

THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

August 9, 1951

Description: In the opening segment, ER and Elliott Roosevelt conclude their response to a listener's question regarding the causes of war. In the interview segment, ER discusses the future of opera with composer Gian Carlo Menotti.

Participants: ER, Elliott Roosevelt, Gian Carlo Menotti and Ben Grauer

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, on the other hand, I feel that this statement uh uh that has been made by Dr. Bunch uh merely uh points uh a finger at the fact that most people on this earth, if left to their own devices, uh would prefer to find some other uh way of achieving their ends other than through uh waging a war and putting--and subjugating other people.

[ER:] Well they would I think in the civilized areas-- you have to remember that what really happened in the past uh was not the people wanted to make war in many cases but that something drove them out of their own country like famine or flood or something of that sort which we will we will class as hunger, do you see? And in driving them out and forcing them to go somewhere else they had to fight because the other people didn't just accept them with open arms. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] Therefore in many cases, war came about for--from the primitive desire to exist [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] And um that is what happened in the old days. Now as you get to more civilized conditions in which you control food supply and so forth people don't want to go to war or--but leaders sometimes do for much the same old reasons.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Yes. Well, I think uh that answers the question uh of uh our lady uh writer and uh now I see that we have to go on to another part of our program.

[Break 1:44-50]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Opera as a rule does not fare very well on Broadway, outside of the Metropolitan that is. But there is a composer who has had singular success with it, having created a new type of theatrical entertainment. He is here today to tell us more about it. Now here is Mrs. Roosevelt to introduce her guest.

[ER:] Thank you, Elliott. For a long time I've enjoyed and admired the musical dramas of Gian Carlo Menotti and I am very happy that he has accepted my invitation to join us on the program today, Mr. Menotti. (2:32)

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] May I say that ah I just last week I had sworn to myself that I would never again speak on the radio or appear on television but when I received your invitation I simply couldn't resist the temptation.

[ER:] Well I'm very glad you couldn't resist, because I want to ask you quite a good many questions. [Gian Carlo Menotti: Good.] I know that you have created a new type of theatrical entertainment in *Amelia goes to the Ball*, in *Medium* and most recently, in the *Consul* to name just a few. What do you call these productions? Are they operas, musical dramas or plays? How should we speak of them?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Well may I ask you a question, are you afraid of operas?

[ER:] No I'm not afraid of operas at all! [ER and Gian Carlo Menotti laugh]

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Well then, let's call them operas. [Gian Carlo Menotti laughs] I mean my operas are operas. Everyone else seems to be afraid of the word 'opera' but I'm not.

[ER:] No, I'm not either and um uh I will say that I think what you give us in a way is more accepting that many of the old type operas. Not only in the music but because the subject matter is nearer to our present day and that somehow it seemed to me your music and what the people actually said came closer to being one.

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Well thank you. That was a very nice thank you. [ER and Gian Carlo Menotti laugh]

[ER:] I have gone to the opera ever since I was very small and I-- [ER laughs]

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] I'm sure you have slept the way I have too many times.

[ER:] And sometimes I have um come away wishing-- in fact, you probably wouldn't agree with me, but I think a great many of the operas uh would be more enjoyable if you didn't have to look at the stage [ER and Gian Carlo Menotti laugh] which is rather terrible but--

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] I agree-- I agree entirely.

[ER:] You do? Why I'm quite surprised, I've always been afraid to say that! [ER and Gian Carlo Menotti laugh] Well now I understand that you've just come back from a year in Europe, part of which you spent in Rome filming the *Medium*. This is your first movie isn't it?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Yes and maybe my last [Gian Carlo Menotti chuckles]. I-I have to be a bit uh--one has to be a bit of a dictator to be a good director and uh you have to like machines. Well I hate machines [Gian Carlo Menotti clears throat], um cameras in particular. And this whole thing of being the dictator um while I can tell you I never sat on the famous chair with my name on it, you know, the famous director's chair or I was too-too scared to sit in it.

[ER:] [ER laughs] Well, uh evidently you're not quite sure then whether uh you like the creating of a movie, but do you like it um as um as a medium for reaching people?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Oh yes I mean, whether you like it or not you're going to have to lump it, I mean just like electricity. You-you can say that you like or dislike electricity but everybody uses it so its--

[ER:] Well now you've created a movie, which do you really like better uh the production with real people on stage on Broadway or the movie? (5:52)

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Oh dear, that's a bit like asking a mother who has just given birth to twins which of the two babies she prefers. [ER laughs] [ER: That's a lovely idea.] I'm a-I'm a very mean parent, I-I can get bored with my babies especially when they scream as loudly as my babies do.

