Laughs, Luck . . . and Lucy
How I Came to Create the Most Popular Sitcom of All Time
Jess Oppenheimer
with Gregg Oppenheimer

"Lucy's Lost Scenes" CD Inside!
Laughs, Luck . . .
and Lucy
How I Came to Create the Most Popular Sitcom of All Time

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With Gregg Oppenheimer
To Es
Jess Oppenheimer (1913-88), producer and head writer of 153 classic episodes of I Love Lucy, had an extensive broadcast career, beginning in Radio’s Golden Age, when he wrote for Fred Astaire, Jack Benny, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, Al Jolson, Rudy Vallee, John Barrymore and Fanny Brice, among others. His association with Lucille Ball began in 1948, when he signed on as head writer, producer and director of her radio series, My Favorite Husband. After I Love Lucy he created and produced such TV series as Angel, Glynis (starring Glynis Johns), and The Debbie Reynolds Show. His other TV credits include The General Motors 50th Anniversary Show, Ford Star Time, The U.S. Steel Hour, Get Smart, and Bob Hope’s Chrysler Theater, as well as specials for Danny Kaye, Lucille Ball, Bob Hope, and others. He received two Emmy Awards and five Emmy nominations, a Sylvania Award, a Michael Award, the Writers’ Guild Paddy Chayefsky Laurel Award for Television Achievement, and a Distinguished Service Award from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, serving on the Academy’s Board of Governors from 1955 to 1957.
Gregg Oppenheimer began his career as an amateur humorist in 1955, after being introduced by his father to Lucille Ball on the set of *I Love Lucy*. Lucy kneeled down and asked Gregg, then four years old, “Where did you get those big brown eyes?” Gregg’s reply: “They came with the face.” After a brief stint as a rehearsal cameraman on *The Debbie Reynolds Show*, Gregg left Hollywood and attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, receiving a degree in Art and Design, and then the Boalt Hall School of Law at the University of California at Berkeley. Gregg has been a partner in the international law firm of O’Melveny and Myers since 1986. In 1996, after completing this book, Gregg decided to give up practicing law in order to pursue writing and other creative endeavors, and to spend more time with his wife, Debbie, and his ten-year-old daughter, Julie.
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My father, Jess Oppenheimer, was a consummate storyteller. Of course, many of his tales are familiar to countless millions of I Love Lucy fans all over the world. But successful as he was at writing comedy for radio and television, I think his greatest joy came from hearing friends and acquaintances laugh one at a time as he recounted his stories to them.

And he had a lot of stories to tell—everything from his first encounter with Lucille Ball and the creation of I Love Lucy to his experiences with such stars as Jack Benny, Fred Astaire, and Groucho Marx.

I loved listening to and laughing at my father’s stories as much as he enjoyed telling them—maybe more. Growing up, I heard them so many times that I knew most of them by heart. But for some reason he always resisted setting them down on paper. Finally, at age seventy-two, after years of urging by family and friends, he began writing his memoirs.

He died in 1988, before the project was completed. After his death, I took eight weeks off from my law practice to go through the six metal filing cabinets full of his notes and papers that still sat in his office in the basement of my mother’s house in Brentwood. In a file labeled “Memoirs” I found an 85-page typewritten manuscript, the beginnings of a book. I had seen an earlier version of this manuscript more than a year before, when he had given it to me to edit. That was the only time that we ever collaborated on a writing project, an experience I still cherish. But as I went through his files, I found additional passages that I had never seen
before, together with his notes for additional stories—stories that I knew well.

As I dug deeper into his files, I came up with even more treasures: his journal from his 1934 trip around the world; the text of a television comedy writing seminar he gave in 1953; a three-hour-long taped interview that he gave in 1961; the manuscript of an article he wrote about Lucy having TV’s first baby; and a one-page typewritten sheet of paper, registered with the Writers’ Guild in 1951 for $1.00, containing “an idea for a radio and/or television program incorporating characters named Lucy and Ricky Ricardo.” I made a decision then and there—someday I would finish the book my father had started.

Over the next three years I spent much of my spare time accumulating everything that I could find that my father ever wrote or recorded—every interview, every quote in a news clipping, every letter, every magazine article he authored, every radio or TV program, every script. When I decided that I had enough material, together with my memories of his stories, to begin writing in earnest, I obtained permission from my law firm to take a year’s leave to complete the project.

When I began, my primary motivation was to share with others the wonderful stories that I had enjoyed all of my life. But as I progressed, I started to see patterns and relationships that I had never noticed before. I gained insight into how my father’s experiences shaped his life and his work, and led him to be the unique and remarkable person that he was. Writing this book has been a tremendously rewarding experience for me, and I hope that reading will be an enjoyable one for you.
IT WAS A LONG BATTLE, but in the end I lost. My family exacted my solemn promise: I would write my memoir.

I had always resisted writing about my life because I didn’t feel that I was important or interesting enough for other people to sit down and read about. Besides, I didn’t really have anything in particular to say. My life offers little to inspire or teach anyone. And I certainly have no particularly strong points of view. About as controversial a position as I’ve ever taken is to support the Golden Rule—under some circumstances.

But I’ve lived through and been a part of a particularly exciting era: from the start of radio through the development and maturation (of a sort) of television. And I’ve worked with many people—everyone from Marlene Dietrich to Lucille Ball—who are of great interest to the public. So, as a reporter, rather than autobiographer, I could see my family’s rationale for wanting me to set these things down on paper.

“After all,” they kept saying, “you keep telling these stories over and over again, and people seem to enjoy them.” It sounded logical enough, but I suspected that part of their motivation was that with a book to refer people to, they would never again have to sit and listen to me.

The first thing I realized after promising to write my memoir was that I didn’t know, except in the vaguest way, what the word “memoir” meant. So I looked it up. The dictionary gave me a choice of meanings: either “a narrative composed from personal experience,” or “a biography written without special regard for completeness.”
Combining parts of both, I pieced together my own personal definition, which made it possible for me to undertake this project: Memoir: An incomplete history of episodes in my life.

A word of warning. Almost everything reminds me of a story. If I were talking to you in person (and when I write, I feel as though I am), I would digress and tell you these stories as they came to mind, which is just what I'll do as this memoir unfolds. My brain works much like a kaleidoscope. Ideas, memories, bits, pieces, stories tumble about and fall into and out of consciousness in no particular order. It is not stream of consciousness, for there is nothing nearly as organized as a stream about it. It might better be called “splash of consciousness.”

