

NEW YEAR

Written and produced by

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Re-Imagined Radio
Season 09, Episode 01

Final draft

NEW YEAR

Looking back. Looking ahead.

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Season 09, Episode 01
Final Draft

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Synopsis

A New Year's Eve themed episode featuring two segments. The first is "The First Year," a 1947 episode of *The Whistler*, a mystery anthology where a man and woman must stay married for ten years to inherit \$500,000, leading to tension and murder on their first anniversary. The second segment is a 1957 live New Year's Eve broadcast from New York City with Guy Lombardo and the Royal Canadians performing classic songs from the 1930s to 1950s. The hosts concluding remarks include well wishes for the new year.

Credits

Written, Produced, Hosted by John F. Barber

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Management & Photography

Color Code

Yellow highlighted text = sound effect(s), either pre-recorded or live.

~~**Magenta highlighted text with strike through**~~ = text deleted for episode timing

MUSIC = pre-recorded

MUSIC = bespoke, created for this episode

MUSIC: RIR THEME

OPEN

HOST

Hello, I'm John Barber. Welcome to Re-Imagined Radio, a program of sound-based storytelling. Named for Janus, the Roman God of beginnings and endings, January is noted for New Year's Eve, a holiday with a unique opportunity to reflect and celebrate both the previous and upcoming years. Following this focus, this January episode of Re-Imagined Radio samples from *The Whistler* and *Guy Lombardo*. Both take place on New Year's Eve.

First up is "The First Year," an episode of *The Whistler* first broadcast December 31, 1947. The Whistler was a very popular American radio mystery anthology and its whistled theme was known to millions. Each episode focused on criminal acts and their surprise undoing, narrated by the unnamed and omnipresent Whistler who often commented directly on the action like a Greek chorus.

In "The First Year" a rich uncle tries to teach his niece the true value of matrimony by changing his will to require her and her husband to stay married for ten years before they inherit. If one dies, the other inherits everything. The story begins and ends on New Year's Eve of "The First Year" of their marriage ...

ACT 1: "THE FIRST YEAR"

SFX: THE WHISTLER WHISTLE

ANNOUNCER That whistle is your signal for The Whistler.

SFX: WHISTLE CONCLUDE

WHISTLER I am The Whistler, and I know many things, for I walk by night. I know many strange tales hidden in the hearts of men and women who have stepped into the shadows. Yes, I know the nameless terrors of which they dare not speak.

ANNOUNCER And now The Whistler's strange story. The First Year.

WHISTLER The story of Lydia Winters falls naturally into two parts, separated by exactly one year almost to the minute. Her marriage to Elliot Larkin ended, of course, on New Year's Eve, somewhere around midnight at a place called Silver Lake Lodge. The circumstances surrounding its ending are a matter of record now in the files of the police department, Homicide Division.

MUSIC: STINGER FOR EMPHASIS

WHISTLER The beginning is another story, a personal one. Just a year before, early on New Year's morning, Lydia Winters had stood at the door of her uncle's apartment with Elliot, listening to the whistles ushering in the new year.

SFX: EXTERIOR. WHISTLES

ELLIOT Darling.

LYDIA Huh?

ELLIOT Listen.

LYDIA (LAUGHS) It's official now, a brand new year.

ELLIOT Brand new life.

LYDIA I better go in now, Elliot.

ELLIOT Look, Lydia, let's go together. You can speak your piece and I'll back you up.

LYDIA I already told you I want to talk to Uncle Philip alone, darling.

ELLIOT Oh, but why waste New Year's Eve? Good Lord, woman, it'll only take a minute to tell you all this.

LYDIA I love you, dear, and I'm going to marry you. But you might as well learn right now when I make up my mind, I mean it.

LYDIA As so Marty tells me. Poor Marty.

ELLIOT Yeah, poor Marty. Looked like you hit him with a pole axe when you told him tonight.

LYDIA He'll get over it, they all do.

ELLIOT I wonder if we will.

LYDIA Maybe. But it'll be fun while it lasts.

ELLIOT Lydia, why are you marrying me?

LYDIA Oh, you dance well, you're good-looking,
you have charm of a sort, and of course.

ELLIOT There's my money.

LYDIA Your money. I'm tired of depending on
Uncle Philip.

ELLIOT Ah, you're a worldly woman.

LYDIA But very practical. Kiss me, darling.
Good night, Elliot.

ELLIOT I'll pick you up tomorrow at noon. We
can be married in Greenville and run up
to Silver Lake Lodge for a couple of
weeks, huh?

LYDIA You're so capable, darling. All figured
out for me.

ELLIOT Yeah, except Uncle Philip.

LYDIA Just leave Uncle Philip to meet you.
Good night.

ELLIOT Good night. Happy New Year.

SFX: INTERIOR. DOOR CLOSSES.
FOOTSTEPS ON HARD FLOORING.

LYDIA Well, Uncle Philip.

PHILLIP RIDGELY Oh, it's you.

LYDIA You old darling waiting up for me?

