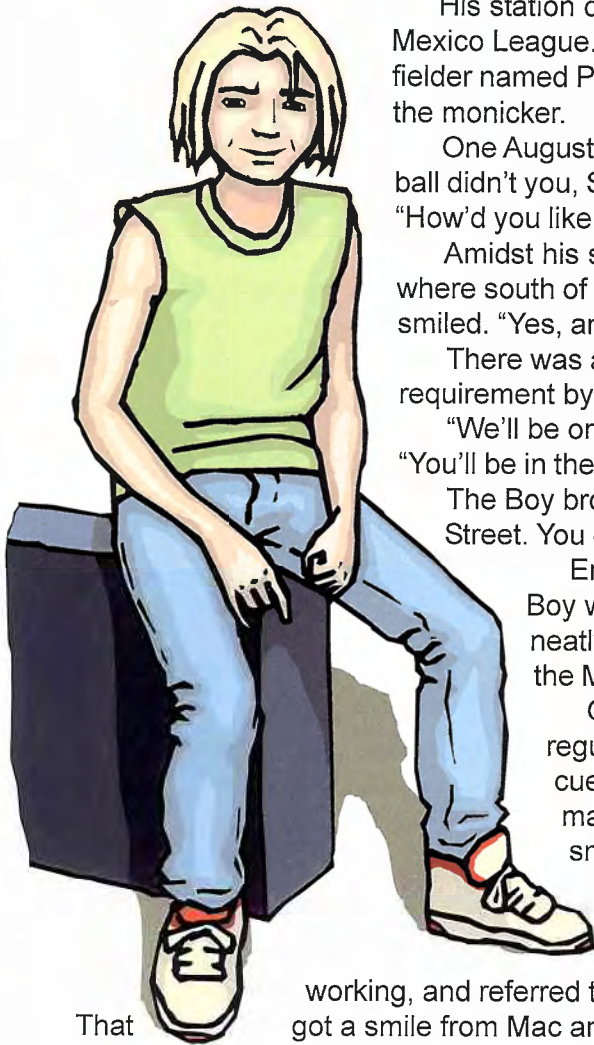




# THE BOY: Nasty Day For Baseball

By **Jim Schock**

In the middle-age of radio, the glorious 1930's and 1940's, when the medium was maturing, becoming a major entertainment force and creating its own legends, if you worked at a small station in Tucson, you still had to wear more than one hat.



Which is how The Boy became a Sportscaster. Well, maybe.

His station carried the games of the Tucson Toros, of the Class D Arizona-Mexico League. The most popular player on the team was a 40-something outfielder named Pinky Vargas. No one in Arizona or Mexico knew how he acquired the monicker.

One August day the GM came to the Boy and said, "You played some baseball didn't you, Son?" The Boy nodded. "Student of the game?" Another nod. "How'd you like to call tonight's game?"

Amidst his sheer panic, the Boy remembered it was an away game, somewhere south of the border, down Mexico way. He mentioned this to the GM who smiled. "Yes, and you're going to re-create it. Get with Mac, he'll fill you in."

There was an engineer named Mac at every radio station in America. It was a requirement by the FCC before they would issue a license. Well, maybe.

"We'll be on location at Martin's Drug Store on Congress Street," said Mac. "You'll be in the window with the ticker."

The Boy broadcast a blank response. "It's machine like they use on Wall Street. You embroider stuff around it." Pause. "You know, ad-lib."

Embroider nine innings of a baseball game he couldn't see? The Boy was a writer. His was a world of scripts, formatted perfectly, typed neatly, collated expertly, then read word-for-word. He promptly went to the Men's and threw up.

Game time, equipped with the press book from the Toros and the regular announcer's score book, he did a pre-show ten minutes, cued a commercial, came back, and began the first inning with a masterpiece of word description of the beautiful desert night and the smell of sage blossoms blowing in from center field. Mac smiled.

Almost immediately he discovered he wasn't padding between the cryptography coming from the little machine, so he quickly began to describe how slowly the opposing pitcher was

working, and referred to him as "A human rain delay."

That got a smile from Mac and a laugh from the crowd gathered on the sidewalk outside. Things seemed to go smoothly enough. "Pinky Vargas poled a circuit clout," got him applause from the growing crowd. He drew his first deep breath of the evening.

Then the teletype machine went out.

Panicked, the Boy first had the next batter go to a full count and then foul off pitches, 19 in a row, just one shy of a league record. He followed this with news the game had stopped due to blustery winds stirring up eye-stinging whirlwinds that had the Toros playing in The Dust Bowl.

Panicked, he grabbed a book from the paperback rack in the drugstore, *The Weather & You*, and for nearly an hour recounted meteorological phenomena of the Sonoran Desert that kept the game suspended. When the ticker came back to life, the Human Rain Delay was throwing 5-6 pitches a minute and the broadcast got off on time with a victory by the Toros, capped by a second Pinky Vargas circuit clout/homerun.

What really happened at the game was a bench-clearing brawl with fans throwing glass beer bottles at the visiting team. The next day a newspaper reporter called to ask why he hadn't mentioned the brawl, the Boy said, "The FCC frowns on that." There was no follow question.

The Boy subsequently retired from sportscasting and subsequently resisted numerous suggestions he become a broadcast meteorologist.



# THE BOY: Healing the Patient

By **Jim Schock**

The Boy, no longer young, found himself awaiting heart bypass surgery in the company of strangers – new doctors, new nurses, new everybody. Even his sons looked and sounded different though he knew that was because they were unfamiliar with hospitals and horizontal fathers.

When it was over and he was still hooked up to monitors, oxygen, EKG apparatus, and various tubes, he received a visit from four non-strangers, **Broadcast Legends** all: **Al Bullock**, **Peter Cleaveland**, **Fred LaCosse**, and **John Lester**. The doctors had helped his heart; these crazy-wonderful guys jump-started his spirit.

When he returned home and a lengthy recuperation was underway, their well wishes and jokes dimmed to a distant echo and bleakness returned. In desperation he ransacked his bookcases for some old radio cassettes and without looking at any of the titles, inserted one and pushed Play and in a moment was listening **Merwyn A. Pogue**, better known as “**Ish Kabibble**” sparring wisecracks with **Kay Kyser**.

Not as good as the Four Horsemen of KGO, but enough to re-focus his mind. The recording was old. **Mike Douglas** (yes, that one) was the Boy Singer, but listening to it, the Boy lost all sense of pain and misery as he visited old friends from his childhood.

The leader of the afternoon cereal set, **Jack Armstrong** and the boys from Hudson High, became meaningful after realizing the original **Jack** was **Don Amerche** and brother **Jim** played **Captain Hughes**.

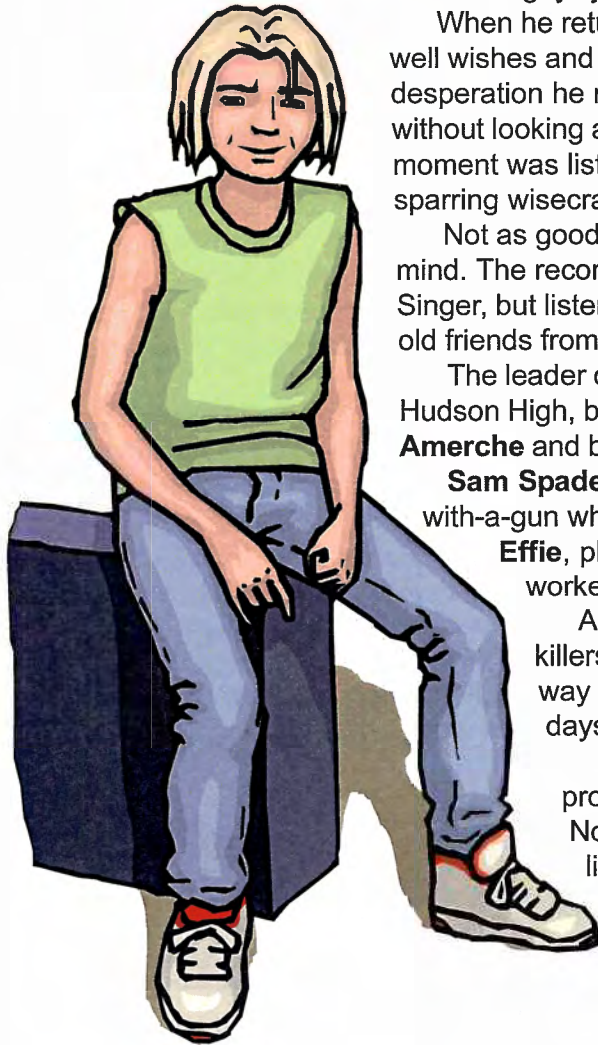
**Sam Spade** was recast from **Dashiell Hammett's** character to a comic-with-a-gun who began each show by dictating case reports to secretary **Effie**, played by **Lurene Tuttle**, whose nephew, **Steve**, the Boy had worked with in the KRON newsroom in the 70's.

As he listened, he relaxed, got off the sleeping pills and pain killers and allowed the sweet past of old radio to heal him. Along the way it came to him that in the beginning, and all through its glory days, radio was America's first common, shared experience.

Radio was not rude nor loud, and it didn't shout at you. Radio provided friends, music, and laughter in good times and bad. Nobody had troubles like **Stella Dallas**, but everyone had a closet like **Fibber Magee**. Good punished evil, right triumphed over wrong, and love always found a way.

Radio was a reflection of those who listened to it and who drew strength and affirmation of the values of doing the right thing, being a good neighbor and a good friend, of trusting and helping each other, and, yes, visiting old, heart-patient guys in the hospital.

Thank you, friends.



**JIM SCHOCK** began writing radio shows as a teen, and reluctantly upgraded to TV, including toil in the newsrooms of KGO and KRON. His current screenplay is a comedy, “The Beverly Hills Ladies Dog Walking and Martini Society.” You may contact him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com). You'll get a reply.



# THE BOY: Selling Soap

By **Jim Schock**

One late August, the Boy, fresh off a great season of writing for summer replacement shows, felt he was on the brink of launching a career in pounding out scripts for radio shows in Los Angeles. By October he was putting a job on his Christmas Wish List.

Someone suggested he investigate soap operas, of which there were many with long pedigrees, and the promise of more to come to fill up the morning and afternoon hours of America's housewives as they cleaned, dusted, ironed, and mended their lives away.

He sat down in front of his radio and listened to them all day long, after which he considered applying to the W.P.A. because it seemed better duty shoveling dirt than the stuff of soap opera scripts. He didn't because he was opposed to physical labor on specious religious grounds.

Then he struck on the idea of writing an episode or two of one of the sudsers and sending it to the producers as proof he could handle such material without actually gagging. The show he chose was *The Romance of Helen Trent*,

The Boy chose Helen because although the opening about romance coming to a woman over 35 had nothing to do with the stories. Helen had real adventures. This plucky lady was shot, drugged, framed for murder, went to prison, faced the gas chamber and was nearly pushed off a cliff, then trapped in a mountain cabin by a mad hypnotist. Helen Trent made Jack Armstrong look like a stay-at-home.

His two sample scripts got him a train ticket to New York and an interview with the doyenne of daytime, **Anne Hummert**, originator-writer-producer of more than three-dozen radio dramas. These included ones she wrote herself, *Manhattan Merry-Go-Round*, *Ma Perkins*, *Young Widder Brown*, *Stella Dallas*, *Just Plain Bill*, *Backstage Wife*, and the popular nighttimer, *Mr. Keen, Tracer of Lost Persons*.

The office was busy, but Mrs. Hummert was the epitome of civility and decorum. She asked The Boy about other things he had written and smiled as he described his career in pulp fiction, his first radio show in Tucson, his really terrible first novel, and his hope that someday he would be able to create a radio show of his own.

A kind smile, a slight nod of the head. Things seemed to be going well until she asked what he would do if, despite his age, he were put in charge of "Helen."

"Well," the Boy began. MISTAKE

For ten minutes he paced the spacious office, detailing Helen's New Adventures, that would include travel, ("She should meet some royalty."), be romantically pursued by a movie star, have a meeting with Mrs. Roosevelt, be wooed by a Texas oilman, and, finally, "...do something for the Red Cross." Panting, The Boy sat

down, pleased with his performance. He looked across the desk at his future.

Mrs. Hummert smiled as if she were sucking a lemon, punched a button on her intercom and spoke softly. "We're through in here, please give the young gentleman his return ticket and thank him for coming all this way."

The ticket was NY-LA. The Boy got off in Tucson and to this day has never listened to another radio soap opera.

**Jim Schock** went on to write other things. He also toiled in the newsrooms of KGO-TV and KRON-TV and served as West Coast Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News. He presently writes films for television. You may contact him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com). He answers all his email.





# THE BOY: The Interview

By **Jim Schock**

"My news director hired you and I don't know anything about you, so tell me about yourself." The GM offered a steady stare.

The Boy thought for a moment. "I don't know anything about you, either," he said, causing the exec to rear back in his daddy chair and look over the top of his glasses.

"You're about to be a hired hand. I must tell you, the people I've asked think you're a wise-ass."

"They're right." He paused. "And they think you're a tough guy and a hard man to work for."

"And they're right about that."

"That's good. I don't like to work for cream puffs."

"Explain, please."

"A cream-puff executive waffles when the going gets tough. A hard-case boss cares about truth, light, sun, and profits, but he backs his guys."

Another rear-back and another over-the-spectacles look. "Tell me what you think of my news director."

"He's a hired hand, too, but I have high expectations for him."

"He's a member of the Executive Board. That implies high expectations."

"Being on the Executive Board makes him an executive. What he does in the newsroom makes him a newsman. One's more important than the other."

"And you think it's the latter?"

"Of course. Look, a newsroom is made up of a lot of *individuals*, people whose personalities are different from one another. People whose skill sets require initiative, constantly dealing with strangers, the ability to understand what a story is really about, and translate all that and more into a minute, twenty seconds."

"And executives?"

"It's not like writing a memo." A deep breath, then: "Intelligence comes first. To be effective, a good reporter has to be curious and exercise superior judgement. He also must have a well-tuned sense of responsibility. His reporting could cost the station its license. He must explore all sides to a story. He can't let his personal opinion affect his work. He has to be stable – able to keep his head when the world is rattling around him. He has to do all this and still get the story back in the shop and on the air by six."

"That's it?"

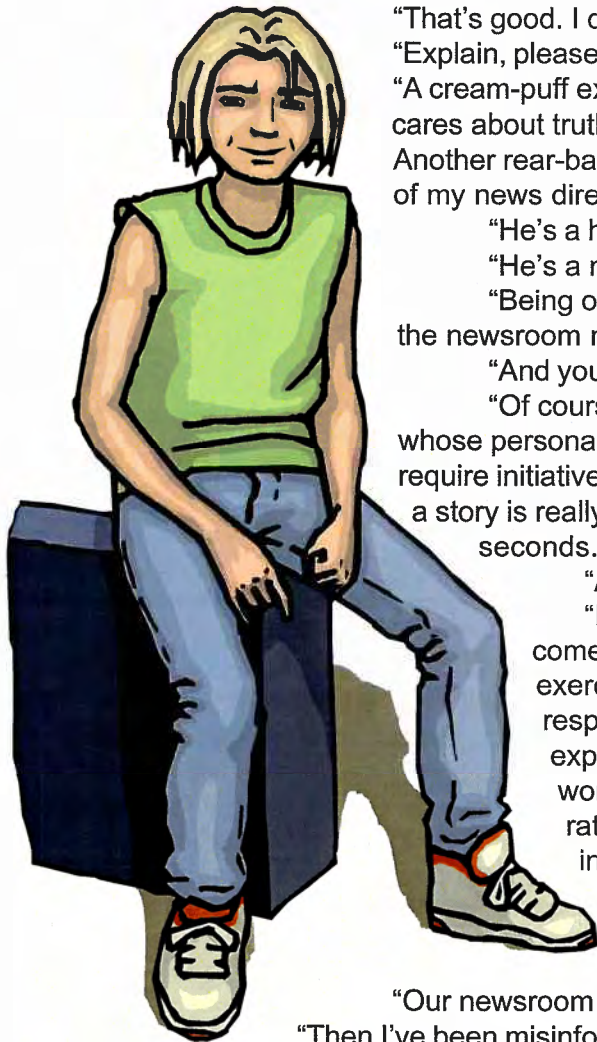
"That's part of it." The Boy rose. "If we're done here, I have a meeting with the news director in the newsroom annex."

