

**FORTIES (1941-1950) N-Z**  
**All reviews by Michael J. Weldon**

THE NEXT VOICE YOU HEAR (MGM, 50) D William Wellman, S Charles Schnee, P Dore Schary

"Joe Smith, American" (James Whitmore) is a mechanic at the Ajax Aircraft Plant who lives with his very pregnant wife Mary (Nancy Davis) and their newspaper delivery boy son Johnny (Gary Grey) in a nice new L. A. suburb. Joe is irritated and short tempered though with car and money problems and calls his (atheist) boss Mr. Brannan (Art Smith) "a drip." One day Joe hears a voice claiming to be God on the radio. Mary says "it must be one of those Orson Welles things" but soon headlines confirm that the voice is being heard every night in all languages worldwide to members of all religions and it cannot be taped. During a rain storm people panic expecting a biblical flood and church attendance soars. Joe freaks yelling "We're all evil!" as he attacks Mary's Aunt Ethel (Lillian Bronson), then gets falling down drunk at the corner bar with his loud bachelor friend Mitch (Douglas Kennedy, also in INVADERS FROM MARS). On the seventh day, God rests and the new baby is born. Commies are only mentioned once but considering the time everybody knew why the MGM release was made. Also with Tom D'Andrea (Gillis on THE LIFE OF RILEY) and Jeff Corey as Joe's simple work and bowling buddies Hap and Freddy, George Chandler as a traffic cop, Frankie Darrow, Sherry Jackson, and Chet Huntley (radio announcer). About half way through it hit me - the characters equal the cast of THE SIMPSONS! Just substitute a nuke plant for Joe's workplace and twin sisters for the aunt. Maggie is on the way. With some alterations it all fits perfectly! Lenny speaks with the voice of Hap and Homer has heard the voice of God more than once. Wellman also directed THE IRON CURTAIN (48). Smith, soon blacklisted, returned in THE MOVING FINGER (PV #32). Davis met Ronald Reagan the year this was released and they were married within two years.

NO GREATER SIN (Sinister, 41) D William Nigh, S Michel Jacobs (SOCIAL ENEMY #1) Dr. Cavanaugh (Leon Ames) is the heroic health commissioner of the thriving, growing defense plant town of Springfield. He declares that "85% of those girls" (at the nearby mobster run Owl's Nest roadhouse) are infected (with syphilis) and vows to educate and cure the population. The local paper assigns reporter Sondra (Luanna Walters) to help him but the mayor is "horribly shocked by this filthy news campaign." The roadhouse (with adjoining motel rooms) is raided and local soldiers, workers and women have to take blood tests (which are explained and demonstrated). Meanwhile Sondra's sister and her new husband become infected, which leads to a murder and a court case. This war time movie (from University Films) has higher production values than most roadshow movies and does a good job of balancing drama and a common sense message. One line (that's been heard a lot in recent years) is, "It's not a moral issue." SIN is much better than BLACK DRAGONS, THE APE and the MR WONG movies Nigh was doing at Monogram and PRC at the time.

ONE BODY TOO MANY (Sinister, 44) D Frank McDonald, S Winston Miller, Maxwell Shane, P William Pine, William Thomas Albert (Jack "the Tin Man" Haley), a nervous insurance salesman, finds himself guarding a dead millionaire while the man's relatives wait for the reading of the will. During a thunderstorm, secret panels slide open, eyes watch from a painting, hands clutch and cast members die. Albert is buried alive in a glass vault, loses his towel after a bath and befriends a pretty niece (Jean Parker from BLUEBEARD). Bela Lugosi and Blanche Yurka (from CRY OF THE WEREWOLF) are fun as sinister seeming servants who keep offering coffee and William Edmunds (HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN) is the eccentric professor who runs the observatory. Paramount

released the OK murder comedy with a cast including Lyle Talbot, Douglas Fowley, Bernard Nedell (lawyer), Lucien Littlefield, Dorothy Granger, Fay Helm (also in NIGHT MONSTER with Bela) and blonde Maxine Fife. Haley and Littlefield returned in SCARED STIFF (45) by the same director. Bela's next comedies, ZOMBIES ON BROADWAY (45) and GENIUS AT WORK (46) starred Brown and Carney.