PHILLIP There's a very good reason, Lydia. I want to talk to you seriously for once.

LYDIA Oh, and I know just what it's about. You don't approve of Elliot, do you, dear? You think he's a fortune hunter, irresponsible, unworthy of me. And I'm so hard and thoughtless and gullible.

PHILLIP You through?

LYDIA Yes.

PHILLIP Good. Then please understand this. If I have any concern about Elliot Larkin, it's on his account and not yours.

LYDIA Is that so?

PHILLIP Exactly. In the proper hands, he might just might understand you, grow up into a decent human being. With you, he hasn't a chance.

LYDIA Now wait a minute. If you think you can tell me.

PHILLIP Let me finish. That's beside the point anyway. You're just like your mother was, Lydia. The same selfishness, the same abysmal ignorance of the true meaning of marriage. You're not in love with this man, he's not in love with you.

LYDIA You're pretty sure of yourself, aren't you?

PHILLIP Of course I'm sure. I will not approve your marriage to Elliot Larkin or any other man until you indicate some small understanding of what the word means. Until you're able to look upon it as a sacred contract instead of an adventure.

LYDIA I see. Now I'd be grateful if you'd step off the soapbox while I tell you something. I don't care what you think.

PHILLIP Listen to me, Lydia.

LYDIA I'm through listening to you. I'm of age, Uncle Philip. Tomorrow afternoon I'm marrying Elliot, whether you approve or not. I don't care about you or your money or anything else. It's my life, and I intend to live it as I please. I'm leaving at noon tomorrow, Uncle Philip, and there's nothing you can do about it.

PHILLIP Hmm. Nothing I can do about it, eh?

SFX: INTERIOR. PICK UP TELEPHONE.
DIAL NUMBERS. TELEPHONE RINGING.

BALLINGER Hello?

PHILLIP RIDGELY Ballinger?

BALLINGER Yes?

PHILLIP Phil Ridgely. I hate to get you up, old man.

BALLINGER Oh, not at all. New Year's, you know. We're having a little party.

PHILLIP I want to see you right away, Ballinger, about my will.

BALLINGER Oh. How about tomorrow morning?

PHILLIP I said right away. Now.

MUSIC: DRAMATIC TRANSITION

BALLINGER Good Lord, Phil. You can't do a thing like this now.

PHILLIP Why not?

BALLINGER Why, it's vicious. If there was any chance for success of Lydia's marriage, it's destroyed by this ... this thing. You can't play with people's lives as if they were puppets.

PHILLIP It's my money, Ballinger. I can do with it what I please. Now get this again. The new will is to provide that if Lydia and Elliot Larkin live together as man and wife under the same roof for a period of 10 years, they are to receive the principal legacy of \$500,000 jointly, or half to each other as they may choose. That failing, it goes to the children's relief fund. Got that?

BALLINGER That's clear enough.

PHILLIP Now, if at any time during those ten years, either one of them die by any means, the entire sum is payable to the survivor immediately.

BALLINGER Look here, Philip. I realize I'm in no position to question your moral code. But this thing is fiendish. Why it'll set them at each other's throats.

PHILLIP Perhaps it will, Ballinger. Perhaps it will. It's a sort of a test, you know. If I'm right, if the marriage means nothing to either of them, it will destroy them. On the other hand, if I'm wrong, it will be a real reward.

BALLINGER Yes, but don't you see? It's not a will, Philip. It's a weapon.

PHILLIP Maybe. I know I won't live to see it work out, but you'll see it, Ballinger. You're to acquaint them with the provisions the moment I die. There's a comfortable retainer in there for you to see it's followed to the letter.

PHILLIP (LAUGHS) You know, I envy you, Ballinger. It should prove very interesting.

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

SFX: THE WHISTLER WHISTLE CROSS
FADES TO MUSIC OF SAME, DUCKS UNDER
THE FOLLOWING.

WHISTLER Yes, Lydia, it began on a New Year's Eve, at a party with Elliot Larkin, when suddenly, impetuously, you decided that here was the answer to Uncle Philip's tyranny, an avenue to freedom. And it's worked out fairly well, hasn't it? It's

not a storybook marriage, of course, but you didn't expect that.

Still, Elliot is fairly presentable, reasonable, and charming, and you're sure he's wealthy enough to keep you well-dressed and entertained. And until something better comes along, you're content.

It was an evening in October that changed all that. The two of you had just arrived home from a football game.

ELLIOT Oh, Johnny Gates. Can you imagine running into him that way?

LYDIA I felt like a lost sheep with the two of you huddled together all after.

ELLIOT Well, I haven't seen him since college. Oh, here, let me take your coat.

LYDIA Huh?

ELLIOT There. It was a lucky break running into him that way, you know.

LYDIA Where's the cigarette?

ELLIOT Oh, a minute. Oh, here, catch.

LYDIA Thanks. What do you mean lucky break? You didn't pay any attention to the game.

ELLIOT Well, he's leaving his job. He's going to the Orient.

LYDIA Oh?

