

RADIO COLLECTION: **SUSPENSE**

(Broadcast: June 17, 1942 – June 3, 1962)

With a revolving guest cast of some of Hollywood's most popular names, the Peabody Award-winning *Suspense* ushered into radio's golden age a unique point of cross-pollination between media industries. Under the management of producer William Spier and the patronage of the CBS radio network, the weekly "psychological drama" featured performances from a range of successful commercial film personas of "marquee status" including Cary Grant, Judy Garland and Humphrey Bogart, with notable episodes featuring Agnes Moorehead and Orson Welles. Moorehead's role as the bedridden Mrs. Elbert Stevenson in *Sorry, Wrong Number* proved such a ratings success that she repeated the performance seven times in subsequent broadcasts.

The initial success of *Suspense* was due in large part to the partnership between its producer Spier, composer Lucien Morawek and sound effects supervisor Berne Surrey who fostered a production environment that allowed for minimal rehearsal time from its performers, making the show appealing for film stars coordinating busy shooting and publicity schedules. Spier's focus on fully integrating the program's soundscape,



Agnes Moorehead performs as Mrs. Elbert Stevenson in *Sorry, Wrong Number* for the weekly radio crime anthology, *Suspense*.

including the dramatic use of moments of silence, with its script foregrounded the aural nature of the medium while building upon the commercially-friendly national reputation of its guest cast members from Hollywood. This formula would prove effective well into the 1950s when staff changes at CBS and shifts in the radio and film industries along with the proliferation of television ownership caused a realigning of the importance of radio in commercial drama. For *Suspense*, faced with the lack of participation of major film stars during the late 1950s, the program would

weather the difficulties of a shrinking budget and dwindling audience base until 1962.

The UCLA Film and Television Archive holds multiple titles of *Suspense* available for use on-site at the Archive Research and Study Center.

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Radio

(Please contact the Archive Research and Study Center for additional titles)

Suspense. Sorry, Wrong Number – Version Two (1943-08-21). Broadcast on CBS. Cast, Agnes Moorehead. Audio Study Copy: AA 572

Suspense. Back For Christmas (1943-12-23). Broadcast on CBS. Cast, Peter Lorre. Audio Study Copy: AA 269

Suspense. Donovan's Brain (1944-05-18). Broadcast on CBS. Cast, Orson Welles. Audio Study Copy: AA 604

Suspense. The Man Who Knew How (1944-08-10). Broadcast on CBS. Cast, Charles Laughton. Audio Study Copy: AA 630

Suspense. The Thing In The Window (1946-12-19). Broadcast on CBS. Cast, Joseph Cotton. Audio Study Copy: AA 184

Suspense. Death At Live Oak (1947-05-15). Broadcast on CBS. Cast, Robert Mitchum. Audio Study Copy: AA 697

Suspense. Love's Lovely Counterfeit (1948-01-17). Broadcast on CBS. Cast, James Cagney. Audio Study Copy: AA 486

Suspense. The Man Who Wanted To Be Edward G. Robinson (1948-09-30). Broadcast on CBS. Cast, Edward G. Robinson. Audio Study Copy: AA 296

Suspense. Death Has A Shadow (1949-05-05). Broadcast on CBS. Cast, Bob Hope. Audio Study Copy: AA 181

Suspense. Mission Completed (1949-12-01). Broadcast on CBS. Cast, James Stewart. Audio Study Copy: AA 545

Suspense. A Good And Faithful Servant (1952-06-02). Broadcast on CBS. Cast, Jack Benny. Audio Study Copy: AA 342

Suspense. Joker Wild (1952-12-08). Broadcast on CBS. Cast, Elliot Lewis, Kathy Lewis. Audio Study Copy: AA 228

Suspense. Kaleidoscope (1955-07-12). Broadcast on CBS. Writer, Ray Bradbury. Cast, William Conrad. Audio Study Copy: AA 330

Suspense. Murder on Mike (1957-07-28). Broadcast on CBS. Cast, Raymond Burr. Audio Study Copy: AA 726

Suspense. Tonight at 5:55 (1960-04-17). Broadcast on CBS. Cast, Louie Van Rooten. Audio Study Copy: AA 525