Which reminds me . . .
Laughs, Luck . . . and Lucy
ON JANUARY 19, 1953, Lucille Ball gave birth to two baby boys. One was born in the morning in Los Angeles and the other that night, three thousand miles away in New York City. If that isn’t amazing enough in itself, try this—one of the babies was conceived eight months before it was born, but the pregnancy lasted only six weeks! I’m referring, of course, to the television baby born to Lucy and Ricky Ricardo.

Of Lucy’s two sons, I’ve always felt a closer kinship with Little Ricky Ricardo. Although I can’t claim to be his father, I feel I’m responsible for his being here.

As producer and head writer of I Love Lucy, I was well acquainted with the public’s great fascination for all things “Lucy.” But I was totally unprepared for the overwhelming reaction that met the new arrivals in the Ricardo and Arnaz households. The TV birth of Little Ricky on CBS was watched by an incredible 44 million viewers—15 million more than would tune in President Eisenhower’s inauguration the next day on all three networks. And when Lucy delivered Desiderio Alberto Arnaz y de Acha IV by Caesarean section at 8:15 on that Monday morning, the news was immediately flashed over every news service. Programs were interrupted. It was announced in schools. Seven minutes after Lucy had her baby, it was announced over the radio in Japan—and in many other countries where they had never even seen I Love Lucy. Somehow, they were interested.
I wasn’t about to wait for news bulletins. I had arranged with Desi Arnaz to phone me at home from the hospital with progress reports. At 7:45 a.m., when Desi called to let me know that Lucy was about to go into the operating room, I asked him to leave the line open so I could be the first to hear the news.

As I sat there in the kitchen, waiting for word from Desi, I started thinking about how far we’d come with *I Love Lucy*, and how unbelievably lucky we’d been at every step along the way. It seemed incredible that it had only been eighteen short months since all of us had plunged headlong into the brand new business of television. We were an eager and innocent crew, embarking on a trip in a medium about which we knew nothing. None of us had any inkling of the high-flying success that lay ahead. We all were just deliriously knocking ourselves out to put the show on the air each week. What’s more, we loved the work—none of us could wait to get to the set or to the typewriter.

Luck. There was no doubt about it. The show had been singularly blessed with unbelievably good luck from the very moment of its conception. Somehow, the perfect group of special talents had just happened to be available and in the right spot at precisely the right time in history for this particular project. From the first reading of the first script, it was apparent that the kind of material that we most easily and naturally created was right on the button with the entire cast’s sense of humor, and they were able to perform it brilliantly with a minimum of effort.

From the initial performance of *I Love Lucy* before the cameras, there had been magic in the air. The audience had fallen in love at first sight, and they acted like giddy lovers, indeed. Once the spell was cast, laughing at the jokes wasn’t enough for them. They soon started laughing at the straight lines, and then at any line, as long as it came from this
particular cast. More than once I’d seen “Good morning. How are you?” knock them right into the aisles. It was the audience’s way of saying “I love you.”

Of course, the most important piece of magic was Lucy herself. Her radiant talent, her wonderful combination of beauty and clown, her sure touch for the human quality, which found recognition in every segment of the viewing audience, were the sparks that gave life to the entire series. She was truly one of a kind, and I thanked my lucky stars that our paths had crossed when they did.

That had been in the summer of 1948, when Harry Ackerman at CBS Radio asked me to write a script for the network’s new, unsponsored radio sitcom, *My Favorite Husband*, starring Lucille Ball. Upon accepting the assignment I had made what turned out to be a fortuitous decision. In *My Favorite Husband* Lucy played a “gay, sophisticated,” socialite wife of a bank vice president—quite the opposite of the character I had been writing for Fanny Brice on her *Baby Snooks* radio program. Instead of sticking to the pattern set in the previous episodes, I decided to make Lucy’s character more like Snooks—less sophisticated, more childlike and impulsive—taking Lucy and the show in a new direction, with broad, slapstick comedy. Lucy took to her new role like a fish to water. Harry signed me as the show’s head writer, producer, and director, and we were well on our way to *I Love Lucy*.

Had Harry called me at any other time during the previous five years, I would have had to say no because of my writing chores on the *Baby Snooks* program. But a salary dispute between Fanny and the network had unexpectedly forced *Baby Snooks* off the air just a few months before. So, as luck would have it, I was available when Harry’s call came.

Even Lucy’s unexpected pregnancy at the end of our first television season had been a stroke of luck, although at the
time it had seemed to spell the end of the series. I had learned of Lucy’s impending motherhood just as we were about to begin rehearsals for one of the last shows of the season. Desi had entered the soundstage and, without saying a word, he had come over, put his arm around my shoulder, and walked me off the set and over to my office so we could be alone. I could see from his expression that whatever the news, it could only be bad.

Swallowing hard, Desi said, “We just came from the doctor. Lucy’s going to have a baby.” Pleased as he and Lucy were about having another child, both of them were certain that it meant that *I Love Lucy* would have to go off the air. The cardinal rule of those who controlled the new medium of television was not to present anything that might offend anyone. The CBS censor had a list of words that could never be uttered on the air, and “pregnant” was one of them. Of course, today we can not only say the word “pregnant” on TV, but also make graphic reference to all the various organs, equipment, and procedures that contribute to that condition—or lack of it. It’s hard to imagine that simply putting a pregnant woman on television could ever have been considered daring. But in the early 1950s, the very thought of a TV show dealing with as real an idea as having a baby was simply unheard of. To Lucy and Desi, it looked as though they would have to quit TV just as they reached the top.

As the show’s head writer and producer, I was the one who had to decide how to save *I Love Lucy*. 
In “Lucy Hires an English Tutor,” we had Lucy arrange for an elocution expert (Hans Conried, center) to teach the Ricardos and the Mertzes correct English so that her baby would be raised in the proper vocal environment.

“What can we do, Jess?” Desi asked. “How long will we have to be off the air?”

Without thinking twice, I grabbed his hand and shook it.

“Congratulations,” I said. “This is wonderful! This is just what we need to give us excitement in our second season. Lucy Ricardo will have a baby, too!”

Desi was incredulous. “We can’t do that on television!” he declared. “The network and the sponsor will never let us get away with it.”

“Sure they will, if we present it properly,” I told him. “What better thing is there for married couples in the audience to identify with than having a baby?”
Lucy with my son, Gregg, and daughter, Jo, on the set of *I Love Lucy*.

