

Checkmate

Checkmate was a detective series which aired on CBS on Saturday in the 8:30PM to 9:30PM time slot during the first season beginning on September 17, 1960 through June 24, 1961. Season two, the program was moved to Wednesdays beginning October 4, 1961 through June 20, 1962. There were a total of 70 episodes in this series. It was produced by Jack Benny's production company, JaMco Productions.

The program produced one 1961 Primetime Emmy Award winner for Outstanding Achievement in Art Direction and Scenic Design for John J. Lloyd, the art director. In 1962, John (Johnny) Williams was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Soundtrack Album or Recording of Score from Motion Picture or Television.

The weekly stories showed cases of the San Francisco detective agency called Checkmate, Inc. which specialized in preventing crimes before they happen.

Episode for Class:

The Thrill Seeker - Aired May 27, 1961

Anthony George (Don Corey) - was born Ottavio Gabriel George in Endicott, New York. After serving in World War II, he moved to Hollywood when by 1950, he received his first credit. The majority of George's roles were on television.

Some of his pre-*Checkmate* appearances were on *Cheyenne*, *Highway Patrol*, *Sugarfoot*, *The Untouchables* and *Wagon Train*.

His continuing success came from daytime soap operas such as *Dark Shadows*, *Search For Tomorrow* and *One Life To Live*. George's final television appearance was on an episode of *Simon and Simon*.

Doug McClure (Jed Sils) - is best remembered for his role as Trampas in 249 episodes of *The Virginian*. Before getting this memorable role, McClure could be seen in the films *Gidget*, *The Enemy Below*, *The Unforgiven* and *Because They're Young*.

After *The Virginian* ended in 1971, McClure was to co-star as a detective with Bette Davis on a series about a parolee assisting a judge, played by Davis. The pilot was produced but failed to generate any interest as a series. It was later released as a movie for television titled *The Judge and Jake Wyler*. His other attempts at television series were unsuccessful.

In the 1970's and 1980's, McClure did commercials for Hamms Beer and was the slave to Jamie Farr's character in *Cannonball Run II* in 1984. Along with Troy Donahue, McClure was the inspiration for the character Troy McClure on *The Simpsons*.

On November 16, 1994 at his final public appearance, McClure was awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for television at 7065 Hollywood Blvd.

Sebastian Cabot (Dr. Carl Hyatt) - was born Charles Sebastian Thomas Cabot in London. At the age of 14, he quit school to work in an automotive garage. He also served as a chauffeur and valet for British actor Frank Pettingell. His acting career began with a small part in *Foreign Affairs* from 1935. Cabot's first screen credit was in Alfred Hitchcock's *Secret Agent* from 1936.

After moving to the United States, he worked for Disney on *Westward Ho*, *The Wagons!*, *Johnny Tremain* and H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*. In television, he was on *Gunsmoke*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Meet McGraw*, *Bonanza*, *The Red Skelton Show* and *The Twilight Zone*.

A few years after *Checkmate*, Cabot became popular as Giles French in *Family Affair* from 1966 to 1971. In the beginning, he did not want to do this role because he felt the part was stereotypical as a staid, dignified English butler. However, the money being offered for the pilot was very good, so he reluctantly agreed. Cabot became bored with the role and the series very early. He confided that both he and Brian Keith were bored to the point of exhaustion for the final two seasons. In 1968, Cabot received a nomination for a Primetime Emmy for Outstanding Continued Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Comedy Series for *Family Affair*.

Susan Oliver (Gloria Kenyon) - was born Charlotte Gercke in New York City. In 1960, the 28-year-old was cast in two episodes of *Wagon Train*. Some of her numerous appearances in television include *Adventures in Paradise*, *Twilight Zone*, *Route 66*, *Dr. Kildare*, *The Naked City*, *The Barbara Stanwyck Show*, *Burke's Law*, *The Fugitive*, *Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.*, *I Spy*, *The Virginian*, *The Name of the Game*, *Longstreet*, *Mannix* and *The Andy Griffith Show*.

