

DRAGNET

Written by

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Re-Imagined Radio
Season 12, Episode 08, August 19, 2024

Final draft

DRAGNET

"All we want are the facts, ma'am"

Re-Imagined Radio
Season 12, Episode 8
Final Draft

Premier broadcast: August 19, 2024

Written, produced, hosted by John F. Barber

Sound design, Music composition, Post-production by Marc Rose

Graphics by Holly Slocum

Synopsis

Re-Imagined Radio spotlights *Dragnet*, the real-life police procedural conceived, produced by, and starring Jack Webb, as Detective Sergeant Joe Friday. Broadcast on the NBC Radio Network, 1949 to 1957, *Dragnet* chronicled actual Los Angeles Police Department cases with step-by-step details and realism. We sample from Webb's earlier radio programs and an episode of *Dragnet* to showcase Webb as a great radio storyteller.

Credits

Samples from "Brotherhood Week," Episode #04, *One Out of Seven*, broadcast February 27, 1946.

Samples from "Major League Baseball," Episode #05, *The Jack Webb Show*, broadcast April 17, 1946.

Samples from "Dixie Gilian," Episode #09, *Pat Novak, For Hire*, broadcast November 24, 1946.

Samples from "Fatal Auction," Episode #10, *Johnny Madero, Pier 23*, broadcast June 26, 1947.

Samples from "The Guy from Gower Gulch," Episode #19, *Jeff Regan, Investigator*, broadcast November 13, 1948.

Samples from "The City Hall Bombing," Episode #06, *Dragnet*, broadcast July 21, 1949.

Color Code

Yellow highlighted text = sound effect(s), either pre-recorded or created for episode. Pre-recorded audio is used as content in this episode.

MUSIC = pre-recorded

MUSIC = bespoke, created for this episode

COLD OPEN

SFX: OPENING OF DRAGNET EPISODE
#06, "THE CITY HALL BOMBING," JULY
21, 1949

FIRST 4-NOTES OF BRASS AND TYMPANI
MUSIC THEME, "THE DRAGNET MARCH,"
BY WALTER SCHUMANN.

MUSIC: "DUM-DE-DUM-DUM"

ANNOUNCER "Ladies and gentlemen, the story you are about to hear is true. Only the names have been changed to protect the innocent."

MUSIC: "DUM-DE-DUM-DUM"

ANNOUNCER "You're a Detective Sergeant. You've been off duty two hours. You receive an emergency call from the Chief Detective. An entire block in your city is threatened with complete destruction. Your job. Report at once."

MUSIC: "DUM-DE-DUM-DUM"

ANNOUNCER "Dragnet. The documented drama of an actual crime. Investigated and solved by the men who unrelentingly stand watch on the security of your home, your family, and your life."

"For the next thirty minutes, in cooperation of the Los Angeles Police Department, you will travel step by step on the side of the law through an actual case from official police files. From

beginning to end. From crime to punishment, Dragnet is the story of your police force in action."

MUSIC: UP

MUSIC AND SFX OF FOOTSTEPS
REVERBERATING ALONG A HALLWAY.

JACK WEBB AS SGT. FRIDAY "It was Tuesday, November 15th. It was raining in Los Angeles. We were off duty, reporting in on an emergency call. My partner's Ben Romero. The boss is Ed Backstrand, Chief of Detectives. My name's Friday. It was 8:32 AM when I walked in the Spring Street entrance to the City Hall."

ELEVATOR OPERATOR "You Sergeant Friday?"

FRIDAY "Yeah. That's right."

ELEVATOR OPERATOR "Well take my elevator, Sergeant. It's the only one in service."

THEME AND ANNOUNCER

MUSIC: RIR THEME

ANNOUNCER Welcome to Re-Imagined Radio, a program about radio storytelling. With each episode we explore how dialogue, sound effects, and music can combine to promote storytelling and engage your listening imagination. We also like to include the stories behind the story. The history. The connections. Trivia.

This episode is no different, and here to tell you about it is John Barber, producer and host.