ELLIOT Yeah, he represents some cordial outfit, liqueurs, that sort of thing, you know. Well, I mean, that's the job he's leaving, and it's a pretty good job.

LYDIA What's that got to do with you?

ELLIOT He says he'll recommend me to replace him if I want it.

LYDIA You mean you're going to work?

ELLIOT Well, why not? I can't be a playboy all my life, you know.

LYDIA Elliot! Elliot, darling, what the world got into your head?

ELLIOT What's so funny, huh?

LYDIA Help me, Elliot. You working all day?

SFX: INTERIOR. TELEPHONE RINGS.

ELLIOT Yeah, well, you better answer the phone.

LYDIA Yeah, excuse me, darling. Hello?

BALLINGER Mrs. Larkin?

LYDIA Yes?

BALLINGER This is Mr. Ballinger, your uncle's lawyer.

LYDIA I'm not at home to my uncle, Mr. Ballinger. You can tell him to ...

BALLINGER Just a minute, Mrs. Larkin. I'm calling to tell you that your uncle passed away this afternoon.

LYDIA I see.

BALLINGER It's my duty as his executor to read to you the terms of his will.

ELLIOT Who is it, honey?

LYDIA (TO BALLINGER) Just a minute, please.
(TO ELLIOT) Uncle Philip's dead, something about the will.

ELLIOT Oh, let me talk to him.

LYDIA (TO ELLIOT) I'll handle it. (TO BALLINGER) Mr. Ballinger, perhaps you don't quite understand my relationship with Uncle Philip.

ELLIOT Wait a minute.

LYDIA Elliot!

ELLIOT Give me that phone now.

LYDIA What do you think you're doing?

ELLIOT Time I knock some sense into your head, Angel. You may as well know it now, we're broke.

LYDIA For what?

ELLIOT Or, as close to it as you can get without selling the furniture. That's why I took Johnny up on the job.

BALLINGER Hello?

LYDIA You had money, a lot of it, you said.

ELLIOT Never mind that now. Just tell Mr. Ballinger you'll be glad to talk to him. You hear? Go on, take the phone.

LYDIA Hello? Hello, Mr. Ballinger?

BALLINGER Yes?

LYDIA We'll be over right away.

ELLIOT How'd it taste, dear?

LYDIA What?

ELLIOT Humble pie.

LYDIA I'm not in the mood for that sort of thing, Elliot. Why didn't you tell me you were broke?

ELLIOT You didn't ask. You just went along with what everyone believed about the Larkin fortune.

LYDIA You think that was fair to me?

ELLIOT Well, it works two ways, Angel. After all, I was under the impression your Uncle Philip's worldly goods were practically in your pocket.

LYDIA I see. Well, I guess I'd better make this clear, Elliot. I don't love you. I never did.

ELLIOT Oh, now take it easy.

LYDIA And bright and early tomorrow morning,
I'm leaving this house, and I'm not
coming back.

ELLIOT Really? Well, I'm going to miss you
terribly. Where are you going?

LYDIA Does it matter very much?

ELLIOT No, not really. Tomorrow's up to you,
Lydia. Tonight, on the other hand.

LYDIA I'll see Mr. Ballinger alone.

ELLIOT Uh-uh. We're going together, darling.
Somehow I'm just a little curious about
your uncle's will.

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

ELLIOT You mean this thing forces us to love
each other?

BALLINGER More or less. That is, if you want the
money, you will live together under the
same roof for ten years.

ELLIOT Yes, I heard it the first time,
Ballinger. Now are you sure it'll hold
up under probate?

BALLINGER It's quite legal if that's what you
mean.

LYDIA Naturally. You didn't know Uncle Philip
very well, Elliot. Most efficient man in
the world.

ELLIOT Well, well, that's it. If there are any questions, Lydia?

LYDIA No. No, it's all very clear. Oh, come on, Elliot.

BALLINGER Well then, good night. Good night, Larkin.

ELLIOT Good night. (BEGINS LAUGHING)

LYDIA Amusement, Elliot, or the beginning of a scary?

ELLIOT A little of each, I suppose. You know, you must admit the old boy had a sense of humor.

LYDIA Must I?

ELLIOT Ten years, nine to go. Well, I guess there was a time when I'd be willing to do anything for a half million dollars. Right now, I don't know.

LYDIA It won't make any real difference, Elliot. I want that money. You live your life, I'll live mine. No questions, no answers.

ELLIOT Except to the watchdog.

LYDIA Ballinger? Yes, we can handle him.

ELLIOT I suppose it's worth a try. All right, dear, what's the first move?

LYDIA Your friend, Johnny Gates.

ELLIOT Johnny?

LYDIA You'll need that job now. You have a wife and home to support. Remember?

MUSIC: UNDER THE FOLLOWING

WHISTLER At that moment, you're forced to admit something to yourself, aren't you, Lydia? That Uncle Philip was right. That your marriage to Elliot Larkin is a farce, a hollow, mocking thing that was never meant to be. And there's something else, Lydia, the strange will. As the weeks pass, you know it for what it really is, an instrument of torture, a weapon striking back at you from the grave.