THE PHANTOM OF CHINATOWN (Sinister, 40) D Phil Rosen, S George Waggner, P Paul Malvern

After five MR. WONG movies, Monogram lost the services of Boris Karloff, so they broke the tradition of casting Caucasians as Asian detectives (and villains) by starring Keye Luke in this final entry. It's not good, just historic and short (about an hour). Dr. Benton, an archaeologist, returns from an emperor's tomb in Mongolia and dies while giving a lecture in S. F. Students laugh at the stock footage of camels and native dancers. Jimmy Wong (Luke with a mustache) has a Chinese cook and is attracted to the victim's secretary (Lotus Long), while solving the murder with series regular Grant Withers as Captain Street. Luke (who had been Charlie Chan's number one son and the original Kato in GREEN HORNET serials) had a long career which included playing Master Po on KUNG FU. Long had been in two Karloff Wong movies and the unrelated MYSTERIOUS MR. WONG (with Lugosi). Rosen later directed Chan movies.

QUEEN OF THE AMAZONS (Sinister, 46) P/D Edward Finney, S Roger Merton

This starts in India, represented by old footage of an elephant parade, then shifts to a riverboat to Cairo and the African jungle where a female sharpshooter (Patricia Morison) searches for her missing fiance (Bruce Edwards). Her guide (serial Batman Robert Lowery) "hates women" but of course falls for her. Comedy relief is provided by a short, story telling cook and a monkey. Native "boys" carry things and Bombo is killed by a lion. This mess of a movie is loaded with old footage (natives dancing, a tiger attack...) disguised as flashbacks narrated by either The Colonel or Tonga. One of Tonga's flashbacks is about the origin of a "white goddess she devil" and her white female followers. He warns that "they voodoo!" The fiance is finally found living with Queen Zita (Amira Moustafa) who uses a whip. With J. Edward Bromberg, John Miljan and Keith Richards. Morrison (TARZAN AND THE HUNTRESS), was later a Broadway musical star. The Lippert release runs 61 mins.

REET, PETITE AND GONE (SW, 47) P/D William Forest Crouch, S Irwin Winehouse  
Louis Jarvis (Louis Jordan) helps his dying father search for the mystery women in his will while a crooked lawyer plots against them with an imposter. Louis and his press agent (usual sidekick Milton Woods) measure the busts of women lined up in bathing suits. They name them ("Miss Hell On Wheels," "Miss Beulah Cornflower") and say their job is like being "a night watchman in a nudist colony." The black beauties look fine, but the 14 songs performed are the main attraction. Half of them were chart hits. Jordan's (all great) include "Let The Good Times Roll," "I Know What You've Been Puttin' Down," "Wham Sam" (dig them gams) and a fun comic song ("The Green Grass Grew All Around") with bird lyrics. You also get lesser known but excellent female blues and R+B singers like big June Richmond (who also acts), Vanita Smythe and Mabel Lee. Jordan and Bea Griffith, who co-stars as Honey, also play different characters in a flashback. Griffith also dances and hangs around in her underwear. The tape has some sound problems. Note: Mable Lee was aka Mable King who recorded R+B singles during the 50s and 60s and acted in GANJA AND HESS.