Desi finally agreed that it was worth a try, and ran off to tell Lucy the news that she was going to have two babies. But as soon as the door closed behind him, I started wondering if I shouldn’t have thought twice before making that decision. The responsibility of doing a series of shows on such a delicate theme, in such an intimate medium, with a star who was actually pregnant, was staggering. And maybe Desi was right about the sponsor and the network. After all, they had
already made it clear to us that the Ricardos, though married, were not even allowed to share a double bed!

I quickly called a conference with my cowriters, Madelyn Pugh and Bob Carroll, Jr. The three of us sat in my office for hours, discussing every angle of the problem. We finally decided that although it had never been done before, we were prepared to tackle it. We felt certain that we could extract all the inherent humor from the situation while staying well within the bounds of good taste.

And now, eight months later, I was satisfied that we had succeeded in doing just that.

As I sat there still holding the phone, a sobering thought suddenly hit me. Television, still in its own infancy, was about to give birth to its first baby, and I was responsible not only for its being born, but also for the way in which it would be brought up. Of course, I was not altogether without experience on this score—my own two young children, asleep upstairs, were proof of that—but unlike what went on in the Oppenheimer household, the decisions that I made about the upbringing of Little Ricky Ricardo would be seen and judged by tens of millions of people every week.

As the minutes ticked by, my thoughts reached back to my own childhood in San Francisco, a chapter in my life that had laid the first solid brick on the road to *I Love Lucy*. Of one thing I was sure—the childhood that I would write for Little Ricky would be very different from mine.
I AM FIRMLY CONVINCED that having some kind of serious maladjustment in childhood that gives you an offbeat slant on life is one of the most important prerequisites for a comedy writer. If you are completely integrated, well-adjusted and happy—if you accept the commonplace as commonplace—then there’s simply nothing funny in it. On the other hand, I can tell you, based on my own experience, that if you can’t quite conform, if you don’t feel exactly the way everyone else feels, then everything that other people do can take on a sort of ridiculousness.

Equipped with the requisite offbeat point of view, a comedy writer can find humor even in the unlikeliest of situations. My favorite example involved Lester White, a veteran comedy writer for Bob Hope and others, who died of cancer a few years ago at Cedars-Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles. After lengthy treatment, Lester’s doctor finally visited him in his room one day and gave him the grim prognosis: the doctor could not predict how long Lester had to live—he could go at any moment.

“T’m sorry Les,” the doctor concluded. “All we can do is try to make you as comfortable as possible for your remaining time.”

After the doctor left, as Lester sat in his room contemplating his fate, a nurse entered to take his vital signs. This particular nurse happened to be extremely heavy; she must have weighed at least three hundred pounds. Lester just stared at her as she moved around the room, busying herself with taking his temperature, checking his blood pressure, refilling his pitcher of ice water, and fluffing his
pillow. Her chores done, she stood at the foot of the bed and addressed Lester. “Is there anything else I can do for you, Mr. White?”

Lester looked at the enormously fat nurse standing before him and said, “For God’s sake—don’t sing.”

[Remainder of Chapter 2 omitted from free excerpt]
[Chapters 3 to 12 omitted from free excerpt]
The Ideal Cast

As wonderful as the entire cast was, *I Love Lucy* was without question a “star” piece. The entire project rode on the radiant talent of one woman. The Lucille Ball of the 1950s was an incredible, stunning performer. In every sense, she was a star. Remove any other actor from the project and it would be diminished. Take away Lucille Ball, and it would be demolished. In fact, to my mind no combination of the supporting players could sustain interest on the screen without Lucy, unless they were talking about her.

Most comedy writers consider themselves lucky if a star realizes 60 percent of the values they’ve written into a script. Lucy, somehow, returned about 125 percent. Unexpected qualities appeared out of nowhere. Little, human, ordinary, recognizable values. Inflections that were exactly the way your sister or your mother, or the lady bus driver used to sound. She was everywoman. Ask her to be a tough showgirl and you got back a broad who simply could not look and move like that unless she’d been pumping out bumps and grinds in a burlesque house for twenty years. Ask her for royalty and she became a queen. And she kept astounding us that way every week.

The audience never had the feeling that they were watching her act. She simply *was* Lucy Ricardo. And if you looked carefully, you would marvel that every fiber in the woman’s body was contributing to the illusion. Did Ricky catch her in a lie? She wouldn’t be just a voice denying it. Her stance would be a liar’s stance. Defensive. There would be a telltale picking at a cuticle, or a slight, nervous jerking of an
elbow, or a finger brushed against an upper lip, which is the first place you feel the perspiration of anxiety. Her hands, her feet, her knees, every cell would be doing the right thing. This was an exceptionally talented young lady, and I don’t know enough superlatives to do her justice.

People used to ask me whether Lucille Ball was funny in real life. And I had to tell them no, not funny in the way that Lucy Ricardo was. But she could come up with things that were remarkable in their ability to evoke laughs. I never heard her suggest any dialogue—she wasn’t a writer, as such. But within her character, she had the ability to throw in little universally humorous things.

We could put down a line that said “Lucy gets up in the morning, she’s terribly tired and goes into the kitchen, barely able to feel her way around because she can’t get her eyes open, and makes a cup of coffee.” That’s all it would say on the paper. But it would be seven hilarious minutes on the air, because she just had this incredible talent for making people say, “Oh my God, that’s just the way I look in the morning.” It was difficult, after watching her turn a routine transitory scene into a comedy gem, to keep from thinking what a great writer you were.

She also had a marvelous sense of what would work and what wouldn’t. If she felt a scene wasn’t exactly right—even if she couldn’t articulate exactly what was wrong with it—we’d take another look at it. After a closer inspection, we would usually discover that she was right and we would rework the scene.

One of the many unexpected benefits of our three-camera technique was that over four days of rehearsal, a lot of good material would get developed. In a single camera situation, you have maybe one day of rehearsal, and then you film it, out of sequence, over the next few days. If you think of something on the third day of shooting on a one-camera show, even if it’s a sensational idea, you can’t use it because it affects something that you already shot on the first day of filming. But on I Love Lucy, where we didn’t shoot it until the very last evening, if someone thought of something
during rehearsals we’d just make the necessary changes elsewhere in the script. This gave us tremendous flexibility.

