

Sorry, Wrong Number

By Lucille Fletcher



As Lucille once explained in an interview, *Sorry, Wrong Number* was partially inspired by an incident from someone else's life. While Herrmann was sick at home, Lucille went down to the corner drug store for medicine. Innocently striking up a conversation with her pharmacist, a longtime friend, she raised the ire of an elderly woman who had apparently been waiting first. The woman interrupted and approached the druggist, complaining about poor service and demanding to "know who this interloper is!", referring to Fletcher. Ms. Fletcher, finding the woman's shrill voice and demeanor particularly irritating, went home with the intention of writing a script based around a character with those traits who becomes embroiled in a precarious situation.

The radio drama premiered in 1943 and became one of the most legendary radio plays of all time. Agnes Moorehead created the role in the first performance and again in several later radio productions. Barbara Stanwyck starred in the 1948 film version and, in 1952, performed the original radio play over the airwaves. A 1959 version produced for the CBS radio series *Suspense* received a 1960 Edgar Award for Best Radio Drama.

A Brief Note About Radio Play Scripts

While it may seem obvious that a script for radio might be formatted differently since there's no need for the divisions, indentations and annotations required for a reader to highlight visuals, yet, when a reader expects to see a play in a familiar format, there appears to be something missing.

Ergo, this brief explanation intended to prepare the present reader about what to expect a few pages further on:

It is important for radio actors, musicians, sound effects teams and technicians to quickly see the inter-relationship of cues for their respective parts. A radio script is linear in its presentation. Actors work from scripts and need not commit their lines to memory, and usually do not do so. No indentation is used because things happen quickly and we want the reader's eye to track down the page.

Sound and music cues and directions to actors are in italics and all non-spoken words are in italics:

SOUND: Don Quijano dragging old metal armor.

Non-spoken proper names are capitalized:

DON QUIXOTE: Hortensia!

It is conventional for performers and technicians to highlight their lines or cues with a highlighter pen.

When a radio play is recorded without an audience present, it is easier to record sound and music on separate tracks after recording the dialogue. Sound cues in the actors' scripts let them know that there are sounds occurring that they are relating to, such as crowd noise, a falling body or bodies, knife wounds, dishes breaking against a head, a gunshot, sound of a bus approaching, etc.

If you have a suggestion to improve readability, send me a note.

Thanks,

Michael Winn

Email: <mailto:Michael@sandiegoradiotheater.com?subject=Comments of script legibility>

Sorry, Wrong Number
Original Broadcast Date: May 25 1943

Characters:

Mrs. Elbert Stevenson (Agnes)

Jim

George

Police Sergeant Martin

Telephone Operator

Chief Operator

Information Operator

Western Union

Hospital Receptionist

Man in Black

Announcer

MUSIC: *THEME MUSIC UP DUCK UNDER AND HOLD TILL END*

MAN IN BLACK: Good evening, this is the **Man in Black..**

MUSIC: *Stab*

MAN IN BLACK: I am called the man in black because I have an aversion for light...I am here in the studio tonight...what are you doing? Dim the light, you fool! Imbeciles! Excuse me, where was I? Oh, yes...tonight I am here to introduce you to a program written by a woman who has seen into into the darkest side of human weakness...the hateful, the mean, thoughtless that leads to..

MUSIC: *STAB*

MAN IN BLACK: Murder! Tonight...from San Diego, we present a compelling actress we discovered in the dark and dreary eucalyptus groves of Rancho Santa Fe. Ms. Ruth Godley appears in a study of terror written by Lucille Fletcher called, "Sorry, Wrong Number" about a woman who is caught in an unfortunate predicament involving the telephone company and the police.

MUSIC: *Stab*

MAN IN BLACK: This program is not for the squeamish. Listen at your own risk...

SFX: *PHONE DIALING NOISES BEGINS*

SFX: *Clicking telephone*

AGNES: Operator, I've been trying to call Murray Hill 4-0098 for the last half hour and it's been busy. I don't see how it could possibly be busy that long. Can you try that number for me, please.

OPERATOR: (FILTER) I'll be glad to try that number for you. One moment, please.

SFX: *CLICKING AS OPERATOR DIALS THE TELEPHONE.*

AGNES: I don't see how it could be busy all that time. It's my husband's office and I'm all alone here in the house. My health is very poor and I've been feeling so nervous all day...

OPERATOR: Ringing Murray Hill 4-0098...

SFX: (FILTER) *PHONE RINGING*

MAN: (FILTER) Hello?

AGNES: Hello, is Mr. Stevenson there?

MAN: (FILTER) Hello? Hello?

GEORGE: Hello...

MAN: Hello, George?

GEORGE: (FILTER) Yes, this is George speaking.

AGNES: Hello, who is this? What number am I calling please?

MAN: I'm here with our client...

GEORGE: Ohhh, good... Is everything OK? Is the coast clear for tonight?

MAN: Yes, George. He says the coast is clear for tonight.

GEORGE: Ok, ok...

MAN: Where are you now?

GEORGE: In a phone booth. Don't worry, everything's ok...

MAN: Very well, you know the address...

GEORGE: Yes, I know, I know. Let's see now...at 11 o'clock, the privat patrolman goes around the corner to 2nd Avenue for a beer.

MAN: That's right. Eleven o'clock. And be sure all the lights downstairs are out.

GEORGE: OK...

MAN: There should be only one light visible from the street.

GEORGE: OK... OK...

MAN: (OFF MIC) What's that? (ON MIC) Just a minute, George. (PAUSE) Oh, our client tells me that at 11:15, a train crosses the bridge. It makes a noise in case a window is open and she should scream.