HOST OPEN

HOST

Hello everyone. For this episode of Re-Imagined Radio we spotlight *Dragnet*, the real-life police procedural conceived, produced by, and starring Jack Webb, as Detective Sergeant Joe Friday. Broadcast on the NBC Radio Network, 1949 to 1957, *Dragnet* chronicled actual Los Angeles Police Department cases with step-by-step details and realism.

For the next hour, we'll sample from Webb's earlier radio programs to hear him developing his *Dragnet* character and under-played acting style. We'll also listen to "The City Hall Bombing," an episode of *Dragnet*. Together, these listening experiences showcase Webb as a great radio storyteller.

While listening, please visit our website, [reimaginedradio dot FM](http://reimaginedradio.fm). There, on the "Dragnet" archival webpage, you'll find more information and a copy of our script, which you may like to follow as you listen.

Thanks for joining us, and enjoy listening as Re-Imagined Radio presents "Dragnet."

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

HOST INTRODUCTION

HOST

Jack Webb, born 1920, in Santa Monica, California, grew up in Los Angeles. His mother and grandmother, Webb's only family, encouraged his early interest in art, movies, and reading. His earliest experience with radio work was at Belmont High School, as an announcer for the school radio station, BHS.

In 1945, out of the military and back in Los Angeles, Webb looked for jobs in radio.

An audition tape he recorded in Los Angeles was sent to ABC affiliate station KGO in San Francisco. Management liked what they heard. Webb was offered a job.

SFX: MUSIC FROM "ONE OUT OF SEVEN"
FOR TRANSITION

ONE OUT OF SEVEN

HOST

Webb's earliest radio recordings are from "One Out of Seven," broadcast February to March 1946. The introduction laid out the premise for each episode.

SFX: INTRODUCTION FROM "ONE OUT OF SEVEN." ENDS WITH ORGAN FLOURISH.

HOST

Episodes expanded on chosen news stories with dramatizations. Webb, then 26, voiced all the parts.

The dramatizations allowed Webb to present prejudice, intolerance, and hate, not as vague topics, but rather as driving forces in the lives of real people, both aggressors and targets of aggression.

Here is a sample from "Brotherhood Week," Episode #04, broadcast February 27, 1946.

SFX: SAMPLES FROM "BROTHERHOOD WEEK" EPISODE

HOST

We just listened to samples from "Brotherhood Week," an episode of *One Out of Seven*. Only seven episodes were produced. This is one of four that survive. The short series was one of Jack Webb's earliest radio acting roles.

For more information and to listen to the entire episode, visit the episode page at our website, [reimaginedradio dot FM](http://reimaginedradio.com).

SFX: MUSIC SAMPLE FROM "THE JACK WEBB SHOW" AS TRANSITION.

THE JACK WEBB SHOW

HOST

In April 1946, Webb began a new radio series at KGO, called *The Jack Webb Show*.

An unknown number of episodes were produced and distributed over the ABC West Coast Network. Two are known to survive. Episodes featured comedy skits,

quips, and bad puns, along with great jazz and blues music in its weekly episodes.

Let's listen to samples from "Major League Baseball," Episode #05, broadcast April 17, 1946.

**SFX: SAMPLES FROM "MAJOR LEAGUE
BASEBALL." ENDS WITH MUSIC AND ABC
NETWORK IDENTIFICATION.**

HOST

When ABC network asked KGO to provide a half-hour Sunday program for some of the Pacific Coast stations, Webb and writer Richard Breen introduced radio listeners to *Pat Novak, For Hire*.

This was Webb's first role as a detective. On advice from Breen, Webb let the dialogue do the work and played Novak with an understated, matter of fact style.

Voiced by Webb, Pat Novak was street-wise and cynical Philip Marlowe on steroids and speed. Listeners heard a detective series that radio historian John Dunning called quote "a series so hard-boiled it became high camp" unquote.

As example, let's listen to the first scene from "Dixie Gilian," Episode #09 of *Pat Novak, For Hire*, broadcast November 24, 1946. Setting up the scene, Webb, as Pat Novak, introduces himself .

. .