Take the famous “grape-stomping” scene in “Lucy’s Italian Movie.” The original script read this way:

The woman walks toward the big vat, and Lucy stands there a minute, and the woman looks around and indicates to her to come on, so Lucy follows her.

WOMAN 1. (Italian.) Come on—let’s get to work.

SUBTITLE. Come on—get the lead out.

Lucy follows her into the vat. The woman climbs in and starts stomping on the grapes. Lucy looks over the edge and sees what she’s doing, and looks squeamish. The woman indicates with a wave of her arm to come on. Lucy cautiously climbs in and gingerly puts her foot on the grapes. Her face reflects that this is a very weird sensation. The Italian woman is stomping vigorously, and Lucy looks like she’s walking on eggs.

The woman reacts to Lucy’s delicate air, stops, and illustrates for Lucy by stomping hard. Lucy, getting the idea, goes at it with fuller enthusiasm, like a runner running in place, shaking every muscle. She begins to enjoy this, and starts running around the vat, then tries trick steps, like a ballet dancer, and perhaps like a person with one leg shorter than the other, etc.

Lucy reaches up to check her earring, which is loose, tightens it, then checks the other ear, and finds that her earring is missing. She looks alarmed and realizes it is down in the grapes. She starts feeling around with one foot, trying to find the earring.

The other woman notices that she isn’t working, comes over, nudges her and indicates that she should keep stomping.

WOMAN 1. (Italian.) Come on—get to work.

SUBTITLE. Quit goofing off.

The woman starts stomping to show Lucy, suddenly gets a pained expression as she steps on the earring. She hops up and down holding her foot.

Lucy quickly takes off the other earring and throws it away. She starts stomping away as we fade out.

The funniest part of that entire episode—Lucy’s riotous fight with the other woman in the grape vat—wasn’t in the original script. It was developed on the set during rehearsals,
with our director for that season, Jim Kern. I can’t remember exactly when or how it was added. It may have been that they called us down to the set because they felt it needed more—that it just didn’t build up to a big enough height. Or they may have just improvised on their own. They were absolutely free to do whatever they wanted, and when I came down to the stage, if I agreed, it would stay in. If I didn’t agree, we would have a long discussion about it.

The only real problem we had with adding the fight to the vineyard scene was that Lucy kept getting her hair under the water in the grape vat. Because she colored it so much, the prop and makeup people had to find something that wasn’t going to leave her with purple hair. They finally came up with a food coloring at the very last minute.

Lucy always did every stunt that we wrote for her, usually without question. Occasionally, though, this took some convincing. In my favorite *I Love Lucy* episode, “L.A. at Last,” when William Holden visits the Ricardos’ hotel room with Ricky, an embarrassed Lucy disguises herself with kerchief, glasses, and a long putty nose. According to the script, as Holden lit her cigarette, the end of Lucy’s nose would go up in flames.

It took me all week to convince Lucy that her real nose wouldn’t catch on fire. Our makeup man, Hal King, used a putty nose that wouldn’t burn and placed a candlewick in it, just to ensure her safety. Still, Lucy was extremely nervous about it all through the rehearsal and during the final shooting, and we all held our breath until the scene was over and in the can.
The funniest part of “Lucy’s Italian Movie”—Lucy’s riotous fight with the other woman in the grape vat—wasn’t even in the original script.

When her putty nose caught fire, the script called for her to remove it and dunk it in her cup of coffee. Lucy ad-libbed and picked up the cup with both hands, dunking the end of her putty nose while it was still attached. It was an inspired moment, entirely hers.
(Above) Karl Freund and I watch makeup man Hal King as he gives Lucy a special putty nose designed to catch fire when William Holden lights Lucy's cigarette in “L.A. at Last” (below).
They were absolutely free to do whatever they wanted, and when I came down to the stage, if I agreed, it would stay in. If I didn’t agree, we would have a long discussion about it.

Some of the stunts posed big technical problems for us. “The Great Train Robbery” episode, in which Lucy repeatedly brings the train to a screeching halt by pulling the emergency brake, was one of the most challenging shows to produce. You’ve probably seen movies or television programs in which there is supposed to be a sudden stopping of a train, simulated by shaking the camera. In this episode we actually constructed the set—representing the entire interior of a Pullman car from one end to the other—and mounted it on
huge springs. At the appropriate moment a large, coiled spring was released, and its power shot the entire set forward about four feet, literally driving the actors to their knees.

In “The Great Train Robbery,” we actually mounted the entire Pullman car set on huge springs, which we released whenever Lucy pulled the emergency brake.

For the final scene of “Ricky’s ‘Life’ Story,” we put Lucy in a harness and suspended her above the set during Ricky’s musical number. She didn’t tell us until afterwards, but early in her movie career she had been in a similar harness and had fallen thirty feet to the ground when it failed. The impact
broke several vertebrae in her back. Lucy was scared to death of the harness because of what had happened to her before, but she never said a word about it. During dinner, about an hour and a half before we shot the show, she was so overcome by the tension that she actually passed out cold. Even then, she didn’t quit. She revived and gave a great performance, stunt and all. And nobody in the audience ever knew what she had gone through.

Lucille Ball was about as different from Lucy Ricardo as anyone could possibly be. To me, Lucy Ricardo represents the childish factor still a part of every adult. Most people who get into a frustrating situation may have a flash thought of some impulsive act that would be a gratifying way of coping with the situation. But they quickly put it out of their minds, the way responsible, inhibited adults are supposed to. For Lucy Ricardo, however, the impulsive thought invariably becomes the course of action. In identifying with her, the audience can vicariously enjoy exercising their own childish impulses, petty curiosities, and foolhardy but self-gratifying escapades.

Lucille Ball, on the other hand, was a hard-nosed and dedicated professional. There was only one thing that she and her TV character had in common—an overactive imagination, which sometimes got her into embarrassing situations.

Once, when we were doing the radio series, Gale Gordon didn’t show up on time for rehearsal. After several people had remarked on his absence, Lucy sadly announced to the cast and crew that Gale had had a heart attack the night before. We all just sat there in shock at the news, unable to speak.
Suspended above the stage, Lucy strikes a playful pose just before filming a scene in “The Star Upstairs.”

Suddenly, in walked Gale Gordon. “I’m terribly sorry for being so late,” he explained, “but I was stuck in an awful traffic jam on Sunset Boulevard.”

All eyes turned to Lucy.

“Well,” she said sheepishly, “he did come over to our table at Chasen’s last night and say he wasn’t feeling well.”