AGNES: Hello! What number is this, please...

GEORGE: OK, I understand... That's 11:15 the train, eh?

MAN: Yeah. Do you remember everything else, George?

GEORGE: Yeah. Yeah. I'll make it quick...as little blood as possible because our client does not wish to make her suffer...

MAN: That's right...you'll use a knife?

GEORGE: Yes, a knife...it will be ok. The afterwards, I'll remove the rings and the bracelets and the jewelry in the bureau drawer because our client wishes it to look like a simple robbery. Don't worry, everything's ok, I know...

SFX: BUZZING SOUND AS PHONE DISCONNECTS.

AGNES: (STAGE WHISPER) Oh! How awful!

SFX: PHONE DIALING

AGNES: How unspeakably awful!... Operator!

OPERATOR: Your number, please...

AGNES: Operator! I've just been cut off...

OPERATOR: What number will you calling.

AGNES: Well, Operator, I was supposed to be calling Murray Hill 4-0098, but it wasn't. Some wires must have got crossed. I was cut into a wrong number -- and I -- I've just heard the most dreadful thing -- something about a -- murder -- and -- and Operator, you'll simply have to retrace that call at once ... I...

OPERATOR: I beg your pardon? Uh, may I help you?

AGNES: I know it was a wrong number and I had no business listening -- but these two men -- they were cold-blooded fiends -- and they are going to murder somebody -- some poor, innocent

woman who was all alone -- in a house near a bridge... And we've got to stop them -- we've just got to ...

OPERATOR: (FRUSTRATED) What number are you dialing?

AGNES: It doesn't matter what number I was calling. This was a wrong number and you dialed it for me. And we've got to find out what it was -- immediately.

OPERATOR: What number did you call?

AGNES: Oh, why're you so stupid?... What time is it? Do you mean to tell me that you can't find out what that number was just now.

OPERATOR: I'll connect you to the chief operator.

AGNES: Oh -- I think it's perfectly shameful. Now, look -- it was obviously a case of some little slip of the finger. I told you to try Murray Hill 4-0098 for me -- you dialed it -- but your finger must have slipped -- and I was connected with some other number -- and I could hear them but they couldn't hear me. Now -- I simply fail to see why you couldn't make that same mistake again -- on purpose -- why couldn't you try to dial Murray Hill 4-0098 in the same careless way?

OPERATOR: Murray Hill 4-0098. I will try to get it for you.

AGNES: Thank you.

SFX: DIALING, THEN BUSY SIGNAL

OPERATOR: I'm sorry Murray Hill 4-0098 is busy...

SFX: *Clicking receiver frantically*

AGNES: Operator! Operator!

OPERATOR: Your call, please?

AGNES: You didn't try to get that wrong number at all. I asked you explicitly. And all you did was dial correctly.

OPERATOR: I am sorry. What number are you calling?

AGNES: Can't you for once forget what number I'm calling and do something for me . . . Now, I want to trace that call -- it's my civic duty -- and it's your civic duty -- to trace that call -- and apprehend those dangerous killers -- and if you won't ---

OPERATOR: I will connect you with the chief operator.

AGNES: Well, please!

SFX: RINGING

AGNES: (MUTTERING TO HERSELF) All this talk -- can't make anyone understand ...

CHIEF OP: This is the chief operator.

AGNES: OH. Chief Operator, I want you to trace a call--a telephone call, Immediately. I don't know where it came from or who was making it, but it's absolutely necessary that it be tracked down. Because it was about a murder that someone's planning. A terrible, cold-blooded murder of a poor innocent woman -- tonight -- at 11: 15.

CHIEF OP: I see.

AGNES: Can you trace it for me? Can you track down those men?

CHIEF OP: Well, I'm not certain, it depends.

AGNES: It depends on what?

CHIEF OP: It depends on whether the call is still going on. If it's a live call, we can trace it on the equipment. If it's been disconnected, we can't.

AGNES: Disconnected?

CHIEF OP: If the parties have stopped talking to each other.

AGNES: Oh, but of course they must have stopped talking to each other by now. That was at least five minutes ago -- and they didn't sound like the type that would make a long call...

CHIEF OP: Well, I could try tracing it. May I have your name, please?

AGNES: Mrs. Stevenson. Mrs. Elbert Stevenson. But -- listen --

CHIEF OP: And your telephone number, please?

AGNES: Plaza 3-2098. But -- if you go on wasting all this time ---

CHIEF OP. Why do you want this call traced?

AGNES: Why?! No reason. I mean -- I merely felt very strongly that something ought to be done about it. These men sounded like killers -- they're dangerous! They're going to murder this woman at 11: 15 tonight. I thought the police ought to know.

CHIEF OP: Have you reported this to the police?

AGNES: Well, No. Not yet...

CHIEF OP: You want this call checked purely as a private individual?

AGNES: Yes! But mean while--

CHIEF OP: I'm sorry, Mrs. Stevenson but I'm afraid we couldn't make this check for you and trace the call just on your say so

AGNES: But...

CHIEF OP: ...as a private individual.

AGNES: Why...

CHIEF OP: We have to have something more official...

AGNES: Oh, for heavens sake! You mean to tell me I can't report there's going to be a murder, without getting tied up in all this red tape? Why -- it's perfectly idiotic! Well alright, alright, I'll -- call the police.

CHIEF OP: I'm sure that will be the best way to deal with...

SFX: (SLAMS DOWN RECEIVER)

AGNES: (To herself) Ridiculous! