

Pursuit

(CBS)

1949 - 1952

A Radio Series Broadcast Log

By Stewart Wright.

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Audition Show: One. Recorded on 11/29/1948.
First Network Broadcast: 10/27/1949.
Last Network Broadcast: 03/25/1952.
Number of Network Broadcasts: 64.
Shows In Circulation: 19 CBS Broadcasts and the Audition Show.
Length: 30 minutes.

AUDITION SHOW:

Pursuit had its roots in a CBS series that did not come to fruition. An audition show, "You Take Ballistics," was produced for the proposed series *The Hunters*. (This production was based on a short story of the same name by William Irish (a pseudonym of Cornell Woolrich, 1903-1968) which first appeared in the January, 1938 issue of magazine *Double Detective*. This Robert L. Richards adaptation had been previously used on another CBS series, *Suspense*, on 03/23/1947.) A new production of "You Take Ballistics," was later used for the first episode of the *Pursuit* series.

The opening and closing of the audition show imply that *The Hunters* would be a crime anthology series with a different star every week. No other episodes of *The Hunters* other than the audition show seem to have been produced.

Anthology series based on a central theme were not uncommon on CBS. The network also had *Escape*, it's "high adventure" themed series; *Romance*, with a central theme of romance; and of course, the long-running *Suspense*, another crime anthology series.

SERIES DESCRIPTION:

***Pursuit* Premieres: A Crime Anthology?**

A new production of the Richards adaptation of "You Take Ballistics" was used for the first episode of the *Pursuit* series which premiered on 10/27/1949. (This broadcast is not in circulation.) The names of the main police characters were retained from *The Hunters* production: Inspector Harvey, Sergeant Kass, and Chief Inspector Leffinger.

Even at this late date there seems to have been some indecision at CBS on the format for *Pursuit*. Would it be a crime anthology series based on the theme of Man hunting Man with different characters and stars each week or a more standard style crime series dealing with the investigations of a recurring fictional main character?

The opening of the premiere episode, taken directly from the script, indicates a crime anthology series was intended; "From the world of adventure, from yesterday's headlines, from the annals of history -- we bring you Dramatic stories of *Pursuit*. . . When Man hunts Man!"

The script for the premier episode concludes with the announcer stating, "On Thursday, November 3rd, *Pursuit* will bring you the story of a desperate man hunting down a vicious killer -- with the life of his own wife at stake! As John and Ward Hawkins tell it in their gripping tale 'Motive For Murder.'" This John and Ward Hawkins short story was not used on *Pursuit*. ("Motive For Murder" had been previously adapted for NBC's *Radio City Playhouse* on 06/20/1949 and a different adaptation, by E. Jack Neuman, would be used on *Suspense* on 03/16/1950.) *Pursuit* did not air on November 3rd; it was pre-empted by a President Truman speech.

With the Second Episode, the Series Format is Changed.

By the time the second episode of *Pursuit*, "Three For All," aired on Thursday, 11/10/1949, the format for the series had been decided upon.

Pursuit became a police procedural series. Perhaps the change in format was in response to NBC's wildly popular *Dragnet*. *Pursuit* would retain the basic concept of Man hunting Man, but would focus on the investigations of the fictional Scotland Yard Inspector Peter Black. The Inspector was an extremely dedicated policeman, a relentless man hunter, who once on the case, would not rest until the wrongdoer was brought to Justice. Black was assisted in his cases by Sergeant Moffet. Their immediate superior was Chief Inspector Harkness.

While many of Black's cases were in the London area, others took him to various parts of the United Kingdom and even overseas.

The series was unusual in that it featured dual narration. Starting in the Spring of 1950, Bill Johnstone provided the opening and closing narrations and sometimes, bridges between commercials. Inspector Black furnished the change of scenes and overall case narrations.

Standard Opening:

Spoken by the Narrator:

"*Pursuit*. "A criminal strikes and fades quickly back into the shadow of his own dark world. . . and then, the man from Scotland Yard, the famous Inspector Peter Black, and the relentless, dangerous pursuit. . . . When man hunts man!"

Standard Closing:

Spoken by Inspector Black at the end of each case:

"*Pursuit!* And the pursuit is ended."

