

## Beat The Clock

The show began on radio as *Time's A-Wastin'* in 1948, hosted by Bud Collyer and changed its name to *Beat The Time* on January 5, 1949. The show moved to television on the CBS nighttime schedule starting on March 23, 1950. On September 16, 1957, CBS premiered an afternoon version of *Beat The Clock* as well, which ran for a year. The nighttime show was cancelled on February 16, 1958 and the afternoon program followed on September 12, 1958. Collyer hosted the show for 91 episodes during six years (1950 to 1956). He also co-produced it for part of its run. The show next went to ABC in 1958 until 1961.

Initially the show ran for 45 minutes, then expanded to an hour (it is unclear if this was still on Thursday) before moving to Saturdays. The show did not have a sponsor until the Saturday night shows and this is believed to have happened in September 1950 (Collyer mentions on October 4, 1952 that they've just celebrated two years of sponsorship).

Those prior episodes are believed to not be in the available library of episodes (hence some of the reason for the unclarity). The show was telecast from the **Maxine Elliott Theater (Studio 51)**. This theatre was built in 1908 and hosted the early episodes of Ed Sullivan's *Toast Of The Town* from 1948 to 1953. The theatre was located at 109 West 39th Street, Manhattan, New York City. It was demolished in 1960. From 1958 to 1961, *Beat The Clock* was broadcast from the Ritz Theatre in New York.

**Mark Goodson** and long-time partner **Bill Todman** produced some of the longest-running game shows in television history and their names were well known to the large audiences for these

shows. Some of their other memorable game shows include *To Tell The Truth*, *Password*, *The Price Is Right* and *What's My Line?*

Like many other shows of its day, the show was recorded using kinescope.

**Bud Collyer** (born Clayton Johnson Heermance, Jr., son of Clayton Johnson Heermance and Caroline Collyer) - His best-remembered radio starring role began in early 1940 in *The Adventures Of Superman* on the Mutual Broadcasting System. Collyer supplied the voices of both Superman and his alter ego Clark Kent. He got his first introduction to game shows when he co-hosted ABC's *Break The Bank*. In 1956, Collyer became even more popular as the host of a new Goodson-Todman production *To Tell The Truth* on CBS. Collyer would go on to host the popular panel/game show *To Tell The Truth* for 1,436 episodes from 1956 to 1968.

**Bern Bennett** - was the announcer on *Beat The Clock* from 1950 to 1956. His voice could also be heard on many other television programs such as *The Steve Allen Show*, *To Tell The Truth*, *Knots Landing*, *The Young and The Restless* plus *The Bold and The Beautiful*.

**Roxanne** (born **Dolores Rosedale** on March 20, 1928 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. As a model/actress, she was the blonde assistant on *Beat The Clock* from 1950 to 1955.

During her career she also used the professional name Roxanne Rosedale. She studied fashion design and worked as a dental assistant. Dolores came in second in the 1949 Miss Minneapolis beauty pageant. Then she moved to New York City to become a

model. She made her television debut in 1948 on the game show *Winner Take All*. It was canceled after two seasons. In 1950 she was offered a job as the assistant on the game show *Beat The Clock*. Dolores (Roxanne) introduced the contestants and took pictures with her trademark Sylvania camera. The show was a huge hit and she became a popular television star. She was named "The Most Glamorous Girl On TV" in 1952. The glamorous blonde was featured on dozens of magazine covers including *People Today*, *Life*, and *TV Guide*. At the height of her career she earned more than \$1000 a week and even had her own doll.

She wanted to become a serious actress so she began taking acting lessons. Dolores appeared on the television series *Crime Photographer* and in the film *The Seven Year Itch* with Marilyn Monroe. On March 13, 1954 she got married to Minneapolis businessman Tom Roddy. When she became pregnant in 1955 she decided to leave *Beat The Clock* after appearing in 82 episodes. Her daughter, Anne, was born in late 1955. Dolores had a small part in the 1957 crime drama *The Young Don't Cry*. After retiring from show business she and her family moved back to Minnesota. She and Tom had four more children - Thomas, Benjamin, Michael, and Elizabeth. In an interview she said, "When I married and started the family, I made the choice I wanted to make. I had lots of successful years in show business, but I didn't want to make a life of it." During the 1970's she worked at Schlamp's & Sons Furriers. Dolores and her husband, Tom divorced in 1979.