Yes, Uncle Philip might as well be alive and laughing at you, telling you that you can't win. But through it all, you're determined that somehow, some way, you'll defeat Philip on his own ground. Then on New Year's Eve, the night marking your first year together, Elliot calls you at the apartment.

LYDIA Yes?

ELLIOT Lydia, I thought you might be interested. I've got that job.

LYDIA Johnny?

ELLIOT Yeah, he's giving it up, leaving right away.

LYDIA Oh, nice. Tonight I can drink champagne that's paid for.

ELLIOT Oh, oh, about that. I won't be able to make dinner until later. I'm helping Johnny celebrate.

LYDIA Oh, don't worry about that. I meant to tell you we can skip the dinner plan. I'm meeting Marty Bell at the Zebra Club.

ELLIOT Marty Bell, huh? Well, true love never dies. Good old Marty.

LYDIA Don't tell me you object, darling. I'll see you tomorrow, Elliot.

ELLIOT You'll see me tonight if you insist on going there with Bell or come down to the Zebra Club tonight.

LYDIA OR what? Don't play the jealous husband, Elliot. That's really overdoing it. Goodbye.

MARTY BELL Lydia! Lydia!

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

SFX: CROSS FADE TO NIGHT CLUB

WALLAH

LYDIA Marty, Marty, you're very amusing.

MARTY But I mean it, Lydia. I love you.

LYDIA Does anyone really mean that?

MARTY I want you to go away with me, Lydia.
Leave Elliot.

LYDIA Please, Marty. Trying to break up the
perfectly matched, adoring Larkin?

MARTY It isn't breaking anything up, and you
know it. You're not fooling me, Lydia.

LYDIA Stop it, Marty.

MARTY You don't care a hang for Elliot.

LYDIA I said stop it. There's someone coming
over to our table, an old friend.

MARTY Really? I don't see anyone who.

LYDIA Mr. Ballinger. What an unexpected
surprise.

BALLINGER Yes, I dare say.

LYDIA I'd like you to meet Marty Bell, an old
friend of Elliot.

BALLINGER Oh.

LYDIA Marty, Mr. Ballinger.

MARTY How are you doing, Mr. Ballinger?

LYDIA Marty's keeping me company while I wait
for Elliot, but he has an appointment.

MARTY Maybe you'd sit in for a while, Mr.
Ballinger, isn't it?

BALLINGER Glad to, but.

LYDIA Then Marty won't have to waste any more time.

MARTY I'm not wasting time, Lydia.

LYDIA All right, you're going to dear, Marty. I'll tell Elliot and I'll run along.

BALLINGER Nice to meet you, Bell.

MARTY Yeah, same here. Goodbye, Lydia.

LYDIA (TO MARTY) Bye, Marty, and thanks so much. (TO BALLINGER) He's such a dear.

BALLINGER Lydia, I've been intending to bring this up for some time. I've been disturbed about things that I've been hearing.

LYDIA Things? What things?

BALLINGER About you and Elliot.

LYDIA Oh.

BALLINGER You know when there's any sign of trouble between you, you're on dangerous ground.

LYDIA Why, Mr. Ballinger, I don't know what you're talking about. We're getting along beautifully.

BALLINGER Where is Elliot, Lydia? It's New Year's Eve. You two should be together.

LYDIA Well, of course we should, but tonight's only beginning, Mr. Ballinger. Why, I

talked to Elliot only a little while ago. He's going to be here.

BALLINGER Do you mind if I wait?

LYDIA Why no, I'd appreciate it if you would. Wait, there he is now. He just came in. Would you excuse me a minute? I'll tell him where we are. Excuse me?

GUEST Well, sure, lady.

ELLIOT Would you let me through, please?

PERSON Oh, sure. I'm sorry. Pardon me.

GUEST It's okay.

LYDIA Elliot! Elliot!

ELLIOT Oh, there you are. Where's Marty? I want to talk to him.

LYDIA He's not here, Elliot. Come over to the table with me.

ELLIOT He ran out, huh?

LYDIA I sent him away. Ballinger's here.

ELLIOT Ballinger?

LYDIA Smile, darling. He's looking right at us.

ELLIOT What? Oh.

LYDIA Would you let us through, please?

ELLIOT Yes, excuse us.

LYDIA Thank you.

ELLIOT I'm so sorry.

LYDIA Right here, darling. Right here. Come on up. Here he is, Mr. Ballinger, my stray lamb. Dear, you remember Mr. Ballinger.

BALLINGER Hello, Larkin. Yes.

ELLIOT How are you, Ballinger?

BALLINGER Good afternoon, my boy. I just started around a drink.

ELLIOT Why, how nice.

BALLINGER If you'll permit me, I'd like to offer a toast on your anniversary. One year, isn't it?

LYDIA That's right.

ELLIOT Oh, one beautiful year.

BALLINGER Yes. Well, we can drink to that, and of course, to your future. May you remain as happy as you are tonight.