"Our newsroom doesn't have an annex."

"Then I've been misinformed." He shook hands with the GM and in the elevator asked the newsroom secretary where the newsroom annex was.

"A block down the street. On the corner. It's called the Federal Reserve Lounge."

"Thanks," said the Boy and he began to whistle.



**Jim Schock** worked in the newsroom of KGO-TV and KRON-TV and served as Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News West Coast. He now writes novels and screenplays. His latest script is, *The Beverly Hills Ladies Dog Walking* and *Martini Society*. You may contact him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com). He responds to all Legends' email.



# THE BOY: Consult This!

By **Jim Schock**

The consultant was coming. The Boy dreaded it for weeks, as if someone had announced spinal meningitis would call a meeting. This band of fast-talkers who know nothing of news and the franchise news organizations created with the public, were going to take hundreds of thousands of dollars from his station's coffers in return for dumbing-down his audience.

"It's branding," said the super-smooth man whose career and reputation had been made by taking ideas from one station and 'selling' them to other stations. The Happy Talk phase, called "Humanizing your anchor guys" was almost complete, meaning news presenters would soon have the same appeal as actors who sell toothpaste.

"It's heresy to an American institution."

"Look, I don't even know what heresy is, I'm going to get numbers. Bigger numbers, more money. Name of the game."

The Boy gritted his teeth. It had taken him months to convince the GM and Sales Manager to remove 'personal products,' mail order, and used-car spots from news programs, to spare the audience from wincing at commercials running between Vietnam War death counts and child abductions.

"What's this 'institution' jazz? It's a PROgram, like all the rest of them," smirked the consultant, firing up a cigaret.

The Boy shifted his gaze to the GM who looked pained. "The boys in New York expect News Departments to become profit centers." His pained expression indicated he was a victim of the go-along-to-get-along philosophy. This GM had backed his news guys, left them alone to do their work, and that philosophy resulted in his small but efficient newsroom garnering a good and growing audience.

"Okay, wiseguy," said the consultant, what do you call that double murder you buried in the second segment last night?"

"O n e Tenderloin dope dealer shot two competing dope dealers. I'd call it Public Service, but in the newsroom we call it the same thing the police do: Misdemeanor Homicides."

"It was lead story and you buried it. 'Murder in the streets! Blood on the sidewalk! Crimers! Get with it! Your audience wants action, murder, mayhem! You gave them thirty-seconds VO!"

"Tabloid news is hype and you're suggesting viewers will flock to hyped news and cleave to our station like it's an issue of *Hot True Crime*?"

The consultant rose and began pacing the room. "Maybe you can tell me what you mean when you call your news programs 'an American institution,' O Great Defender of News PROgrams."

"Easy," the Boy said. "It's mentioned in the U.S. Constitution."

"It can't be! When that was written, there was no television! Gotcha there, Buddy-boy."

"It's the First Amendment. The one that guarantees freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, and freedom of the press. Maybe you've heard of some of those. There are other issues enumerated in the license granted by the FCC to broadcast in the public interest."

The consultant looked at the GM. "That true?" The GM nodded.

"We have a mandate from the network and they have dozens of lawyers..."

"The networks aren't licensed. Only the stations are."

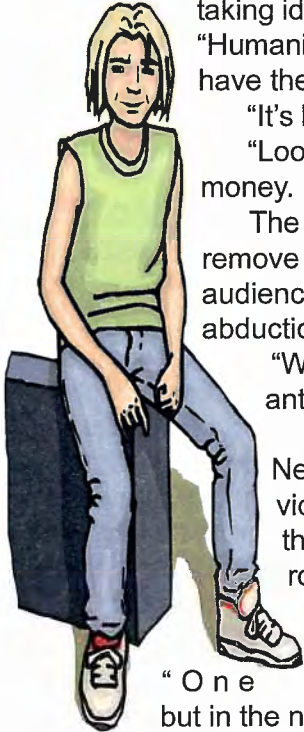
Another look at the GM and another nod and a new tactic. "Okay, Mr. News Guy, why are you against profits and a better life?"

"We're not talking about that. We're talking about homogenizing a product that will turn the humble task of gathering, editing, and presenting the news into a bland PROgram that has little to do with preserving the license or serving the needs of the community."

"What do you think will happen when we start doing it my way?"

"News will become a commodity. Stations will lose their identity. Audiences will tune in to see who's running the most blood on the sidewalk. News program will attempt to out-hype each other and news people will become 'personalities' hired for their blow-dry and their white teeth." The Boy took a deep breath. "And the First Amendment will become a joke."

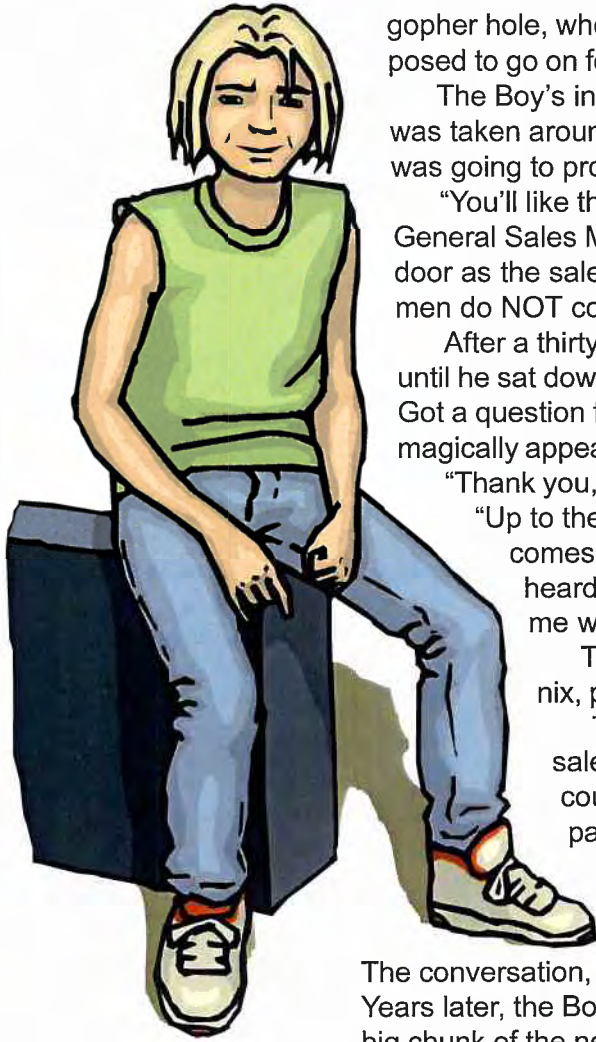
The room grew silent. The Boy rose and walked out. And, lo, all that he said came to pass.





# The Boy: Death of a Salesman

By **Jim Schock**



He wasn't supposed to die. The big Irisher who could charm a snake out of gopher hole, who had been a self-proclaimed "peddler" all his life, was supposed to go on forever. Everyone who knew him believed he would.

The Boy's introduction to the effervescent peddler man occurred when he was taken around to meet the executives as the new kid in the newsroom who was going to produce the late news and write award-winning documentaries.

"You'll like this guy," said the News Director as they stood outside the General Sales Manager's office door. The Boy could hear a ruckus behind the door as the sales boss reminded one of his guys, "You're a salesman! Salesmen do NOT come back to the office after lunch!"

After a thirty-second meet-and-greet the Boy did not see the man again until he sat down beside him one evening at the Newroom Annex. "Hiya, Kid. Got a question for ya." He said with an imperceptible nod that caused a drink to magically appear.

"Thank you," the Boy said.

"Up to the mouth and over the gums, look out stomach, here she comes," toasted the GSM, who then asked, "You're a news guy, I heard something at the airport I didn't understand, I want you to tell me what it was."

The Boy asked him what he heard. "Something like, "Mr. Phoenix, please report to the flight line."

The Boy smiled. "You heard it on the loudspeakers, right?" The sales guy nodded. "And you saw a lot of men head for a white courtesy phone." Another nod. "It's an emergency call. They're paging people."

"How do you know things like that?"

The Boy shrugged. "Most airports have changed the call to Airport Supervisor Phoenix, please report to the flight line."

The conversation, accompanied by another drink, cemented their friendship. Years later, the Boy asked for some help when a consultant wanted to spend a big chunk of the newsroom budget to design and build a new news set. "Tell 'em you never saw a set get a rating point," was the advice that saved the day.

Local television is not an endeavor that produces a lot of heroes, but the Big Guy was the exception. A few men march to a different drummer and the Boy forever wanted to fall in beside the Irish peddler guy and march to his. So did everyone else

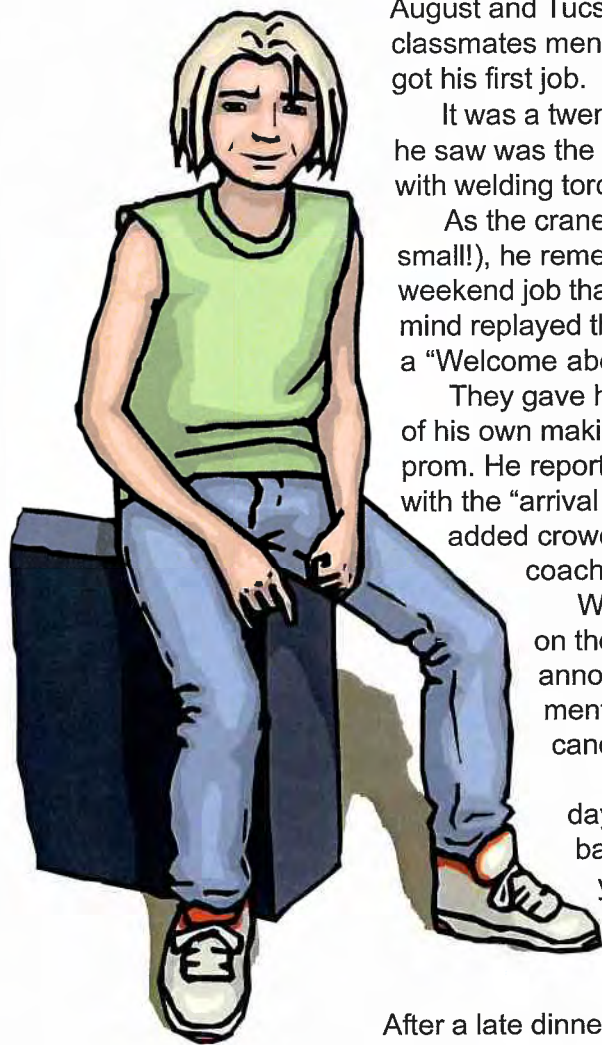
**Jim Schock** toiled in the newsrooms of KGO and KRON and served as Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News West Coast. He now writes novels and screenplays. You may reach him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com). He responds to all Broadcast Legends email.





# The Boy: Memories and Moonlight

By **Jim Schock**



The Boy was visiting his old high school and college hometown. It was August and Tucson was toasting at 105 degrees by noon when one of his old classmates mentioned they were tearing down the old radio station where he got his first job.

It was a twenty-minute drive to the site and when he parked, the first thing he saw was the tower lying on the ground, being sliced and diced by two men with welding torches. He had changed the beacon light on that tower once.

As the crane and wrecking ball methodically menaced the building (so small!), he remembered the lobby where he once waited for an interview for a weekend job that included a ten to midnight d.j. slot on Saturday night. Next his mind replayed the chat in the GM's office where he received a handshake and a "Welcome aboard."

They gave him full range to start his small-town d.j. career with a program of his own making, "Prom Night." Each Saturday he recreated an imaginary prom. He reported names of real teachers who were chaperones, followed with the "arrival of the Prom Queen," using names of girls he wanted to meet, added crowd-noise sound effects and one-minute interviews with various coaches.

Within a month "Prom Night" became the highest-rated program on the station, at which point The Boy was replaced by a staff announcer who attempted teen jokes, sly suggestions and did not mention a single name. Ratings plummeted and the show was cancelled. That was more painful than being replaced.

But it was here The Boy realized a first job is like... your first day of school, your first swimming lesson, your first hit in baseball, your first car, your first love. Of all of the firsts in your life, your first job is the best. You're getting paid to work, in the real world. Until that moment The Boy believed in his blood and bones that the first time he kissed a girl would always be his best First. But it wasn't; *this was*.

After a late dinner with friends lasting past ten o'clock, he returned to the station site. The tower had been carted away. He walked to the crumbled cinder block heap and in the cold moonlight that created a jumble of geometric shapes, he heard himself signing on "Prom Night" and introducing the first tune while twisting up the crowd-noise sound effect. The music, the applause, the laughter melded into one rich noise and it was as if he laid a finger on a star.

When the music ended, he picked up a small, precious piece of concrete that had once graced the entrance, put it in his pocket and waved goodbye to the ghost-building he saw in the moonlight. The modest station where he worked his first job was not gone; it would never be gone. Not now, not ever.

**Jim Schock** is a novelist/screenwriter who worked in newsrooms at KGO and KRON. He also served as Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News, West Coast and has just completed a new novel. You may contact him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com). He responds to all **Legends'** email.





# The Boy: The New Newsroom

By **Jim Schock**



He was hired in a bar by a TV news director who was also his station's anchorman, and with whom he'd swapped stories in three different San Francisco venues that served adult beverages. Joined by the camaraderie and trust that accompanies men who prefer dry gin on a stem, The Boy found himself back in the news game.

The station was located near City Hall in a converted Bekins warehouse and had the slowest elevator in the Bay Area, but it was a major slice of Heaven.

There were a few bumps. Stories were shot on single-system 16mm film, a wretched invention at best. The station didn't have a lab, newsfilm was processed by a commercial outfit a block down the street. There was one film editor. If he needed to cut two stories at once, he had to go upstairs to the Film Department.

There was no Teleprompter in the studio, and the only contact with news crews in the field was via iffy two-way radios in the trade-out, bare-bones cars. However, it wasn't as bad as the radio side, which shared the office where another ashtray wouldn't fit, and the radio cars had "2" painted on one side and "3" on the other to give the impression their news fleet could cause a traffic jam all by itself.

His first day on the job, subbing for a vacationing news producer, he couldn't find the tape room. However, within three weeks he was producing the 11:00 PM news and his first request was to reassign one of the news cameramen to a later shift. Asked why, he said, "As far as our viewers know, nothing happens after dark."

I need some stories that take place when the sun's not shining."

It required an additional meeting with the GM, but he got his cameraman and a guy in the lab to process the film.

He also rewrote everything from the early show so that not one story looked or sounded the same on the eleven. Sometimes he had a reporter cut a new track or change an interview. Anything to make the late news fresh.

Twice, because he had no reporter, he covered a story himself, though he didn't belong to the right union. Nobody noticed. Then he pulled what became known as "The Mayor Trick."

To celebrate his membership in AFTRA, he assigned himself to cover a late afternoon news conference at City Hall. Reporters sat around the Mayor's huge desk and asked questions. The Boy wrote on a 3x5 card, "My name is... and inserted his name. When he asked a question and the Mayor looked at him to give his reply, he saw the card and used The Boy's name three times during his response.

After, all the TV and radio reporters told him it was very bad form, but all the print reporters clapped him on the shoulder and said they'd like to buy him a drink.

