

for a case-in-point, in the tricky business of bringing radio shows to TV, for several reasons. For one thing, the program was brought over virtually intact—producer, basic cast, writer, musical director, announcer, and the program's format and theme all made the move with no changes. At the same time, *Mr. D.A.* is not an atypical radio show, in fact, it is very representative of an entire group of medium-priced radio shows of a mystery or crime nature which could conceivably make the transition to video. Lastly, since virtually everyone associated with the problems of the radio *Mr. D.A.* is also working on the new TV version, it was possible to find out, collectively and individually, how they are making out in the newer air medium, and what problems arose from the move.

New as the TV *Mr. D.A.* still is, the idea of doing a video version of the famous racket-and-crime-busting series was not a last-minute or even recent development in Bristol-Myers' advertising plans.

A Bristol-Myers advertising spokesman told SPONSOR: "We thought about making a television version of *Mr. D.A.* from the moment TV began to boom in the early postwar years. Periodically, the subject came up in meetings, and we discussed it thoroughly. There was never any real question of whether or not we *wanted* to bring the radio show into television. We were also convinced that the same production staff and talent who had kept the radio show's ratings high since 1940 and made *Mr. D.A.* a success in terms of product sales could do the job in TV."

Since the TV version of the weekly crime series had been a pet project of Bristol-Myers for a long time, how did the big drug firm decide when the time was ripe to make the changeover?

"We waited until our continuing media research showed us that there would be a sizable potential audience for a video *Mr. D.A.*," the Bristol-Myers spokesman explained. "It would not have been sound from an economic standpoint to have done it earlier. At the same time, we were carefully watching the relationship between the size of the total radio audience and the TV audience, and the competitive standing of radio and video. We decided, in the spring of this year, that the fall of 1951 would be our target date for the start of a TV version of *Mr. D.A.*"

How did Bristol-Myers decide that the entire basic cast and the behind-the-scenes staffers (producer, writer, musician, etc.) could make the grade in TV when the time came?

To find the answer, SPONSOR talked to representatives of the ad agency handling the TV *Mr. D.A.* (Young & Rubicam) as well as those of the client and the producer, Byron Productions. This is the consensus of how the evaluation process worked out for those connected with *Mister District Attorney*.

Since *Mr. D.A.* is a package show, based on characters and a title created by Phillips H. Lord but produced entirely by Ed Byron, the great part of the burden of selection fell on the shoulders of stocky, energetic Ed Byron, who has been producing and di-



Commercials on TV "D.A." are adaptation of radio selling

recting the radio series since its inception as an NBC sustainer in 1939. At the age of 45, Byron is a veteran packager, and knows all the angles. Like all producers in radio who felt they wanted to continue eating, Byron had been a close student of TV from the beginning, watching shows, discussing production technique, attending rehearsals, etc. He was well aware of the fact that Bristol-Myers was following, with equal thoroughness, the progress being made by TV, and that his radio package might ultimately be made over into a video series.

When this prospect became "hot" early this spring, Byron went to work.
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Rehearsal schedule of the radio and video "Mr. D. A.'s" had to be retailed to avoid conflicts, was solved by putting the radio show on tape. The radio show now takes four hours to produce; the video show takes 28 hours

Rehearsal schedule for "Mr. D. A."

Radio	
Airtime:	FRIDAY 9:30 to 9:55 p.m., EST
Rehearsals:	WEDNESDAYS 4:30 to 7:15 p.m. 7:15 p.m. dress and tape (if re-taping, until 9:00 p.m.)

Television	
Airtime:	Alternate MONDAYS 8:00 to 8:30 p.m., EST
Rehearsals:	MONDAY 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. (not scheduled on odd Monday)
	TUESDAY 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.; 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.
	THURSDAY 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.
	FRIDAY 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (or 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.)
	SATURDAY 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.
	SUNDAY 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. (or 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.) 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

3. Key backstagers went along in the radio-to-TV shift. Producer Ed Byron (top) and asst. Joyce Lowinson handle production, Bob Shaw and friend (bottom) do scripts