Spoken by the Narrator:

". . . We invite you to join us next week at this same time when *Pursuit* will bring you another dramatic story of the famous Inspector Peter Black from Scotland Yard relentlessly hunting down those whose disordered passions breed violence and murder. . . another story of man hunting man when we bring you *Pursuit*."

Opening Change:

Starting with the Summer, 1951 run, *Pursuit* had a distinctive opening for the series. The chiming of Big Ben alternating with a similar chord played by Eddie Dunstedter on the organ, was combined with Bill Johnstone's compelling opening narration.

SCHEDULING:

Pursuit experienced several broadcast day and time changes during its run on CBS.

During the 1949-50 season *Pursuit* faced such competition as *Dragnet*, *The Life of Reilly*, *People Are Funny*, and *Twenty Questions*.

During its only extended scheduling in a single time slot, the 1951-52 season, *Pursuit* faced formidable competition: *Fibber McGee and Molly* on NBC and *Mysterious Traveler* on Mutual.

For information about a well-publicized scheduling change that was delayed by a late-occurring spot sponsorship for two episodes, see **PROGRAMMING NOTE** on Page 7 of this broadcast log.

SPONSORSHIP:

10/27/1949 – 05/02/1950:

Three shows sponsored by Ford (01/06/1950, 01/13/1950, and 04/18/1950); otherwise, Sustaining.

07/01/1950 - 07/22/1950:

Wrigley's Gum.

07/10/1951 - 08/21/1951:

Wrigley's Gum.

09/18/1951 – 03/25/1952:

Sterling Drug – various products: Haley's M-O, Dr. Lyons Tooth Powder, Ironized Yeast, Molle Shave Cream, Double Danderine Shampoo, and Energene Cleaning Fluid.

CAST AND CREW:

Cast:

Inspector Harvey: Ted de Corsia (10/27/1949 episode only).
Inspector Peter Black: Ted de Corsia (11/03/1949 – 04/18/1950);
John Dehner (04/25/1950, and 07/01/1950 – 07/22/1950);
Herb Butterfield (05/02/1950);
and
Ben Wright (07/10/1951 – 03/25/1952).
Raymond Lawrence.

Sergeant Moffet
Chief Inspector Harkness
and Narrator: William Johnstone.

NOTE: When Johnstone was not playing Harkness, he usually appeared as some other character in the cast.

There were also a couple of minor recurring characters in the series:

Dr. Bishop, the Scotland

Yard pathologist: Alec Harford.
and

Inspector Mallinson: Lou Krugman and Edgar Barrier.

Guest Cast:

(In descending order of frequency of appearance.)

Joe Kearns, Byron Kane, Lou Krugman, Charles Davis, Jay Novello, Bill Johnstone, Ben Wright, Paul Frees, Tudor Owens, Irene Tedrow, Ramsey Hill, Herb Butterfield, John Dehner, Jeanette Nolan, Betty Harford, Terry Kilburn, Doris Lloyd, Eric Snowden, Larry Dobkin, Eileen Erskine, Dan O'Herlihy, Joan Banks, Alec Harford, Junius Mathews, Ted Osborne, Norma Varden, Peggy Webber, Lillian Buyeff, Virginia Gregg, Alma Lawton, Steve Roberts, John Stephenson, and others.

CREW:

Producers: William N. Robson 10/27/1949 – 12/23/1949.
Elliott Lewis 01/06/1950 – 03/25/1952.

Directors: William N. Robson 10/27/1949 – 12/23/1949.
Elliott Lewis 01/06/1950 – 03/25/1952, with the following exceptions:
Norman Macdonnell 01/31/1950;
Antony Ellis & Gil Doud 02/07/1950 & 02/14/1950.

Writers: 10/27/1949 – 01/06/1950: Various writers including Robert L. Richards, Morton Fine and David Friedkin, John and Gwen Bagni, Louis Vittes, E. Jack Neuman, and Les Crutchfield.
 01/13/1950 – 07/22/1950: Gil Doud and Antony Ellis.
 07/10/1951 – 03/25/1952: Antony Ellis.
 02/19/1952: Gil Doud and Antony Ellis.

Music: 10/27/1949 – 07/22/1950:
Pursuit used an orchestra; Leith Stevens, Martin Skiles and others did music arrangements during this time period.
 07/10/1951 – 03/25/1952:
 An organ, played by Eddie Dunstedter, was used in place of an orchestra.