The numbers began to edge up. Not all at once, and sometimes not enough families to earn a rating point, but up nevertheless. After the next book, suddenly the station's Late News was solidly in second place, stunning the competition into action.

The GM and the Sales Manager took The Boy and the News Director to lunch at an extremely fancy (expensive) restaurant. Mid meal, the GM asked them how they had accomplished their ratings coup. The Boy started to speak, but the News Director held up his hand, clinked glasses with The Boy and said, "Martinis on a stick."

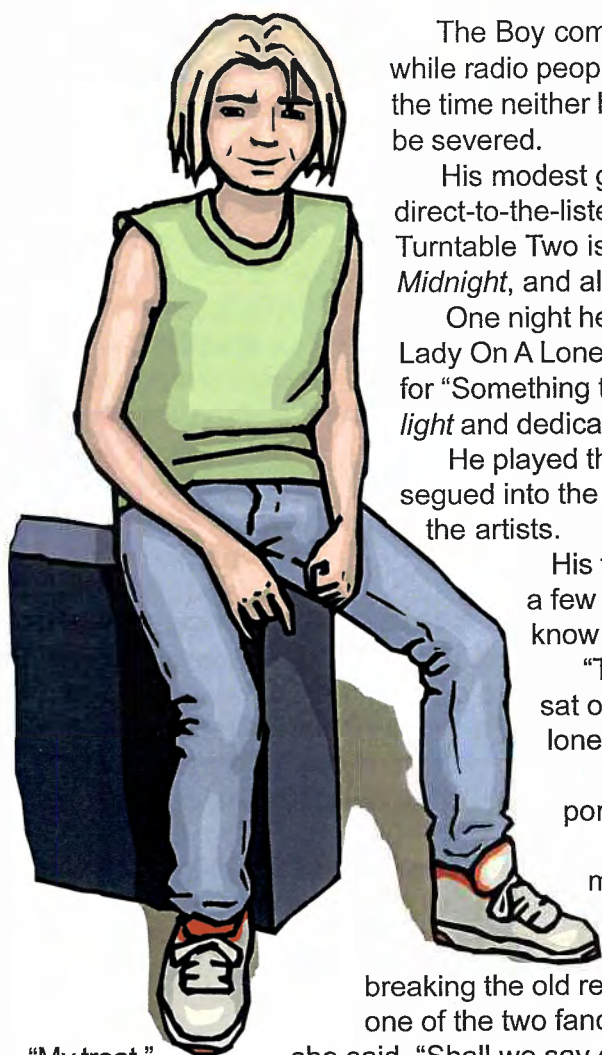
The Boy nodded.

**Jim Schock** toiled in Bay Area newsrooms at KGO and KRON and served as Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News West Coast. He now writes screenplays and novels. His latest is called, "Stealing Elvis."



# The Boy: Moonlight and Melodies

By **Jim Schock**



The Boy completed his d.j. career before computers picked the music, while radio people still talked to their listeners who made requests by phone. At the time neither he nor anyone in the business believed that vital link would ever be severed.

His modest gig, on a Tucson AM-er, was called *Music By Request*, and his direct-to-the-listener corny Open proclaimed, "MBR is where you are, and Turntable Two is reserved for you." His theme song was *Celery Stalks at Midnight*, and all his records were 78s.

One night he received a call for someone who dubbed herself "A Lonely Lady On A Lonely Night." Her voice seemed to call for initial caps. She asked for "Something to be lonely by," and hung up. The Boy played *Stella By Starlight* and dedicated it to all the lonely ladies within the sound of his voice.

He played the **Harry James** version and, perhaps for the first time on radio segued into the **Sinatra/Alex Stordahl** newer release, then back-announced the artists.

His three-line bank of phones lighted up. He watched them blink for a few seconds, then answered Line 1 because, though he didn't know how, he knew it would be Lonely Lady.

"Thank you," she said in That Voice. "I turned up the radio and sat on my front porch and watched the stars and stopped feeling lonely." Pause. "Why did you play it twice?"

"To give you time to turn up the radio and go out on your front porch."

"That's the most delicious white lie I've ever heard." It was the most delicious 'gotcha' the Boy ever heard. "Do you ever accept invitations to lunch from strange ladies?"

"All the time," he said. "And that's two white lies in a row, breaking the old record." She laughed and suggested a Thursday meeting at a one of the two fancy dining rooms in town.

"My treat," she said, "Shall we say one o'clock?"

"We shall," he said and listened to her laugh until the line went dead. The Boy got a haircut next morning and hoped it wouldn't show five days later on Lonely Lady Lunch Day.

He arrived a few minutes early and was immediately approached by the Maitre 'd who appraised him from head to toe, arched an eyebrow and inquired, "Are you dining with 'Lonely Lady, sir?" The Boy nodded, and all eyes in the restaurant turned toward him as he was escorted to the best table in the room.

A man and a woman sat at the table. The man rose. The Boy managed to control his quivering voice and said, "If this were a movie, I think my line would be, 'You don't look so lonely.'"

The man and woman laughed and the man extended his hand for a firm handshake. "Glad to meet you, Master Record Spinner, I'm **Stuart Granger** and this is my wife—"

"**Jean Simmons**, one of the greatest actresses in the world!" croaked the Boy. Trying unsuccessfully to hide his awkwardness, he continued, "May I kiss your hand or something?"

"Please sit. You may kiss her hand, but anything past the elbow is a fistfight, and those nasty things ruin a man's appetite."

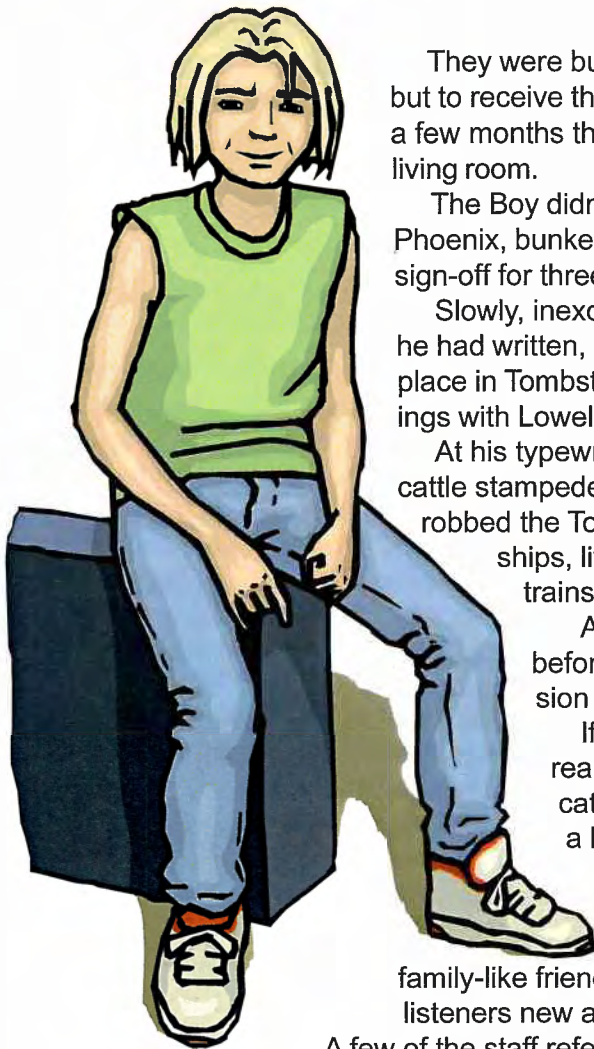
"For lunch, you mean." **Jean Simmons** laughed for a whole minute. The next two and a half hours were pure enchantment. The Boy relaxed and talked and laughed, poked at a chicken salad, drank wine, and prayed very hard the day would never end.

**Jim Schock** remained friends with the actors for many years until their deaths. He retired from TV News and now writes novels. His latest project is "The News Merchants."



# The Boy: Radio with Pictures

By **Jim Schock**



They were building a TV station in Tucson. There were a couple in Phoenix, but to receive them, you had to install a 50-foot tower on the roof of your house. In a few months these would come down, replaced by rabbit ears on the set in your living room.

The Boy didn't have a set in his living room or anyplace else, so he drove up to Phoenix, bunked with a college buddy and watched television from sign-on to sign-off for three days. On the drive home, he mulled over what he had seen.

Slowly, inexorably what television meant came to him. For the past four years he had written, produced, and directed a half-hour weekly radio show that took place in Tombstone, Arizona. The biggest part of his preparation involved meetings with Lowell, the engineer-soundman for the production.

At his typewriter, the Boy was free to script a gunfight, a barroom brawl, a cattle stampede, a barn dance, even a posse pursuing bad guys who had just robbed the Tombstone Bank. Before the western show, he wrote about space ships, living on the moon, and spanning the continent on high-speed trains.

All he had to do was get a copy of the script to Lowell five days before air, and do a run-through the day the program aired live. Television would not be so kind.

If he wanted a gunfight, there had to be props, guns that were realistic and fired blanks; costumes, locations, the works. A simple cattle rustle would require a) cattle, b) horses, c) wranglers, all of it – a lot of real people to conduct the business of movie-making. Yikes!

As he drove on under a sky of dark clouds, he made his decision. He would stick with radio, no matter where it took him. He would do so because radio was familiar, personal, family-like friendly, and he believed in the shared intimacy and closeness of listeners new and old.

A few of the staff referred to the onrushing medium as “radio with pictures” and the Boy laughed at the phrase and often repeated it. He also knew in his blood and bones that radio, after a clumsy beginning had righted its course, honed its skills, and went on to perfect an incomparable enchantment it now called “theater of the mind.” Nobody could top that, no sir, no way.

His decision lasted no more than three minutes as he pictured his audience, no longer creating pictures in their minds, but watching pictures created for them, with interpretations by actors and directors and editors and costumers and make-up artists and a legion of strangers who would take a script and make it over in their minds for an audience who would disconnect and become mere viewers, not collaborators.

There had to be brave writer-producers who would go to the mat to protect the words and ideas while creating new worlds for audiences, and to reinforce the connection necessary to sustain comedy and drama and sports in the hearts and minds of viewers. If not, a numbing, dumbing-down would consume the broadcast world. It was a gigantic challenge, a battle without end, but somebody had to do it.

When The Boy entered Tucson, he didn't drive straight home, instead making his way to the construction site of the TV station. A fresh wind had blown the heavy night clouds on down to Mexico and the scene beyond the chain-link fence was of stark, geometric shapes and hard-edged shadows.

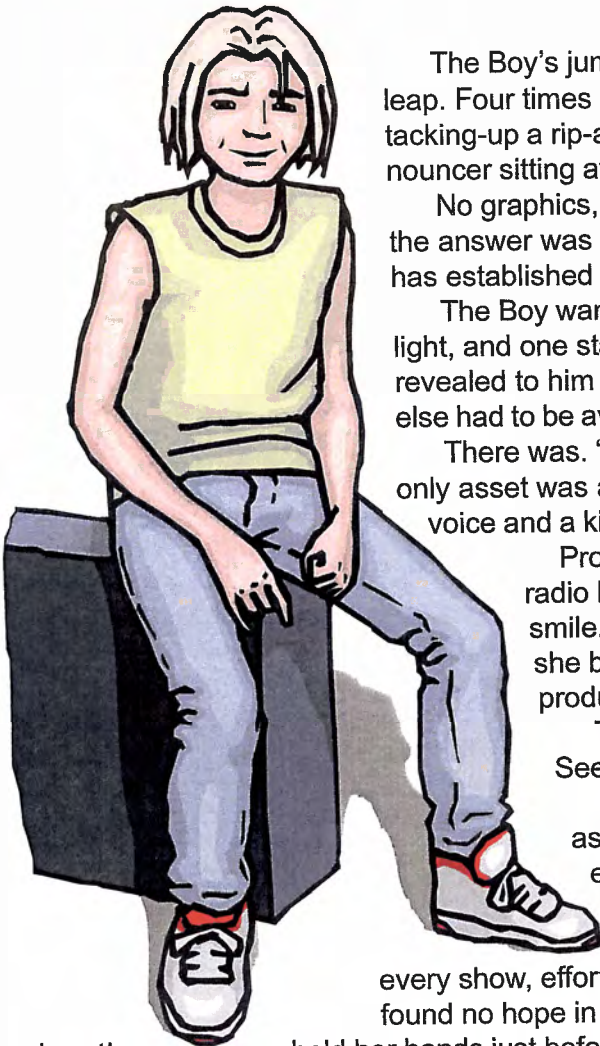
In the ivory light of a full moon, the Boy whispered two words, “Goodbye, radio.”

**Jim Schock** is a novelist-screenwriter who toiled in local newsrooms at KGO-TV and KRON, and served as Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News, West Coast. His current novel-in-progress is “The News Merchants.” You may contact him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com).



# The Boy: What TV Producers Do

By **Jim Schock**



The Boy's jump into this new television thing was more of a baby step than a leap. Four times a day he prepared a 15-minute newscast. Big deal, it meant tacking-up a rip-and-read newswire report that would be read by an "older" announcer sitting at a desk with a station logo behind him.

No graphics, no film, no beepers, just a guy, a desk. When he asked about it, the answer was always the same, "We are fulfilling the requirements the FCC has established for our license."

The Boy wanted to tell the FCC that news wasn't one guy, one desk, one key light, and one stapled-up account of AP and UPI news summaries. Then it was revealed to him that one doesn't stir the FCC from its slumber. Okay, something else had to be available.

There was. "The Woman's Hour," 15 minutes at 4:00 PM, M-F. The show's only asset was a beautiful woman in her 30's who possessed a warm contralto voice and a killer smile, 90% of the tools local TV talent required in those days.

Problem was she simply lost it when she entered the studio. On radio her voice was pleasant and personal and you could hear her smile. On television, her nervousness tightened her vocal chords and she became Mickey Mouse squeaky, and her smile resembled the one produced when a dentist says, "Open wide."

The Boy's assignment: "We're making you an Assistant Producer. See what you can do."

The first thing he did was watch her program for a week and felt as if he should be given a medal, or at least a merit badge for endurance. The lighting, which reminded him of an operating room, was softened and she looked better being awful.

He talked to her before she went and reviewed every element of every show, efforting utmost to explain away her nervousness, to no avail. He found no hope in pills, steered clear of hypnotism, had a local girl singer explain

relaxation, held her hands just before she went on, worked with engineers to tone down her squeak, discussed diet, booze, cigarettes, the price of tea in China, all still no avail.

Asked by Management how it was going, the Boy always said he felt a breakthrough was imminent, making himself feel for all the world like Young Doctor Malone or Dr. Christian. Or an associate producer.

Eventually, however, he cured her. It happened one day just outside Studio A when he was holding her hands and telling her how much he believed in her. "Just remember the First Rule of Life."

"What's the first rule of life?"

"The First rule of life is 'Never let someone believe more in you than you believe in yourself.'"

"That's IT?"

"That's it," said The Boy and he grabbed her head with both hands and planted a long, industrial-strength kiss on her mouth and when he grew breathless he let her go and stepped back to look at her. Her eyes were shining as she entered Studio A, did a perfect show in her perfect voice, became the Talk of the Town, and went on to bigger and better things.

The Boy smiled. Television was going to be a lot of fun.

