Nero Wolfe TV Series in the 1950s
(OOPs, 3 attempts never made it to prime-time)

1959 NEWS

Bill was one of the most sought-after young actors on TV. CBS.
TWO STAGE ACTORS SIGNED BY C.B.S.-TV

Kasznar and Shatner to Play in ‘Nero Wolfe’ Pilot Film—‘Telephone Hour’ Plans

William Shatner has been signed to star with Kurt Kasznar in a pilot film that may be the basis for a “Nero Wolfe” television series.

The film, with which the Columbia Broadcasting System hopes to lure a sponsor for the series, will be produced here starting Monday. Mr. Kasznar will have the title role and Mr. Shatner will play Archie Goodwin, his young colleague.
The series, based on Rex Stout’s detective stories, will have Edwin Fadiman as executive producer. He had the same title with a similar series on radio. Gordon Duff has been named producer and Tom Donovan, director.

The first episode, written by Sidney Carroll, will feature Alexander Scourby. The two stars are appearing in Broadway shows. Mr. Kasznar is in “Look After Lulu” and Mr. Shatner in “The World of Suzie Wong.”

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The New York Times
March 14, 1959
United Press International

NEW YORK (UPI) — There is something terribly and about the contemporary circus—the mournful grey, dirty elephants: the little clowns grinding out their pathetic attempts at fun; the spectacularly uncomely girls, the badly costumed flyers, wire walkers and high bar swingers milking pretend-danger out of dreary rituals; the seedy roustabouts constantly puncturing the sketchy illusion with the sweat-jobs of reality.

Monday night, ABC-TV funneled out portions of the Ringling Bros., and Barnum and Bailey Circus in a one-hour special from Charlotte, N.C. and I must confess it looked to me like all the portions of the Ed Sullivan show that drive me to Steve Allen.

There was a fellow who hung by his hair and juggled fire, a fellow who hung from his heels on a trapeze and a bunch of weepy elephants, those fictitious animals, who hung atop each other. There were some puny cats who jumped through a hoop of fire and a llama who jumped over a bar and an elephant.

These Truex out of its script and introduced Don Porter in a new continuing role — Porter was a member of Miss Sothern's old TV show, Private Secretary. I doubt whether this sort of switch is going to help the show much—its trouble lies in its mechanical, assembly-line approach to comedy. Things like Arthur Murray doing the tango Monday night help to make the NBC-TV Arthur Murray Party one of the funniest shows on television — unintentionally, of course.

The Channel Swims: Kurt Kasznar and William Shatner will film the pilot of CBS-TV's upcoming series, Nero Wolfe, next week in Manhattan. ABC-TV will show Traffic Court into the Monday night Pati Page slot after Miss Page's show folds on March 16.

Rickey Nelson of ABC-TV's Ozzie and Harriet is on a bullfight kick and plans to go to Spain this summer. Larry Blyden Monday replaced Robert Morse in the NBC-TV Omnibus production of "Forty Five Minutes From Broadway" — Others in the cast of the March 15 musical are Russell Nype and Tammy Grimes.
There was also much to do about two people who were "shot" out of an "atomic" cannon and I seem to remember that same sad, cannon when it was functioning anatomically back in the early '30's.

There were in this hour a few patches of interest some of the camera work that went on while a high wire walker was working conveyed the feeling of height with remarkable truth. And I

NBC-TV will repeat the one

hour documentary, "The Jazz Age," on March 29. Comedian Shelly Berman will take on a dramatic role in the March 27 episode of NBC-TV's Ellery Queen.

ABC-TV's Sammy Kaye has three former Arthur Godfrey Talent Scout winners in his band—singer Larry Ellis, accordionist Johnny Lapadula and trumpeter Johnny Amaroso.

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**FRIDAY MARCH 20 1959**

**LEWISTON EVENING JOURNAL - LEWISTON-ALBURN MAINE**

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**VIDEO VERSIONS**

**by Johnny Robinson**

THE PILOT FILM OF A PROJECTED new half-hour television series based on Rex Stout's popular "Nero Wolfe" detective stories is being produced in New York. The series is being produced by the CBS Television Network in association with Edwin Fadiman.

Two of the top performers of the Broadway stage, Kurt Kasznar and William Shatner, have been signed for the starring roles, with Kasznar playing the title role of the dilettante-detective and Shatner playing Archie Goodwin, his young and breezy colleague. The first program, dealing with the mysterious death of a guided missile scientist at a Cape Canaveral launching, was written by Sidney Carroll and will feature Alexander Scourby. Kurt Kasznar and William Shatner are currently featured in two Broadway shows: Kasznar in Noel Coward's "Look After Lulu" and Shatner in "The World of Suzie Wong." Mr. Fadiman will be executive producer of the "Nero Wolfe" series, an assignment he also handled during the radio career of the program. Gordon Duff will be the producer and Tom Donovan will direct. To date, more than 30,000,000 copies of Stout's Nero Wolfe stories have been sold, including translations into foreign languages—among them Japanese and Chinese. The stories are currently appearing in the Saturday Evening Post.
Bernstein Closes Season; Critic Hopes for His Return

By WILLIAM EWALD

The Channel Swim: Kurt Kasznar and William Shatner will film the pilot of CBS-TV's upcoming series, Nero Wolfe. Next week in Manhattan ABC-TV will show Traffic Court into the Monday night Pati Page slot after Miss Page's show folds on March 16.

Kurt Kasznar, hired for the title role in CBS-TV's upcoming series about the fat detective, Nero Wolfe, partly because he weighed 280 pounds, recently dropped 70 pounds and will now have to be padded around his middle. ... CBS-TV's Desilu Playhouse, faced with the tough competition of NBC-TV's academy awards show on April 6, has decided to throw in the towel and slot a repeat show, "The Time Element," with William Bendix.
Two time periods that traditionally have featured hour shows on two television networks will be turned over next fall to half-hour productions. They are the Columbia Broadcasting System's 10 to 11 P. M. hour on Mondays and the National Broadcasting Company's 8 to 9 hour on Saturday evenings.

"Desilu Playhouse," now televised by C. B. S. on Mondays, will switch to a 9 to 10 P. M. Friday schedule in September. The Monday evening hour from 10 to 11 o'clock was the home of "Studio One" from 1948 until it left the air last season.

"Nero Wolfe," a filmed detective series based upon the character created by Rex Stout, may be the new entry for C. B. S. on Mondays from 10 to 10:30 P. M. A proposed sponsorship deal is under consideration by the P. Lorillard Company and the General Foods Corporation. There has been no indication what the other half-hour show might be.
Revlon Eying Comedy Series

NEW YORK—With the dropping of its Wednesday, 10-11 p.m., slot on CBS-TV, Revlon has set aside its search for a replacement for "20th Century-Fox Hour," postponing decision on three mystery shows it has been mulling until it has examined the field for a half-hour situation-comedy series.

"The $64,000 Question" and "Challenge" and the new Guy Mitchell show are set for CBS-TV and ABC-TV, with Revlon seeking a fourth buy for next season, preferably on NBC-TV. "Crime Club," an MCA-TV mystery hour, would find a berth on NBC if Revlon reconsidered it. The other mysteries being mulled by the advertiser have been "Nero Wolfe," a CBS-produced series based on the Rex Stout stories, and "Mystery Street," the M-G-M anthology headed for ABC.
McConnell Outlines NBC Plans

Predicts 50-100 Pic Houses With TV in Half Year

HOLLYWOOD, Oct. 18.—Television day at the 56th semi-annual convention of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers (SMPE) which ended here Friday (14) following a week of technical discussions, awards and predictions. Sparked by ever mounting video activity, SMPE members paid special heed to the future, exploring camera possibilities, prospects of theater television, and winding up with a field trip to the Mt. Wilson transmitter site where the main address of the convention was delivered by Dr. Vladimir Zworykin, research director.

Had encouraging for tele boosters was the prediction that 50 to 100 theaters throughout the nation would be converted to large-screen television within six months. This prophecy came from Don Hyndman, chairman of SMPE's theater tele committee and Eastern manager of the motion picture department, Eastman Kodak Company.