Announcers: Larry Thor and others during 1949-50 run. Then Bob Stevenson from 07/17/1951.

Sound Effects: 10/27/1949 – 05/02/1950:
 Clark Casey and Berne Surrey and others.
 07/10/1951 – 03/25/1952:
 Gus Bayz, Ralph Cummings, Ross Murray, Gene Twombly, and others.

LOG:

The log is divided into sections with the day and time of broadcast listed at the beginning of each section. All episode titles and broadcast dates and times in this Log are taken directly from Primary Sources: the CBS individual episode scripts and other network documentation. Broadcast dates and times were verified using the 1949-52 Radio listings from the New York Times and other newspapers. Newspaper articles on schedule changes, proposed and actually implemented, were also consulted. All times are for the Eastern Time Zone.

Episode Titles

Episode titles were usually announced during the broadcast. In some cases, collectors have made their own titles. Short plot summaries are provided to help resolve discrepancies between the titles contained in this log and collector titles. Also, these plot summaries may also help in the identification of any additional episodes that come into circulation.

Episode Availability

Relatively few episodes of this fine series are in circulation; only 19 of the 64 episodes from the CBS run and the audition show for *The Hunters*. Four episodes starring Ted de Corsia and 11 starring Ben Wright survive. The four July, 1950 Summer Replacement shows starring John Dehner are in

circulation. The twenty episodes with **highlighted titles** are known to be in circulation. One can only hope that additional episodes will become available to the Old-Time Radio community.

AUDITION SHOW – Proposed series *The Hunters*.

Date	Title & Plot Summary
11/29/1948 (Date Unverified)	You Take Ballistics Inspector Harvey matches wits with murderer Clarence Coleman. (Audition show for the unsold series, <i>The Hunters</i> , starring Victor Jory. Same script was used for first episode of <i>Pursuit</i> .)

SEASON I - 10/27/1949 through 05/02/1950.

Thursday – 10:30 to 11:00 PM

Date	Title & Plot Summary
10/27/1949	You Take Ballistics Inspector Harvey matches wits with murderer Clarence Coleman.
11/03/1949	Pre-empted.
11/10/1949	Three For All A series of WWII veterans are murdered. The motive may be revenge.
11/17/1949	The Double Faced Killer Black pursues a 9-fingered murderer.
11/24/1949	The Veiled Hat A constable sees a young woman fall into the river. Suicide or a cover for murder?

Friday – 10:00 to 10:30 PM

Date	Title & Plot Summary
11/25/1949	The Tear Of Siva Five men are killed on the ship Malacca Crescent.
12/02/1949	Pattern for Homicide A murder suspect fakes his own death to throw Black off the trail.
12/09/1949	Death Is A Memory A stolen body with a false identity leads to murder.
12/16/1949	Murder Is The Cargo A ship's steward who is a suspect in an investigation is murdered.
12/23/1949	Five Pound Killer A murdered man has counterfeit five-pound notes on his

person.

PROGRAMMING NOTE: *Pursuit* was scheduled to move to Tuesday nights starting on January 3, 1950 to make way for a new show starring Robert Q. Lewis that was scheduled to premiere on Friday, January 6th, 1950.

Because the Ford Motor Co. sponsored a number of CBS-produced sustaining programs for a couple of weeks as part of a major advertising campaign, including two Friday night shows, *Young Love* and *Pursuit*, the start of the new Robert Q. Lewis show, *The Show Goes On*, was delayed until January 20.

As a result, *Young Love* and *Pursuit*, continued in their Friday night time slots through January 13th. *Pursuit* did not move to Tuesdays until January 17, 1950.

12/30/1949 Pre-empted.

01/06/1950 **The Tall Man**

A dying shopkeeper shot during a jewelry store robbery, tells the Inspector that the killer was a 'tall' man.

01/13/1950 **The Pursuit Of The Wyemouth Killer**

Scotland Yard is asked to aid in the solution of a double murder.

Tuesday – 10:00 to 10:30 PM

Date Title & Plot Summary

01/17/1950 **The Pursuit Of The Wormwood Scrubs Murderer**

Inspector Black pursues a murderer in a rural area.

01/24/1950 **The Pursuit Of The Elusive Ransom**

Black goes to France to catch a team of jewel thieves that has turned to murder.