SFX: SAMPLES FROM "DIXIE GILIAN"
EPISODE OF PAT NOVAK FOR HIRE. OUT
CUE = FOGHORN.

HOST

With Breen's writing and Webb's acting, *Pat Novak For Hire* was very popular with West Coast listeners. But, after 26 weeks, Breen quit and moved to Hollywood, lured by a screenplay writing job. Within an hour, Webb also quit and returned to Los Angeles. *Pat Novak, For Hire* continued, but didn't sustain the level of Webb's performance. More about this shortly.

SFX: MUSIC SAMPLE FROM "JOHNNY
MADERO" FOR TRANSITION.

JOHNNY MADERO, PIER 23

HOST

In Hollywood, the Mutual Broadcasting System sensed an opportunity. They hired Webb and Breen to create a new radio show, *Johnny Madero, Pier 23* as a continuation of their *Pat Novak, For Hire*.

Re-united, Webb and Breen continued the wise-cracking, tough guy role they had cultivated earlier. Twenty episodes were produced. Two are known to survive.

In this one, "Fatal Auction," Episode #10, broadcast June 26, 1947, Webb, as Johnny Madero, begins his story at an auction where he meets a woman . . .

SFX: SAMPLES FROM "FATAL AUCTION"
EPISODE OF JOHNNY MADERO, PIER 23.

**OUT CUE: "A BLACK LEATHER SUITCASE.
IT ARRIVED YESTERDAY."**

HOST Madero's thousand dollar bid wins the suitcase. After claiming it, Madero returns to his seat and discovers the woman is gone . . .

**SFX: SAMPLES FROM "FATAL AUCTION"
EPISODE OF JOHNNY MADERO, PIER 23.**

HOST In many episodes, like this one, Madero gets knocked out early in the story. He recovers, and solves the case. *Johnny Madero, Pier 23* aired for one summer, and, despite its formulaic structure, was well received.

But West Coast listeners continued to call for the return of *Pat Novak, For Hire*. This prompted ABC to pull the program from KGO in San Francisco and restore it to Webb and Breen as a coast-to-coast program, originating in Hollywood, during the 1949 season.

MUSIC: RIR THEME FOR BREAK

THE FUSEBOX BREAK

HOST This is Re-Imagined Radio. I'm John Barber. We'll return to *Dragnet* in just a moment, but first, I want to tell you about The Fusebox Show, produced by Marc Rose. It's a different kind of radio storytelling, a carnival of quick witted and quirky conversation and commentary

about current day events and news.
Here's a sample.

SFX: THE FUSEBOX SHOW TEASER

HOST Learn more, and subscribe to the podcast at *The Fusebox Show* website, thefuseboxshow dot com.

MUSIC: RIR THEME, FADE UNDER AND OUT FOR THE FOLLOWING

HOST This is Re-Imagined Radio. Our episode spotlights "Dragnet," the iconic police procedural starring Jack Webb. Learn more at our website, reimagedradio dot FM.

SFX: MUSIC SAMPLE FROM "JEFF REGAN" FOR TRANSITION.

JEFF REGAN, PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

HOST As we've heard, in both *Pat Novak, For Hire* and *Johnny Madero, Pier 23*, Webb played a wise-cracking, hard-boiled, understated detective. In *Jeff Regan, Private Investigator*, Webb further hones his character.

Let's listen to samples from "The Guy from Gower Gulch," Episode #19, broadcast November 13, 1948.

SFX: SAMPLES FROM "THE GUY FROM GOWER GULCH" EPISODE OF JEFF REGAN, PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR. OUT CUE = ORGAN FLOURISH.

HOST After 24 episodes, Webb left the *Jeff Regan, Private Investigator* series and began working on a new radio show.

DRAGNET

SFX: MUSIC THEME FROM DRAGNET

HOST Webb planned a police procedural based on real cases from Los Angeles Police Department files. Episodes would feature authentic depictions of the modern police detective, including methods, mannerisms, and technical language. The series name, for example, "Dragnet," was a police term for "a system of coordinated procedures for apprehending criminal suspects or other wanted persons."

