

## **RADIO WOMEN**

Written, Produced, Hosted by

John F. Barber

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Re-Imagined Radio  
Season 12, Episode 03, March 18, 2024

Final draft

## **RADIO WOMEN**

Often unsung. Still outstanding.

Re-Imagined Radio  
Season 12, Episode 3  
Final Draft

Premier broadcast: March 18, 2024

Written, produced, hosted by John F. Barber

Sound design, music composition, and post-production by  
Marc Rose

Graphics by Holly Slocum

### **Synopsis**

This episode of Re-Imagined Radio, "Radio Women," samples from radio work of eight women -- Lucille Fletcher, Edith Meiser, Ruth Woodman, Mary MacBride, Jean King, Cathy Lewis, Margaret Lynch, and Gracie Allen to celebrate Women's History Month and important contributions made by women to radio storytelling.

### **Archive**

Episodes of Re-Imagined Radio are archived as podcasts at our website, reimagedradio DOT fm. You can listen or subscribe there. Podcasts are also available at the major distribution platforms.

### **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.

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

**MUSIC** = pre-recorded

**MUSIC** = bespoke, created for this episode

COLD OPEN

SFX: SAMPLE FROM RIR PROMO, LUCILLE  
FLETCHER, SORRY, WRONG NUMBER AND  
THE HITCH-HIKER

THEME AND ANNOUNCER

MUSIC: RIR THEME

ANNOUNCER

Welcome to Re-Imagined Radio, a program about radio storytelling. With each episode we combine dialogue, sound effects, and music to engage your listening imagination. We also like to include the stories behind the story. The history. The connections. Trivia. And we always strive to answer the questions, "So What?" and "Why Is This Important?" This episode is no different, and here to tell you about it is John Barber, producer and host.

HOST OPEN

HOST

Hello everyone. Welcome to Re-Imagined Radio. This episode celebrates Women's History Month and women who made pioneering and significant contributions to radio storytelling.

We sample radio work from eight women -- Lucille Fletcher, Edith Meiser, Ruth Woodman, Mary MacBride, Jean King, Cathy Lewis, Margaret Lynch, and Gracie Allen.

Thanks for joining us as Re-Imagined Radio presents "Radio Women."

**MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION**

ACT 1: LUCILLE FLETCHER

HOST We began our episode with samples from Re-Imagined Radio's adaptations of "Sorry, Wrong Number," and "The Hitch-Hiker," both written by Lucille Fletcher, lauded by no less an authority than Orson Welles as radio's most talented writer.

Visit our website, [reimaginedradio.fm](http://reimaginedradio.fm), and listen to our adaptations of these two superb radio dramas by Lucille Fletcher. These adaptations are also available as podcasts, which you can download from our website.

**MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION**

ACT 2: EDITH MEISER

HOST This is Re-Imagined Radio. Our episode is "Radio Women," a tribute to women and radio programs that made pioneering and significant contributions to radio storytelling.

We tune the dial now to Edith Meiser.

Edith Meiser, Broadway actress, novelist, writer of mysteries and radio dramas, introduced Sherlock Holmes, the detective's detective, to American radio audiences.

From 1930 to 1936, Meiser adapted 59 of the 60 Sherlock Holmes stories by Arthur

Conan Doyle into episodes for three radio series, *Sherlock Holmes*, *Sherlock Holmes Stories*, and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*.

In 1939, following the success of Hollywood Sherlock Holmes films starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce, Meiser began adapting and writing more Holmes stories for a radio series called *The New Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. Rathbone voiced Sherlock Holmes. Bruce was Dr. John Watson.

"The Bruce Partington Plans" is the earliest of the surviving episodes from this radio series. It was first broadcast November 6, 1939. Let's listen to some samples . . .

**SFX: SAMPLES FROM MEISER "THE BRUCE PARTINGTON PLANS"**

**MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION**

ACT 3: RUTH WOODMAN

HOST

Like Edith Meiser, Ruth Cornwall Woodman was a detective of sorts. She researched and wrote more than 1,000 stories for the popular radio program *Death Valley Days*, 1930 to 1951.

In 1930, Woodman was employed at the McCann Erickson Advertising Agency, in New York. When client Pacific Coast Borax Company, makers of 20-Mule Team Borax, a popular laundry and washing

soap, agreed to sponsor a Western-themed radio program, they required the writer to have first-hand knowledge of the Death Valley area, the source of their product.

Woodman eagerly agreed to the challenge. She spent summers researching the history and people of the Death Valley area. She explored the old towns and mines. Talked with everyone she could. Visited small town historical museums. And read old newspapers. She returned to New York and used the information she gathered to write the next season's *Death Valley Days* radio episodes.

The result was a highly successful radio show where Woodman's alter ego -- the narrator known as "The Old Ranger" -- told stories with an unmatched realism and drama.

Her stories often dealt with the people of Death Valley. The miners and prospectors. The seekers of lost mines and buried treasure.

"Shoo Fly," the story of a female prospector, is a good example. Let's listen to samples from this June 16, 1939 episode of *Death Valley Days* . . .

**SFX: SAMPLES FROM WOODMAN "SHOO FLY"**

**MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION**

ACT 4: MARY MCBRIDE

HOST

While Woodman presented the realism and drama of the Old West with her *Death Valley Days* radio series, Mary Margaret McBride personified the women's radio show genre. Called "The First Lady of Radio," McBride hosted *The Mary Margaret McBride Show*, 1934 to 1976.

As a pioneering radio interview host, McBride talked about current events and issues of the world important to women. She talked with people well known in the world of arts, entertainment, and politics, with an original and natural style.

For example, McBride interviewed Zora Neal Hurston, American author who portrayed early-1900s racial struggles in the American South. Hurston also published research on hoodoo, a spiritual tradition among African Americans in the Southern United States.