01/31/1950 **The Pursuit Of The Lady In Waiting**

Black pursues a poisoner and finds much more.

Tuesday – 10:30 to 11:00 PM

Date Title & Plot Summary

02/07/1950 **The Pursuit On Lundy Island**

Black goes on holiday and finds murder.

02/14/1950 **The Pursuit Of The Wickham Killer**

A call from an old friend leads Black into a murder investigation.

02/21/1950 **The Pursuit Of The Forty-Fourth Passenger**

An airliner is destroyed and murder is suspected.

02/28/1950 Pre-Empted.

03/07/1950 **The Pursuit Of The Firebird**

Black looks for a murderer and finds more than one. An important clue is on a phonograph record.

03/14/1950 **The Pursuit In the Kingdom of Rossiter**

Black and Moffett go to Africa to arrest Rossiter, a murderer and embezzler.

(This Gil Doud and Antony Ellis script was reused with modifications on *Escape* as "The Power Of Hammer" on 10/15/1950.)

03/21/1950 Pre-empted

03/28/1950 **The Pursuit In Hammond Towers**

An English nobleman is murdered.

04/04/1950 **The Pursuit Of The Hollywood Killer**

A young woman is found murdered in the Hollywood Cinema.

04/11/1950 **Pursuit - And The Man Who Confessed**

A man gives himself up after committing a murder. Or did he?

04/18/1950 **Pursuit In Bassett Marsh**

A corpse is found near a small fishing village.

04/25/1950 **The Pursuit Of The Commando Killers**

A series of brilliantly-planned robberies results in murder.

(Script was later used for a new production as "**Pursuit Of The Commando Killers**" on 02/19/1952 with different cast and crew members.)

05/02/1950 **Pursuit Of The Man Who Smiled**

An explosion covers a murder.

SUMMER REPLACEMENT - For *The Gene Autry Show*.

Saturday - 8:00 to 8:30 PM

Date Title & Plot Summary

07/01/1950 **Pursuit Of The Man Who Couldn't Go Home**

A man jumps from a building. Suicide or murder?

07/08/1950 **Pursuit Of The Masked Five**

A robbery suspect is killed by an accomplice while under custody of Black and Moffet.

07/15/1950 **Pursuit Of The Limehouse Killers**

Investigation of a narcotics ring leads to the murder of a policeman.

07/22/1950 **Pursuit In the North Sea**

A black market operation leads to a smuggling ring of War veterans and pursuit on the high seas.

SUMMER REPLACEMENT - For *Life Wth Luigi*.

Tuesday - 9:00 to 9:30 PM

Date Title & Plot Summary

07/10/1951 **Pursuit In Petticoat Lane**

During a jewelry store robbery, a clerk is killed.

- 07/17/1951 **Pursuit At Dunster Fair**
Black and Moffet travel to Taunton to investigate an attack that leaves the victim dying.
- 07/24/1951 **Pursuit Of The Killer Who Wasn't There**
A man is shot to death and his body is found in the trunk of a car.
- 07/31/1951 **Pursuit Of The Lonely Heart**
Many people suspect a man of killing his wife, but no one can find the body.
- 08/07/1951 **Pursuit . . . And The Boy Who Was Late**
A bomb explodes at Scotland Yard.
- 08/14/1951 **Pursuit Of The Knife Boys**
A gang of young toughs attacks a couple. The husband identifies one of his attackers and then recants his identification.
- 08/21/1951 **Pursuit At The Vicarage**
Someone is trying to kill a Vicar. Inspector Black is requested to investigate.

SEASON II - 09/18/1951 through 03/25/1952.