[ER:] Well uh do you get bored uh-more bored with your film babies than you did with your performance on the stage--

[ER and Gian Carlo Menotti overlap]

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Oh I just have one film baby so I-I'm rather partial to it.

[ER:] You're a bit partial to it for the moment, I see--

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] for the moment.

[ER:] but you'd like not to have to direct a movie again

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Well I---

[ER:] In the near future.

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Everybody say so but you know I'm sure that I'm-I'll end up doing another one sometime.

[ER:] Well I-I have the same feeling you do about machines. We struggled a whole day to do a um--in Paris to do on film a television show and I can only tell you by the end of the day I felt that I never wanted to look at that Paris studio again. [ER and Gian Carlo Menotti laugh] Well now what was added to the stage production of *The Medium* to make it into a full length motion picture? (7:00)

[Gian Carlo Menotti] I had to add three whole new scenes. It was very hard work because I had to write them while I was directing the film. [ER:] You had to write them while you were--and then you must have written much more music too. [Gian Carlo Menotti: Oh yes.] Oh that was uh that was a good deal to have to do. Was that because it takes less time on the uh---

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] No because the-the stage version is done in two acts and really doesn't um make a whole evening.

[ER:] It doesn't fill the time, [Gian Carlo Menotti: No.] I see. Well I understand that you used many of the actual street scenes in Rome and also a real carnival. Did you decide on a carnival for the film and then locate one or did you run across the carnival first and then decide to write it into the film?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] You know it's these things people always like to know how an artist first comes across an idea. Very rarely the artist knows it himself, it's a bit like establishing the exact moment when you fall asleep uh there you are awake and all of a sudden there you are flying an airplane or being president of the United States [Gian Carlo Menotti laugh] you never know the exact moment when you've fallen asleep and the same thing in-in writing musicals thinking of an idea for the stage or if it's something you're writing it. You don't know how you ever started it.

[ER:] And-and something very often that comes out of your consciousness that you weren't even conscious was there until you found yourself writing it. Isn't that true?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] very true, very true.

[ER:] I-I have found that in writing um my own autobiography I would sit down and say I just can't remember anything, but as I wrote I remembered and remembered and remembered [ER and Gian Carlo Menotti laugh] It was always such a surprise. [Gian Carlo Menotti: That was very lucky] And I imagine that is exactly what would happen in writing a um anything that was-you were doing it would come out of your mind--

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Very true. And I think that the process of uh creation it's a -it's a process very close to memory I think it's a form a remembrance. Many actors won't agree with me but I believe in it very uh strongly. (9:10)

[ER:] That's interesting. Uh how many of the cast in the movie version of *The Medium* were from the original Broadway production?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Well Marie Powers [1902-1973] who plays the part of the Medium and uh Leo Coleman [1919-] who plays the part of Toby, the mute and Beverly Dame who plays the part um Mrs. Gobineau. All the others are new.

[ER:] Well as I recall it apart from the mute there was only one man, who plays that. Was he an American?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Very much so, his name is Donald Morgan [1911-1995] and he is an excellent uh singer and wonderful actor.

[ER:] Well why was the film made in Italy rather than in our own very well-known Hollywood?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Oh dear. [Gian Carlo Menotti chuckle] There are many reasons. First of all, because in Hollywood the film would have never been made. Secondly, because with my own work, I like to do what I want and not what other people want. And thirdly, um well wouldn't you rather go to Rome than Hollywood? [ER and Gian Carlo Menotti laugh]

[ER:] That's a lovely question to ask and I think I would! [ER and Gian Carlo Menotti laugh] But I'm going um to um shock you again I'm afraid and that is I would rather go to Florence than I would to Rome [Gian Carlo Menotti: Really?] Yes, I would--[Gian Carlo Menotti: Oh I'd much rather—] Now of course the history in Rome uh and-and the ruins and then its modern part are very, very interesting and delightful. But there's always was something to me about the way the city lay and-and the um the charm of the atmosphere in Florence that I never felt quite the same in Rome.

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Well I think that Rome is a bit like a very old courtesan, and I-I adore courtesans [ER and Gian Carlo Menotti laugh] so I think Rome is very fascinating.