ROCKIN' IN THE ROCKIES (45) D Vernon Keays, J. Benton Cheney, John Grey, P Colbert Clark

Likable con man Shorty (Moe) runs a modern day ranch for Rusty (Jay Kirby). He meets NY showgirls June (blonde Mary Beth Hughes) and Betty (Gladys Blake) plus Larry and Curly (in a Reno club owned by Vernon Dent) and invites them to

stay there. In this 63 min. long Columbia musical Moe more or less takes the role that Ted Healy had in the early days of the Stooges. He has his hair combed back and actually gets a girl (Blake, later in SCARED TO DEATH). The Stooges sing ("Wahoo"), do a termite inspector routine and Larry and Curly try to mount a horse and briefly appear in drag. The Hoosier Hotshots do several numbers (one sounds like trad jazz) and play cowhands. After many comic misunderstandings, a big audition show is put on. When a visiting producer says "I'm going crazy!" Moe says "Don't brag, we're nuts already!" The musical highpoint is when Spade Cooley and his western swing band (featuring fiddles, an accordion and electric guitar) do "Miss Molly." The Cappy Barra Boys play their harmonicas and a horse and a stuffed trophy head talk. Keays also directed westerns and the serial THE MYSTERIOUS MR. M (46). This has been on cable TV in recent years.

SCARED TO DEATH (Englewood, 47) D Christy Cabanne, S W. J. Abbott, P William B. David

I've been a fan of this insane mystery in "Natural" Cinecolor since I first saw it at a (70s) midnight screening. The late Laura (Molly Lamont), who had been a psychic in occupied France, is being driven out of her mind by her sinister live in father in law Dr. Van Ee (George Zucco), a green mask, and a dummy head. Laura uses absurd one liners to introduce flashbacks from her morgue slab! Van Ee's stage hypnotist cousin Leonide (Bela Lugosi) shows up with his deaf and dumb "little man" (Angelo Rossitto). They both sneak around wearing identical hats, string ties and capes. Bela mentions the (actual) "great magician Raymund" and having been in a concentration camp. A fast talking reporter (Douglas Fowley) shows up with his dumb blonde girlfriend (Joyce Compton) and questions everybody. There's also an extremely idiotic private eye (Nat Pendleton), a maid (Gladys Blake) and the husband (Roland Varno). It's all just over one hour long and there's a surprise character in drag. Director Cabanne had started out with D. W. Griffith. The print is worn.

THE SPIDER (45) D Robert Webb, S Jo Eisinger, W. Scott Darling, P Ben Silvey  
Richard Conte is a New Orleans private eye who hangs out at The Creole Bar, in this 62 min. Fox semi-remake. Conte and the rest of the cast are good and without the comedy relief, it could classify as film noir. A carnival mind reader (Faye Marlowe, who narrates), hires him, characters start to die, and he's blamed by the police. Henry the janitor (Mantan Moreland) helps hide a body (he has to ride in the back seat of a car with it). He sleeps in a closet and is easily scared (of course), but he actually saves the day twice. With (Swiss born) Kurt Kreuger as Garonne the magician, Martin Kosleck, acting much like Peter Lorre, Ann (DETOUR) Savage as the detective's double crossing partner, John Harvey, and Cara Williams. Webb later directed LOVE ME TENDER.

STREET CORNER (SW, 48) D Albert Kelley, S Jack Jungmeyer, P George McCall  
Wise but weary Dr. Fenton (Joseph Crehan, also in Monogram Charlie Chan, Shadow and Bowery Boys movies) shows us what happened to 17 year old Lois (Marcia Mae Jones - also in 40s movies like HAUNTED HOUSE and LADY IN THE DEATH HOUSE) because her country club member parents couldn't be bothered to discuss "family relations." Lois gets "in trouble" after the prom, the boy is killed and she passes out after the "criminal operation" in a house on the wrong side of the tracks and nearly dies. The abortion doctor (she looks like a demented European peasant) is sentenced in court. While Dr. Fenton is narrating from his desk, his nurse asks, "Talking to yourself again?" The doc shows us a cesarean birth film (and a more explicit full color birth film that was substituted in the 60s). "Abortion is murder!" is the message of this roadshow hit originally from Wilshire Pictures. It was shown to all male or all female audiences for many years. Crehan played a similar role in the same year's BECAUSE OF EVE. Kelley had directed CAMPUS NIGHTS (29) and JUNGLE BRIDE (33).

