

## The Whistler – Radio Horror Host Notes

**From:** <http://www.radiohorrorhosts.com/whistler.html>

# *The Whistler*

*1942 - 1955*



Bill Forman was the voice of *The Whistler*.

You're walking alone on the street at night, but then you hear another set of footsteps and a haunting tune being whistled by an unseen stranger. Fritz Lang used an similar premise in his 1930s German movie with Peter Lorre playing *M*, a psychopathic murderer of children. But the American radio series was even creepier. The unseen Whistler didn't kill anyone (that we know of), but he certainly loved watching murders take place, narrating them for us, and chuckling at the suffering of others instead of doing anything to stop it. Unlike *M*, he was never caught. He kept walking the streets every week for thirteen long years, whistling his ominous thirteen notes and telling us another tale of bizarre fate. Perhaps Fate is who the Whistler really was? He never provided any sir name, and the killer was usually punished by some twist of fate that only The Whistler seemed to expect.

It is very likely *The Whistler* was inspired by [\*The Shadow\*](#), which began nearly a decade earlier. Like the Shadow, the Whistler seemed to enter and exit the criminal underworld without ever being seen. He would watch the evil doers carry out their schemes, yet they never saw him, even though he would tell us what they were thinking in their presence. His voice sounded equally sinister to The Shadow, too. It was was a slithering tenor, hissing the "s's" and often laughing "heh-heh-heh-heh-heh!" at the foolishness of the guilty. Both series had similar opening lines: *The Shadow* "knew what evil lurked in the hearts of men", whereas *The Whistler* "knows

many strange tales hidden in the hearts of men and women who have stepped into the shadows."



When Bill Forman served 1/2 year in the military, Marvin Miller substituted as The Whistler.

Also like *The Shadow*, several different actors played the title role over the course of *The Whistler* series. Bill Forman played it the most, but his announcer (Marvin Miller) substituted for him during the six months of his army duty (Buxton, 256). Gale Gordon and Joseph Kearns voiced the Whistler in earlier days, while Everett Clarke played the character in 1947 and Bill Johnstone did in 1948 (Dunning, 719).

The last similarity was the saddest one. Both series ended about the time frame (in the mid 1950s). Crime increased in the following decades, maybe because the guilty felt they were no longer being watched and could get away with murder. Or could it be that the Whistler is saving up some more great stories to tell us about in the future?

---



"Shrunkened Head" was an early Whistler tale with horror overtones. Artist depiction courtesy of [Tune In For Terror](#) © 1992

**The Standard Intro:**

(Eerie Whistle accompanied by eerie music)

Whistler: "I am the Whistler, and I know many things, for I walk by night. I know many strange tales hidden in the hearts of men and women who have stepped into the shadows. Yes, I know the nameless terrors of which they dare not speak. And so I tell you tonight the strange mystery of \_\_\_\_\_"

### **An Opening Narration:**

Whistler: "In the quickening darkness of a stormy fall evening, a young girl paces the deserted platform of a small suburban railroad station. From her anxious attitude, we know that she is waiting for someone. But just be patient Miss Medford. There is someone coming to meet you. He has just now driven up. He is coming though the station door, walking up behind you..."

(A short scene plays.)

Whistler: "Rather a disappointing reception Mari Medford, wouldn't you think? You have come over 2,000 miles all by yourself, just to see the only living relative you have in the world. And then you are met by a stranger. The car turns up the tree lined driveway. This, Mari, is what is known in this countryside as Medford Manor. Yes, Medford Manor. It's all that the name implies. A gloomy pile of a structure, even made gloomier by the blackness of the night and the driving rain. Oh, someone has heard the car approach. The door is opened. It's the butler, Victor. Well Mari? Are you going in? Heh-heh-heh-heh. What a pity you don't know what I do, you'd never cross that threshold if you did! Um, too late now. Your luggage is being brought in. The young man and the butler stand beside you. The door closes..."

### **An Ending Narration:**

Whistler: "Why don't you tell her now Clay? Tell her why you were working as Peter Medford's secretary. Because your father was Peter's partner. His partner. That your father was ruined by Peter and killed himself. Killed himself in disgrace. That you suspected him of having cheated your father. That you came to find the evidence and discovered in time Peter's diabolical plan to prevent Mari from every marrying. Better tell her Clay. Heh-heh. I would. Heh-heh-heh-heh."

### **The Standard Closing:**

(Whistler's 13 notes, followed by music.)