Tuesday – 9:30 to 10:00 PM

- | Date | Title & Plot Summary |
|-------------|--|
| 09/18/1951 | Pursuit And the Ladies of Farthing Street
A series of anonymous notes tells the Inspector that the writer knows about a murder. Unfortunately, the sender is found dead. |
| 09/25/1951 | Pursuit Of The Romeo And Juliet Killers
Black is on the trail of two jewel thieves. |
| 10/02/1951 | Pursuit And the Man Died Late
A body of a recently deceased man is brought into the morgue; several months after he is shot in the brain. |
| 10/09/1951 | Pursuit Of The Soviet Embassy Killer
Black tries to prevent the assassination of Soviet officials. |
| 10/16/1951 | Pursuit Of The Parcels of Death
A killer is sending bombs in packages. |
| 10/23/1951 | Pursuit Of The Thief Who Had a Conscience
A dying career criminal has information on a long unsolved case for Black. |
| 10/30/1951 | Pursuit Of The Swindon Killer
A policeman is found dead in the Thames. |
| 11/06/1951 | Pursuit And the Portrait Of The Young Lady
Black investigates a theft at a famous art gallery. |
| 11/13/1951 | Pursuit And the Woman Who Died Alone |

- A woman is found murdered in a room with the door locked from the inside.
- 11/20/1951 **Pursuit On The Night Ferry**
Black tries to prevent an attack on the Night Ferry Express.
- 11/27/1951 **Pursuit Of The Epsom Downs Killer**
A man staggers onto the track during a horse race.
- 12/04/1951 **Pursuit Of The Man Named Wong**
A trunk with a body in it is found on a dock.
- 12/11/1951 **Pursuit Of The Loch Ness Killers**
Black and Moffet go to Scotland to investigate a car bombing.
- 12/18/1951 **Pursuit Of The Musical Killers**
An aircraft designer is kidnapped and murdered.
- 12/25/1951 **Pursuit Of The Chief Inspector's Guest**
Black's Christmas guest doesn't show up.
- 01/01/1952 **Pursuit In The English Manor**
Inspector Black's car breaks down on his way to a Holiday Party.
- 01/08/1952 **Pursuit Of The Willesden Terrors**
A neighbor says a man is being murdered by the man's wife and sister-in-law.
- 01/15/1952 **Pursuit And the Wandsworth Prisoner**
A man in prison for assault says he has committed a murder.
- 01/22/1952 **Pursuit Of The Counterfeit Killers**
Black is on the trail of a gang of bank note forgers.
- 01/29/1952 **Pursuit And the Belsen Motive**
A jeweler is savagely beaten to death and his partner is missing.
- 02/05/1952 **Pursuit Of The London Terror**
Black tracks down a serial killer of young women.
- 02/12/1952 **Pursuit Of The Thames Pirates**
The police are after a gang of dangerous waterfront thieves and Black is captured by them.
- 02/19/1952 **Pursuit Of The Commando Killers**
A series of brilliantly-planned robberies results in murder.
(Script was previously used as "**The Pursuit Of The Commando Killers**" on 04/25/1950 with different cast and crew members.)
- 02/26/1952 **Pursuit Of The Woman In Gray**
A woman prison inmate has been attacked 3 times and the Prison Governor thinks these attacks might lead to murder.
- 03/04/1952 **Pursuit In Clynewidd Mine**
A man is murdered during a mine accident and Black investigates when he's caught in another cave-in.
- 03/11/1952 **Pursuit Of The Asiatic Killer**
A man insists that he was poisoned before he died and claimed

- his wife knew who did it.
- 03/18/1952 **Pursuit And the Man From M. I. Two**
Black's visit with his nephew is interrupted by the murder of a British agent.
- 03/25/1952 **Pursuit Of The Man With The Gun**
A man calls Scotland Yard to report that he has just killed his wife.

SOURCES CONSULTED:

Radio Broadcasts:

Pursuit Broadcasts.

Scripts and Other Related Documentation:

Pursuit Scripts and network Property Purchase Records and other documents pertaining to the series.

KNX Collection

American Radio Archives

Grant R. Brimhall Library

Thousand Oaks, CA

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1949-52 Articles from various newspapers.

Periodicals

1949-52 Articles from *Billboard*, *Broadcasting*, *Sponsor*, and *Variety*.

Return With Us Now. . . .

(Newsletter of the Radio Historical Association of Colorado)

"'Pursuit' A Lesser-Known Gem" by Stewart Wright, July/August , 2010.

Radio Recall

(Journal of the Metro Washington Old-Time Radio Club)

"*Pursuit*. . . When Man Hunts Man!" by Stewart Wright, June/August, 2012.

Internet:

Vintage Broadcast

<https://vintagebroadcast.com/ipnmonitor/vintagebc/>

Correspondence:

2002 correspondence with Jim Cox and Arlene Osborne.

2011 correspondence with Jack French.