As of 2022, Dolores is 94 years old and still living in Minneapolis where she is a grandmother.

Roxanne (Dolores) was replaced by Beverly Bentley in August of 1955.

*Beat the Clock* began airing Thursday nights on CBS on March 23, 1950, running with no commercials. Even the show's introduction was austere; no theme song, just a shot of the Clock ticking off the seconds as announcer Bern Bennett would say "It's time for America's favorite party game, "BEAT THE CLOCK..." and then introduce Bud Collyer.

The stunts performed on the show were mostly created by staff stunt writers Frank Wayne and Bob Howard. In the early days of the show, playwright Neil Simon was also a stunt writer. The stunts were usually aimed towards fun with difficulty being secondary. The stunts would usually be constructed out of common household props such as cardboard boxes, string, balloons, record players, dishes, cups, plates, cutlery, and balls of almost every type. As was the case with many other game shows during television's infancy, the budget was low. Each stunt had to be thoroughly tested before it could be used on the show.

Contestants were chosen from the studio audience and usually were married couples. Other pairs were engaged, dating or were a familial relationship.

One couple competed against the clock to win a prize in stunts that required one or both members of the couple. The stunt was described and the time limit was set on a giant onstage clock. The time limit was always a multiple of 5 seconds, usually at least 30 seconds. At one point, Collyer said that a 55-second time limit was the maximum, but later on, stunts occasionally had 60-second limits.

On the primetime version, if the couple beat the \$200 clock, the wife would play the jackpot clock in which the words of a famous saying or quote were scrambled up on a magnetic board and that phrase had to be unscrambled in 20 seconds or less. If successful, then the couple won the Jackpot Prize. If not, they got a prize worth more than \$200.

**The Prizes:** \$100 clock prizes included Michael C. Fina silverware sets, a collection of four Knapp-Monarch small kitchen appliances, or a Hoover upright. \$200 clock prizes included International-Harvester refrigerators, air conditioning units, a Tappan range/oven, a James dishwasher, Speed Queen washers and dryers (they were only offered separately) and small Sylvania televisions. The Jackpot Prize during Sylvania's tenure was always a Sylvania television set.

When children were brought on the show, there were special gifts. Starting on September 6, 1952, girls brought on the show were given a Roxanne doll that was produced at the time. On October 11, 1952, the Buck Rogers Space Ranger Kit was debuted for boys. In the mid-50s, each child was given a Sylvania camera kit.

Some time during every episode, a bell would sound. The couple playing at the time would attempt the Bonus Stunt for the Bonus Prize that started at \$100 in cash. If the stunt was not beaten, it would be attempted the next week with \$100 added to the prize. When it was beaten, it was retired from the show and a new Bonus Stunt began the next week at \$100. The bonus did not affect the regular game. Win or lose, the couple continued the regular clocks wherever they left off. Beginning in August 1954, the starting amount for each Bonus Stunt was raised to \$500, still increasing \$100 each week. Bonus Stunts were harder than the usual \$100 and \$200 clocks and sometimes reached \$2,000 and

even \$3,000 on rare occasions. The first time the Bonus reached \$1,000 was on February 28, 1953, when it was won for that amount.

If contestants were involved in a messy stunt, Roxanne (later Beverly) would come out and take a picture. Collyer would also help the contestants from time to time by stopping the clock and giving them a tip on how to complete the stunt successfully.

On September 15, 1969, *Beat the Clock* returned to television in five-day-a-week syndication. This series continued to air until September 20, 1974. In 1979, CBS elected to bring the series back as *All-New Beat The Clock* for its daytime schedule. This very brief version ran until 1980. Another attempt to bring the show back took place in 2002, but failed after only one episode. The final attempt lasted for 40 episodes in 2018.

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## REFERENCES

Mark Goodson Fandom website

[https://markgoodson.fandom.com/wiki/Beat\\_the\\_Clock](https://markgoodson.fandom.com/wiki/Beat_the_Clock)

Beat The Clock Fandom website

<https://beat-the-clock.fandom.com/wiki/Roxanne>

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