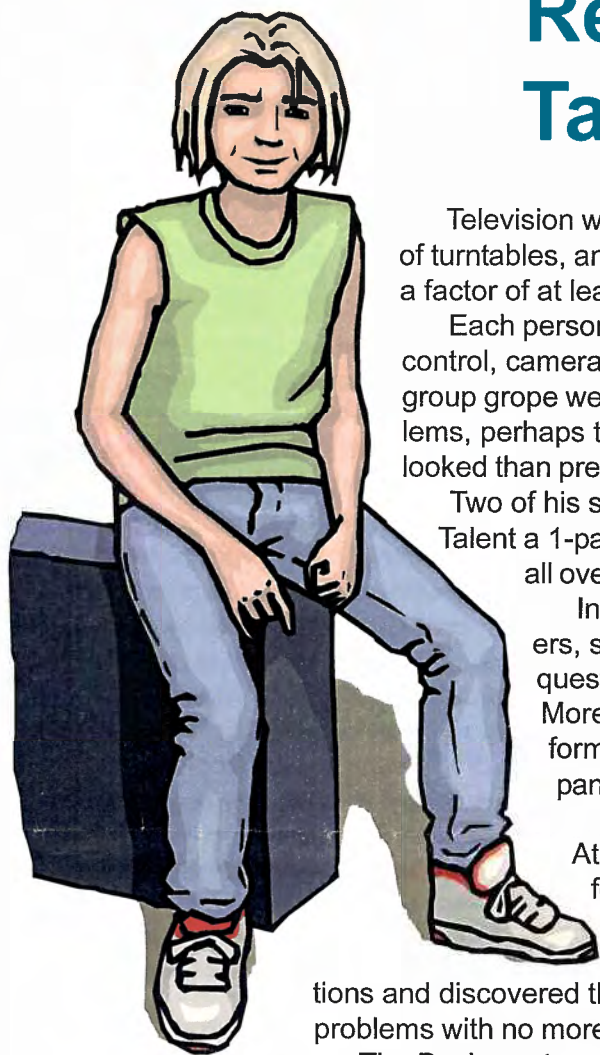
**JIM SCHOCK** spent a career in TV including newsroom stints at KGO and KRON, and was West Coast Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News. He retired to write novels and screenplays. You may reach him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com). He answers all email from **Legends** Members and Friends.





# The Boy: Stand By Camera Two Ready Camera Two Take One!

By **Jim Schock**



Television was different all right. In radio it was just you, a microphone, couple of turntables, and the audience. The Boy discovered Television multiplied that by a factor of at least 10.

Each person could do one thing and one thing only. Direct, audio, video control, camera (3), switcher, stage manager, playback, and announcer. As if that group grope weren't enough, it didn't take long to figure out that one of the problems, perhaps the problem, was that Talent spent more time preparing how they looked than preparing intellectually for the programs.

Two of his shows were public service half hours. In radio the producer gave Talent a 1-pager with b.g. and some Q's and let 'er rip, and 28:30 later, it was all over.

In television, the producer was forced to render opinions on blazers, shirts, ties hair, makeup and that was just the guys. The distaff questions ran more to "Can I interview the Governor in this dress?" More than once such encounters caused the Boy to reconsider his former career option in appliance sales at Sears Roebuck and Company.

But, as he discovered that first year, Talent wasn't the problem. At his insistence, each on-air person under his temporary charge for program prep and execution, had to sit with him and watch their programs one week later. During these sessions he made suggestions, gave hints about camera presence, followed ques-

tions and discovered those with their faces hanging out were quick to resolve their own problems with no more than a little helping hand now and then.

The Boy's next problem was different, so was the solution. After the first blush of appearing on TV passed, pols, coaches, businessmen started noticing how they looked on early b&w TV. The universal decision: N.S.G. Closeups showed wrinkles, scars and liver spots and, because of early lighting, perspiration. OK, sweat.

Lots to do. First, Tucson's short mayor appeared regularly on the Boy's program because his seat had two cushions and the news staff chairs were lowered. The sweat factor was cured by chilling the studios down and working under house lights until 2 minutes before recording.

The mayor's press secretary revealed his honor wouldn't be appearing on TV because of, well, wrinkles. The Boy consulted with the Chief Engineer who gave him two career-enhancing words, "soft focus."

However, the major problem he discovered was that TV people never had a problem, but did have a daily crisis of some kind. Language inflation became the next fix that awaited him. If he didn't manage that, he was sure to become well-acquainted with various models of next year's frost-free Kenmore fridge.

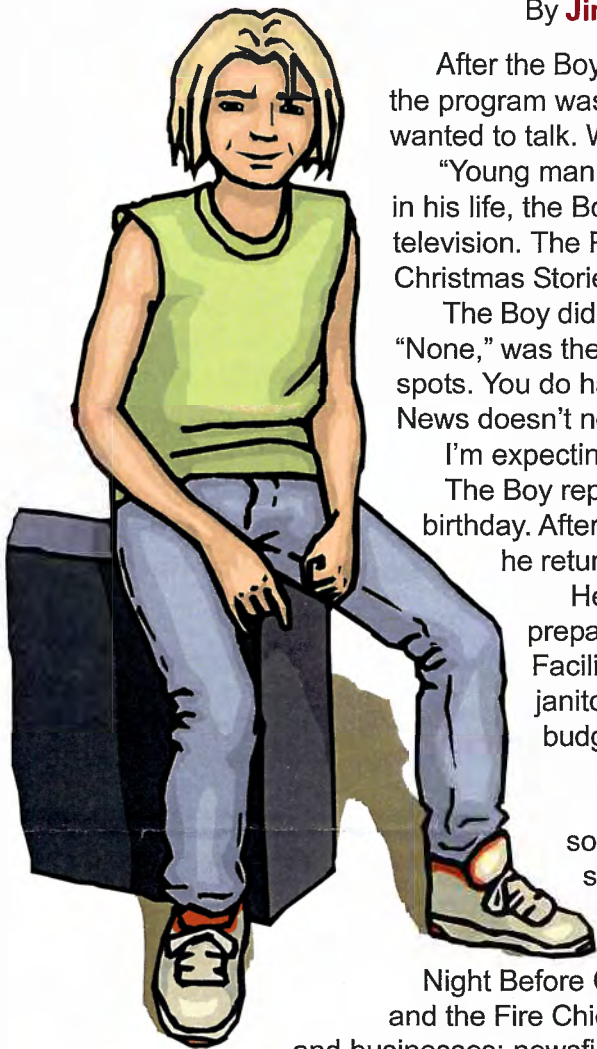


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# The Boy: Big Bag of Tricks

By **Jim Schock**



After the Boy had smoothed out the wrinkles of “Good Morning, Tucson,” and the program was cruising along and getting good numbers, the Program Director wanted to talk. When a PD wants to talk, it’s about problems.

“Young man,” he said, “We need a kick-ass Christmas Show.” Up to this point in his life, the Boy had never connected “kick-ass” with Christmas, but this was television. The PD continued, “Pull out all the stops. Music, choirs, soloists, Christmas Stories – nothing over three minutes – pretty girls, you know the drill.

The Boy did not know the drill, but he nodded and asked about the budget. “None,” was the reply. “Public Service, but we might want to sell a couple of spots. You do have full use of the studio – No O/T! — and film cameras when News doesn’t need them.

I’m expecting a prize-winner.” Those last words were always his last words.

The Boy replied, “No sweat,” and went to work. It was November 14<sup>th</sup>, his birthday. After over-celebrating, he stayed out of the station for a week. When he returned, Management wanted a Presentation or his head, his choice.

He considered Presentations “Lying on paper” and he was well-prepared to show the GM, the PD, Sales Manager, Chief Engineer, Facilities Manager, Art Department, News, and Public Affairs, and the janitors if there was room for them, what you do when you have no budget.

“Tell us about your little show,” said the GM.

The Boy took a deep breath and announced, “This year ‘A Tucson Christmas’ will include 49 choirs, 3 of them children, 4 of them singing in Spanish, two black congregations; holiday wishes from 25 top teachers and coaches, 4 in dual languages; 24 greetings from top retailers in town; a retirement center recitation of The

Night Before Christmas; greetings from the Mayor, Chief of Police, and the Fire Chief; 10 dancing Santas, a Ho-Ho-Ho contest; decorated homes and businesses; newsfilm of past charity Christmas dinners; a beeper from the Governor;

a pets-dressed-as-reindeer segment; and several other events not yet confirmed.

“That’s a lot to cram into an hour.”

“It’s actually 12 hours, one each night, as in ‘The Twelve Days of Christmas’. And it runs all day December 25<sup>th</sup>.”

“And how much is this epic going to cost, young man?”

Two and a half days of studio taping time, one day of film shooting, 10 days of editing, and zero O/T. The greetings by business leaders are paid for at Rate Card prices, and because of the reduced crew requirements on Christmas day, the savings should make it all a wash.”

“And the advertisers...?”

The Sales Manager stood-up. “Signed, sealed, and delivered.” He held up a sheaf of papers. “And we made a lot of new friends in the business community.”

The Program Director broke in. “It’s a joke, can’t be done.”

The GM held up a hand and studied the young man for a moment. The Boy met his eyes and said, “Can do, sir.”

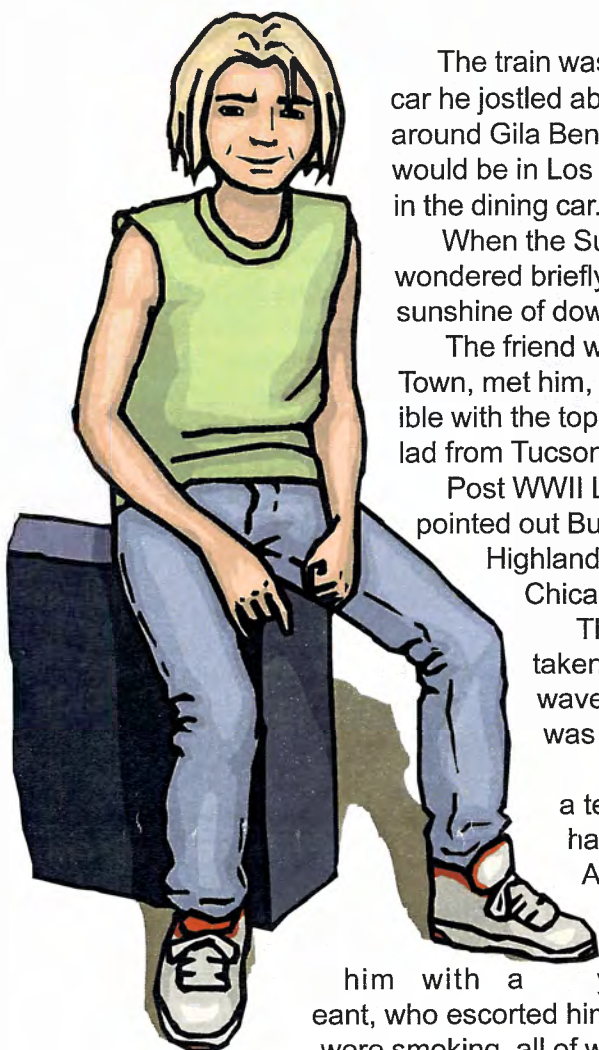
“Then, by Christmas, go to it!” Everyone in the room applauded except the PD who asked the Boy if he had a backup plan if things didn’t work out.”

The Boy smiled. “We tape an hour of a yule log burning and play Christmas carols.” Everyone applauded again and the Boy took a deep breath and most of the oxygen out of the room. It was to be his last Christmas in the minor leagues.



# The Boy: The Big Break

By **Jim Schock**



The train was late and The Boy didn't depart until after two a.m. In the Pullman car he jostled about in his lower berth until he fell asleep somewhere, he figured, around Gila Bend. The porter awakened him the next morning, announced they would be in Los Angeles in about two hours and breakfast was still being served in the dining car.

When the Sunset Limited pulled into Union Station, he retrieved his bags, wondered briefly where he would be after Labor Day and walked into the dazzling sunshine of downtown LA.

The friend who had helped him get a job in what he referred to as Tinsel Town, met him, loaded The Boy and his luggage into his peppy little Ford convertible with the top down and advised they'd just cruise around a while to give the lad from Tucson a chance to get the lay of the land.

Post WWII LA swirled past as they drove along wide boulevards and his host pointed out Bunker Hill, the Angel's Flight Tram, the Los Feliz district and the Highland Park area that reminded The Boy of a tree-shaded street in Chicago he visited when he was eleven.

They coasted down the street to Melrose where he had his picture taken in front of the Paramount gate where **Cecil B. DeMille** was waved in driving a Lincoln convertible. The Boy estimated his pulse was clocking about 140.

Then it was time to meet his new employer. Although it was only a temporary summer job, a few LA friends convinced him once you had a credit, even a summer one, jobs weren't that hard to find.

Although he did not believe it, he could feel a hook, line, and sinker jostling in his stomach.

Surprise, the receptionist in the lobby had his name and paired him with a young woman who must have come fresh from a beauty pageant, who escorted him to a large room filled with a long table at which sat a dozen men were smoking, all of whom ignored him. A feeling crept over him that instead of typing,

he should have taken Auto Shop.

His girl guide whispered a "Welcome aboard" and showed him to the only empty chair at the table, smiled and made an exit accompanied by a chorus of what were then called 'wolf whistles.'

The Man entered the room and voices were lowered and silent by the time he sat down. His eyes made a circuit of the table and landed on The Boy. He smiled, made a couple of cracks about his writing staff hating any guy without a cheap sport coat, and he should pay no attention to them.

The boy smiled back and said, "That's all right, sir, they haven't had the advantages I've had."

"And what would those be, Son?"

"I can type and spell."

The room exploded with laughter and each of the cold and distant men smiled, nodded to each other and offered eye-welcomes he would never forget.

Meanwhile the man at the other end of the table rose, walked the length of the room and put out his hand. The Boy stood, knees shaking and smiled, which came out more than like a gas pain grimace, but grasped the hand offered him and heard the man say, "Pay no attention to this pack of ex-felons.

Welcome, my name's **Bob Hope**."

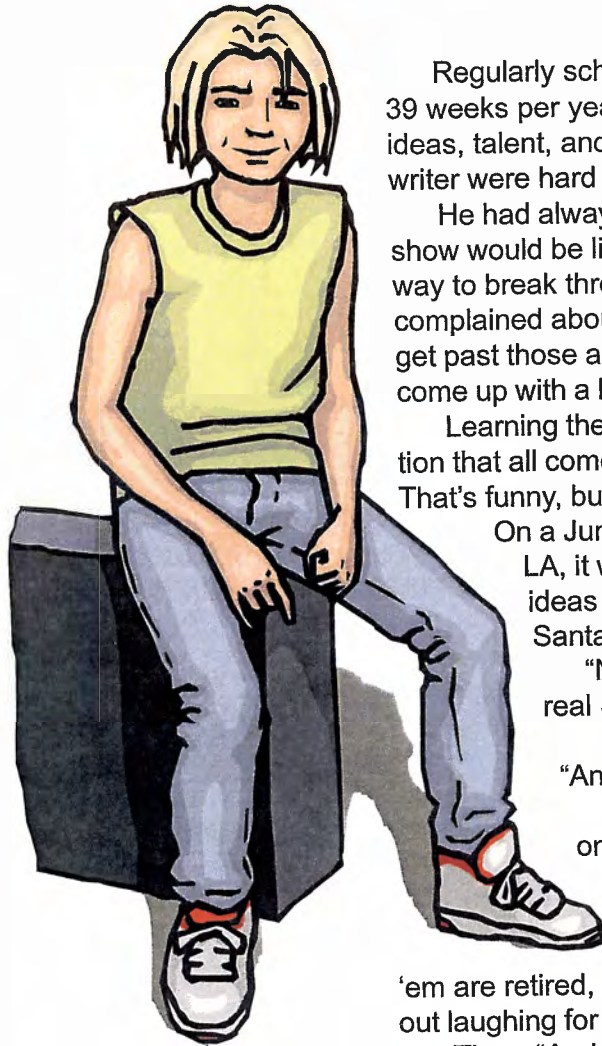
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# The Boy: The Summer of Hope

By **Jim Schock**



Regularly scheduled radio programs, comedies, dramas, whatever, played 39 weeks per year. For 13 weeks in summer, replacement shows tested new ideas, talent, and, sometimes, writers. The first month as a \$30 a week comedy writer were hard on The Boy.