Oliver played the female lead guest character in "The Cage", which was the first pilot of *Star Trek*. Oliver was covered in green makeup all over her body with a dark brunette wig. Her iconic image of *Star Trek* was immortalized in the 2014 documentary about Susan Oliver's life, *The Green Girl*.

She also had a continuing role on the primetime serial *Peyton Place* in 1966. From 1975 to 1976, Oliver was a regular cast member on *Days of Our Lives*. In films she was in *Your Cheatin' Heart* and *The Disorderly Orderly*.

In the late 1970's, Oliver turned to directing and was one of the original 19 women admitted to the American Film Institute's Directing Workshop for Women. Some her directorial assignments included *M*A*S*H* and *Trapper John, M.D.*

She was a passenger aboard the Clipper Washington, a Boeing 707 on a transatlantic flight from Paris to New York City when it dropped from 35,000 feet to 6000 feet. It happened on February 3, 1959, the same day Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and J. P. (The Big Bopper) Richardson died in an airplane crash. These events gave her a paralyzing fear of flying and it took extensive hypnosis to overcome it.

In July of 1964 she was reintroduced to personal flying during an evening flight over Los Angeles in a Cessna 172. The experience motivated her to return the next day to the Santa Monica Airport to begin training for a Private Pilot certificate the next year. Oliver was named Pilot of the Year in 1970. In 1972, her training for a glider rating was chronicled for an episode *The American Sportsman*.

Esther Dale (Mrs. Kenyon) - was born in Beaufort, South Carolina. She enjoyed a successful career as a singer on the concert stage. Some of her singing appearances were with the New York Philharmonic and the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Dale made many appearances on stage and in films over the years. She played Birdie Hicks in the *Ma and Pa Kettle* film series *The Egg and I*, *Ma and Pa Kettle*, *Ma and Pa Kettle At The Fair* and *Ma and Pa Kettle At Waikiki*.

On television, she appeared in *Maverick*, *Wagon Train*, *The Donna Reed Show* and *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*.

David White (Lawrence Tucker) - was born in Denver, Colorado. He graduated from Los Angeles City College and began acting at the Pasadena Playhouse as well as the Cleveland Play House.

White appeared on numerous television series in the 1950's and 1960's, including *One Step Beyond*, *Perry Mason*, *Peter Gunn*, *Mr. Lucky*, *The Untouchables*, *The Fugitive*, *Mission: Impossible*, *My Three Sons*, *Father Knows Best*, *Bonanza*, *Have Gun - Will Travel* and *My Favorite Martian*.

In 1964, White was cast as Larry Tate on *Bewitched*, a role he played in 188 episodes for the show's entire run from 1964 to 1972. His final television role was in 1986 on *Dynasty*.

Maudie Prickett (Rigina Hotel Manager) - was born Maudie Marie Doyle in Portland, Oregon. Some of her early appearances in films and television include *Harvey*, *North by Northwest*, *The Adventures of Kit Carson* and *The Adventures of Superman*.

She was a familiar face on television for over 20 years. She is best remembered for her roles as Miss Gordon, Jack Benny's secretary on *The Jack Benny Program* and Rosie the neighbor maid on *Hazel*. Prickett also was in several episodes of *The Andy Griffith Show* as either Mrs. Edna Larch or Aunt Nora. Jonathan Winters's character Maude "Granny" Frickert was named partly in tribute to Maudie Prickett.

Paul Hartman (Nielson) - was born in San Francisco, California. In 1922, he teamed up with Grace Barrett for a dancing comedy vaudeville act. They were married in 1923. The couple made their Broadway debut in *Ballyhoo* of 1932 alongside Bob Hope.

Next, they were off to Hollywood, where Paul appeared with Frank Sinatra and Victor Borge in *Higher and Higher* from 1943.

In the 1950's, Hartman was appearing in *The Pride Of The Family*. Fay Wray played his wife and Natalie Wood with Robert Hyatt played his children. He is best remembered as the handyman Emmett Clark on *The Andy Griffith Show* and *Mayberry R.F.D.*

He had guest roles on *Petticoat Junction*, *Love, American Style*; *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, *Hazel*, *Ben Casey*, *The Twilight Zone*, *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour* and *Family Affair*.