MUSIC: NEW YEAR'S THEME

WHISTLER Right now, Lydia, as you lift your glass and touch it to the others, listen to Ballinger's hollow toast. You realize that this can't go on, that nine more years seem impossible. But it's impossible too, Lydia, to sacrifice the

money, isn't it? The money. The defeat of Uncle Philip on his own ground is uppermost in your mind.

All you can think of an hour later as you sit beside Elliot in the car.

LYDIA I hope Mr. Ballinger doesn't think it odd, our leaving so early.

ELLIOT I explained to him. I have to drive a friend to the airport.

LYDIA Oh, Johnny Gates?

ELLIOT Yeah, he's flying to Seattle on a midnight plane. What I didn't tell Ballinger is that I'm going too.

LYDIA You're what?

ELLIOT Got my ticket, suitcase in the back.

LYDIA Elliot, you can't do this.

ELLIOT Why not?

LYDIA Because of what if I'd mean Ballinger's suspicious now? What will he think when he hears you've gone flying off somewhere on our anniversary?

ELLIOT Does that matter?

LYDIA Of course it matters. He's got the power to cancel everything. You can't do it, Elliot. Wait a few days at least.

ELLIOT I'm sorry. It's my first assignment on the new job. The company expects me to wire them from Seattle in the morning.

LYDIA Why? Why did you agree to such a thing?

ELLIOT Maybe I've had all I can stand, Lydia.

LYDIA For half a million dollars, don't be a fool, Elliot. Look, look, I'll do anything you say. I'll stay away from Marty. Anything, Elliot, just give me a chance.

ELLIOT Well, another helping, huh?

LYDIA What?

ELLIOT Same humble pie.

LYDIA Oh, Elliot, please. Please be reasonable.

ELLIOT Oh, Johnny's expecting me. Lydia, I don't see how I can change things now. I'm supposed to be there.

LYDIA There must be a way, Elliot. You'll regret this yourself. I know you will.

ELLIOT Well, I wonder.

LYDIA What are you thinking?

ELLIOT Maybe Johnny can help us. Come on up with me. We'll talk to him.

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

JOHNNY GATES Maybe I'm a little dumb tonight, Elliot.
Give me another rundown on that, will
you?

ELLIOT Well, now look, Johnny, it's simple. I'd
just like an extra day here, that's all.
You're flying north anyway. Couldn't you
send that wire for me?

JOHNNY To cover you with a company.

ELLIOT That's right. Now, you see, that way
Lydia and I can be together on our
anniversary, and I'll be up there in a
day or two.

JOHNNY Well, I don't suppose there'll be much
doing over the holiday anyway.

ELLIOT Oh, not a thing. It's just that I don't
want to beg off on my first assignment.

JOHNNY No, that wouldn't be so good. Okay, pal,
I'll handle it.

ELLIOT That's swell.

LYDIA Johnny, I appreciate this too.

JOHNNY I forget it. Elliot's done plenty for
me.

ELLIOT Oh, Johnny, there's one more thing. I
don't like the idea of turning in my
plane ticket. You know, just in case the
company should check.

JOHNNY Oh, I don't think they will.

ELLIOT Well, I'd rather not take a chance. Now, look, if it doesn't matter to you, you're leaving the company anyway, couldn't you turn yours back and go in my place all the way through?

JOHNNY Well, you'll feel safer.

ELLIOT Well, Johnny, I really would.

JOHNNY Okay, let's have it. Say, I'll even check into your hotel for you.

ELLIOT Oh, fine.

JOHNNY We better get going.

ELLIOT Yeah, right away.

JOHNNY Well, I'll finish packing. Be with you in a minute.

ELLIOT Satisfied, Lydia?

LYDIA Perfectly.

ELLIOT Look, as long as we're going to make it look good to Ballinger, maybe we can go the whole hog.

LYDIA How do you mean?

ELLIOT Well, after we drop Johnny at the airport, how about driving up to Silver Lake Lodge?

LYDIA Wonderful.

ELLIOT Remember the first time we were there? A brand new year, a brand new life.

LYDIA I remember it perfectly, Elliot. I'd love to go. I think it's exactly what Mr. Ballinger would like.

WHISTLER Well, Lydia, for the moment, you've won. But the worry of the future is on your mind, driving down to the airport and watching Johnny Gates off on Flight 27. And all the way up to Silver Lake Lodge, you wonder about those nine long years ahead. It isn't going to be easy, Lydia, but somehow you're determined to make Elliot continue to see it your way.

A few miles below the lodge, you ask him to stop at a roadside store.

SFX: CAR INTERIOR. RADIO FADES UP

RADIO ANNOUNCER There are half a million people in this most colorful of all southern cities. We'll put out the door.

LYDIA Sounds like they're having quite a time down in New Orleans.

ELLIOT Yeah?

LYDIA I just want to get some cigarettes, Elliot. I'll be right back.

ELLIOT Take your time.

SFX: CAR DOOR CLOSES, FOOTSTEPS ON PAVEMENT TO STORE, DOOR OPENS, BELL

RINGS, MUSIC FROM RADIO FADES UP
FROM THE BACKGROUND.