[ER:] Well I-I think that Rome is fascinating too and I can quite understand why you wanted to go to the atmosphere in Italy. But now I would like to ask you something. In connection with this film have you ever attended a seance? (11:20)

[ER and Gian Carlo Menotti overlap]

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Can you believe it, no.

[ER:] No!

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Have you ever attended one?

[ER:] No, no I never have.

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Well-well why we should go together to one. (11:29)

[ER:] Well perhaps we should sometime; it's an experience like everything else.

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Do you know a good medium?

[ER:] Uh no I don't. I don't know any medium. [ER laughs] Every now and then I get letters from people who tell me that they have--um in fact just the other day I had a letter from someone in Germany who said that he had had a vision of my husband and that he would like to come see me. And I didn't know whether that meant that he would like me to pay his way from Germany or what that meant but [Gian Carlo Menotti laughs] then he added in his letter that he had two visions of my husband when my husband was still alive. And uh one had been in Switzerland and uh so uh I decided I could do without that particular uh vision being presented to me, but um it would perhaps interesting for us both to go and uh attend a seance. When will *The Medium* open in this country and where will it open?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] I believe that the um it's the sixth of uh September at the Sutton Theatre.

[ER:] At the what?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Sutton Theatre.

[ER:] Oh really, the sixth of September. Well now we will have to--we'll have to remember that and--and make sure that um sometime-- I am very bad about going to the movies, I have to own up to that too but I will certainly have to try and go to the movie theatre-- [Gian Carlo Menotti: I hope you do.] and see *The Medium*. And um is it now uh where I mean, is it over here and have you finished--finished everything you have to do?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Uh practically. I actually I saw the finished version only this morning.

[ER:] You saw the finished version this morning?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Yes, for the first time.

[ER:] Oh I hope you were pleased with it.

[Gian Carlo Menotti :] Well I was rather excited.[Gian Carlo Menotti laughs]

[ER:] Now I see that uh our announcer must have a word and then we will be right back and continue this interview.

[Break 13:24-13:34]

[ER:] Now we come back to our interview with Mr. Gian Carlo Menotti and um we will go on with um the asking questions about his film and other things that we're interested in. After completing filming of *The Medium* in Rome, I understand that you visited a number of different cities in Europe attending first performances of *The Consul*. What were these cities?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Uh London first, where I-I was terribly excited because uh Laurence Olivier [1907-1989] presented [Gian Carlo Menotti clears his throat] presented *The Medium* there and um I always wanted to meet him and Vivien Leigh [1913-1967] so I had my fun there. Then I went to Basel, uh Vienna, Bruxelle [Brussels], Milan and finally Paris where I--where I had a wonderful time.

[ER:] Well what interests me is you went to Vienna. Now Vienna is--has three zones and three countries, one of them the USSR, meet in Vienna. What zone did you have *The Consul* produced in?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Well of course the American zone [ER and Gian Carlo Menotti laugh].

[ER:] And uh did any of the people from the Russian zone attend?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Oh yes quite a few. They were very solemn except one soldier that kept laughing all during the performance, I still don't know why.

[ER:] One soldier who kept laughing? That's interesting.

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Yes, it was very amusing.

[ER:] Well I don't believe any Iron Curtain countries would care to have you produce *The Consul*. Um but do you have any contact at all with artists such as yourself in any of those countries?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Well every once and a while I see their pictures in the papers and that's about as far as one can go. But um, oh yes in-in Milan at Alla Scala I did meet [Aram Ilyich] Khachaturian [1903-1978] who uh was there surrounded by interpreters and bodyguards and I believe that he heard the rehearsal of *The Consul* but all he said to me was "how do you do" in Russian. And I hope I won't be investigated because of that [Gian Carlo Menotti laughs].

[ER:] Oh that's all you-that's all he said?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] That's all he said.

[ER:] Well I-I tried in the last Human Rights Commission to learn how to say "good morning" in Russian so that I could um--you see the USSR delegate sits one away from me, the United Kingdom sits between us, and um I felt that it was--would be a gesture of uh amity to say "good morning" in Russian. I found it very difficult. Well recently I referred to *The Consul* in one of my columns because it dramatized so perfectly the actual red tape and endless paperwork and waiting required by bureaucracy. How did you happen to see material for a drama in this type of situation?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Well I have-I have travelled and I have looked and I have read and I believe we all have friends uh with stories even more heartbreaking than the one Magda Sorel (16:41)

[ER:] Well um in the-in the different countries where it was played in Europe um what did you find that the reaction was? Did it vary according to whether or not the people had actually lived under such a system or everywhere in Europe do they have an understanding of a system like that?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Well I believe that the reaction was about the same in every city. Uh I think that bureaucracy is a form of-of modern tyranny that is growing more and more in every country of the world and uh strange enough even in a country like Switzerland it made a terrific impression and they um either they-they-they feel it from the side of the-of the uh uh of the people be-having been oppressed by dictatorship or they feel rather guilty about not having protected more of the people who-or the refugees and the people who are trying to escape from there. (17:36)

[ER:] Well I think bureaucracy of course and-and papers uh is a danger even in this country today. I think that one of the things we ought to try very hard to do is to eliminate this endless amount of uh of uh paperwork that goes on every kind of subject. Someone I was talking to the other day told me that in Israel they've done rather wonderful thing that there when you land on the soil of Israel whether you come

from the Iron Curtain countries, from Yemen, from Iraq, or from anywhere else, you don't have to fill out a paper. You have landed in Israel and you are a citizen. I think that is something really um extraordinary.

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Oh that's marvelous, that is--

[ER:] It seemed to me it was a wonderful psychological achievement to have first of all the courage not to examine into the past and-of every person who came and though I suppose that is done at the point when they start, uh but um to realize what it would mean to them not to have to fill out papers, I thought that was really a wonderful um uh well a wonderful achievement.

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] I agree with you.

[ER:] Uh you of course knew Europe before the war and so I would like to ask you now what changes struck you most in this year that you've been abroad. (19:18)

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Well it all depends actually on what country you-you go. Uh in Italy for example, which is my own country, um people are-are busy and-and uh uh very uh restless with all the hysteria. Uh really when I left Italy people asked me uh why I was going back to America and [Gian Carlo Menotti clears his throat] I really told them I-I had to go back to country where people lived quietly and have a nice uh sweet and slow life because in Italy people just are really hysterical about traveling, about doing things. I think it's a much faster life than-than uh we have in America, strange to say.

[ER:] That's interesting because they always say that we live with much more hysteria and excitement than they do in Italy.

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Well because most people only come to New York but if you live in Mount Kisco [New York] the way I do, I'll show you there's not much excitement going [ER: No.] on except going to the movies in the evening.

[ER:] I-I live at Hyde Park too, but I-I'm more often in New York than I really like to be. [ER and Gian Carlo Menotti laugh] You were-you were in Italy during the recent elections, do you feel that communism is gaining or losing there?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Well it is losing now, but not as much as it should. I still feel that the difference between the standard of life and the rich and the poor in Italy are too great and it is really quite shocking to see how irresponsible rich people are in Italy. I-I believe people in Italy live uh with uh with a luxury that you don't even see here in America and that is really rather shocking and I think that many people have-have uh uh taken up communism out of-out of a rebellion and of disgust. (21:07)

[ER:] Of course I think you must realize, though perhaps uh it doesn't strike you as much as it does me, that in the United States in the last uh oh let's say thirty years we've had a very nice, quiet, um bloodless revolution but it's come about by the realization of the majority of people that you couldn't have that great disparity between rich and poor and you couldn't have um things which really were the rights of human beings generally uh treated as charity, they had to become rights and uh I-I really think that that has happened here only in the last well uh thirty-forty years [Gian Carlo Menotti: That's true.] Over that over the intervening period it's very different from what was in the early we might call it the millionaire period in this country. It's-- (22:05)

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Well, why in Italy you still see families with dozens of servants. And um while I was in Rome a Ball was given where in the invitation it was stated that women could only wear white and diamonds; well you know it's rather shocking in a-in a country where people are still dying of hunger.

[ER:] That is really very funny, that is really very funny. Well um I know that um that I'm-I'm when I stop to think about it-it happened so gradually in this country eh that um uh one doesn't think about it ordinarily. But when I think back being quite an elderly lady um I see the changes that have come in our country and I think they're good [Gian Carlo Menotti: Oh I agree with you.] [Gian Carlo Menotti laughs] But I'm not at all sure that uh they don't have to come both in Italy and I would say in France even--

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] oh yes, I think that--

[ER:] and some other countries of Europe too.

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] In France too, uh it is very much the same.

[ER:] Didn't you find uh--I think perhaps the only country ah uh where there is a great fundamental--well two countries--I would say that in Holland and in Great Britain there is a fundamental closing of-of the gap between the top and the bottom.