Don Oreck (Philip Kenyon) - appeared in several television series supporting roles along with some uncredited appearances in a few feature films.

After his service in the United States Army, he was a member of the Los Angeles Police Department. While with law enforcement, he began taking small acting assignments. By the late 1950's, he could be seen in a variety of television programs. Oreck was briefly married to actress Joanne Moore.

The building used as Mrs. Kenyon's house was built on the Universal Studios lot in 1946. Over the years, this house was seen in several motion pictures and television programs. It is best remembered as the home of *The Munsters* from 1964 to 1966. Most recently, this house was seen in *Desperate Housewives* from 2004 to 2012.

REFERENCES

Internet Movie Data Base Wikipedia

Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer

Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer aired from January 7, 1958 to November 28, 1959. A total of 76 episodes ran over two seasons. The half-hour time slot program was filmed in black and white.

In 1946, Spillane worked with illustrator Mike Roy and Edwin Robbins to create the private-eye character Mike Danger for proposed comic-book publication. They were unable to sell the project as a comic. Spillane reworked the story as the novel *I, the Jury*, changing Mike Danger to Mike Hammer.

Spillane needed quick cash to buy land for a house in 1946. He wrote the detective novel *I, The Jury* in less than a month. Although he had been a professional writer for magazines, *I, The Jury* was his first novel. It sold over 3,000,000 copies and made him a celebrity. This novel was made into a feature film in 1953.

Mike Hammer, the radio series aired from December 1952 to October 1954 on the Mutual Broadcasting System. It was called *That Hammer Guy* and starred Larry Haines in the title role followed by George Petrie and Ted DeCorsia. During the 1950's, several Mike Hammer movies were made with Biff Elliot, Robert Bray and Ralph Meeker starring as Mike Hammer.

A 1954 television pilot was developed starring Brian Keith. It was written and directed by Blake Edwards. However, it was not picked up.

Since the 1958 series ended, Stacey Keach starred as Mike Hammer in four films for television along with two television series: *Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer* (1984 - 1985) plus *The New Mike Hammer* (1986 - 1987) both series had the same cast. Keach followed with *Mike Hammer, Private Eye* (1997 - 1998). Kevin Dobson starred in *Margin For Murder*, a 1981 television movie and Rob Estes starred in *Come Die With Me: A Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer Mystery* a 1994 television movie.

Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer for television was produced by MCA. The shows were rushed out in lots of 39, usually shot in two or three days. Back then, the budgets were often well under \$50,000 per episode. The episodes were filmed at the Republic Studios backlot in the San Fernando Valley. Many exterior shots were filmed in New York City.

Episode for class:

Peace Bond - Aired May 2, 1958

Darren McGavin (Mike Hamer) - was born William Lyle Richardson in Spokane, Washington. After dropping out of college, he found work as a painter at Columbia Pictures movie studios in 1945. McGavin won his first movie role in *A Song To Remember*.

In 1955, he had his first starring roles in feature films *Summertime*, opposite Katharine Hepburn and *The Man With The Golden Arm*.

When Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis broke up, McGavin played the role originally planned for Dean Martin in *The Delicate Delinquent* which was Jerry Lewis's first solo film.

During his career, McGavin starred in seven different television series and was a guest star in several others. His most memorable series was *Kolchak: The Night Stalker*.

McGavin was scheduled to take over the Larry Hagman role of "Major Anthony (Tony) Nelson" for the sixth season of *I Dream of Jeannie*. However, NBC canceled the series before production began.

In 1983, he starred in *A Christmas Story* as a middle class father in 1940's. Although the film was an average box office success, it has since become a classic holiday film in the years since its release.

Bart Burns (Captain Pat Chambers) - was born George Joseph Burns in New York City, New York. He took the name Bart when he began his acting career in 1947 to avoid confusion with comic George Burns.

He made his Broadway debut in the original production of *Mister Roberts* alongside Henry Fonda. Burns made his motion picture debut in *Between Heaven and Hell* in 1956. During his 35 year career, he made over 100 appearances in film and television roles.

