

HAVE GUN – WILL TRAVEL

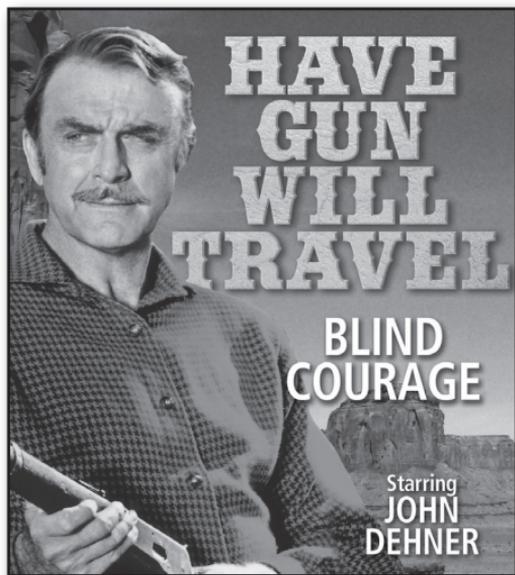
Blind Courage

Program Guide by Ivan G. Shreve, Jr.

“It isn’t clear who developed or used the first sound effects in radio dramatizations,” writes Leonard Maltin in *The Great American Broadcast*, “but in a medium bursting with discovery it couldn’t have taken long for someone to realize that sound enhancement of some sort was necessary to produce the illusion of reality.” Radio had several descriptions for those artists who provided the hoofbeats of horses: sound effects men, soundmen...by the late 1940s, the practice was even referred to as “sound patterns,” in keeping with the escalating strides in the sophistication of radio drama.

Ray Kemper, Bill James, and Tom Hanley are three names very familiar to old-time radio devotees. They are considered the crème de la crème of sound effects practitioners for their exemplary work on such shows as *The Voyage of the Scarlet Queen* and *Gunsmoke*. Because *Gunsmoke*’s director-producer Norman Macdonnell was pressed into service to adapt the TV hit *Have Gun – Will Travel* for

radio, his regular sound team -- Hanley and James -- was assigned to perform the sound patterns for that program as well. Since these soundmen were more than mere technicians, they would often be called upon to handle additional responsibilities. Hanley has a small acting role in “Roped” ... an episode that he had actually written! Tom penned a number of scripts for the series, and two of them (“Roped” and “Blind Courage”) are included in this collection. His colleague Ray Kemper is also represented here as the author



of “The Gunsmith,” the first episode of the radio *HGWT* that was not adapted from a television script. According to Martin Grams, Jr. (co-author of *The Have Gun – Will Travel Companion*), Kemper “would ultimately script a total of nine episodes, and the majority of his submissions are now considered some of the best episodes of the radio series.”

The radio version of *HGWT* was put together by CBS for two reasons: economics (in adapting previously used TV scripts they could avoid having to pay for new ones), and to assuage the feelings of Macdonnell (who was treated rather shabbily when the network brought his radio baby, *Gunsmoke*, to the small screen). Ben Wright, who played *HGWT*’s “Hey Boy” on radio, observed in an interview: “I think Norm came up with the idea for doing the radio version of *Have Gun*, possibly to show them that ‘Hey, look what I can do with your program and I did it even better.’” Thirty-five of the first thirty-nine episodes of radio’s *HGWT* were adaptations of TV scripts. According to star John Dehner, the adaptations eventually became “totally inappropriate for radio, and they were forced to write new and original radio shows.” This explains the opportunity afforded to the soundmen. In addition, Frank Paris (who took over as producer-director when Macdonnell left the series) contributed many original scripts as well.

When *Have Gun – Will Travel* premiered over CBS radio on November 23, 1958, it followed the cancellation of *Frontier Gentleman*—a Western that had also starred John Dehner. It’s curious that he took the *HGWT* gig, considering that he had turned down the lead roles in two previous radio oaters -- *Gunsmoke* and *Fort Laramie* -- because he didn’t want to be typecast in Westerns.

Born on Staten Island, NY in 1915, John Forkum Dehner (below) lived a life that most folks could only dream of experiencing. The son of an artist, John traveled extensively with his parents, attending school in Europe and learning to speak several languages. Initially, Dehner set out to study art at the University of California...but by the time he earned his diploma, his area of interest had switched to acting. To pay the bills, John became an assistant animator at the Walt Disney studios, where he worked on such movies as *Fantasia* (1940) and *Bambi* (1941). (In the 1941 Disney film *The Reluctant Dragon*, Dehner makes his feature film debut as one of the men in the studio’s story department.)



