

with all the loving care of a Broadway first night—and only a handful of people saw it. The show was done on a closed-circuit TV studio, and a kinescope recording was made. This was run through, again and again, for Byron and for the agency and client.

It was an expensive test, since half-hour "test-tube" kinescopes are seldom brought in for less than \$10,000 or \$15,000, but everyone feels the results were worth it.

The trial-run filmed TV show proved several things. For one thing, it showed that producer Ed Byron, when teamed with an agency TV director, could turn out a good video show. It proved that writer Bob Shaw could write about the characters of the *Mr. D.A.* series in terms of the visual air medium. Above all, it showed that—given the chance—

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 "The local station, always alerted for low-cost effective program salesmanship, has to be the spawning ground for Radio 1951."

LESTER GOTTLIEB

Director of radio programs, CBS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

the veterans of the radio show also excelled in television.

"This was very important," a Bristol-Myers executive told SPONSOR. "We were very lucky in having a radio cast who, more or less by accident, looked in person about how you would expect them to look, judging by their voices and radio roles."

Incidentally, some minor "tailoring" was necessary in the conversion of the radio thespians to TV performers, SPONSOR learned. The star of the show, Jay Jostyn, was the one most concerned. Jostyn, a tall, blond, wavy-haired veteran of years of radio, had the proper sonorous-sounding voice for the role of the nameless District Attorney. But, Jostyn was fond of growing his hair long, in the manner of the late John Barrymore (whom he somewhat resembles). He was also given to wearing some sharp-looking tailored sports clothes and flowing ties. Before the TV series started in early October, Jostyn went to a barbershop to acquire a neat trim, and to Brooks Brothers for a plain business suit. Now Jostyn looks more like a D.A., less like an actor.

This was virtually all that was necessary, except for minor costuming and the designing of permanent office sets, in the way of converting the trio of radio regulars to TV. Len Doyle, who plays "Harrington," the D.A.'s assis-

tant, is just the sort of explosive, cigar-smoking, indestructible guy you'd expect. Vicki Vola, who plays "Miss Miller," the D.A.'s secretary, is attractive enough to look good on TV, without giving the feel that she's out-of-place in an office with a notebook open and a pencil poised.

It's interesting to note that while Bristol-Myers was going through the chain of events and thinking that led up to the kinescoped "shakedown cruise" of *Mr. D.A.*, it was busy trimming the sails of the older series. The radio series, bought by Bristol-Myers in 1940 at a time when the big drug firm was getting fed up with the high costs of big-name comedy shows in radio, was no longer "medium-priced." With TV making inroads into the audience of its (then) Wednesday-night spot on NBC in 1950 and 1951, the program's ratings, audience and sales pull were beginning to get a little out of line with its costs as the program's effectiveness eased off.

As an antidote to this, Bristol-Myers ordered some cut-backs in the radio show, which resulted in dropping a 21-piece radio orchestra used for musical effects, and substituting an organist and a horn player, and finally just an organist. Casts were held down to a minimum, and all frills were eliminated. Most of this cost-cutting was done for two reasons: (1) to bring the present costs of the radio show in line with the present effectiveness of nighttime network radio, and (2) to get somewhat "ahead" on budget money for *Mr. D.A.*, so that the TV version would not take quite as big a bite out of the Bristol-Myers ad budget. Bristol-Myers also decided that when it had a chance, it would put the radio series on tape recordings.

With this fall set as the target date for the start of the *Mr. D.A.* TV series, Bristol-Myers and Young & Rubicam went shopping for a good TV time slot soon after the completion of the successful kinescope show.

Word soon got around the industry, and the American Broadcasting Company approached Bristol-Myers with a choice offer. It was actually a kind of "package" time offer, although shows on ABC radio and ABC-TV cannot be lumped together for frequency or dollar-volume discounts.

ABC did offer, however, a choice morning time slot (M-W-F, 11:30 to noon) for B-M's radio *Break the Bank*.



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