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Yes oh I heard that um I was not in Holland but I was uh in-in England and I felt that very strongly. The only--I think the only saving thing in Italy is that I don't think that the Italian people will ever accept communism because they have--they have a--a long tradition of-of cheating their government it doesn't matter what government they'll get they will always try to destroy it and cheat it [ER laughs] so even if communism will appear--will appear in Italy I mean as a government a form of government it won't last long—

[ER overlapping:] They will try to get rid of it.

[ER:] Well now I wonder on that note, whether you could tell us a little about your own background. How did you happen to come to this country to study and to work?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Well I'm in this country because I had a very intelligent mother. Uh you see uh as a child I was one of those little monsters called prodigies and I was horribly spoiled and lived in--on flattery so my mother decided to export me to a country where nobody knew me and where people in general are not uh well don't care too much about composers-- [ER: Not artistic.] well no they are artistic but I think the composer has never been glamorized in this country uh until about a few years ago when movies were made on Chopin and so on and so here I am. (24:44)

[ER and Gian Carlo Menotti overlap]

[ER:] That's how you came here, she sent you over—and how--at what age did you come?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] I was sixteen--

[ER:] Sixteen?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] And she drop-dropped me in Philadelphia. In a very rainy afternoon.

[ER:] Where-- what-- Did she put you in a school in Philadelphia?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Yes, at the Curtis Institute.

[ER:] In a boarding school?

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] No it was-- it's a music school.

[ER:] And um then--

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] I didn't speak a word of English.

[ER:] Then did you live in uh in-uh in an American family or--

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] uh yes an American family.

[ER:] So you learned English quickly.

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] I had to.

[ER:] You had to! Well you-you had something on your side because anyone with a musical ear learns languages quickly--

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] That's true, except Russian.

[ER:] Except Russian! [ER and Gian Carlo Menotti laugh] Well I-I think that's very interesting and um now that you're back in this country I'd like to ask you one more question. What are your plans for composing? (25:33)

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] Well I'm writing an opera for uh television and uh I am writing an orchestra piece and then a new opera piece for the stage called *The Saint of Bleecker Street* and uh which is based on a religious problem so I-I pray God that the Catholic Church will-won't make any fuss about it [Gian Carlo Menotti laughs].

[ER:] Well I should say that you're going to be very busy indeed and um I hope Mount Kisco remains quiet so that you have time to work with peace and quiet.

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] I'll see to it.

[ER:] I'm sorry that our time has come to an end but I want to thank you so much for coming on the program today.

[Gian Carlo Menotti:] I want to thank you.

[Break 26:14-26:21]

[Ben Grauer:] This has been the Eleanor Roosevelt Program recorded in Mrs. Roosevelt's living room in the Park Sheraton Hotel on the corner of 55th Street and 7th Avenue in New York City. Today Mrs. Roosevelt's guest was the famous composer of opera in the modern style, Gian Carlo Menotti. Composer of *The Medium* and the *The Telephone* and his recent success, *The Consul*. Just returned from making a film in Rome and discussing his activities and his points of view with Mrs. Roosevelt. Tomorrow our guest will be one of the famed experts on public opinion in the United States, Mr. Elmo Roper [1900-1971]. Mr. Roper will tell us something about popular sentiment regarding world government movements and will also give some revealing statistics on political activity on the part of people in the United States.

I think we time for a brief glimpse into the guest list for next week. It's a varied and interesting one including uh Ernest Lindley [1899-1979] on Monday of Newsweek magazine. Tuesday Dr. Rosemary

Park [1907-2004], the president of the Connecticut College for Women; Victor Borge [1909-2000] comedian pianist on Wednesday; the Dean of Theatrical Producers John Golden [1874-1955] on Thursday and the week rounding out with a visit with the well-known explorer Ivan Sanderson [1911-1973] on Friday. That's the guest list for next week.

Mrs. Roosevelt and Elliott Roosevelt will be with you again tomorrow with Elmo Roper as guest and every day Monday through Friday from 12:30-1:15pm until tomorrow then at the usual time this is Ben Grauer bidding you good afternoon.