John Dehner



Virginia Gregg

With Norm Macdonnell at the helm of *Have Gun – Will Travel*, the program displayed slight echoes of the radio *Gunsmoke* -- particularly since many of the latter show's performers were heard on *HGWT*. Ben Wright, a *Gunsmoke* regular, was featured as “Hey Boy,” Paladin’s unofficial sidekick. In fact, because of his mastery of dialects, Wright often took on additional roles in the same episode. The character of Miss Wong was introduced in the aforementioned “Roped” episode. Another employee of The Carlton Hotel, and a love interest for Hey Boy, she was portrayed by Virginia Gregg (above). Interestingly, the character of Miss Wong appeared on the radio *HGWT* before the TV version of the show introduced “Hey Girl” (played by Lisa Lu), who would replace “Hey Boy” (played on television by Kam Tong). Tong was offered a substantial supporting role on a series entitled *The Garland Touch* in the fall of 1960, but he returned to the *HGWT* fold when that program was cancelled after one season.

Perhaps the most significant way that the radio and television *Have Gun – Will Travel*s differed was that the radio show had a “series finale.” Radio’s *HGWT* was cancelled on November 27, 1960, and listeners learned in “From Here to Boston” that Paladin had a wealthy aunt in Beantown. This East Coast relation had left him \$100,000 in her will. (It turns out that she was murdered by a brother and sister team, who are looking to croak our hero, too.) It was certainly contrary to convention to have Paladin riding off into the East. Meanwhile, in TV Land, the character continued to offer his gun for hire -- and entertain sizable audiences -- for several more seasons before leaving the airwaves on April 20, 1963.

The following broadcasts of *Have Gun – Will Travel* feature John Dehner as Paladin, with Ben Wright as Hey Boy. Hugh Douglas is the announcer. The series was produced and directed by Norman Macdonnell and Frank Paris.

CD 1A: “The Colonel and the Lady” - April 12, 1959

Colonel H.P. Lathrop places an ad in a Sacramento newspaper that seems tailor-made for a man of Paladin’s talents. He hires Paladin to track down a dance hall queen who answers to “Gloria Morgan.” Featured in this episode are Lillian Buyeff, Lawrence Dobkin, Frank Gerstle, Virginia Gregg, Eve McVeagh, and Jack Moyles.

CD 1B: “Birds of a Feather” - April 19, 1959

In Pueblo, Colorado, Paladin finds himself in the middle of a dispute between the Western Pacific and Rio Grande railroads. Both are seeking to seize control of Raymond Gorge, a mountain pass near the town. The cast includes Joseph Kearns, James Nusser, and Vic Perrin.

CD 2A: “The Gunsmith” - April 26, 1959

An elderly gunsmith is severely beat by young punk Link Dobie, so Paladin offers protection services to the victim. This is the first original script written for the radio version of *Have Gun – Will Travel*...penned by “sound patterns” artist Ray Kemper! Actor Ben Wright plays both Hey Boy and Riker in this adventure, alongside co-stars Lawrence Dobkin and Ralph Moody.

CD 2B: “Gunshy” - May 3, 1959

Hey Boy presents Paladin with a chess knight made of jade. It is the one remaining piece of a chess set that belongs to his uncle Sing Wo, a laundryman. The set has been stolen by three escaped convicts, so Paladin sets out to retrieve it. Heard in this episode are Richard Crenna, Barbara Eiler, Jeanette Nolan (below), Vic Perrin, and Barney Phillips.

CD 3A: “Statue of San Sebastian” - May 10, 1959

Ian Crown telegrams Paladin with a sizeable offer of cash for his services. Arriving at his destination, Paladin is robbed by a little orphan boy from the town’s mission...and the mission’s padre tells our hero that a precious statue has been confiscated by the man who’s hired him. The cast includes Dick Beals, Perry Cook, Don Diamond, Lawrence Dobkin, and James Nusser.

CD 3B: “The Silver Queen” - May 17, 1959

In making the acquaintance of Mademoiselle Annette Vargas at the Carlton, Paladin learns that she has inherited half of a silver mine from the late Leady “Leadhead” Kane. She’ll need his services, however, to establish her claim when Kane’s partner challenges the will. Lynn Allen, Harry Bartell, Joseph Kearns, and James Nusser co-star in this adventure.



Jeanette Nolan

CD 4A: “In an Evil Time” - May 24, 1959

Outlaw Pappy French robbed a bank with four other men, and was fortunate to be the only member of the gang who got away. Malone, the bank’s president,



Barbara Eiler

hires Paladin to retrieve the missing funds...and the legend responsible. Featured in this episode are Harry Bartell and Joseph Kearns.

CD 4B: “Blind Courage” - May 31, 1959

In a story written by SFX man Tom Hanley, wealthy shipping magnate John Sutherland has an unusual request for hired gun Paladin. He wants our hero to teach him how to shoot...which wouldn't be so out of the ordinary if Sutherland wasn't blind! The cast includes Sam Edwards, Barbara Eiler (left), Jack Moyles, and Tracy Roberts.