• • •
Even though the entire world loved Lucy, everyone on *I Love Lucy* didn’t love everyone else. For one thing, Vivian Vance couldn’t stomach Bill Frawley. Actually, they got along quite well at first. But before long Viv became upset at the fact that people so readily accepted her lovely young self as the wife of “that old man,” as she called him. Though her believability in the role was actually a testament to her talent, she felt deeply insulted, thinking she would be better cast as Bill Frawley’s daughter.

When Bill got wind of her complaints, he was offended, and retaliated by suggesting lines for himself that characterized Ethel as having a “figure like a sack full of doorknobs” or some other of a long list of tried and true, if unoriginal, insults. I had to be called down to the set many times to settle arguments between the two of them. Usually it was because Viv had suggested some script changes or additional bits of business. Because it was Viv who had done the suggesting, Bill would flatly refuse to cooperate, often retreating to his dressing room in a pout. But underneath his gruff exterior, Bill was really a teddy bear, and he and I had a good relationship. I would listen to his complaints and then ask him to “do it for me.” He would usually agree, but he always took pains to remind me “I’ll do it for you, but not for that bitch.”

We were careful to make the Mertzes like the Ricardos in some ways, yet very different in others. Lucy and Ricky were comparative newlyweds—married perhaps eleven years, and still having a relatively starry-eyed love affair. Fred and Ethel, while still in love, had been married a long time and knew each other backward and forward, and they didn’t much like the view from either direction.
Even though the entire world loved Lucy, everyone on *I Love Lucy* didn’t love everyone else.

When we cast Bill Frawley and Vivian Vance as the Mertzes, we knew only of Frawley’s work as a character actor in films, and of Vance’s fine performance as the lead in *Voice of the Turtle*, a straight drama. A few weeks after we started production, we had a story idea that depended on Bill and Vivian being able to sing and dance a little. I went down to the stage where they were rehearsing and sheepishly asked them if they thought they could handle it. With our luck, I shouldn’t have worried. To my delight (and embarrassment for even having to ask such a question), they informed me that they each had had an illustrious career in the musical theater. So a whole, unexpected, wonderful new area fell into our laps as a gift.
Another important stroke of luck for the show was Desi Arnaz. When we started *I Love Lucy*, I thought of Desi as a big question mark. Neither he nor anyone else knew whether he could really do this kind of thing at all. But Desi was a quick study, and considerably brighter than many people gave him credit for. He was conscientious and worked extremely hard to prove his doubters wrong. In the end, to everyone’s delight, Desi proved himself to be a skillful farceur and a fine actor, providing Lucy with a charming foil and giving the show an added dimension.

Desi was also a shrewd businessman, as he proved to CBS on more than one occasion. Technical matters, however, were not his forte. I remember one Tuesday morning when he came into my office complaining that we weren’t leaving enough blank space on the screen around the show’s credits, with the result that one or two letters were being cut off of some of the names.

“I didn’t notice anything wrong on last night’s show,” I told him. “Your new TV set must need adjusting.”

“There’s nothing wrong with my TV set,” Desi insisted. “I tell you it’s the prints that we’re sending to the network.”

To calm him down, I finally had to promise him that I’d check with the film lab. But after he went back down to rehearsals, I asked one of our technicians to go out to Lucy and Desi’s ranch in Chatsworth and check out their brand-new TV. Sure enough, that’s where the problem was. The technician made a few simple adjustments and then returned to the studio. Desi never even knew that he’d been there.

The following Tuesday morning, Desi was back in my office again. “I just wanted to let you know that the film lab fixed the problem,” he said, smiling. “The credits on last night’s show looked perfect.” I told him I was glad the problem had been solved. Just as he was leaving, Desi turned back to me and added, “I told you there was nothing wrong with my TV set.”

Desi had a lot of obstacles to overcome. He was painfully aware that CBS hadn’t even wanted him on the show in the first place and had only reluctantly agreed when it became
clear that they might lose Lucy to another network. And CBS was not alone in its opinion of Desi. When the original pilot film was sent back to New York, Milton Biow screened it for his good friends Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II. After the screening was over, Hammerstein reportedly turned to Biow and delivered a one-line assessment of the show: “Keep the redhead, but ditch the Cuban.”

“He’s her husband,” Biow quickly explained. “It’s a package deal. To get her, we have to take him.”

“Well, then for God’s sake don’t let him sing,” Hammerstein replied. “No one will understand him.”

So Biow added a clause to his contract with Desilu to insure that Desi’s vocals would be kept to a minimum. “It is agreed,” the clause declared, “that in each program the major emphasis shall be placed on the basic situations arising out of the fictional marriage of [Lucy and Ricky Ricardo], and that the orchestra will furnish only incidental or background music except where an occasional script shall require a vocal number by Desi Arnaz as part of the story line.”

Because of that clause, we made it a point during the first year to make any song by Desi an important part of the story. For example, Desi would be singing, and Lucy would be trying to break into the act during the song. But after the show got to be number one, Desi demanded that the contract be revised to ease the restriction. By that time both Biow and Philip Morris wanted the show so badly that neither was about to buck him.

Just as we had done with Lucy’s radio husband, we took pains to humanize the character of Ricky Ricardo by bringing him down in earning power so the average person could identify with his problems. The “Tropicana” nightclub where Ricky Ricardo worked was a far cry from the Copacabana. Instead, we made it kind of a middle-class tourist trap patronized mostly by out-of-towners and conventioneers.

There were actually a lot more jokes involving Ricky’s botched pronunciation than ended up on the screen. Seven or eight times a week he would say something during rehearsal that came out funny because of his accent, and the
people on the set would throw it in. Desi was an awfully good sport to go along with this, but I had to take most of them out. I felt that the audience would get sick of “accent” jokes if we did them all the time.

Desi’s accent wasn’t the only aspect of his Cuban background that had an effect on the show. His Latin American upbringing influenced the story lines, as well. For instance, we could do stories all day long about Ricky being unfaithful to Lucy (or at least about her thinking that he was being unfaithful), but to do a story about Lucy’s infidelity was quite another thing altogether, because in the Cuban culture in which Desi had been raised, it was accepted that no woman would ever dare to be unfaithful to a man.