He had always imagined, metaphorically, that working on a radio comedy show would be like coming to work to eat ice cream. No way. He had to find a way to break through to these frowning, downbeat men each of whom constantly complained about heartburn, constipation, coughing spasms, and lumbago. To get past those ailments and gain entrance to their inner circle, he would have to come up with a line, a killer line.

Learning the craft of comedy writing, a daunting task, began with the revelation that all comedy contains an element of pain. ("A man slips on a banana peel. That's funny, but it ain't so funny for the guy who slips is it?) Lesson One.

On a June day with the temperature hovering in the mid-90's in downtown LA, it was announced the day's work would be knocking out some ideas for a Christmas Show. Four of the old guys shout, "Bob plays Santa."

"No," The Boy said quietly. "Bob runs a School for Santas and the real Santa is in one of his classes." Cold silence.

The Head Writer leaned back from the table, eyed The Boy, "And?"

"And Bob kicks him out of class." Silence. "So Santa takes him on a dry run and Bob has to drive the sleigh."

"And?"

"And he can't get 'em started because he doesn't know their names." A nod. "Dancer, Prancer, Donner, Blitzen and the rest of 'em are retired, see?" Three seconds of silence and everyone in the room bursts out laughing for more than a minute, laugh-tears gliding through their chin stubble.

Then: "And that's funny because?"

"Because I'm just a dumb college kid who wants to get Bob in a sleigh on Christmas Eve with. . . " Everyone leans toward him. The Boy picks up the pace. "On Christmas Eve Bob takes Dorothy Lamour with him. . . to navigate. Or something."

"And she sings to make the reindeer Go. Can we make the reindeer Jewish?" Another nod. "And the real Santa is **Jerry Colonna** who wants to set up a reindeer taxi service and doesn't know where to find reindeer who know how to fly."

Silence for an extended moment, then: "The SPCA would be all over us like stink on manure, but you had one good line." He paused and The Boy began to puff up. "And that line was, 'I'm just a dumb college kid.'" Everyone in the room burst out laughing including The Boy, as he realized he was going to have to go to college all over again that summer and he was going to love every minute of it.

**Jim Schock** never made Bob Hope's Christmas card list, but did see him several times over the years. Mr. Hope died in 2003 at age 100. The Boy is still chugging along in his 80's. You may reach him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com) You'll receive a reply.

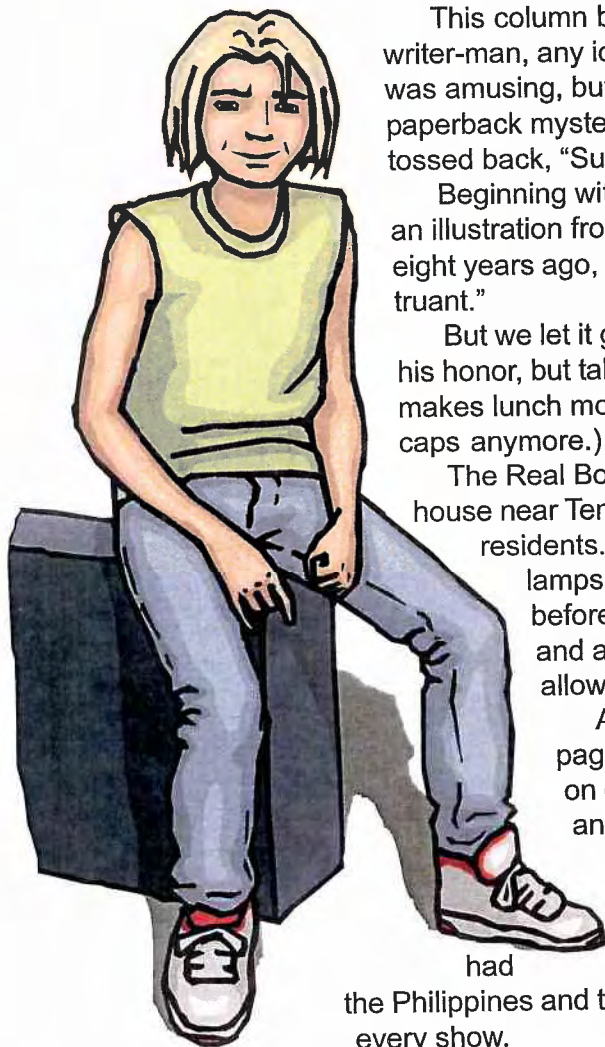




# The Boy:

## The Boy Behind “The Boy”

By **Jim Schock**



This column began when **Knowles Robertson**, bless him, asked me, “Hey, writer-man, any ideas suitable for the **Legends Newsletter**?” The ‘suitable’ part was amusing, but after writing for a couple of popular newspapers, scribbling paperback mystery novels, and churning out a series of documentaries on TV, I tossed back, “Sure, why not?”

Beginning with the first appearance of “The Boy,” has been accompanied by an illustration from **Knowles**’ free-graphics CD and from the first column about eight years ago, I’ve hated it. Asked why, my terse reply was always, “Looks like a truant.”

But we let it go. After **Knowles** died, I decided to continue with the truant in his honor, but take a look for the last time at tow-headed kid who looks like he makes lunch money stealing BMW hubcaps. (Okay, Beemers don’t have hub caps anymore.)

The Real Boy was not that urban. He was born in the bedroom of a farmhouse near Templeton, Indiana, a town that probably never had more than 90 residents. (But it’s still on the map.) He lived without electricity (kerosene lamps) or running water (a pump in the woodshed) but learned to read before he attended a one-room schoolhouse that, yes, had a BOYS and a GIRLS – outhouses. With no electricity, on dark days you were allowed to put your head on your desk and nap, a luxury for farm kids.

Around the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, The Boy purchased a crystal set from the pages of Popular Mechanics Magazine and constructed a radio and on good nights could pick up stations in Indianapolis and Chicago and a new world came to him.

His radio friends included **Fibber** and **Molly**, **Jack Armstrong** (played by **Jim Ameche** 1933-39, The Tom Mix Ralston Straights-hooters featured **Tom Mix** and when The Boy discovered Mr. Mix served with **Teddy Roosevelt**’s Rough Riders and saw action in the Philippines and the Boer War, he tried to tune in the three-a-week production’s every show.

It was the **Dr. Christian** program that caught his ear and his interest most because it held a script contest every year where listeners were encouraged to send in scripts to compete for a \$2,000 first prize. He entered, paying \$2 from his 25-cents-a-week allowance for a typist, but never won. Undeterred, he began calling himself a radio writer.

He was not yet 12 years old.

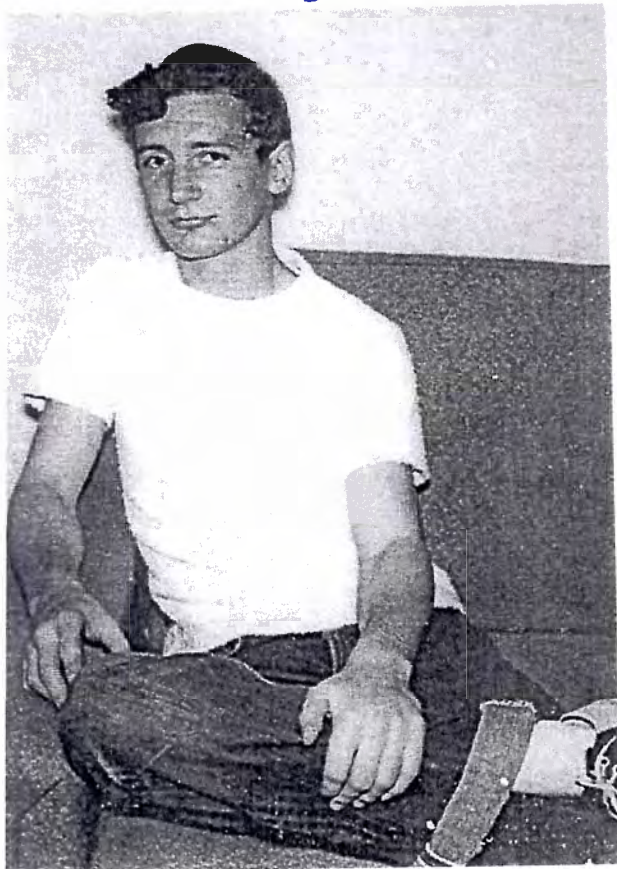
**Jim Schock**, retired, now writes novels and screenplays, but formerly toiled in the news-rooms of KGO and KRON, and served as Bureau Chief, ABC-TV West Coast. He serves as a Board Member for **Broadcast Legends**.





# The Boy: Transition Time in Tucson

By **Jim Schock**



No more free-graphic towhead, here's the real Boy at 15, and this Kodak Moment (remember those?) was taken by his mother after they left the Indiana farm and moved to Tucson, Arizona.

The Boy adapted quickly to city living even if his new home had only one highschool and two buildings over six stories high. Real Indians shopping at the five and dime, rodeos ('scuse me, ro-DAY-os), great Mexican food, the works.

When he entered Tucson High as a Sophomore he didn't mind the fact THS ran two sessions per school day nor American History at 7:00a.m. He liked what seemed to be a dress code, or at least what each and every boy wore to school each and every day, without exception: tee shirt and Levi's.

He added his own touch – saddle shoes instead of Keds..

But what he liked the most wasn't the clothes or the early classes, or playing on the football team, but the radio stations – all three of them. One for CBS, one for NBC, and one for something called Mutual Don Lee.

The boy found a job bagging groceries and stocking shelves at a Chinese grocery and spent most of his first week's pay at a second-hand store on a small bakelite radio with a plug-in jack for earphones.

This enabled him to do his home work while listening to a world of new friends on shows like "The Air Adventures of **Jimmy Allen**," "**Arch Obler's** Plays," **Art Baker** and **Arthur Godfrey**, **Baby Snooks**, **Mary** and **Larry Noble** ("Backstage Wife"), and a news guy, **Steve Wilson** whose newspaper, The Illustrated Press, sported the slogan, "Freedom of the press is a flaming sword. Use it justly; hold it high; guard it well."

Overall, the then-small western town that was like a new planet to the former bib overalls, clod-hopper farm boy. Lonely at first, he did not find new friends because radio consumed The Boy. Eventually it began to interfere with his side job, writing and selling short stories to pulp magazines. The stories paid little, a quarter-cent a word or the princely sum of \$12.50 for a 5,000 words short story for, say, *Ranchland Romances*.

The writing was fine, but radio was the magic carpet and The Boy adjusted his sights to the broadcast medium and made a pact with himself: He would be on the radio before his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

That felt swell. Now all he had to do was invent himself a program that would get him there.

**Jim Schock**, retired, now writes novels and screenplays, but formerly toiled in the news-rooms of KGO and KRON, and served as Bureau Chief, ABC-TV West Coast. He serves as a Board Member for **Broadcast Legends**.





# The Boy: Getting on the Radio Job One



By **Jim Schock**

One of the lessons The Boy learned on the farm was that if you want to fire a rifle or shotgun, you must first acquire a target. That knowledge simplified his search. He also realized a program for his audience should air when targeted listeners were available. He later learned radio-speak for these items: "demographics" and "timeslot."

He'd been told radio people were busy so he limited his presentation to one page, headed by the program title, TEEN TIME. His target KVOA, the NBC affiliate and the powerhouse station in Tucson at 1000 watts Daytime, 500 watts after sundown. The call letters meant "Voice of Arizona."

The Boy would write and produce and proposed rotating Host duties to a different teen each week, from Captain of the Football team to cheerleaders to Honor Students, and Student Actors all first-rate Teen Talent. Off-the-record, there were a couple of Senior girls he'd like to meet.

Other features would include interviews with class officers, coaches, school announcements, cafeteria menus, and a weekly 1-minute rundown of gas prices for teen hotrodders. New, Self-Serve outlets were charging under 25¢ per gal in that bygone era.

Each program would feature a girl singer alternating with a Mariachi trio of his buddies. Total: 29:30 of news, information, peppy chat, music and six minutes of commercials, tah-dah!

Big problem: Who should he pitch it to? GM? PD? Public Service? Walking to school one morning The Boy had an idea right there on the front steps of Tucson High School: Send it to the Sales Manager!

He did just that and two afternoons later he was seated across from a man who smelled of gin and cigalets, meaning, of course, this was the big time.

The man lighted a cigaret, waved the one-page and said, "I like it, Kid. We'll log it as public service and sell spots. Ten a.m. on Saturday mornings, you get five bucks a week. When can you start?"

"Today's Thursday, how about day after tomorrow?" They shook hands on it and The Boy looked at his watch. From Sophomore hick student to Radio Producer in ten minutes, not bad. Back on the sidewalk, he buffed his nails on his shirtfront.

His next lesson would be one he had to pass many times: Promise vs Performance, because ten o'clock Saturday morning was hurtling toward Mr. Teen Producer like a runaway locomotive. All he had to do was find a host, a girl singer, an interviewee, theme music, and a script.

And he had 43 hours and 45 minutes to do so. It was at this point The Boy discovered he was in a crosswalk on a busy street and several cars honking at him.



The Boy survived to continue a broadcast career that included the newsrooms of KGO-TV, KRON, and a stint as Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News, West Coast. He now writes films and novels. You may reach him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com).



# The Boy: The BIG TAH-DAH!



At the conclusion of the forty-four hours and forty-three minutes The Boy had between landing a deal to write, produce, and direct a Saturday half-hour "Teen Time" radio program, he had written a script, acquired the services of a girl singer, arranged a telephone interview with the Tucson High basketball coach, chosen theme music, and was now sitting in Studio At twenty-seven minutes before air time with a couple of little problems.

First, the basketball coach cancelled "due to a family Emergency." The Boy later learned Coach had a golf date. Second, his pal Ed, whom he had picked to Host the show walked out for reasons never explained, and the girl singer's piano player was complaining about the studio piano not being up to his personal standards.

In a flash, The Boy learned how the best-planned radio program could evolve from being a magic carpet that transported listeners to another dimension, and transform itself into an ordinary, run-of-the-mill pain in the . . . uh-hem, rear end.

On top of that, when he explained his problems to the PD, all he got was carefully modulated, "I understand, but the show must go on. Play a couple of records or something." Without the interview and facing a petulant pianist, he envisioned his 28:30 masterpiece was going to sign off at approximately 10:21:15 and nobody would remember "Teen Time" past lunch time.

He decided he needed a little fresh air and was thinking when he got outside that he might run away, change his name, and study air conditioning maintenance.

And then who should come walking down the sidewalk but a TPD policeman. Click! The Boy's fertile young mind came alive and he talked the cop into appearing on his show to fill three minutes of former Coach Talk into "Driving Tips Teenagers Should Always Keep in Mind." The offer of a cup of coffee clinched the deal.

Back in the studio, he found the girl singer's accompanist had left, but he sat down at the piano played the her tune all the way through as she hummed along side him. "It'll work, let's do it," she said and kissed him on the cheek.

He returned to the Host's microphone in time to hear the station announcer say, "It ten a.m. in Tucson, B-U-L-O-V-A Watch Time," and his Teen Time theme hit the air.

The cop, Officer Robinette, turned out to be the star. He revealed he'd gone to college with girl singer's father, and reminded her not to date boys with bad driving habits. Turned out she was dating a driving instructor's son, whereupon the policeman dished out a one-liner, "And if I may, let me add the you should be even more careful when the motor is not running."

That remark brought applause and laughter from the GM, the PD, the Sales Manager, and a half-dozen clients who'd gathered in the lobby. Everyone in the station told The Boy how much they liked the variety, the pacing, the content, the theme music, and everything else.

No one cared the program didn't exactly match the newspaper blurb and no one missed the scheduled host, the basketball coach, or the petulant pianist.

Alone in the studio later that day, The Boy wrote on the top page of the script, "Always nail everything down." Years later when he came across the script he underlined those words three times.