Marion Ross (Mary Williams) - was born in Watertown, Carver County, Minnesota. She made her 1953 film debut in *Forever Female*. Ross also appeared in *The Glenn Miller Story*, *Sabrina*, *Lust for Life*, *Lizzie*, *Teacher's Pet*, *Some Came Running* and *Operation Petticoat*.

Ross' television career also began in 1953 on the series *Life With Father*. Her other television appearances include *The Lone Ranger*, *The Donna Reed Show*, *The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show*, *The Millionaire*, *Perry Mason*, *The Barbara Stanwyck Show*, *Father Knows Best*, *The Outer Limits*, *Thriller*, *Mannix*, *Route 66*, *Mr. Novak*, *Death Valley Days*, *Hawaii Five-O*, *The Brady Bunch* and *The Fugitive*.

Marion Ross' best known role was as "Mrs. C" (Marion Cunningham) on *Happy Days* from 1974 to 1984. She also starred on the television series *Brooklyn Bridge* from 1991 to 1993.

Some of her "post-Happy Days" roles were on *Touched By An Angel*, *The Drew Carey Show*, *That '70s Show*, *Gilmore Girls* and *Hollywood Squares*.

She was nominated five times for Emmy Awards, but never won. On July 12, 2001, Marion Ross received a star on the Hollywood Walk Of Fame located at 6420 Hollywood Blvd.

Edmon Ryan (Tom Bronson) - was born Edmon Ryan Mossbarger in Cecilia, Kentucky. Before entering show business, he was a football coach and history teacher in Kentucky.

He made his Broadway debut in *Post Road* and continued with *Command Decision*, *Dream Girl* and *The Male Animal* where he acted on stage in California and Europe.

Ryan acted on radio along with films and television. He spent one year as a cast member on the soap opera *Search For Tomorrow*.

Wesley Lau (Johnny Conrad) - was born and raised in Sheboygan, Wisconsin where he studied playwriting at the University of Wisconsin. While his goal was to be a writer, he wound up acting because he found more jobs as an actor than as a playwright when he arrived in New York City seeking work.

Lau's first appearance on *Perry Mason* was as a client in 1961. Two episodes later, he made his first appearance on *Perry Mason* as the character, Lt. Andy Anderson, due to the declining health of Ray Collins (Lt. Tragg.) Lau continued in that role for 80 more episodes.

His other television appearances include *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Gunsmoke*, *Have Gun-Will Travel*, *Peter Gunn*, *The Twilight Zone*, *The Time Tunnel*, *The Big Valley*, *Mission: Impossible*, *Cannon*, *Wagon Train* and *The Six Million Dollar Man*. He reunited with Raymond Burr in an episode of *Ironside* in 1973.

George Eldredge (Judge) - made over 280 appearances in movies and television during a career that lasted from the 1930's to the early 1960's. He was usually cast as army generals, doctors and police officers.

He was a photographer for the Berkeley, California Police Department before his film career began. Eldredge performed with the San Francisco Opera Company for two seasons in various supporting roles as a baritone.

During the 1950's, Eldredge appeared on such programs as *Peter Gunn*, *Bat Masterson*, *The Adventures of Superman*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Perry Mason* and *Bat Masterson*. George Eldredge was the older brother of actor John Eldredge who is best remembered as Harry Archer on *Meet Corliss Archer*.

Frank Marlowe (Joe The Book) - was born Frank Marlowe Riggi in Massachusetts. He had nearly 300 appearances in films and television in a career that spanned 30 years.

Throughout the 1930's and 1940's, he could be seen in *The Whole Town's Talking*, *Bringing Up Baby*, *My Favorite Wife*, *Sergeant York*, *Saboteur*, *Anchors Aweigh*, *Road To Utopia*, *Notorious*, *The Secret Life Of Walter Mitty* and *The Three Musketeers*.

Some of his television work includes *The Abbott and Costello Show*, *Adventures of Superman*, *The Millionaire*, *Dragnet*, *Perry Mason* and *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*.

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