Hyndman stated that commercial success of the recent World Series

Brief and Important

Last-Minute Digest of AM-TV News

Bracken Pitch for KWKB

Film comic Eddie Bracken will petition the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for permission to buy Pasadena indie station KWKB in partnership with the Jenkins and Lodge ad agency. Sale is contingent on approval of KWKB's plan to buy out rival Pasadena indie KAKH and KAKS-FM, both owned by attorney Andy Haley.

"TV Ad Medium" Booklet Sells

"Television as an Advertising Medium," the Commerce Department's comprehensive summarizing up of the TV marketing situation (The Billboard, August 20), is becoming one of the Government Printing Office's best-sellers. Price at 60 cents, the pamphlet is back in stock after the first printing of 10,000 copies had vanished two weeks ago.

Fadinman Prepares TV Packages

Fadinman Associates this week announced plans to package a TV series featuring Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe detective characters. The firm is also readying a pitch on the First Piano Quartet, a top box-office group, for TV this season.

"Ruthie" To Hang Up

"Ruthie on the Telephone," by Goodman Ace, now sponsored by Philip Morris cigarettes, is being dropped after its November 3 telecast, but the time is being retained. The program is on the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) TV five nights each week from 7:35-8 p.m. Among the shows being considered as a replacement is one starring Herb Shriner, who once did an AM show for the same account.

The Billboard

August 26, 1950

Nero Wolfe Readied to Caper on NBC's Air

The Rex Stout mystery character, Nero Wolfe, probably will be airborne this fall. NBC is cutting an audition platter and is said to have a few sponsors interested in bankrolling the series. Package is owned by Ed Fadinman, and is represented by Ted Ashley. If the show should not sell before the fall, NBC is believed prepared to sustain the series next season.
NBC To Shift Tele Emphasis On Radio Seg

(Continued from page 3)

station, nor would he risk repeating TV material to AM listeners who might have seen the shows on TV.

Plans for the program were outlined to this week's NBC convention by Charles R. Denny, executive vice-president of the network, as part of NBC's plans to develop new and aggressive AM sales plans. Other new show-sales plans revealed by Denny were titled "Night and Day" and "Sight and Sound."

"Night" will offer a daytime show, Break the Bank, and Nero Wolfe on Friday nights, to three sponsors, each of whom will pay a third of the costs or around $11,500 each. "Sight" will offer a TV-AM combination, either as a simulcast or via tape on AM. The combination is based on the theory that advertisers will get unduplicated audiences.

Denny also declared that even if "operation tandem"—the first of the NBC-AM sales gimmicks—does not succeed, it is the sort of sales approach necessary under current sales conditions.

Some affiliates are cold to the tandem plan. One school argues that it may hurt national spot business—which pays them full card rate as against the reduced network compensation. Others say that it is in effect a rate cut, since the stations are to be paid at the hourly rate, rather than the higher half-hour rate, even tho the shows are all half-hour programs.
AFM Probes Canned Music on Networks
Waxed Cues, Bridges To Claim Attention in Contract Huddles

HOLLYWOOD, Nov. 11—Solution to the problem of wider increased use of recorded bridges and cues is being asked by Local 47 in the American Federation of Musicians (AFM) contract renewal negotiations with the nets. Local's vice president and radio-rewarding rep, Phil Fischer, estimated that approximately 100 musicians are being denied employment by wide use of disked music. Sponsored air shows using canned bridges and cues include Screen Directors' Playhouse and Take It Or Leave It, both on NBC, and ABC's Mr. President. Sustaining shows include NBC Theater of the Air, The Saint, Nero Wolfe and Texas Rangers. CBS has a Coast regional

Memo from Hollywood, relying on waxed music.

Problem of networked canned music is relatively young. Prior to the introduction of taped shows by Bing Crosby, both NBC and CBS had a set policy against recorded shows, and ABC and Mutual used canned music sparingly. With competition forcing both NBC and CBS to lower its policy barriers as a result of the widespread use of tape, AFM feels those have been cutting down on use of live bowlers in favor of waxed music. According to Fischer, AFM will not oppose use of canned bridges and cues provided musicians are protected.

Issue of recorded bridges and cues is expected to be one of the major points to be considered during the forthcoming AFM-wr

contract renewal negotiations.