The Boy continued in radio and went on to a career that included toiling in the news-rooms of KGO-TV and KRON, as well as a stint as Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News, West Coast. Retired, he now writes novels and screenplays. You may contact him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com). You'll receive a reply.



# The Boy: Radio After Dark



"Teen Time" was a hit from day one, but The Boy didn't relax until after ten shows when the anxiety cramps receded. His English teacher, an elderly lady (55!) asked him why he worried about it so much. He calmly replied, "Every journey begins with the burden of hope."

Anxious to improve his weekly stipend of five dollars, he volunteered to become Record Librarian, logging in newly-received 78s on 3x5 cards and adding them to the Cardex drawers. He also began adding comments such as "Stately," "Foxtrot," and "Romantic," his own categories, "Jumpy" "Bluesy," "Last Dance," "B'fast Tune," "Jitterbuggy", "Star-filled nights," "Steamy," "and others.

When the PD asked him what "Steamy" meant, The Boy mumbled something about steaming up the windows of a '46 Chevy on a cold desert night. Instead of a reprimand, he was asked if he'd like an occasional fill-in gig on the station's late-night (10:00PM) program, 'Music By Request,' MBR for short. He quickly agreed, but there was a catch. The job required a First Class Phone – an FCC 'ticket.'

He enrolled in a class that "Guaranteed an FCC Certificate," but after flunking the test three times, the instructor pulled him aside. "How'd you learn to send Morse Code like that?" (Required for a license.) He explained he received a telegraph Christmas toy when he was a kid and taught himself to use it. "When you were a kid, eh?" The Instructor laughed for two full minutes and re-scored his test to Pass. At first reluctant, the Boy finally decided the real engineers were at the transmitter outside town, and all he would do was play records and key a mic.

He sought advice from the station's DJ staffers and they merely laughed and asked him to fetch coffee. It was an engineer who took him aside and advised, "Be somebody else, that's the key." And so The Boy became Barry Knight, who hosted MBR from his Star Cruiser parked 1.7 miles over the high Sonoran Desert of the American Southwest.

Goofy, yes, but three days after his second fill-in stint, the station received over 300 postcard requests from far-away places: Denver, Albuquerque, El Paso, and Tulsa – all firsts for an AM broadcaster with 1000W daytime, 500W after sundown. His success cost him his job.

The GM called him in, announced his DJ career was over, but if he would write ad libs for the guy who'd be hosting MBR, he'd be paid ten dollars a week. The Boy inquired about a writing credit. "Of course not!" boomed the station's highest executive, "but I'll make it twelve dollars." As the Boy's future plans did not include broadcasting, he quickly agreed. For a good reason.

The day before he received a check for a five-thousand word short story from a pulp magazine called, Ranchland Romances. It was for \$12.50, one-quarter of a cent per word. Dollars signs began spinning around in his head. That morning he opened a savings account for his college fund to ensure his dream/wish – a PhD in History.

"No regrets?" the GM asked, offering a handshake to seal the deal.

"None, sir." The GM patted his the young man's shoulder and smiled. The Boy smiled, too, knowing he would never forget Radio and what it meant to his life, plus the knowledge that radio, even local stations, needed writers. On top of that, in less than two months, it would be his 16th birthday and he wouldn't have to work his regular summer gig, clerking in Tom Wing June's grocery store.

On his way out he stopped and loaded up on typewriter ribbons.

**Jim Schock** spent more time in broadcasting, including the newsrooms of KGO-TV and KRON, and a stint as Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News, West Coast. You may contact him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com). You'll get a reply.





# The Boy: Star Encounters



Somewhere along the way, aided by the Teen Time radio show he'd invented when he was fifteen, The Boy learned about celebrities. While Tucson was far off the beaten track of showbiz people, a few stalwarts managed to visit The Old Pueblo, a sub-title the City Fathers had added to the town, population about 45,000.

The first of these was Isodore Itzkowitz, a collaborator on the song, *Merrily We Roll Along*, in 1935, stage name, Eddie Cantor. Unknown to the boy the Broadway star was visiting the radio station while in town to record PSAs for a local chapter of a national charity. The Boy finished a Saturday morning Teen Time and was collecting his script and music when out of the corner of his eye he saw a hand pick up his hat, a cowboy Stetson, don it and break into a popular tune of the time, "Mule Train."

They exchanged names and the station GM advised The Boy Mr. Cantor's visit was over but when he heard the opening of Tucson's New Teen Center, he wanted to know more about it. That brought forth a confession that it was an account of a fictional place to help gain some much-needed publicity for a teen venue which had never succeeded in acquiring a budget from the City.

After a brief commiseration, The Boy felt encouraged to ask Mr. Cantor if perhaps he could cut a quick :60 endorsing the idea and followed with a passionate version of how the comedian had come up with the slogan, *March of Dimes*. The star demurred, citing political reasons, but suggested if a Teen Center ever became a reality, time permitting, he'd help open it, in person. The Boy played a ragged version of *Makin' Whoopee* to accompany Mr. Cantor's exit.

Later he met Gene Autry, who'd acquired KOPO, a local AM station and changed to KOLD, to sister-it with his Phoenix station, KOOL-AM. Later, there were TV stations with these call letters.

His most-engaging encounter, however, occurred when he was horseback riding at a schoolmate's ranch near Tucson and roped a runaway calf just as a man and woman rode up on horseback in search of the animal. As they were introducing themselves, The Boy smiled and began to shake his head. "No need for that, I know who you are." When they asked for proof of his knowledge, he said, "You're King of the Cowboys." The strangers laughed, dismounted and kept laughing so much The Boy feared they might actually believe they were Roy Rogers and Dale Evans.

No chance. They were two A-List Hollywood stars, Stewart Granger and Jean Simmons – in the flesh and fine flesh it was, too. Within a few minutes he realized they were the kindest, most charming, intelligent, gracious, and genuine people he had ever met. One thing led to another and that evening he sat under the carpet of stars that graced the Arizona night and dined with them in the patio of their sturdy ranch house home.

It was a dinner of discovery. The Boy admired the grace and ease that had earned them their stardom, and lent elegance to even their most casual remarks. Moreover, they displayed their love for each other without flaunting it, and without speaking it aloud, but with a smile, a laugh, and unconscious but telling looks of admiration and caring.

He rode back to his friend's ranch under a rising moon that turned the gently rolling hills into a vast sea of grass and he began to smile, realizing he had been treated to an evening of Love on a silver platter. He learned Love wasn't mere words, or flowers, or valentines. No, Love wore an enduring cloak of honor, respect, and devotion. It was one enchanted evening, he was seventeen years old and he knew this night was etched forever in his young brain. He never figured out how to use it on his show, but that didn't matter.



**Jim Schock** left his cowboy hat in Tucson, later toiled in the newsrooms of KGO-TV and KRON, and served as Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News West Coast. He now writes screenplays and novels. His current work-in-progress is *The News Merchants*. E-mail him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com) you'll receive a reply.



# The Boy: The Big Bad World Awaits

By **Jim Schock**



After starting "Teen Time" when he was fifteen and a high school sophomore, The Boy discovered some years fly by at light speed. He found himself a senior and headed for that grand adventure called college, a nice local campus of about 6,900 students in those days. (Now 40,000+ enrollment.)

With a gigantic measure of reluctance, he handed off the radio show to a couple of pals, pulled occasional shifts at the station and worked on a writing career, specializing in pulp magazine short stories. From these he earned 1/4¢ per word, or \$12.50 for five-thousand word detective magazines that usually featured covers awash with buxom blondes in various stages of dishabille. Despite the money and a growing reputation, his mother would not allow him to work on the stories at home, so he typed them up at school or the radio station.

Every year he entered scripts under five or six different names for the Dr. Christian radio show, hoping to win the \$2,000 grand prize or even \$500 awards for listener scripts.

Despite the fact that the character etched by Jean Hersholt could be Cupid one week and a detective the next, the young author blamed his failure on the fact that radio, in all its genius, could not recreate scantily-clad blondes with long eyelashes and pouty lips.

At seventeen, with a long and growing list of short stories to his credit, he decided it was time to try a novel. After all a best-selling author's advice in a writers' magazine suggested a novel was just a dozen or so short stories, so how hard could it be?

He worked for a month on the plot, outlined each chapter, and sat down and wrote the 65,000 words in less than six weeks and took it to the Christmas party at the radio station where he worked part-time.

One of the station owners was the novelist, Erskine Caldwell, a prolific Southern writer of "Tobacco Road," "God's Little Acre," "Place Called Esterville," and many more sharecropper stories. As the party reached a high point, or low point, he was never quite sure which was which, he approached the author with his pencil-corrected manuscript and asked if would read it. "Glad to, young man, glad to."

The Boy would not see Mr. Caldwell again until a Valentine Day party for sponsors, whereupon he immediately asked the gentleman from Georgia if he had read his "golly, gee-whiz" first-try novel. He had and he took the boy to the GM's office, produced the manuscript and said, "It's good, son." Need any work? "No. Just retype it and send it in." He did so, but unfortunately not a single editor at any of the thirty-one publishers he sent it to shared Mr. Caldwell's enthusiasm. Floparoonie.

He did not attempt another novel for the next seven years.

However, to the delight of his English teachers, he enjoyed capturing a few national scholastic prizes and the little ceremonies they created pleased him, and he thanked each of them profusely, never bothering to mention his well-paying pulp magazine career.

And then High School was history with yet one-more memory-clasping event. As a farm kid in Indiana he had attended a one-room schoolhouse with thirty-eight students, grades 1-8. At his twelveth-grade graduation, held in the football stadium, he received his diploma along with eight-hundred and ninety-six other students.

Next stop: College. The Boy was excited and absolutely certain he would be able to find all of the eight or nine girls he fell in love with at Tucson High, somewhere on the campus of the University of Arizona. Yahoo!

Later in life, The Boy toiled in the newsrooms of KGO-TV and KRON, and served as West Coast Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News. He still writes, mostly novels and screenplays. His current novel-in-progress is "The News Merchants," and his TV film project is "The Best Place In Town To Kiss." If you contact him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com), you'll get a reply.





# The Boy: Next Step - Joe College

By **Jim Schock**



Graduating from high school was a major joy tinged with the fret that the familiar, warm atmosphere of study, athletics, and friendships that included girls was gone, replaced by strange new surroundings, new faces, bigger challenges, and that sinking feeling that captures you when you know you're the lowest of the low – a Freshman, starting all over again in a new world.

There was another factor: Many lower classmen were WW II vets, whom he immediately tagged as “teenagers with cigarets” but he never called them that to their faces, as he admired their easy camaraderie, pithy language, and their spot-on assessment of coeds. (Don't ask.)

To his surprise, several of his professors recognized his name from his Teen Time radio show and his disk jockey chores on Music By Request. Unsure of how to display modesty, The Boy's technique was to acknowledge with a mumbled thank-you, duck and cover, then find a seat in the back of the classroom.

His first day in Creative Writing, an English class his instructor asked, “Young man, are you any relation to the pulp magazine writer of the same name?” The Boy stumble-mumbled that distinguished person-

age was a distant cousin, to which the professor smiled and said, “Your secret is safe with us.” Lesson learned.

After a couple of months he received a call from his old radio station to ask if he were available to host a weekend version of their ten to eleven-thirty weekend version of Music By Request until the regular host recovered from an auto accident. Sure, why not? Sit down, play a few records, make \$10.75 a night, his reply was, “Sell my clothes, I'm in Heaven.”

This innocent October gig turned somewhat fabulous one night when The Boy announced Susie Q of the Tri-Delt house had been pinned by Johnny P, co-captain of the football team and he struck a gong four times with a stapler and pronounced it “A four-bell romance!” Two weeks later when he repeated the gimmick, the girl who had been his Junior Prom date in high school called to say she was walking through campus and every radio in every house on Sorority and Fraternity Row was listening to his program.

When his temp on-air gig was over, his old friend the Sales Manager offered him the same fabulous salary to supply the “pinned” info to the regular weekend platter jock. The chore, which occasionally occupied as much as a full hour of his time, started him thinking about a career in Radio, instead of becoming an English teacher, his former destination.

This was further bumped when he asked the head of the drama department to look at a play he had written. To sweeten the deal he mentioned his students might perform a 90-minute version he was preparing for a local radio station. The play title: Love is a Mirror. When the instructor asked what it was about, The Boy advised “A former co-captain of a football team marries the belle of the Tri-Delt House. She becomes a famous author while he fails to make it as a pro and his sense of inadequacy ruins their marriage – until she reveals the distinction between individual and team sports.”

“Comedy?”

“Of course.”

“I'll let you know on Monday.”

NEXT: His first on-air credit.

Years later The Boy toiled in the newsrooms of KGO-TV and KRON and served as ABC News West Coast Bureau Chief. Now he writes, novels and screenplays. His latest novel is *The News Merchants* and his new screenplay is *Sam Spade Slept Here*. If you contact him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com), you'll receive a reply.





# The Boy: Typewriter Days

By **Jim Schock**



After he entered the university, **the Boy** felt he had made a mistake choosing a curriculum that would lead him to a teacher of high school English. The idea was initially appealing because he would own his summers, school teachers were in demand, and based on the fact he had sold nearly a hundred short stories while in high school, he might be able to work up to novels or plays.

Television came to Arizona, first to Phoenix, and if you wanted to watch it in Tucson, you put a spindly fifty-foot antenna on your roof and, depending on the weather, you could see black and white pictures on giant 17-inch screens. It was enough to whet a young writer's appetite even if he hadn't turned eighteen yet.

Two weeks after the semester began, he had an appointment with the professor who headed-up the radio/TV department about a play he'd asked him to read. The meeting didn't take long. "Are you proud of this script?" He made 'script' sound like something a dog leaves on your front lawn.

"Are you asking because you didn't find, uh, worthy?"

"Your Protagonist was a dumb jock!"

"That was the point of the story. He believed the world worshiped

sports, but his wife stood by him. Her eyes were the mirrors which saw him as a hero-in-the-making and she helped him sustain his dream, so he never realized he was a failure until he missed out in the draft. After that she helped him become a successful coach."

"And how did you come about such a theme?"

"**Ella Wheeler Wilcox**. Her poem "Solitude" stated, 'Laugh and the world laughs with you, weep and you weep alone.' **The Boy** paused. "She wrote it in 1883 and I felt it was worthy of an update."

"The world doesn't work that way, young man! I hope you learn that by the time you matriculate from this institution!" He walked away a few steps, turned and said, "I filed your script in the waste basket!" **The Boy** smiled, knowing he would never write a scene in his entire life as bad as the one he had just experienced.

For the rest of the day, the only thought he could cling to that didn't leave him heaped with disappointment, was that this wasn't real life, this was university life. After his three o'clock class he wandered over to meet **Liz Blake**, who had been **Elizabeth Blake** in high school. She was taking a stagecraft class. She dashed over to him and tugged him across the stage to meet her instructor.

"Here he is, Professor." They shook hands.

"I spoke with a certain colleague who told me he'd rejected something you wrote. I don't suppose you have another copy do you, young man?"

**The Boy** reached into one of the binders he was carrying and produced a fresh copy of his play, "Love Is A Mirror," explaining he cut Ditto stencils and ran off 20 copies. The professor said he'd let **Miss Blake** know the results in a day or two.

What happened next was a whirlwind of activity involving the script, the drama department, the campus radio station and restoration of **the Boy's** belief in miracles, radio, and the American Way. With a minimal re-write, a table read, and one rehearsal, his comedy ran on the campus station and on his old radio station which donated \$250 to the campus broadcast center for the privilege.

**Liz Blake** received a thank-you dinner and **The Boy** received a call from Hollywood!

Years later **The Boy** wrote and produced news programs for KGO-TV and KRON and served as West Coast Bureau Chief for ABC-TV News. He now writes novels and screenplays. His latest novel is *The News Merchants* and his new screenplay is *Sam Spade Slept Here*. You can contact him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com). You'll receive a reply.