CD 5A: “Roped” - June 7, 1959

A pair of professional horse thieves knock Paladin unconscious and tie him up. That's no way to treat the man who's going to save you from a lynching! This broadcast introduces the character of “Miss Wong,” portrayed by Virginia Gregg. She co-stars here with Jeanne Bates, Joseph Kearns, Vic Perrin, and Tom Hanley (this time as an actor).

CD 5B: “Bitter Wine” - June 14, 1959

Renato Donatello hires Paladin's gun to settle a feud he's having with his neighbor, a wildcatter named Timothy Gorman. The fruits of Donatello's vineyard are under siege from the runoff waste generated by Gorman's oil wells. Heard in this episode are Parley Baer (billed as “Waldo Epperson”), Lawrence Dobkin, Virginia Gregg, and Blanche Hawkins.

CD 6A: “Trouble in North Fork” - June 21, 1959

Tildy Buchanan wires Paladin to help her and her adopted Mennonite family in the small hamlet of North Fork. It would seem that a few townfolk have little tolerance for the Mennonites' ways and customs...and they are determined to drive them out. The cast includes Harry Bartell, Virginia Gregg, Joseph Kearns, Jess Kirkpatrick, Lou Krugman, and Vic Perrin.

CD 6B: “Homecoming” - June 28, 1959

Paladin is asked by Will Stanhope to protect him from Ed Stacey, a man recently released from prison after serving time for a holdup he didn't commit. Stacey has returned to his hometown of Hammond, and Stanhope is determined to persuade him to relocate. Harry Bartell co-stars, along with Virginia Gregg, Lou Krugman, Ken Lynch, Jack Moyles, and Barney Phillips.

CD 7A: “Comanche” - July 5, 1959

Corporal Henry Carver is a U.S. Army Cavalry deserter, and Paladin is hired to locate him and persuade him to return. Along the way, he meets up with Captain John Keel, a soldier with whom he served during his own hitch in the Army. Heard in this adventure are Sam Edwards, Barbara Eiler, Virginia Gregg, Jack Moyles, and Vic Perrin.

CD 7B: “Young Gun” - July 12, 1959

Paladin offers his services to Frank Wellman, a rancher having difficulty getting water for his herd. The only available water in the area is controlled by Roy Calvert, an ex-gunfighter-turned-cattleman whose son is anxious to continue his father’s legacy. The cast includes Harry Bartell, Virginia Christine, Perry Cook, Sam Edwards, and Vic Perrin.

CD 8A: “Deliver the Body” - July 19, 1959

S.J. Lovett, the mayor of Silver Flat, hires Paladin to hunt down and kill Ben Tyler, the man accused of murdering the town’s sheriff. The evidence against the accused is painfully thin, so Paladin decides to bring him back for a proper trial...if he can. Heard in this adventure are Harry Bartell, Richard Crenna (below), Bartlett Robinson, and James Westerfield.

CD 8B: “The Wager” - July 26, 1959

Sid Morgan is returning to Silver City with his fiancée. He requests Paladin’s guardianship, because a rival is determined to take his life. It isn’t long before Paladin is forced into a fight with a gunman who’s killed twelve men... and plans to make our hero number thirteen. The cast includes Lynn Allen, Lawrence Dobkin, Vic Perrin, and Barney Phillips.

CD 9A: “High Wire” - August 2, 1959

Paladin is off for Salamander City in search of a girl named Irene Stanford; he hopes to persuade her to leave her boyfriend and return to San Francisco. Her beau is Dooley Delaware, a circus acrobat who is now plying his trade in saloons, passing the hat. Heard in this story are Lawrence Dobkin, Sam Edwards, Virginia Gregg, James Nusser, and Peggy Webber.

CD 9B: “Finn Alley” - August 9, 1959

Paladin is entertaining one of his many conquests when a frantic Hey Boy needs his help—Miss Wong



Richard Crenna

has been kidnapped! Frank Paris (who wrote this script) replaces Norm Macdonnell as producer-director with this broadcast. The cast includes Parley Baer (billed as “Waldo Epperson”), Patti Gallagher, Virginia Gregg, and Joseph Kearns.



Virginia Christine



John Dehner

CD 10A: “The Lady” - August 16, 1959

The Honorable Diana Coulter believes Paladin to be a guide and an interpreter...at least, that’s what she was told by Hey Boy. Our hero agrees to accompany her to her brother’s ranch in Shiprock, Arizona...and the two of them have a tense encounter with Comanches along the way. Virginia Christine (above) and Virginia Gregg co-star in this episode.

CD 10B: “Bonanza” - August 23, 1959

Samuel Curry has given Paladin fifty shares in his Virginia City silver mine in exchange for his services. It appears that Paladin has gone into the “ghostbusting” business, since he’s been hired to rid Curry’s mine of ghosts! Heard in this story are Harry Bartell, Virginia Gregg, Helen Kleeb, James Nusser, and Bartlett Robinson.



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