CLERK Yes, ma'am?

LYDIA A pack of cigarettes, please.

CLERK Take your pick.

LYDIA Oh, these will do. Here you are.

LYDIA Yeah, thanks.

SFX: RADIO CUT IN ANNOUNCEMENT

REPORTER A brief announcement, then back to the New Year's round-the-town celebration. Flight 27 of Peerless Airlines, northbound for Seattle, crashed and burned in an unexplained accident one hour ago. All on board were killed.

MUSIC: DRAMATIC TRANSITION, DUCKS
AND CONTINUES UNDER

WHISTLER That news comes suddenly, doesn't it, Lydia? The answer to everything, to Elliot, the money, everything. Yes, Lydia, Elliot was on that plane, even if it was in name only. At this very moment, as he waits for you in the car outside, he's officially dead, certainly unidentifiable.

And the words of Uncle Philip's will keep running through your mind.

SFX: MUSIC OUT. RECORDING OF
PHILLIP BALLINGER RECITING THE KEY
POINT OF HIS NEW WILL FADES UP.

BALLINGER If at any time either Lydia or Elliot Larkin die, the entire sum is payable immediately to the survivor.

MUSIC: BACK UP, CONTINUES UNDER THE
FOLLOWING

WHISTLER You know how simple it can be now, Lydia. Yes, as you close the door behind you, walk through the bracing mountain air to the car, you realize that here is the opportunity of a lifetime, freedom from Elliot and all of the \$500,000 for yourself. And looking at Elliot relaxed waiting for you, you know you're going to kill him tonight.

SFX: INTERIOR OF CAR. RADIO
ANNOUNCER DESCRIBING NEW YEARS EVE
CELEBRATION IN NEW ORLEANS.

RADIO ANNOUNCER Everyone here has a horn of some other kind of.

LYDIA Sorry to keep you waiting.

ELLIOT Oh, it's all right.

LYDIA Just as I went into the store, there was some sort of news flash on the radio. You hear it?

ELLIOT News flash? No, some other station, probably.

LYDIA Yes, I thought so.

SFX: INTERIOR OF CAR. RADIO
SWITCHED OFF. MOTOR SOUNDS AS CAR
PULLS AWAY.

ELLIOT Hey. Hey, I was enjoying that. New Year's Eve, in New Orleans.

LYDIA Please, I'd like it quiet. We'll be up at the cabin in a few minutes. Right now, I want to think.

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

WHISTLER Of course you want to think, Lydia, of the loaded target pistol in the gun case at the cabin, of how lonely it is there, of how easy it'll be to dispose of Elliot's body in that wilderness.

MUSIC: STINGER

WHISTLER Less than an hour later, you're at the cabin ready to put your plan in operation. The pistol is just beneath your hand, stuck between the sofa cushions as you sit before the fire Elliot has built for the occasion. You steady your nerves and.

LYDIA Elliot?

ELLIOT Just a minute, dear. I'm fixing the drink.

LYDIA Hurry it up, will you?

WHISTLER You're tense now, bracing yourself.
 You'll wait until he's moved around and
 is standing right in front of you,
 holding the drinks on the tray. That way
 it can't go wrong.

SFX: INTERIOR. FOOTSTEPS, DRINKS
RATTLING AS THEY ARE CARRIED ON A
TRAY.

LYDIA Around this way, darling. Right near the
 fire.

SFX: CABIN INTERIOR. TWO GUNSHOTS.

MUSIC: WHISTLER THEME

WHISTLER Yes, the marriage of Lydia Winters
 Larkin ended in murder on a New Year's
 Eve, at a place called Silver Lake
 Lodge, where she and her husband,
 Elliot, had spent their honeymoon just a
 year before.

There's a complete record now in the files of the homicide division, a record of a detective's curiosity over the crash of a northbound airplane and the supposed death of a passenger named Elliot Larkin, of an investigation that led to a quick arrest and a complete confession. At police headquarters, Mr. Ballinger, the attorney, was remarkably philosophical as the Lieutenant read the whole amazing story from a hurriedly prepared transcript of the confession.

BALLINGER I can't say that I'm surprised,
Lieutenant. I was afraid from the

beginning that Philip's will would lead to something like that.

POLICE
LIEUTENANT

Yes, the will, of course, gives us a solid motive, although we already figured we'd find something like that. Oh, there's one more paragraph to the confession. You want to hear it?

BALLINGER

Yes, read on, please.

LIEUTENANT

Well, it goes on to say, once I knew that Johnny Gates was on that northbound plane traveling as Elliot Larkin, the way seemed perfectly clear. As soon as we got to the cabin, I got hold of a gun and waited for my opportunity. The first chance I had, I pulled the trigger twice without any warning, and it was all over. And then there's the signature, of course.

BALLINGER

The only thing I don't understand, Lieutenant, is how you were able to make the arrest so quickly.

LIEUTENANT

A good hunch on the part of one of the boys. You see, when he found out that Larkin was due up in Seattle on that new job, he flew up there as a matter of routine. Well, after that, of course, the arrest was oh, they're bringing him to prison now.

