

The Lineup

With the smash success of *Dragnet*, many networks and producers began to play follow the leader. On NBC, *Dragnet* was followed up with *Tales of the Texas Rangers* which dramatized real life tales from the Texas Rangers. CBS countered with *The Lineup*, later *21st Precinct* followed by *Nightwatch*. These shows followed the actions of policeman in the field and were as realistic as it got in a show that was pre-cursor to modern police reality dramas like *Cops*.

The Lineup was a hard boiled drama of police action. Like *Dragnet*, it realistically showed police doing their jobs. Unlike *Dragnet*, it was not based on "cases taken from police files." Rather *The Lineup* made its fictional cases seem realistic, from kidnappings and murders to thefts and obscene phone calls. *The Lineup* radio show was not set in any particular city. However, when the series moved to television, it was set in San Francisco.

The Lineup, as the title indicates, centered on a police lineup. The show always began with one. The Sergeant in charge of line would say, "May I have your attention please? You people on the other side of the wire in the audience room, may I have your attention please." He would then give his name and say, "I'll explain the line up to you. Each of the suspects you will see will be numbered. I'll call of their number, their name, and charge. If you have any questions or identifications, please remember the number assigned to the prisoner as I call his name. At the end of each line when I ask for questions or identifications, call out the number. If you're sure or not too sure of the suspect, have him held. The officers who took your name will assist you, they're seated among you. Please be prompt with your questions or identifications. When the prisoners leave here, they are sent to the washroom and dressed back into their jail clothes. It makes it quite difficult to bring them back after they leave here. The questions I ask these suspects are merely to get a natural tone of voice so do not pay too much attention to their answers as they often lie. Bring on the line."

While *The Lineup* was rarely the key to solving the case, it did give the show a rhythm and it also allowed for humor in the interrogation of the suspects by the sergeant. The series began as a Summer Replacement for *The FBI in Peace and War* in 1950, but quickly got its own time slot and would remain on radio until the Spring of 1953, led by Bill Johnstone as Lt. Ben Guthrie. The show would move to television from 1954-1960, and starred Warner Anderson as Guthrie. A film version of *The Lineup* was made in 1958 again starring Anderson.

This series synopsis is courteous of www.greatdetectives.net, with additional information from Wikipedia.

For the Old Time Radio Researchers I'm your announcer, Patrick André. Enjoy the show.