# The Boy: Hello, Hollywood-So Long Hollywood

By **Jim Schock**



After his dust-up with the English Prof who hated his radio play, "Love Is A Mirror" and its subsequent airing on the campus radio station *and* his old radio station, The Boy received a letter from a Producer in Los Angeles inquiring if he might be interested in a Summer Internship, a junior writer position paying \$35.70 a week.

He readily agreed and filled out the enclosed papers and dropped them off at the post office the next morning. Two days later the Boy received another letter, this time from the Contract Department requesting his age. He took that request to a local agent who 'adjusted' the deal so that despite the fact he was 17 years old, the network agreed to let him work for ten weeks.

He left Tucson (Pop 46,000) and drove his 1938 Plymouth "Salesman's Coupe" across the desert to Los Angeles, a busy, glamorous city of 1.5-million (2015 est 38 Million), arriving a day early in order to scout temporary housing and get his bearings. He should have come a week early, but with the help of a carpet-size folding map from a Shell station, he managed to be on time for Day One.

The regular writing staff was composed of older men who chain-smoked and constantly made the Boy the butt of their jokes. He recognized that as a rite of passage and when one asked, "How much does a ton of popcorn weigh, Sonny?" The Boy thought for a second, then smiled and said, "Popped or unpopped?" The room exploded with laughter and in that instant he knew he had become a junior member of the club.

Although the work was ten-hour days, including two-hour lunches where a lot of what was said there was typed up later. Each evening and on weekends, he explored the neighborhoods, especially Hollywood. In the late 1940's it reeked of grilled burgers and tailpipe exhaust all day long, but at night when the commuters went home and the sidewalks cooled, he ventured Out and About.

First to the famous joints, the Polo Lounge, Tom Breneman's on Vine, Sardi's, The Italian Kitchen, and many more. Within a week he got used to seeing movie stars, and began nodding to male stars, smiling to each and every pretty woman. Looking too young to be in bars, he never got a single complaint from a bartender when he ordered a cup of coffee and left a hefty fifty-cent tip. (Equal to about \$8 today.)

He shamelessly eavesdropped on conversations about this new thing, TV, and heard dire predictions of how the movie biz would be over in four-five years. One evening in a crowded lounge, he offered his bar stool to a stunning, well-dressed woman who ordered two martinis Up and asked The Boy to talk to her. He happily obliged and when she asked if they'd met at Warner's, he nodded. Then she asked where he was born and he said Chicago because Templeton, Indiana probably wouldn't strike a chord. Asked what he did, he mumbled 'writer' and she patted his hand and said she admired writers.

Fifteen minutes later her date arrived, shook hands with the boy and they departed, but not before she made his heartbeat accelerate as she pressed her cheek to his and thanked him for his courtesy and advised him to keep writing.

The next day he wrote a postcard to his mother, saying he'd met **Joan Fontaine** and she was born in Tokyo, Japan. Two days later she called him at his cheap hotel and asked if he was still attending college.

His reply: "Yeah, Ma, two of them."

When the summer and the gig were over, he headed back to Tucson. He laughed when he saw LA in his rear-view mirror and began to wonder what **Joan Fontaine** was doing this morning.

**Jim Schock** later toiled in the newsrooms of KGO-TV and KRON and served as ABC-TV News West Coast Bureau Chief for a time. Retired, he now writes novels and screenplays. His latest script, is "Matrimoney." You may reach him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com). He responds to all Legends e-mails.





# The Boy: Joe College Becomes GI JOE

By **Jim Schock**



It happened with the surprise of a lightning flash. One day **The Boy** was going to work at the radio station where he'd started a program called "Teen Time" at age fourteen, and the next day he was on a Southern Pacific train en route to California's Fort Ord where he spent the night. After breakfast a jeep and driver transported him to The Monterey Language School near the famed Del Monte Golf Course. One word explained it: Korea.

New job description: Interview Prisoners. Before he could do that he had to spend a summer learning the language, after which he was sent to the Presidio of San Francisco to await the training and transportation of his unit, now underway at Ft. Lewis, Washington. It was protocol then that Intelligence Officers did not travel with the troops or officers, which meant he had to endure ten weeks of nothing to do except explore the City.

Great, but he didn't dream how much it would change his life.

One late afternoon he took his first trip on a cable car, a 25¢ ride from Van Ness to downtown. A civilian sitting across from him smiled and said, "How's it goin', Lieutenant?" He'd met the man, then a movie

actor, in Los Angeles. His name was **Art Baker**. He would later hit bigtime radio, hosting a program called, *You Asked For It*. They chatted a few minutes, promised to get together, and **Baker** and his wife got off at the Fairmont Hotel.

The cable car plunged down California Street and **the Boy** jumped off at Montgomery just as the Financial District began disgorging its legion of San Francisco workers. **The Boy** stood amazed as hundreds of attractive young women clicked past him in their high heels. A question jumped into his mind: "Is this Heaven?"

No response, so he followed a herd of beauties into a ground-floor bar that was wide, long and packed with thirsty patrons making four bartenders a blur. He was the only one in the crowd in military uniform. Result: Curiosity. A pair of 40ish men asked where he was stationed, he replied, "The Presidio until August, then Frozen Chosin," a derisive Army term for the South Korean Peninsula. They bought him a drink.

Three attractive twenty-somethings formed a semi-circle in front of him, smiled, flirted, laughed and each gave him a business card (surprise!) and suggested he look them up when he got back, added a peck on the cheek and **The Boy** watched them disappear into the SRO crowd.

He gave the cards to a hot-eyed guy who reminded him of an old highschool buddy, rode the cable car back up the hill, caught a bus back to the Presidio and the BOQ where he found travel orders waiting for him.

He read the orders in Army Speak, translating "Fol Off WP..." to "Following Officer Will Proceed..." and gave a location and a date three weeks hence. He smiled and before he went to sleep that night remembered the Cable Car, **Art Baker**, the Three Women, and smiled, thinking that if he returned from Korea, he might explore the job opportunities in San Francisco. He knew that was a big IF.

To cement the idea, just before he went to sleep that night in the Bachelor Officers Quarters, next to the Officers Club, facing the Parade Grounds, he mumbled, "Goodbye, Tucson, Hello, Pusan, catch you later, Frisco-sahn" and slept like a baby. Sort-of.

Years later **The Boy** toiled in the newsrooms of KGO-TV and KRON and served as ABC-TV News West Coast Bureau Chief. Now he writes novels and screenplays. His current work-in-progress is an untitled mystery novel and his new screenplay, *Santa For President*, is "still in the typewriter." Contact him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com), you'll receive a reply.





# The Boy: Adventures in Oz

By **Jim Schock**



As a ten year old, Chicago was the first large city The Boy ever saw. The buildings, the traffic, the hustles and bustle, the waterfront – all of it new and exciting, but his first glimpse of San Francisco washed all that away. When he spoke with others stationed at The Presidio, or PSFC, as the army called it, he found he was not alone in his admiration for the City by the Bay.

The post itself served as Headquarters, Sixth Army. On the west side of the parade grounds, "Barracks Row" featured the Post MP building, on one end and the movie theater on the other. (Admission 25¢) He visited a distant cousin's grave in the large cemetery and committed to memory a plaque he discovered there:

"On fame's eternal camping ground  
Their silent tents are spread,  
Here guards with Glory 'round  
The bivouac of the dead."

The Boy toured the rest of the 1,500 acres, the golf courses, the coastal batteries built to repel Japanese forces should they decide to invade, but it was the world outside the gates that interested him most:

The City, that cool gray lady of surprise and delight. The first week he was there, he reconnoitered the Golden Gate Bridge. The toll: same cost as a movie, 25¢ (each way) and many service personnel could get chits for free passes.

But Marin didn't interest him, nor did the east bay or the south bay. It was the City itself. He began with the hotels, the Palace, the Fairmont, the St. Francis and soon his Friday jaunts led to him begin at the Mark Hopkins where a crew of beautiful red-haired young women wearing fashionable green uniforms operated the hotel's elevators. At the Top O' The Mark, he picked a window table that allowed a view of the Pacific Ocean and he would sit wondering if he would ever return from the other side of the world.

On one of these Fridays he exited an elevator, only to find the rope was up leading to the bar and was advised there was a private party this evening. He waited for an elevator to return and when the door opened a crowd of beautiful, well-gowned women and men in black-tie poured out. The Boy stood aside and smiled at everyone when suddenly a man stopped in front of him and asked where he was going. Without thinking, he said, "Korea."

The man grabbed his arm and guided him into the party, saying, "That's too far to go without a drink" and the young soldier spent the evening dancing with a wonderful crowd of well-wishers each of whom laughed when he told them he was a farm boy from Indiana. He danced the night away, laughed, received a few kisses on the cheek, and was returned to the Presidio in a non-rented limo with a woman who told him the man who pulled him into the party was **Herb Caen** who worked for a local newspaper.

That night cinched the deal: The Boy – if he returned from FECOM (Far East Command) – made a life-altering promise to himself that this magic place called San Francisco would be his new home.

When a friend at the Officers Club asked him why, he smiled and said, "It's like The Magical Kingdom of Oz – with a liquor license."

The Boy later toiled in the newsrooms of KGO-TV, KRON, and served as West Coast Bureau Chief, ABC-TV New. He now writes novels and screenplays. His latest novel (in progress) is "The Homeless Detective" and his working script is "Half Way To Heaven." You may contact him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com). You'll receive a reply.





# The Boy: Preparing to Ship Out

By **Jim Schock**



The day he had to leave came sooner than he hoped it would. The Boy knew that's how the world worked. If you planned a picnic it would rain. If you hoped to spend a few more sparkling days and diamonds-in-the-sky nights in a romantic and sophisticated city, but it was bound to happen – and it did: Travel orders came through.

He was advised that three days from today transport to SFO would be provided and depart the Presidio at 0700 hours and his flight to Ft. Lewis Washington would depart at 10:00 hours. That routine information lowered the curtain on his San Francisco Experience and he decided to go for a walk, a long walk. He set off up the hill to visit Ft. Scott and take a closer look at the ocean that would separate him from his native land that had become his beloved San Francisco.

His short-lived experience in the great city occupied his mind so much he was startled to find himself at the Golden Gate Bridge and decided to walk over and back so he could tell someone sometime he had done that. As he approached the center of the span he came to realize the great bridge possessed a female gender and she was speaking to him. A warm, contralto voice wished him well and in no uncertain terms insisted he visit her again upon his return. She was certainly more optimistic than he was, but he didn't mind.

He did not know when the bridge opened, but he estimated she was about 15 and he smiled as the thought crossed his mind that he could take himself to Letterman Hospital and report he heard the Golden Gate Bridge talking to him, knowing Uncle Sam didn't relish the thought of having a young U.S. Army officer who talked to bridges on active duty in foreign lands. He laughed out loud and dismissed the thought and retraced his steps back to The Presidio.

It was beginning to grow dark when he passed the WAC Officers Quarters, referred to by many as Menopause Manor and a major stopped her car, asked where he was headed. "Officer's club, Major." Her destination was the same and she drove him there. Exiting the car, he offered her a drink for her trouble. "Yes, but I'm buying even if you do look too young to be served in a bar OR to get orders for Hell, Jamesy-Boy."

At the OC, they had a couple of cocktails and when he discovered she was there to meet several other officers and celebrate turning 40, he played Happy Birthday for her and then a five and one-half minute version of "Laura" – her first name – before bidding her Happy Birthday and returning to his room at the BOQ next door.

He wrote letters to his mother in Tucson, his sister in Indiana, a radio newsman in Los Angeles, and an uncle who raised him for five years on a farm, advising each of his upcoming trip overseas, without mentioning Korea in particular. He gave an MP five dollars to drop the letters off at the post office, brushed his teeth and went to bed.

He stared at the ceiling for an hour or so, laughed out loud once at his five-minute talk with the big orange bridge and went to sleep under San Francisco stars.

The Boy later toiled in the newsrooms of KGO-TV, KRON, and served as West Coast Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News. He now writes novels and screenplays. His latest novel ("Still in the typewriter") is *Street Scene* and his working script is *Santa Is Missing*.

You may contact him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com). You'll receive a reply.





# The Boy: A Trip to Frozen Chosin

## Part 1

By **Jim Schock**



The Boy arrived at SFO two hours before his scheduled flight to Ft. Lewis Washington and was met by a WAC Captain who kept remarking about how great it must be for him to be in his early 20's and have an opportunity to fight for his country. Each time she mentioned it, he nodded, smiled, said nothing.

"Wondering if you'll come back alive, Lieutenant?"

"No, Ma'am. I was wondering where I might get some coffee."

She finished processing him and gave him directions to a restaurant down the concourse. He found it, ordered black coffee and tried to erase the WAC Captain's question from his mind.

He finally accomplished that as he was boarding the plane and a stewardess whose name tag indicated she was "Candy," with a smile that could light up a dark night, guided him to a seat halfway down the aisle advising, "The families with bawling kids are up front, it's quieter here" and led him to an aisle seat over the wing.

He dug a heavy book from his bag, and looked up to see "Candy" holding a slip of paper to him saying, "If you're ever in town and looking for some fun, call me." She sashayed toward the front of the plane, her hips waving a happy goodbye.

The Boy smiled opened the book he started read *All The King's Men* by his favorite author, **Robert Penn Warren**. With only occasional interruptions, he completed half of its 624 pages before landing at SEA, the Seattle airport.

He was met by a PFC who retrieved his bag and escorted him to a Fort Lewis motor pool sedan and drove him to the post where he was greeted by a Major who conducted him a bird colonel who was at least 6'7" and could whip a pack of wild dogs before breakfast. "You look a mite thin for the job, Lieutenant. Spend some time in sick bay recently?"

"No, sir, this is my fighting weight, one hundred and seventy pounds of blue, twisted steel." It was a line an Uncle, a WW II vet, had uttered years ago.

"We'll be departing at 0700 hours tomorrow and I'd like you to attend a small dinner party this evening where you can get acquainted with your fellow officers."

The Boy stood, came to attention and replied "A colonel's request is construed to be an order, sir, and it would be my pleasure." He tacked on a smile.

"Very well, Lieutenant, I'll send a car to pick you up at 18:30 hours." the senior officer concluded – in Korean.

The Boy replied, "Gomapseumida," (Thank you), saluted smartly, and made his exit.

The dinner was not exactly a bust. The other junior officer was a First Louie who'd graduated from Tucson High School two years ahead of The Boy and they'd played baseball together under bright Arizona skies. They politely declined offers of a ride and walked back to their quarters together reminiscing about baseball and girls.

They both promised to re-celebrate the event again – in Tucson after they finished their vacation on the Korean Peninsula. The pleasure of the evening lasted right up to the moment his buddy announced he was engaged to "A perky bundle of charm and lust who was a Stewardess who called herself 'Candy.'"

The boy stopped, leaned over and regurgitated in the gutter. An MP jeep pulled up and asked if there was anything wrong. The Boy replied, "No, Corporal, I'm just rehearsing in case something happens later."

The jeep sped off in the summer twilight. The two young officers walked back to their quarters in silence knowing they both would be leaving in the morning for a place called, "Land of the morning calm."



The Boy later toiled in the newsrooms of KGO-TV and KRON and served as West Coast Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News. Now he writes books and screenplays. Book-in-progress: a non-fiction item, *Too Much Beer, Not Enough Sunday School, All About Guys, For Women Who Own One Or Expect To*, and the script is *The Santa Caper*, a San Francisco noir adventure, Contact him at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com) Reply guaranteed.



# The Boy: The Reluctant Traveler

By **Jim Schock**



The fully-loaded "Super Connie" landed in Hawaii where wives and kids were unloaded first. As he waited, The Boy began to realize that his view of the Pacific from the Golden Gate Bridge or from a table at the Top of the Mark did not do justice to the world's largest body of water.