BALLINGER

How you ever expect to get by with this Larkin?

ELLIOT Does that matter now? Johnny Gates traveling in my name, I thought I had a perfect alibi, so I killed him.

LIEUTENANT And until our man walked in on you in Seattle, you still didn't know that your alibi had blown up in that plane.

ELLIOT Yeah. Funny thing too. At night in the car, Lydia asked me if I'd heard a news flash. It must have been about that plane. I wonder why she didn't tell me.

MUSIC: WHISTLER THEME

ANNOUNCER Featured in tonight's story were Betty Lou Gerson and Gerald Moore. The Whistler was produced by George W. Allen with story by Joel Malone and Harold Swanton and music by Wilbur Hatch.

MUSIC: RIR BREAK THEME

HOST You are listening to Re-Imagined Radio and we're sharing stories with a New Year's theme. I'm John Barber. You just heard "The First Year," a 1947 episode from the very popular mystery anthology program *The Whistler*. The second half of our program will continue after these words from our sponsors.

BREAK #1: COMMUNITY MESSAGES

MUSIC: "AULD LANG SYNE"

HOST

Welcome back to Re-Imagined Radio. I'm John Barber. Re-Imagined Radio is a program of sound-based storytelling. The stories in this episode take place on New Year's Eve, a holiday with a unique opportunity to reflect and celebrate both the previous and upcoming years.

We have already heard "The First Year," an episode of The Whistler, a popular mystery anthology radio series. This second story is Guy Lombardo's New Year's Eve Party.

Guy Lombardo and The Royal Canadians were synonymous with New Year's Eve celebrations broadcast nationwide on radio from 1929 to 1976. In 1956, Lombardo and his orchestra began broadcasting on television as well and included a segment from New York's Times Square.

Lombardo is noted as for providing the theme song for these celebrations, "Auld Lang Syne," a traditional Scottish folk song based on the poem of the same title written by Robert Burns in 1788. The poem-song is about two friends reflecting over drinks about their long and sometimes distant friendship. The title best translates as "Old long since," or "For the sake of old times."

Let's go now to New York City where Guy Lombardo and The Royal Canadians are performing live in The Grill Room of The Roosevelt Hotel. It's almost midnight,

December 31, 1957. Time to ring in the
New Year on Re-Imagined Radio ...

ACT #2: GUY LUMBARDO NEW YEAR'S EVE

MUSIC: "AULD LANG SYNE"

ANNOUNCER Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians,
 direct from the world-famous Grill Room
 of the Roosevelt Hotel at 45th Street
 and Madison Avenue here in New York
 City.

MUSIC: STINGER

ANNOUNCER And now here is Mr. New Year's Eve
 himself, Guy Lombardo.

LOMBARDO Well, thank you, George Bryan. And
 ladies and gentlemen, it's certainly
 wonderful having you all here to help
 celebrate New Year's Eve at the
 Roosevelt Grill. Now we're going to
 start with a great New Year's Eve song
 of the early '30s, "Top Hats, White Tie,
 and Tails."

MUSIC: "TOP HATS, WHITE TIE, AND
TAILS"

Singing: I'm putting on my top hat,
tying up my white tie, brushing off my
tails.

I'm doing up my shirt front, putting in
the shirt studs, polishing my nails.

I'm stepping out, my dear, to breathe an atmosphere that fairly reeks with class.

And I trust that you'll excuse my dust if I step on the gas, for I'll be there, putting down my top hat, mussing up my white tie, dancing in my tails.

LOMBARDO

You know, in 1934, a great New Year's Eve tune that everyone danced to right here in the Roosevelt Grill was "The Continental."

MUSIC: "THE CONTINENTAL"

LOMBARDO

Now more music of yesterday. "The Music Goes Round and Round."

MUSIC: "THE MUSIC GOES ROUND AND ROUND"

Singing: I blow through here, and the music goes down and round. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, and it comes up here. Now I push the first valve down, and the music goes down and round. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, and it comes up here.

Then I push the middle valve down, and the music goes down and round. Below, below, below, deeply. Whoa, whoa, whoa, listen to the jazz come out. Then I push the other valve down, and the music goes down and round. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, and it comes up here.

LOMBARDO

Another big hit became a big hit overnight, "All the Things You Are."

MUSIC: "ALL THE THINGS YOU ARE"

Singing: You are the promised kiss of
springtime that makes the lonely winter
seem long.

You are the breathless hush of evening
that trembles on the brink of a lovely
song.

You are the angel glow that lights a
star. The dearest things I know are what
you are.

Someday my happy arms will hold you, and
someday I'll know the moment divine when
all the things you are are mine.

LOMBARDO

We got to 1939. That New Year's Eve, a
song that was to become a great
Dixieland song came into being. And
here's our arrangement of South Rampart
Street on Parade.

MUSIC: "SOUTH RAMPART STREET ON
PARADE"

LOMBARDO

We're going to do a number now. It was
very popular in 1942, "Don't Sit Under
the Apple Tree."