In Webb's plans, episodes would unfold detail after detail as he, playing Detective Sergeant Joe Friday, and Barton Yarborough as Detective Sergeant Ben Romero worked painstakingly through the tedious double checking, and careful questioning, developing their case to be strong enough to, perhaps, convince a jury of the suspect's guilt. Along the way, listeners would know as much as the police detectives. New information was introduced only when it was uncovered, and verified, using solid police procedures.

"The City Hall Bombing," Episode #06, broadcast July 21, 1949, is a good example. A man with a bomb threatens to blow up Los Angeles City Hall unless his

brother is released from County Jail. Detectives Friday and Romero have less than 30 minutes to secure the threat.

This episode sets the tone for the *Dragnet* series AND is great radio storytelling. Let's listen now to samples from "The City Hall Bombing" episode of *Dragnet*.

SFX: SAMPLES FROM "THE CITY HALL BOMBING" EPISODE OF DRAGNET.

HOST

That was "The City Hall Bombing" episode #06 of *Dragnet*, starring Jack Webb. Originally intended as a summer filler, *Dragnet* became "the nation's premium radio show" according to some radio historians. First broadcast in 1949, *Dragnet* ended in 1956, after seven years and 318 programs, not counting rebroadcasts.

For more information and listening opportunities, visit the "Dragnet" page at our website, reimagedradio dot FM.

MUSIC: RIR THEME FOR BREAK

THE RIR BREAK

MUSIC: RIR THEME. ESTABLISH, THEN FADE OUT UNDER THE FOLLOWING.

HOST

This is Re-Imagined Radio. I'm John Barber. With each episode we explore radio storytelling using voice, sound

effects, and music. Here are some examples . . .

SFX: RE-IMAGINED RADIO AUDIO

TRAILER

HOST

More information and listening opportunities are available at our website--reimaginedradio DOT fm

Re-Imagined Radio is also available as podcasts. Subscribe wherever you get your podcasts, or, our website. Reimaginedradio dot FM.

MUSIC: RIR THEME, ESTABLISH, THEN

DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING

SO WHAT?

HOST

This episode of Re-Imagined Radio spotlights *Dragnet*, the police procedural based on actual police cases, starring Jack Webb.

The *Dragnet* radio series is significant for several reasons. First, it presented a wide range of topics, each using fast moving plots and realistic details to keep the action moving.

The dialogue was understated. Sparse. Influenced by actual police language and communication protocols. Crafted through earlier radio series.

The police work was based on Los Angeles Police Department case files.

Chronicled, step-by-step, with actual details and realistic sound effects, sometimes as many as 300 per episode!

The result gave millions of listeners a feel for real police work. The boredom and drudgery. The danger of heroism. Radio historian John Dunning calls *Dragnet* "a pioneering series of unprecedented realism."

Finally, even if you've never listened to a *Dragnet* radio episode, or watched on television, chances are you know the four note music introduction and Jack Webb's oft-stated phrase, "all we want are the facts." They are forever linked in the public mind of popular culture.

HOST CREDITS/CLOSE

SFX: DRAGNET 4-NOTE THEME

MUSIC: BEGIN FADING IN RIR THEME

MUSIC. KEEP DUCKED UNDER THE
FOLLOWING.

HOST

This episode of Re-Imagined Radio was written by John Barber.

Sound Design, music composition, and post-production by Marc Rose.

Graphics by Holly Slocum Design with Sydney Nguyen.

We produce Re-Imagined Radio with support from KXRW-FM (Vancouver,

Washington) and KXRY-FM (Portland, Oregon).

This is John Barber, producer and host.
Thank you for listening.

MUSIC: RIR THEME UP, THEN DUCK
UNDER THE FOLLOWING

ANNOUNCER CLOSE

ANNOUNCER

This is a production of Re-Imagined Radio. To learn more, visit our website, reimagedradio (all one word, no punctuation) DOT fm.

Please join us again for another episode of Re-Imagined Radio where we will continue our exploration of radio storytelling.

MUSIC: RIR THEME UP, AND TO END.