If Desi didn’t like something, we’d change it, because if he didn’t like a piece of material, he was simply incapable of performing it. Sometimes it was just that he didn’t understand certain things that were part of our American culture. We wrote one script, “Lucy Tells the Truth,” in which Ricky bets Lucy a hundred dollars that she can’t go for twenty-four hours without fibbing. The entire second half of the episode consisted of an unexpected visit to the Ricardos by an auditor from the Internal Revenue Service. Much to Ricky’s dismay, Lucy answers all of the taxman’s questions with the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—revealing that Ricky had “fudged” on some income tax deductions for which he no longer had receipts. If this plotline doesn’t sound familiar, that’s because it never made it on the air. After the first read-through by the cast, Desi flatly refused to do it, maintaining that Ricky Ricardo would never attempt to cheat the United States government in this way. A short but lively discussion ensued, but there was no changing Desi’s mind. In a matter of hours we came up with an entirely new second act in which Lucy’s fibs unwittingly land her a job as a knife thrower’s assistant (and target).

Desi and Lucy were diametrically different kinds of performers. Each Monday morning we would assemble for a first reading of that week’s script. This was usually the first time Lucy or anyone else in the cast had laid eyes on it. Desi
was always much better than Lucy at these first read-throughs. He would understand the material as soon as he saw it, and give a good reading the first time through. His performance would be exactly the same, never any better or any worse, four days later.

Lucy, in contrast, was the kind of performer who needed a lot of rehearsal. If you sat in on one of our Monday morning sessions and then were asked to give your assessment, you probably would have said, “The story is fine, the dialogue is excellent, most of the cast is great, but get rid of the redhead. She doesn’t know what the hell she’s doing.”

Lucy didn’t know what the hell she was doing—at the first reading. But after stumbling through that first reading, she would take the material to the mat. She fought with it, examined it, internalized it, and when it reappeared, she owned it. Her performance would improve more and more as each day went by. And if she got enough rehearsal time there were just no heights she couldn’t reach.

As running Desilu started to take more of Desi’s time, he would continually be leaving rehearsals to go to a meeting or something. Many times Lucy would see him starting to leave and protest, “But Desi, we need the rehearsal!” Desi would look at her with a puzzled expression and say, “What are you talking about? We know the words!” He never could quite understand what was going on inside of Lucy’s head.

For Lucy, who was basically unhappy, the only release she had was in her work. That was the only time I ever saw her really enjoy herself. Except at parties. She was a great partygoer. Lucy liked nothing better than to be at a party, playing a game of some kind. But she had an unhappy home life with Desi, and she was anxious to get away from it. She would come in and would want to work, work, work, rehearse, rehearse, rehearse, day in and day out. This helped the show tremendously, but it was a tragic situation for her personally.

The signs of the eventual bust-up of their marriage were visible even in the early days of I Love Lucy. It was clear that something was wrong. Desi had his thirty-eight-foot power
cruiser, which Lucy didn't like at all. After we would finish filming a show, Desi would go down to his boat at Corona del Mar with his drinking and card-playing buddies, and Lucy would go back to the ranch. Unless they had something to do together for publicity, they wouldn't see each other again until the following week when they both arrived on the set for the first read-through.

Their domestic difficulties were already there before *I Love Lucy*, of course, but the problems just increased geometrically with the tremendous success and popularity of the show. It would have been tough enough for Lucy and Desi to adjust to all of the sudden money and acclaim even if they had had nothing else bothering them. But with all of these other things on their minds it placed an incredible strain on their marriage.

It was just destined not to work. Lucy needed to be dominated, and Desi wasn't happy in a relationship where his wife had a more powerful reputation than he did. He was deeply hurt by all the publicity that said that the success of the show was entirely due to her artistry.

A couple of months after *I Love Lucy* went on the air, Lucy came storming into my office. “That’s it!” she yelled. “The series is over. Desi can go to hell. I’m not going to work with him anymore.”

It took me a long time to calm her down. At least one source of the problems between them was easy to understand. Lucy had always been a bigger star than Desi, but at least they had been in different parts of the entertainment industry. Now they were both in the same show. With Lucy getting all of the acting acclaim and the production credit going to me, he really didn’t have much to hang on to. And Lucy’s relationship with him was clearly suffering as a result. I managed to quietly patch things up between them, but it was clear to me that the problem was not going to go away.

Lucy, in interviews, had long been giving Desi as much credit as she could for the success of the show. Shortly after the first of the year, she decided to take more concrete steps...
to balance their relative standings in the public eye. At rehearsal one day she took Al Simon aside and asked him to do her a personal favor. “I’d appreciate it,” she told Al, “if you’d suggest to Desi that he be executive producer of *I Love Lucy.*”

In a matter of hours we had to come up with a new second act, in which Lucy’s fibs land her a job as a knife thrower’s assistant—and target. (The original, rejected script is reproduced in Appendix B.)
There was a lot of clowning around on the set. Whenever the script called for a fake mustache, beard, toupee, or wig, somebody always wanted to see how it would look on me.
Not too long after that, Desi came to see me in my office. “Jess,” he said, “you and I know that after this show goes off the air I’m not going to get a lot of other acting jobs. What I really want to do is produce, but I need to build a reputation as a producer. How would you feel about letting me take ‘executive producer’ credit on the show?”

Up to that point all of the important decisions on the show had been reached by consensus, after extensive consultations with Desi and everyone else concerned. But I had made it clear from the outset that if I was going to be the producer, I would have to have ultimate control of all of the
show’s creative elements. My contract spelled that out. Even Desi could not override my decisions—only Lucy had that kind of veto power. If Desi took the title of “executive producer,” I wondered, wouldn’t that cause confusion about my authority as producer of the show?

I had made it clear that if I was going to be the producer of I Love Lucy, I would have to have ultimate control of the show’s creative elements. According to my contract, even Desi could not override my decisions—only Lucy had that kind of veto power.

In addition, Desi was not the only one wanting to build a reputation as a TV producer. This was my first, and so far quite successful, producing venture in the new medium. I was concerned that adding an “Executive Producer” credit might convey the impression that Desi, rather than I, had overall control of the show’s artistic elements.
I suggested naming Desi as “Executive in Charge of Production” or “Co-Producer,” but he wasn’t interested in either of those titles. After a long discussion without reaching an acceptable arrangement, we finally agreed to discuss it again after we had both had more time to think about it.

• • •

A few days later, at the home of a friend, I was introduced to someone as the producer of I Love Lucy. After telling me how pleased she was to meet me and how much she enjoyed the show, this person said she had a question for me. “I Love Lucy is only a half hour a week,” she observed. “What do you do during the rest of the week?”