[Break 27:55-28:02]

[Ben Grauer:] Friends, this is Ben Grauer speaking. Vegetable soup without vegetables would be about as inspiring as apple pie without apples. When you serve Habitant vegetable soup don't ever worry about finding vegetables. Every can of Habitant vegetable soup is generously blessed with all kinds of plum juicy garden favored, oodles of them. And the broth is extra rich because it's made from the natural vegetable juices. Perfect seasoning and slow simmering bring out the heavenly flavor of [unclear term: perhaps Habitant vegetable soup. One good spoonful deserves another and another until your craving for good old fashioned home cooked soup is satisfied. Of course you enjoy just as much wondering [unclear term: perhaps Habitant pea soup, the genuine old French Quebec style pea soup and zesty tangy [unclear term: perhaps Habitant onion soup: gold and good and aswim with tender juicy onion slices in pure meat broth. Whether you get the large family size or handy small cans, you'll truly enjoy Habitant vegetable soup, Habitant pea soup and Habitant onion soup. Get a Habitant from your grocer in the yellow can. Now here is Elliott with a letter from a listener.

[Break 29:16-29:28]

[Ben Grauer:] Yes Elliott, and that next part of our program as you say will be Mrs. Roosevelt's interview with today's guest and just before we have our visit with our noted guest I'd like to take my regular glimpse at the listings of WNBC tonight because there is a bracket of four programs that I'd particularly like to direct-direct the attention of our listeners to.

At 8:30pm WNBC will present again a chapter in Dimension X. Well the reason for that X and its sense of mystery and unknown is just that, because these are science fiction dramatizations, a blending of fiction and uh hard technological facts showing some of the amazing possibilities of the future with the tremendous increase in scientific knowledge. Dimension X then at 8:30 followed at 9:00 by Dragnet, a prize winning documentary of exciting case histories from official police files. 9:30 brings us another chapter in the series of Counterspy. Don MacLaughlin [1906-1986] you know stars as David Harding, counterspy and tonight's chapter is titled the Case of the Double Kickback, sounds provocative and very worthwhile attending to. And then at uh 10:00 is Screen Director's Playhouse. Uh This uh excellent series has brought some of the most notable personalities of the Hollywood world to the NBC microphone and at 10 o'clock tonight we will have a visit with Charles Boyer [1899-1987] and Jane Wyatt [1910-2006] at the Screen Director's Playhouse in the drama *The Ghost of Mrs. Muir*. There's the lineup for listening on WNBC tonight. And now to tell us about today's guest with Mrs. Roosevelt, here is Elliott.

[Break 31:14]

[Ben Grauer:] Yes this is our regular pause at Mrs. Roosevelt for station identification. Time for me to tell our listeners that this is WNBC AM and FM New York. And you're listening to the Eleanor Roosevelt Program recorded in Mrs. Roosevelt's living in the Park Sheraton Hotel in New York. Today Mrs. Roosevelt's guest is the famed composer of modern operas, Gian Carlo Menotti. Before we return to the interview I want to remind our listeners again of a uh event of great importance and an announcement that

comes to us from Arthur Wallander [1892-1980], the director of the Office of Civil Defense. The weekly Saturday tests at twelve noon, the siren tests, have been discontinued and commencing tomorrow August 10th these air raid warning siren tests will be held at 11 am on alternate Fridays. The new tests will be the same as those conducting previously on Saturday and will consist of a full red signals denoting the danger of imminent attack, a three minute wobbling note on the sirens and then a three minute period of intermission and finally a full all-clear signal, three one minute steady notes from the sirens separated by two minutes of silence. Now the announcement from the OCD points out that these tests are going to be conducted on Friday to enable the millions of out of towners who spend their business days in the city to become acquainted with the warning signals which would be so vital to them in the event of an enemy attack. The Friday test will also enable thousands of business establishments which have completed their Civil Defense building control organizations to determine their effectiveness by scheduling periodic drills to take place upon the sounding of the air raid warning sirens. Those are the two major reasons for switching the test from the Saturday noon period to which we New Yorkers have been accustomed to this new period Friday at 11am. Now here is a question or rather a statement from commissioner Wallander which particularly involves every one of us in this area. Commissioner Wallander asks that the people of this city to continue to exam their knowledge of the action to take in the event of an air raid by asking themselves this question. If this was a real alert, what would I do? So when you hear that wobbling note of the sirens at 11 o'clock tomorrow morning first of the Friday air raid morning tests, ask yourself that question in the interest of yourself, your family your city and your country. If this was a real alert, what would I do? Now to continue our interview, here again is Mrs. Roosevelt.

Transcribed from holdings at Franklin D. Roosevelt Library (FDRL)
File(s): 72-30 (217)

Transcription: Ruth Tornell
First Edit: Natalie Hall
Final Edit: Andreas Meyris