STRIP STRIP HOORAY! (SW, 50) D Lillian Hunt

If you can tolerate the crooner and the overlong comedy segments, you'll finally be rewarded by a half dozen burlesque dancers including Blaza Glory and famous red head star Tempest Storm. One great looking blonde is backed by an (offscreen) jump blues band featuring piano and impressive electric guitar leads. Comedy includes a man and an "old hag" pretending to be bees, women spitting out honey and, of course, drinking and drunk routines. Hunt was a female burlesque stage show director.

SWING PARADE OF 1946 (Scorched Earth, 46) D Phil Karlson, S Tim Ryan, P Lindsley Parsons, Harry A. Romm

Carol (Gale Storm) becomes a star at the Embassy Club after being thrown out of her boarding house room. Owner Danny Warren (Phil Regan) falls for her while his rich big business father (Russell Hicks) tries to have his club shut down. The Stooges are live-in dishwashers who are promoted to waiters and do a plumbing routine. Comic bouncer Moose (Ed Brophy) treats them almost like Ted Healy used to and for some reason Moe's hair is lighter than usual. This Monogram movie was the last with Curly (who suffered a stroke in '46). The footage of Louis Jordan doing "Don't Worry About That Mule" and "Caledonia" is excellent. During the second hit the band's instruments light up and Jordan dances. I've always liked just looking at the Texas born star Storm since watching her on sitcoms as a kid. Her songs here are pretty MOR, but she later rocked with top 10 covers like "I Hear You Knockin'" (in 55). Other songs here (including "Stormy Weather") are from Connie Boswell (photographed to hide the fact that she had polio) and The Will Osbourne Orch. Also with Mary Treen as a wealthy friend of the Warrens, John Eldredge as the lawyer, and a weird teenager who imitates the sounds of trains, cars and various motors. The Stooges with Curly also appeared in six early 30s movies, three other 40s movies and had a brief gag scene in MY SISTER EILEEN (42).

TIME FLIES (Englewood, 44) D Walter Forde, S J. O. C. Orton, Ted Cavanagh, Howard Irving Young, P Edward Black

In Manhattan a con man (radio comic Tommy Handley as himself), Susie (American Evelyne Dall), a wise talking blonde American nightclub singer and her partner Bill (George Moon) join a professor (Sir Felix Aylmer) in his "Time Ball." They end up in 16th Century England where they introduce swing music, dictate lines to Shakespeare, introduce tobacco to Walter Ralieggh and auction off America (!). Most of the humor contrasts 1940's British and American slang and music with 16th Century British. Pocohantas goes to a bar and says "Me Thirsty!" Goofy FX include the stars briefly becoming babies in space, and at one point the film speeds up so they sound like The Chipmunks. Dall appears in male drag and there are several drug references. Best of all, Aylmer acts and sounds almost exactly like the professor on FUTURAMA! The Gainsborough fantasy runs 88 mis. Hadley had also been in Hitchcock's ELSTREE CALLING (30). Forde also directed BULLDOG JACK (35).

TIME OUT FOR RHYTHM (42) D Sidney Salkow, S Edmund L. Hartmann, Bert Lawrence, P Irving Starr

Danny (Rudy Vallee) and Mike (Richard Lane) open a talent agency. Francis (Rosemary Lane) is the top star but she's unreliable and threatens to break up the partners so her more talented and likable dancing and singing maid Kitty (Ann Miller) ends up replacing her. The Stooges show up a half dozen times in this Columbia musical. They sing, dance, act like gangsters and do their "Maha? Aha!" routine with nearsighted Curly throwing knives at Larry. A production number features Curly in Drag, Brenda And Covina (who play comic secretaries), and The Eddie Durant Rhumba Orch. Miller and The Stooges basically steal the show. Musical numbers are in nightclubs and radio and TV studios and there's talk about "selling television sets" (a plan that was soon derailed by Pearl Harbor). During parts of the best song ("Boogie Man") only the instruments of Glen Gray And His Casa Loma Orch. are seen. Pee Wee Hunt is the vocalist. Six Hits And A

Miss (later in Ron Ormond movies) sing the title song. Allen Jenkins (familiar from many Warner Brothers movies) is fun as Danny's piano playing sidekick and Stoooge regular Bud Jamison appears briefly as a cook. Years later Salkow co-directed THE LAST MAN ON EARTH (64).