Hard as it may be for today’s sophisticated viewers to believe, some people in those early days of television actually thought that everything they saw on the tube was real. They assumed that each week we just filmed whatever happened to be going on at the time in the Ricardo apartment.

I had no trouble at all finding things to do during “the rest of the week.” I figured out once that I was always working on something like thirteen episodes at the same time. In addition to the one we were rehearsing, there would be the show the three of us would start writing that week, the show already in rewrite by me, another show that had been shot the week before, another one in mimeograph, another one in the first editing stages, still another in final stages, and so on. For upcoming shows I held production meetings for things such as casting, costumes, sets, and props. On shows that had already been filmed there were meetings on editing, music, dubbing, publicity, you name it. Right on through to the answer print, people were continually coming to me and asking me detailed questions about this show or that. “In the rough cut of show number seventeen, in the opening scene,” someone would say, “there’s a close-up of Desi at the telephone, and you told me you wanted to use a two-shot of Lucy and Desi, but we can’t use that angle because the boom wasn’t clear.” Somehow, I would always
know exactly what they were talking about. Through some quirk of my brain, I could remember every bit of the footage on all of the shows. Automatically. That part was easy. The hard part was being responsible for actually putting all of these shows together, and for coming up with a new story with Bob and Madelyn every single week.
[Chapters 14 through 16 omitted from free excerpt]
Appendix A

A Character Is Born

Jess Oppenheimer’s first script for Lucille Ball—My Favorite Husband, broadcast live on October 2, 1948, on the CBS Radio Network. This program is discussed in chapter 10 (page 145) and can be heard by visiting www.lucynet.com/audio
Laughs, Luck…and Lucy

[Appendix A omitted from free excerpt]
Appendix B

The Unperformed I Love Lucy

Original, unperformed script for act 2 of I Love Lucy #72 (“Lucy Tells the Truth”), written by Jess Oppenheimer, Madelyn Pugh Davis, and Bob Carroll, Jr. This script, discussed in chapter 13 (page 220), is the only I Love Lucy script that Lucy or Desi ever refused to perform.

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I LOVE LUCY - SHOW NO. 71

(Lucy Tells the Truth)

Filmed:
Released:

CAST

LUCY.............Lucille Ball
RICKY.............Desi Arnaz
ETHEL.............Vivian Vance
FRED.............William Frawley

CAROLYN........
HARRIET.........., MR. MILLER.....
MAN.............
BABY.............
MESSENGER.......
[Appendix B omitted from free excerpt]
Appendix C

“The Freezer”

Script for *I Love Lucy* #29 (“The Freezer”), written by Jess Oppenheimer, Madelyn Pugh Davis, and Bob Carroll, Jr. First broadcast April 28, 1952, on the CBS Television Network. The writing of this script is discussed in chapter 14 (page 232).
Laughs, Luck…and Lucy

[Appendix C omitted from free excerpt]
Appendix D

Vitameatavegamin

Script for Lucy’s fourth reading of the “Vitameatavegamin” commercial in I Love Lucy #30 (“Lucy Does a TV Commercial”), written by Jess Oppenheimer, Madelyn Pugh Davis, and Bob Carroll, Jr. First broadcast May 5, 1952, on the CBS Television Network. Lucy’s “rearrangement” of this material during her performance is discussed in chapter 16 (page 260).
JOE. Say Ross, the audio man wants to get a level on her.
DIRECTOR. Miss McGillicuddy.
LUCY. Huh?
DIRECTOR. Do you mind doing it again?
LUCY. It's perfectly all right.
DIRECTOR. Okay in the control room?
VOICE. Go ahead.
DIRECTOR. Now we're going to time it this time. All right, Miss McGillicuddy, go.
LUCY. You know you're awfully nice.
DIRECTOR. Thank you. Would you go ahead, please?
LUCY. Well—I'm your Vita—veeda—vigee—vat girl. Are you tired, run down, listless? Do you pop out at parties — are you unpopoolar? Well, are you? The answer to alllll your problems is in this li'l ole bottle. Vita-meeta—vegamin. (She looks real pleased with herself for getting it right.) Contains vitamins, meat, metagable, and vinerals. With—(She looks at the bottle.) Vitameatavegamin you can spoon your way to health. All you do is take one of these full—vita meedy mega meenie moe a mis (She holds up the spoon.) ... after every meal. (She has a lot of difficulty getting the spoon under the neck of the bottle, keeps pouring so that it doesn't hit the spoon but goes on the table. Finally, she puts the spoon down on the table, takes the bottle with both hands and pours it into the spoon. She puts the bottle down, looks at the spoon to see that it's full, beams back at the audience, turns back to the table, picks up the bottle and drinks out of it. As she puts the bottle down, she notices the spoon again, picks it up and puts it in her mouth. She forgets to take it out.) (With spoon in her mouth.) It tastes like candy. (She takes the spoon out of her mouth. By now, she is leaning, practically sitting on the table.) So why don't you join the thousands of happy, peppy, people and get a great big bottle of... (She opens her mouth but realizes that she'd better not try it again. Holds up the bottle.) This stuff.
Appendix E

Compact Disc Contents

1. A Character Is Born
Episode 11 of My Favorite Husband (“Young Matrons League Tryouts”), starring Lucille Ball as Liz Cugat, with Richard Denning as George Cugat, Ruth Perrot as Katy, the Maid, John Hiestand as Corey Cartwright, Bea Benaderet as Mrs. Wirtingill, and Hans Conried as Dr. Schweinkampf. Broadcast live on October 2, 1948, on the CBS Radio Network. Written by Jess Oppenheimer. Produced and directed by Gordon T. Hughes. Appendix C is the script of this episode, Jess Oppenheimer’s first script for Lucille Ball, discussed in Chapter 10 – “My Favorite Comedienne”.

2. Lucy Meets Gale Gordon
Excerpt from episode 26 of My Favorite Husband (“Valentine’s Day”), starring Lucille Ball as Liz Cooper, with Richard Denning as George Cooper, Hans Conried as Mr. Dabney, the butcher, and Gale Gordon (in his first appearance on the series) as Judge Skinner. Broadcast live, February 11, 1949, on the CBS Radio Network. Written by Jess Oppenheimer, Madelyn Pugh Davis, and Bob Carroll, Jr. Produced and directed by Jess Oppenheimer. Discussed in chapter 10 – “My Favorite Comedienne”.