In this January 1943 interview, Hurston and McBride talk about cooking, southern heritage, literature, and zombies. It's a notable interview. Let's listen to a sample . . .

SFX: SAMPLES FROM MCBRIDE

"INTERVIEW WITH ZORA NEAL HURSTON"

MUSIC: RIR THEME FOR BREAK

THE FUSEBOX BREAK

HOST This is Re-Imagined Radio. I'm John Barber, producer and host. We'll return to our "Radio Women" episode in just a moment. But first, let me introduce you to The Fusebox Show. Produced by Marc Rose, it's a different kind of radio storytelling, full of quirky conversation, quick wit, and commentary about current day events and news. It's a radio show for everybody, but not everybody will like it. But I think you will. 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

ACT 5: JEAN KING

HOST This is Re-Imagined Radio. Our episode is "Radio Women," a tribute to women and radio programs that made pioneering and significant contributions to radio storytelling.

During the late 1940s, radio disc jockeys became a prominent program feature. These individuals played phonograph records of their own selection or in response to listeners' requests. Mostly they were men, but there were some exceptional women.

One was "Lonesome Gal," whose sultry, come hither breathless voice was heard on syndicated radio stations across the country from 1947 into the 1950s.

Lonesome Gal spoke to her primarily male audience in an intimate tone -- as if they were enjoying a candlelight dinner and wine -- calling them pet names, sounding as if each was the only man in the world.

Between her cooing monologues, Lonesome Gal played records by contemporary singers and musicians. Occasionally, she sang her theme song, "Lonesome Gal."

In real life, "Lonesome Gal" was Jean King. She wrote, produced, and voiced *Lonesome Gal* sending nearly 300 customized recordings to radio stations around the country each week.

Despite success with *Lonesome Gal*, King worked hard to remain anonymous. When she made public appearances, King wore a cat mask to hide her identity.

Let's listen to samples from "I Wanna Be Loved," the March 2, 1951 episode of *Lonesome Gal* . . .

**SFX: SAMPLES FROM KING "LONESOME GAL"**

**MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION**

ACT 6: CATHY LEWIS

HOST

This is Re-Imagined Radio. Our episode pays tribute to women who made pioneering and significant contributions to radio storytelling.

So far, we've highlighted women writers, talk show hosts, and a singing disc jockey. Time now to acknowledge some pioneering radio actresses.

Cathy Lewis was a well respected radio actor in Hollywood, California, during the 1940s and 1950s.

She played Irene Henshaw, the school principle, in *The Great Gildersleeve* series.

She was a strong supporting actress in over 120 episodes of *Suspense*, including "The House in Cypress Canyon," and "On a Country Road" with Cary Grant.

She was the monotone and unsympathetic telephone operator driving Agnes Moorehead to hysterics in Lucille Fletcher's "Sorry, Wrong Number."

Her biggest role perhaps was as the co-star and narrator of the weekly comedy series *My Friend Irma*, 1947 to 1954, where she played Jane Stacy, sensible best friend to Irma Peterson, voiced by Marie Wilson. Let's listen to the first scene from the first episode, "Irma Meets Jane," broadcast April 11, 1947 .

. .

SFX: SAMPLES FROM LEWIS "MY FRIEND  
IRMA"

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

ACT 7: MARGARET LYNCH

HOST

Sticking with comedy, let's talk about the woman often called radio's best comedy writer.

Margaret "Peg" Francis Lynch started at KATE radio, in Albert Lee, Minnesota, where she created a comedy about a married couple, *Ethel and Albert*, and set the mold for her career, during which she wrote 11,000 scripts for radio and television, creating and voicing female characters in couples comedies.

She was also the first woman to create, write, star in, and own a radio couples comedy series, *The Couple Next Door*, a husband-wife centered situation comedy, heard 1957 to 1960. She starred in each 15-minute episode. Let's sample "Neighborhood Bully," broadcast December 31, 1957 . . .

SFX: SAMPLES FROM LYNCH  
"NEIGHBORHOOD BULLY"

MUSIC: FOR TRANSITION

ACT 8: GRACIE ALLEN

HOST

As a comedienne, Grace Ethel Cecile Rosalie Allen, better known as Gracie Allen, was internationally famous as the

partner and comic foil of husband George Burns. They appeared on radio, television, and in film as the duo Burns and Allen.

Although she played a scatterbrain character, Allen was in fact very shrewd in her marketing efforts for the duo. For example, as a 14-episode publicity stunt for the *Burns and Allen Show*, February 28 to May 29, Gracie ran for President of the United States in the 1940 election, as the "Surprise Party."

Her campaign skits generated approximately 45 write in votes in the election. Let's listen to samples from the "Surprise Party Platform" episode, broadcast March 27, 1940 . . .

**SFX: SAMPLES FROM ALLEN "GRACIE FOR PRESIDENT"**

**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, producer and host. 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, listen, like, and review wherever you get your podcasts, or, from our website.

**MUSIC: RIR THEME, ESTABLISH, THEN  
DUCK UNDER THE FOLLOWING**

HOST CREDITS/CLOSE

HOST

Well, that concludes this episode of Re-Imagined Radio, "Radio Women," our tribute to Women's History Month and women who made pioneering and significant contributions to radio storytelling.

We sampled radio storytelling by Lucille Fletcher, Edith Meiser, Ruth Woodman, Mary MacBride, Jean King, Cathy Lewis, Margaret Lynch, and Gracie Allen.

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

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

Graphic design by Holly Slocum 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. Our radio broadcasts are heard on local, regional, and international community radio stations.

For on demand streaming, point your browsers to our website, reimagedradio (all one word, no punctuation) DOT fm.

Thank you so much for listening, and 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.