UNKNOWN ISLAND (Video Vortex, 48) D Jack Bernhard, S Robert T. Shanon, Jack Harley, P A. J. Cohen

Rich, bold and beautiful Carol (Virginia Grey from HOUSE OF HORRORS) backs her fame obsessed fiance (Philip Reed) on his quest to photograph some prehistoric beasts. In a seedy Singapore bar they hire a reckless, hard drinking, loud laughing, womanizing ship captain (Barton MacLane), and he and his first mate shanghai a noble alcoholic (Richard Denning), whose "brains were scrambled" by being the only survivor of a previous trip to the uncharted island. The (mixed race) native crew members mutiny (several times) and the men fight over Carol. Once there, they encounter dinosaurs (dolls) and a "whole slew" of scary faced T Rexes (men in suits), always kept in the background. The main battle though is a T Rexes. a red haired gorilla (!). The rare Film Classics release was filmed with the same cheap Cinecolor process as SCARED TO DEATH (PV #28). The print has some jumps.

WATERFRONT (Dark Dreams, 44) D Steve Sekely, S Martin Mooney, Irwin R. Franklyn, P Arthur Alexander

Victor Marlow (John Carradine), a Nazi spy, checks into a boarding house in foggy San Francisco and contacts a Nazi Optometrist (J. Carrol Naish) who is being blackmailed for a code book. The fiance (Terry Frost) of the German born landlady's daughter Freda (Maris Wrixon from WHITE PONGO) is blamed for one of Marlow's several murders. Carradine, who leaves behind sketches when he kills, is the best part of this better than average PRC feature. Gene Roth has a small role as a cop. The Hungarian director (Istvan Szekeley) had worked in Germany before making movies like REVENGE OF THE ZOMBIES (43) and BLONDE SAVAGE (47) in America.

WHISPERING GHOSTS (Fang, 42) D Alfred Werker, S Lou Breslow, P Sol M. Wurtzel  
Radio detective Van Buren (Milton Berle) and Euclid (Willie Best) go to an old ship to try and solve a murder. A scared black servant (Best had been in THE GHOST BREAKERS with Bob Hope) was typical for the time, but this 20th Century release takes the racism further. Besides making jokes about Euclid's cowardice, stupidity and skin color, his boss purposely doesn't tell him that he's discovered that the ghosts are really actors. Long Jack (John Carradine) and his "crazy sister" (Rene Riano) both talk about the spirits of slaves, then secretly project a film of a scary bone through the nose African on the wall. A suspicious bearded professor (Milton Parsons) shows up with a know it all book salesman (Grady Sutton) and the heiress (co-star Brenda Joyce) is bound and gagged. There's a joke about MOBY DICK (Barrymore version), and besides pretending to be an old captain, Carradine is fun imitating a frog. With Arthur Hohl (police inspector), John Shelton (boyfriend), Abner Biberman (suspect), Charles Halton (attorney), and Frank Faylen (announcer). The radio star idea was from Red Skelton's WHISTLING... movies. Werker made A HAUNTING WE WILL GO, also with Shelton, the same year. The print is very dark, but just adjust the brightness knob.

WHITE PONGO (SW, 45) D Sam Newfield, S Raymond L. Schrock, P Sigmund Neufeld

A cliché Brit ("By jove") and his blonde daughter ("Right-O!") arrive in the jungle with a comic butler. She (Maris Wrixon, also in THE APE) falls for her new bodyguard (Richard Fraser). The Germans that the expedition joined up with turn out (surprise!) to be bad guys. Meanwhile Pongo, a big white "missing link" follows them upriver and kidnaps Wrixon to his tree house. Men in gorilla suit

fans will love the scene where Pongo fights another gorilla and another scene with a whole bunch of gorillas. One of 15 (!) Newfield directed movies from 45, the stock footage filled PRC release is now a David Friedman Roadshow Rarity. For some reason the box says it's a 1955 movie in color!

