

Burke's Law Notes

Episode for class:

Who Killed What's His Name? Aired January 17, 1964

Burke's Law was a detective series that aired on ABC from September 20, 1963 to January 12, 1966 with 81 episodes. The show starred Gene Barry as millionaire captain of Los Angeles Police homicide division Amos Burke, who was chauffeured around to solve crimes in his 1962 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud II complete with an early car phone. The original series was converted into a spy drama, *Amos Burke Secret Agent*, in its third and final season. The series was revived in 1994–1995 on CBS with Gene Barry recreating the role of the millionaire detective.

The role of Amos Burke actually preceded Barry's series, having been played by Dick Powell in "Who Killed Julie Greer?," the initial episode of *The Dick Powell Show* on September 26, 1961. The first incarnation of the series was produced by Powell's company, Four Star Television. As in the later series, the episode features several well-known television and movie stars in cameo appearances as suspects – one of whom is the murderer. Leon Lontoc was the only cast member of the episode to reprise his role in the later series.

Amos Burke was an eligible bachelor whose dates with various gorgeous women are often interrupted by calls to begin a new case.

Burke is assisted by Detective Tim Tilson, a brilliant, thorough young detective is skilled at finding clues and tracing references results in his almost solving the crime. Detective Sergeant Les Hart is a no-nonsense veteran who has known Burke for years. Henry, the chauffeur usually provides comic relief. The characters share a team camaraderie reflected in mild jokes about each other's foibles.

The Amos Burke character was created by Frank D. Gilroy, a skilled writer of many arenas who penned the play *The Subject Was Roses*, winner of the 1965 Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Burke's Law lured many great writers, including *Columbo* creators William Link and Richard Levison, as well as sci-fi great Harlan Ellison.

As with most television hits of the 1960's, the popularity of *Burke's Law* led to a comic book published by Dell. The comic featured monsters and the hero's trademark witticisms, followed by his "Burke's law!" catchphrase. For example, he proclaims, "Never accept substitutes if you don't want your head handed to you — Burke's law!"

What happened to that beautiful Rolls Royce? After the series ended in 1966, Four Star Productions director Robert Gageby acquired the automobile and brought it to his home in Washington, D.C. Years later, the car would end up in the hands of fan Jim Inglis, who moved the car to his home in Florida.

Honey West, the pioneering female private eye created by Gloria and Forest Fickling, first appeared on television in the *Burke's Law* episode "Who Killed The Jackpot?" in 1965. The Anne Francis character proved to be so popular, she got her own series, produced by Aaron Spelling.

Burke's Law was a 1993-1995 revival of the original *Burke's Law* television series and starred Gene Barry as millionaire cop Amos Burke who was now deputy chief instead of a captain. He was assisted by his son, Detective Peter Burke played by Peter Barton. It was produced by Spelling Television.

Gene Barry - was born Eugene Klass in New York City. Barry chose his professional name in honor of John Barrymore. He made his Broadway debut as Captain Paul Duval in the 1942 revival of Sigmund Romberg's *The New Moon*.

In 1950, Barry began appearing on television with the *NBC Television Opera Theatre*. In 1955, he appeared on the CBS television anthology series *Appointment With Adventure*. By 1951, Barry had been hired for his first movie, in the role of Dr. Frank Addison in *The Atomic City*.

When the situation comedy *Our Miss Brooks* changed its format in 1955, Barry was cast in a recurring role as the physical education teacher Gene Talbot, the new romantic interest of series star Eve Arden.

Bat Masterson starred Gene Barry and was broadcast by NBC-TV from 1958 to 1961. In his next television series, *Burke's Law*, Barry won the Golden Globe Award for Best Actor in 1965.

Barry's third television series was *The Name Of The Game*, where he was one of three lead characters. This series aired on NBC from 1968 to 1971.

From 1972 to 1973, Barry starred in *The Adventurer*. The program was filmed entirely in England. The 30 minute episodes aired for one season with 26 shows. Barry played a well-to-do government agent posing as the movie star, Gene Bradley. He helped the good guys conquer the bad guys. Like Amos Burke, the ladies were quite fascinated with Gene Bradley. His co-star was Barry Morse, best remembered as Lt. Philip Gerard who was constantly in pursuit of Dr. Richard Kimble (David Janssen) in *The Fugitive*.

Gene Barry returned to Broadway once in 1962 in *The Perfect Setup* and again in 1983 in the Broadway premiere of the musical *La Cage aux Folles* where Barry was nominated for a Tony Award for his portrayal of Georges.

For his contribution to live theatre, Gene Barry received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6555 Hollywood Boulevard. A Golden Palm Star on the Palm Springs Walk of Stars was dedicated to him in 1994.

Gary Conway - was born Gareth Monello Carmody. He took his acting last name (Conway) from a distant relative on his father's side, Pat Conway. His early film credits include *I Was A Teenage Frankenstein* in 1957 and *How To Make A Monster* in 1958. That same year, he was cast in an episode of *Sky King* with Kirby Grant, Richard Beymer and Gloria Winters.

After his days as Detective Tim Tilson on *Burke's Law*, Conway made an unsuccessful television pilot titled *Assault!*, which was made by the producers of *Combat!* From 1968 to 1970, he starred in the TV series *Land Of The Giants* as Captain Steve Burton.

Regis Toomey - John Francis Regis Toomey was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1929, he appeared in his first films where he started out as a leading man. In time, he found more success as a character actor.

He appeared in many classic films such as *'G' Men*, *Meet John Doe*, *The Big Sleep*, *Rachel and The Stranger* and *Spellbound*. In 1955 he played Uncle Arvide of The Salvation Army in *Guys and Dolls*, a role for which he is still very well remembered.

Toomey appeared in a several episodes of *Richard Diamond, Private Detective* as Lt. McGough. His other television appearances include *The Tall Man* and *Perry Mason*. From 1963 to 1966, Toomey was one of the stars of *Burke's Law*, starring Gene Barry where he played Sergeant Les Hart.

In 1968, after the death of Bea Benaderet, who played Kate Bradley, Toomey played a transitional role in the CBS series *Petticoat Junction* as Dr. Stuart, who cared for the citizens of Hooterville. Toomey played roles well past his 80th year.

Leon Lontoc - began his screen career in 1943 with an uncredited role in the film *Behind The Rising Sun*. In his career, Lontoc guest-starred in television programs, *Ironside*, *McHale's Navy*, *Hawaiian Eye*, *Bonanza*, *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, *Mission: Impossible* and *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. He also co-starred and appeared in films, such as *Ma and Pa Kettle At Waikiki*, *Singin' In The Rain*, *The Ugly American*, *Operation Petticoat* and *The Gallant Hours*.

In 1963, Lontoc was cast to play the role of Henry, the chauffeur of the lead character Amos Burke in the ABC detective fiction television series *Burke's Law*. His last credit was from the sitcom television series *The Brady Bunch*.

Besides acting, he was also a successful businessman having owned and worked at his barber shop along with working as founder, headwaiter and bartender at the restaurant Don The Beachcomber.

Burke's Law Mansion is located in the San Fernando Valley on Longridge Avenue in Sherman Oaks, California. Today, this beautiful 6 bedroom, 7 bathroom home is valued at \$6,841,700

REFERENCES

Internet Movie Data Base

Wikipedia

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Tampa Bay Times