MUSIC: "DON'T SIT UNDER THE APPLE
TREE"

LOMBARDO

People will say, "We're in Love."

MUSIC: "WE'RE IN LOVE"

LOMBARDO

Now, "June Is Busting out All Over.

MUSIC: "JUNE IS BUSING OUT ALL
OVER"

LOMBARDO

You know, something new has been added to our New Year's Eve party here at the Roosevelt Grill. This year we have three very charming and talented young ladies. They're prep recording stars. I know you're going to enjoy them. And here are The Three Petticoats. Come, girls.

THE THREE
PETTICOATS

Singing: Won't you come home, Bill Bailey? Won't you come home? I moan the whole night long.

I'll do that cooking, honey. Well, I'll pay that rent. I know I've done you wrong.

Ever that rainy evening I kicked you out with nothing but a fine tooth comb? Well, I know why it's to blame now. Ain't that a shame, Bill Bailey? Won't you please come home?

Bill Bailey came home late one night. I met him at the door. He tells by the look in my fiery eyes that I was plenty sore. I handed him his fine tooth comb, said, "Boy, you better run." He said, "Now listen here, baby doll. I've just been having some fun."

I stepped into the bedroom and got out my 44. I pointed it at Billy Boy, said, "Don't come back no more." He turned around and started to run from here to Tennessee. He left me here sitting with my banjo on my knee.

Oh, won't you come home, Bill Bailey?
Won't you come home? I'm all alone. I'll
do the cooking, honey. I'll pay the
rent. I know I've done you wrong. Never
that rainy evening when I kicked you out
with nothing but a fine tooth comb.

Well, I know why it's to blame now.
Ain't that a shame, Bill Bailey won't
you please come home? Oh, Billy. Bill
Bailey, won't you please? Bill Bailey,
won't you please come home?

LOMBARDO

Thank you very much, petticoats. My own
brother Carmen here wrote a song in '48
that was the big song that New Year's
Eve. Here's Carmen's song, "Powder Your
Face with Sunshine."

MUSIC: POWDER YOUR FACE WITH
SUNSHINE

Singing: Powder your face with sunshine.
Put on a great, big smile. Make up your
eyes with laughter. Folks will be
laughing with you in a little while.

Whistle a tune of gladness. No matter
what's in style. The future's brighter
when hearts are lighter. Smile, smile,
smile.

MUSIC: PIANO SOLO

LOMBARDO

Come on, buddy.

LOMBARDO

You know, back in 1951, we had a big
hit, "The Tennessee Waltz."

MUSIC: "THE TENNESSEE WALTZ"

Singing: I was waltzing with my darling
to the Tennessee Waltz when an old
friend I happened to see.

Introduced him to my loved one. And
while they were waltzing, my friend
stole my sweetheart from me.

I remember the night at the Tennessee
Waltz. Now I know just how much I have
lost. Yes, I lost my little darling the
night they were playing the beautiful
Tennessee Waltz.

LOMBARDO

Now here's a song with a real New Year's
Eve flavor. It started in New Orleans
years ago, and of course, it's one of my
favorites. And here is "When the Saints
Go Marching In."

MUSIC: "WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING
IN"

Singing: Oh, when the Saints (when the
Saints), when the Saints (when the
Saints), when the Saints go marching in
(marching in), I want to be among that
number when the Saints go marching in.

Oh, when the Saints (when the Saints),
When the Saints (when the Saints), when
the Saints go marching in (marching in),
I want to be right there among that
number when the Saints go marching in.

SFX: CROSS FADE TO TIMES SQUARE,
LIVE WITH RADIO ANNOUNCER

MUSIC: "AULD ANG SYNE" UNDER

RADIO ANNOUNCER And this is it, the magic moment. It is 1958. A new year is born. The globe of light seemed to go out just before it touched the roof. And those letters, 1958, those figures came on slightly before the globe had touched the roof. It's official.

The new year is here. And those numbers are blazing forth on all four sides of the New York Times building, the building here in Times Square. So an old year has died, and the great annual blessed event has happened. A new year has been born. Firecrackers exploding in the crowd now, but they don't care.

A very happy scene as well as a tumultuous one. And so now it's time for us to say, "It's Happy New Year in Times Square." And so back to the dance.

LOMBARDO Happy New Year, everybody. A very happy New Year, especially from all of us and especially from Claral, the first name in hair color. We hope you have a wonderfully, happy, and prosperous 1958. Happy New Year!

BREAK #2: SPONSOR MESSAGES

MUSIC: "AULD LANG SYNE" BY GUY
LOMBARDO. MAINTAIN UNDER
THROUGHOUT. FADE UP AT END OF
CLOSING REMARKS. BACK TIMED. THE
SONG ENDS AT 58:00.

HOST

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This is John Barber, producer and host of Re-Imagined Radio. Thank you for listening. I hope you enjoyed what you heard and will join us again. Until then, go well, stay healthy, and best wishes for the new year! Don't forget your old acquaintances and keep hope alive.