Appendix E: Audio Material
3. **The Driver’s License**  
Excerpt from episode 51 of *My Favorite Husband*  
(“Reminiscing”), starring Lucille Ball as Liz Cooper, with Richard Denning as George Cooper, and Frank Nelson as the Driver’s License Clerk. Broadcast July 1, 1949, on the CBS Radio Network. Written by Jess Oppenheimer, Madelyn Pugh Davis and Bob Carroll, Jr. Produced and directed by Jess Oppenheimer.

4. **The Home Economics Lesson**  

5. **Lucy Promotes Desi**  
Closing credits from episode 115 of *My Favorite Husband*. Broadcast January 20, 1951, on the CBS Radio Network, with Lucy interrupting announcer Bob LeMond to promote the debut the following day of Desi’s new CBS Radio program, *Your Tropical Trip*, which is discussed in chapter 11 – “The TV Audition” (page 170).

6. **My Favorite Husband Outtakes**  
Recorded before a studio audience at CBS Columbia Square in Hollywood in early 1951. Voices heard include those of Bob LeMond, Lucille Ball, Richard Denning, and Jess Oppenheimer (speaking from the control booth). Never broadcast. **Appendix F** is a transcript of this audio.
7. Lucy Says Good-bye
Closing credits from the final episode of *My Favorite Husband*, broadcast March 31, 1951, on the CBS Radio Network, with Lucy’s tearful good-bye to the audience, cast, and crew, discussed in chapter 11 – “The TV Audition”

8. The Restaurant Scene — Radio Version
Excerpt from episode 50 of *My Favorite Husband* (“Liz Changes Her Mind”), starring Lucille Ball as Liz Cooper, with Richard Denning as George Cooper, Gale Gordon as his boss, Rudolph Atterbury, Bea Benaderet as Iris Atterbury, and Frank Nelson as the waiter. Broadcast June 24, 1949, on the CBS Radio Network. Written by Jess Oppenheimer, Madelyn Pugh Davis, and Bob Carroll, Jr. Produced and directed by Jess Oppenheimer. Discussed in Chapter 14 – “Anatomy of a Lucy Script”

9. The Restaurant Scene — TV Version

10. Vitameatavegamin
Excerpt from Episode 30 of *I Love Lucy* (“Lucy Does a T.V. Commercial”), featuring the voices of Lucille Ball, Ross Elliot, Jerry Hausner, and Jess Oppenheimer (speaking from the control booth). Broadcast May 5, 1952, on the CBS Television Network. Written by Jess Oppenheimer, Madelyn Pugh Davis, and Bob Carroll, Jr. Produced by Jess Oppenheimer. Directed by Marc Daniels. Appendix D is the script of this scene, discussed in chapter 16 – “Lucy Is “Enceinte”
11. The Sales Pitch — Radio Version

12. The Sales Pitch — TV Version

13. *I Love Lucy* “Lost Scenes”
Discussed in chapter 16 — “Lucy Is Enceinte”. New opening “flashback” scenes filmed for second season network rebroadcasts of first season episodes, necessitated because of the shortened shooting schedule due to Lucy’s unexpected pregnancy. Featuring the voices of Lucille Ball, Desi Arnaz, Vivian Vance, and William Frawley. After these initial rebroadcasts, these “flashback” scenes were cut from CBS’s film prints and were lost for decades, until their rediscovery by Gregg Oppenheimer:

(a) **Lost Scene #1**: opening scene from the CBS Television Network rebroadcast of episode 5 of *I Love Lucy* ("The Quiz Show") (the first-ever nationally-broadcast rerun of *I Love Lucy*), on October 20, 1952;

(b) **Lost Scene #2**: opening scene from the CBS Television Network rebroadcast of episode 4 of *I Love Lucy* ("The Diet"), on February 9, 1953; and
(c) **Lost Scene #3:** opening scene from the CBS Television Network rebroadcast of episode 91 of *I Love Lucy* (“The Club Dance”), on December 26, 1955.
My Favorite Husband Outtakes (1951)

The following is a transcript of track 6 on the included CD, recorded before a studio audience at CBS Columbia Square in Hollywood in early 1951. Participants include Bob LeMond, Lucille Ball, Richard Denning, and director Jess Oppenheimer (speaking from the control booth).

Note: Lucille Ball’s mother, DeDe, regularly attended performances of My Favorite Husband at CBS Columbia Square in Hollywood. Lucy always called out a greeting to her mom from behind the microphone just moments before the show’s announcer, Bob LeMond, began each broadcast.

LEMOND. It’s time for My Favorite Husband starring Lucille Ball.

LUCY. Jell-O everybody! (Opening theme.)

LEMOND. Yes, it’s the gay family series starring Lucille Ball, with Richard Denning, transcribed and brought to you by the Jell-O family of red-letter desserts. (Jell-O Jingle.)

LEMOND. And now Lucille Ball with Richard Denning as Liz . . .

OPPENHEIMER. (From booth.) Hold it please.

LEMOND. . . . and George Cooper. . . . What’s the matter? Don’t you like my work?

OPPENHEIMER. The guy taping stuff over at Recorders forgot to reset the machines again. Everybody tell jokes to each other.

LUCY. (Laughs.)

LEMOND. (To studio audience.) Oh, I’ll, uh . . . I’ll explain this to you.
LUCY. *(Laughs.)* Hello, Mother. Hello, Mother.

VOICE. From the top.

LUCY. I didn’t get a chance. That’s what they get for rushing.

OPPENHEIMER. We’re having a little trouble with Radio Recorders.

DENNING. *(Laughs.)*

LEMOND. What do you want to do? Want to play music a while?

OPPENHEIMER. Why don’t you do a striptease, Bob.

LEMOND. *(Laughs.)* Well . . .

LUCY. Is it gonna be that long? *(Audience laughter.)*

LEMOND. Let’s introduce some more people. That voice you hear back there, the one in the middle, “Curly” . . . *(Audience laughter.)* . . . that’s our producer and director and writer of the show. He writes the show along with the two people sitting up in the top there, Madelyn Pugh and Bob Carroll, Jr. Right in here is Jess Oppenheimer. How about a hand for all of them. *(Applause.)*

OPPENHEIMER. System in fifteen, Bob.

LEMOND. This is CBS, the Columbia Broadcasting System.
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