WHO KILLED DOC ROBBIN (Sinister, 48) D Bernard Carr, S Maurice Geraghty, Dorothy Reid, P Hal Roach Jr., Robert E. McGowan  
(CURLEY AND HIS GANG IN THE HAUNTED HOUSE) Hal Roach (Sr.) attempted to revive his OUR GANG concept with THE ADVENTURES OF CURLEY AND HIS GANG (47) and this Cinecolor sequel. Five cute kids testify in court, relating haunted house cliché flashbacks to support their atomic scientist suspect friend. Larry Olsen is Curley, but the main kid is the freckled Speck (Dale Belding). Two kids get high from Ether fumes and characters talk about WWII, Japs and the A bomb. The two little black kids (not in the court scenes) were simply billed as "Dis And Dat" (Rene Beard and Donald King). They hide shaking under a bed, and yell "We's goin' home!" They drink all the lemonade that the smarter, braver white kids were selling until their bellies threaten to burst. The height of hilarity is when everyone thinks a chimpanzee is Dat. It all ends with Dat scared white and running away in his underwear. The year this was released by United Artists (a company co-founded by D. W. Griffith), South Carolina "States Rights" Senator Strom Thurmond ran for president. Bet he was a fan of Roach, who soon was producing AMOS N ANDY for TV. With a briefly seen George Zucco (the Doc), Grant Mitchell (judge), Don Castle (attorney), Virginia Grey, Little Eva in the 27 UNCLE TOM'S CABIN (nurse heir), and Charles (INGAGI) Gemora (gorilla). I first saw this in Copenhagen (thanks to a local Variety correspondent). Stymie Beard's look-a-like little brother Rene later sang with the 60's version of The Jayhawks ("Stranded In The Jungle"). Reid, wife of drug casualty silent movie star Wallace Reid, went on to write Francis, The Talking Mule movies

A YANK IN LIBYA (Dark Dreams, 42) D Albert Herman, S Arthur St. Claire, P George M. Merrick  
Fast talking American newsman Mike Malone (Walter Woolf King from several Marx Brothers movies) in Libya, tries to stop local Nazis (led by William Vaughn) planning to incite a local Arab uprising. He also tries to get to know Miss Brooks (Joan Woodbury from KING OF THE ZOMBIES) better and tells a Hitler/Hirohito joke. About half of this pathetic just over an hour feature is very badly integrated jerky old footage from a much more expensive silent epic (also featuring many black Africans). With radio comedian Parkyakarkus (aka Henry Einstein, the father of Albert Brooks) as a helpful guy from Brooklyn disguised as an Arab merchant, Duncan Renaldo as a good Arab, George Lewis as a bad Arab ("Infidel Pig!"), top billed H. B. Warner as an old Brit diplomat, and Amarilla Morris doing a fast belly dance. Herman was an art director for KING KONG.

YOUTH AFLAME (Sinister, 45) D/S Elmer Clifton, P J. D. Kendis  
(HOODLUM GIRLS) Everybody talks about the teens of today in this Social Service Pictures release starring Joy Reese as Katy, a nice Detroit girl who joins a "jive club" with a milk bar. Entertainment there includes an acrobatic dancer, a singing bartender and a long drum solo (my favorite part). One girl there says "Don't swoon you goon." Trouble is, Katy's wilder and prettier older sister Laura (Kay Moseley), manipulated by a (Timothy Farrell type) gangster boyfriend, spikes the punch. The sisters have a cat fight and it all leads to tragedy. Clifton was replaced (by Ida Lupino) as director of NOT WANTED (49), the year he died.