He'd succumbed to a couple of twenty-minute naps en route, but now he was awake, his mind was recording a picture-a-second and marveling at the nonchalance of military wives and children being greeted and kissed by their military husbands for a visit, lucky to have them with duty in a U.S. Territory that might even be a state someday.

The Boy was assigned a room at a nice hotel with a balcony that overlooked an outdoor dining area, a dance floor, and a two-way view of a glorious beach. Tomorrow he would be in Japan, so he had an early dinner in the company of a couple of other junior officers and declined a beach-bar search for – as one of them put it – "near-bare beach babes" – in favor of a call to his prospective bride in Tucson.

Three calls each an hour apart – no answer, on a Wednesday night, with only a three-hour time difference. What if she were. . . no, that could never be. He went to bed, slept soundly until awaked by the desk, "Good morning, Sir, you asked to be called at five o'clock and it's exactly five-oh-two, Hawaii time." He donned a pair of swim trunks and t-shirt and ran a mile, shaved, showered, and went down to breakfast.

Over eggs, bacon and pineapple, he learned that one of the guys in last night's Beach Babes Hunt had been reported AWOL. Incredibly, all he could think of was that when the guy was caught and found guilty, he'd spend a few years in prison and be dishonestly discharged while the Boy and his Buddies would spend a year or more in a shooting war and might return home in a box. Hello, Real World.

He looked at the other GI's faces and read the same thought, reminded them the bus for the airport would arrive in less than an hour. In his room, he found his uniform, which he'd sent down to be pressed hanging neatly in his closet, the two-dollars he'd added for a tip returned with a note, "Come back and see us!" Signed Tom Wing June.

They took off in a MATS (Military Air Transport Service) Super Constellation and landed hours later on Wake Island, a tiny atoll, for refueling and a minor repair that allowed passengers to exit the aircraft and walk around.

Restricted to an area near the hangar, he struck up a conversation with an old mechanic – at least thirty-six, thirty-seven, who tried to convince him that when the tide was out, there was a nine-hole golf course on the island, a statement he was never able to confirm.

Back on the plane, he realized this travel segment would take him to Japan, leaving a short hop to a strange land he never heard of where he'd write letters to his engaged-to-be-engaged girlfriend about a low-tide golf course on Wake Island and leave out all the part about war and dying.

The Boy smiled and closed his eyes. He'd forgotten to buckle-up but a cabin attendant did that for him as the plane taxied for take-off.

The Boy later toiled in the newsrooms of KGO-TV and KRON and served as West Coast Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News. Now he writes books and screenplays. His latest screenplay ("still in the typewriter") is "The Best Place In Town To Kiss," and he's massaging a third draft of "The News Merchants." You may reach at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com). Reply guaranteed.





# The Boy: Land of the Morning Calm

By **Jim Schock**



Tokyo was a bustling city of people in a hurry and reminded the Boy of New York, where everyone had a destination and seemed to be late getting there. With a huge taxi fleet, crowded buses, an efficient-but-crowded subway system. The city could have passed for New York, except no one was speaking English.

The next morning he boarded a double-decker USAF flight to Pusan, a straight-shot west of about six-hundred miles, plenty of time to grow anxious about going from the glamour of Japan to an ugly ground war in South Korea with winter approaching. The pilot didn't help when he announced the temperature as he was landing was "a balmy 22 degrees."

It was a prediction of Things To Come a few months later. For now, it was enough to worry about. Every service man knows bad jokes and bad weather, especially cold weather, constitute bad duty. Real bad duty.

The plane was still taxiing when a staff sergeant approached the Boy with greetings from a Colonel to whose regiment the Boy, an ROTC 2nd Lt, was assigned. He asked for the Boy's sizes in order to have his winter gear ready so he could change at the airport.

"Where you from sergeant?"

"Muncie, Indiana, Sir. And you?"

"A farm near Lafayette."

"Couple of Hoosier Hotshots!, Sir."

The Hotshots were a musical quartet who appeared on stage, on the radio, and were in several movies in the 1930's and '40's and the two young men remembered, smiled. As they moved from the plane to a building heavily guarded by armed American and Korean soldiers, the sergeant and The Boy were smiling. A few weeks later The Boy realized he had not smiled since that moment.

The Colonel was a grouch and frowned when he learned his new Lieutenant was fresh out of Monterey Language School with no in-country experience, so he decided to test him by calling in two Korean officers the Boy was to interview. For more than forty minutes the two "captives" and the Indiana farm boy filled the room with shouts and slurs and phony threats, after which the colonel asked him to 'score' the encounter.

"'Prisoner Number One' is not Korean, he's Chinese and he's a poor liar. 'Number Two' is the real thing, but he gave false information to every question. Also, he's not an officer."

"How can you tell?"

"Uniform didn't fit well, manners, questioning, and vocabulary indicate he was probably a farmer."

The Colonel indicated the men should leave, sat down behind a large desk, waved The Boy to a chair, and asked, "Answer me carefully, Lieutenant: How are your military skills? Handle a rifle, a carbine, anything heavier?"

"Affirmative, Sir." He pointed to the left side of his chest, stood, and moved to where his superior officers could read what was pinned there.

"You went to jump school, too?" He paused. "Where and how long?"  
"Ft. Benning, Colonel. Three weeks: Ground Week, Tower Week, Jump Week."

"Why didn't you join the Airborne?"

The Boy said nothing for a moment, then, "There was the girl, sir, and..."

The Colonel waved. Every male in America can use those six words and true or not, they always work, just as they did this time.

"No details! Welcome, Lieutenant." A half-minute passed, a half-hour in nervous time. Finally, "Go meet the sergeant and suit-up for a man's war."

The Boy saluted smartly, executed a perfect About Face, closed the Colonel's door behind him, and immediately began humming an old song by Tell Taylor and Ole Olson, "You're in the Army now."

The Boy later toiled in the newsrooms of KGO-TV and KRON and served as West Coast Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News. Now he writes books and screenplays. His latest screenplay ("still in the type-writer") is "The Best Place In Town To Kiss," and he's mas-saging a third draft of "The News Merchants." You may reach at [Jim@Schock.com](mailto:Jim@Schock.com). Reply guaranteed.



# The Boy: The Smell of Battle

By **Jim Schock**



The Boy knew he was in a foreign country the first time he inhaled cold winter air from the countryside. He was headed to interview his first for-real enemy troops on a cold clear morning and almost lost his breakfast enroute to his first day of work.

"Sarge," he said, hands on knees waiting to upchuck his Blue Plate Special of powered eggs, Spam, biscuits and Army coffee. "Breakfast reminded me of the Wabash River, a fragrant flow I swam in when I was kid in Indiana."

"The Wabash doesn't have a tributary in South Korea, Lieutenant. What you're smelling is kimchi, the national dish of both Koreas." He paused, added, "It's made up of veggies including fermented napa cabbage. Smell reminds me of an overflowing outhouse. The good news is you get used to it

after six-seven months." With that the Boy deposited his breakfast on the new-fallen snow before continuing their way to the tent where three prisoners were awaiting interrogation.

They were just kids, maybe sixteen, seventeen, but when the Boy approached, the trio spat on his winter boots. The Sergeant stepped forward, jammed his rifle butt into one midsection, delivered a hard backhand to the face of a second, and clouted the third with an elbow upper cut that sent him sprawling. Total time: eight seconds.

When the Boy looked around the room all the other troops had weapons pointed at the teen enemy prisoners.

"Hold!" the Boy shouted. The American soldiers slumped. It was obvious they wanted to bag these youthful enemy. "Get 'em outta here! Back to lock-up." They were marched away and the Boy was left facing a Major whom he hadn't previously met.

"Why did you order my men not to shoot, Lieutenant?"

"Sir, those captives are not Korean. They're Chinese. Probably conscripted and their families are being held captives."

"You sure of that?"

"Ninety percent sure, Major." The senior officer turned, walked away and over his shoulder said, "Get this college-boy the hell outta here!" Walking back to his assigned tent that sported a hand-painted sign, 'Korea Hilton', the Boy asked the sergeant about the major's desire to shoot prisoners.

"Non coms aren't allowed opinions, Lieutenant."

"I'm granting you two minutes of Personal Opinion Time, Sergeant."

The NCO smiled, said "Thank you, sir!" and proceeded to give The Boy a complete rundown on the major including the fact he never left the compound, not even when his XO was wounded less than a mile away and the fact he never missed an opportunity to state, "My ancestors were heroes in the Revolutionary War."

There was a pause that lasted over a minute as The Boy watched the expressions on the sergeant's face. "Sir, I'm sorry I said –"

"No, Sergeant, the fault is mine."

"How's that, Sir?"

"I should have granted you ten minutes."

They both laughed for a long time and the sergeant saluted smartly and said "Have a nice war, Sir" and walked away.

It was the last laugh the Boy would have for a long time.

The Boy later toiled in the newsrooms of KGO-TV and KRON and served as West Coast Bureau Chief, ABC-TV News. Now he writes books and screenplays. His latest "The Anchorman's Wife" and current screenplay "The Radio Gang," a YA story.

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Reply guaranteed.





# The Boy, and Two Cultures

By **Jim Schock**



The Boy managed to survive his first Korean winter for two reasons. First, because he'd learned cold weather survival as an Indiana farm boy. The second involved a Major General who'd read a couple of the young man's mystery novels and wanted to become a published author his own two-star self.

Evenings in the general's cozy-warm quarters, the talk was literary always something the general had written. The Boy started his student off by having his senior officer learn the parts of speech and how to use them. It was 8th grade work, but he passed it off as second year college.

Despite chatting-up the general, The Boy was still faced with his basic duty: interrogating military captives in their native language. He'd learned their lingo at the Army's Monterey Language School. After his initial 10-12 interrogations he realized the captives, each and every one of them down to the lowest private, had mastered the art of lying.

The task wasn't as easy as it may sound because the first response to any question was "Me name Kim, workee motor pool." The Boy noted it in his interrogation book over a hundred times.

However, despite the smells, constant bombardment, wounded GI's, there was one thing he learned to love and appreciate: five-day R&R (Rest and Relaxation) trips to Tokyo.

He spent his first day there exploring the city via bus, taxi, subway, and rickshaw. The citizens were polite and knowledgeable, many spoke passable English and did so when greeting American GIs.

And so it came to pass that after completing a second Tokyo visit, The Boy was wounded, patched up, and returned to a hospital located on a familiar place – Letterman Army Hospital, at The Presidio of San Francisco. After Korea it was more like Heaven.

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## Mystery Telephone Number



*The Original  
Boss Of The Bay™*

Got this note from **Legend Bob Matheson**, retired Director of Broadcasting, Armed Forces Radio & Television. **Bob** started his career at KCSM.



Back in the early '60s one of the top S.F. Radio Stations playing the Top Rock hits was **KYA 1260**.

Contests were common and KYA once had a "**Mystery Telephone Number**" contest. They'd give out clues to what the number was as the Contest went on, and the first Caller to dial it and ask "Is this the KYA Mystery Telephone Number?" would win a fabulous prize.

Well, our house phone in Millbrae started ringing constantly for days. Why? Because our phone number OXford 7-8379 on the telephone dial also spelled out M-Y-S-T-E-R-Y.

And now you know the rest of the story!  
Good Day!

Send us your story [darryl@broadcastlegends.com](mailto:darryl@broadcastlegends.com)



# The Boy: Returning from Korea But not Going Home

By **Jim Schock**



The Boy, now an officer serving as a General's Aide in Korea, was surprised when he received a promotion, but he had learned when you're a general's aide, unexpected things can and do happen. However, an even bigger surprise arrived shortly after when his general to whom he was giving writing lessons announced, "You're going to take a little trip, Jamesy Boy."

"I've been to Japan, General. Twice."

"But not to North Korea once." The senior officer paused before adding, "This is a little jaunt Up North. where an unannounced little war is still underway – sort-of."

The Boy gulped, took a deep breath and gulped again. The General smiled.

"Wh-when does this little jaunt take place, Sir.?"

"Tomorrow morning." He paused. "Take the rest of the day off and talk to Captain Laurence, it's his party."

The Boy nodded and headed for the door, but was halted by a very firm "Lieutenant!" He froze, hand on doorknob, but didn't turn around as the General added, "You'll be arriving via airmail, I trust you can still jump out an aircraft and land safely."

The Boy nodded, turned around and made eye contact with the General. "A senior officer's suggestion is usually considered an order, Sir. I'll report in when I return, General." Three steps and he was out the door. A non-com smiled, handed him two letters and turned away. The Boy looked at his mail and noted one was from his sister who wrote him every two weeks. The other from a law firm in Tucson, Arizona, his home and presently the residence of his wife and son. He decided to read the letters when he returned.

On his way out the door another General stopped him, asked his name and when he replied the one-star led him to a small room and explained his mission tomorrow was to arrange an exchange of prisoners and return the next day with forty captive US officers and enlisted men. The Boy paced the small room as he listened and when the general finished he called a Sergeant, introduced him and instructed them both to get a good night's sleep.

Once outside the building the sergeant turned to The Boy. "There's a rumble in the barracks that tomorrow's flight to pick up wounded men is a Suicide Mission, Sir." The Boy stopped, turned to face the young soldier, placed a hand on his shoulder and looked into his eyes and saw nothing but pure fear staring back.

"You're not a fortune teller and this isn't a combat mission. Relax and do your duty." The young corporal smiled.

"Hot damn! I was kidding. You look awful young and I wanted to see if you'd rattle. I apologize, Sir." He paused. The Boy didn't say more, returned the sergeant's salute, donned his winter jacket and cap and scooted out the door. Walking along he changed his mind and decided to retrieve the mail he'd received and read it before boarding the plane the next morning.

Mistake. Big one. Big enough to make him seriously consider not deploying his parachute when he jumped out of that airplane tomorrow morning in North Korea. The thought bothered him ten times more was the powder keg from his wife's lawyer who coldly advised The Boy his wife had divorced him, remarried and sold their home in Tucson.

He stopped, felt a pounding in his chest and dropped to one knee. After a moment and with the aide of a passer-by regained his feet, thanked the stranger and hobbled back to his room with only one thought clearly floating through his brain.

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# The Boy: NORTH KOREA BYE-BYE

By **Jim Schock**



The Boy hadn't parachuted from an airplane since jump school, but he wasn't going on a combat situation. The General he worked for explained: "It's just a hop into North Korea to retrieve some wounded American soldiers."

Even though it was a mission of mercy, The Boy didn't like the idea. His mind was stuffed with nasty prose from an attorney whose letter advised him he was divorced, no longer had claim to his son, and his now ex-wife had sold their home in Tucson.

The Boy's conclusion was simple: All he had to do to rejoin the human race was find another woman to love and start the process all over again. Duh.

The General gave him a friendly pep talk and asked if he'd like to skip the assignment. He replied, "Duty Calls."

The General made eye contact and replied, "There are times when Duty is cleaning latrines, soldier."

"This is one of them, General." The Boy saluted, the senior officer returned the salute and promised him a jaunt to Tokyo when he returned.

After a sleepless night he joined the troops for a briefing and settled down on a seat at the front of the aircraft and was asleep before wheels-up. His flight was a short one, and they were escorted by four USAF fighter planes. The Boy had to be awakened when they were over the jump zone. Still in his dreamy state he was the first one out the door, and the bright sun and cold temperature jolted him wide awake in two seconds.

He found himself in a strong wind that was taking him at least a half-mile from his drop zone, and a strong crosswind was carrying him toward a lake. Before he could signal anyone, he felt his left hip slam into a huge boulder and stopped feeling anything.

Moments later he was lifted from the snow by six troops. The Boy assumed they were angels. He felt his luck running out fast when he realized they were North Korean soldiers and they were debating whether or not to shoot him. The arrival of a dozen American troops discouraged that idea and he began to wonder if his Ex would attend his funeral.

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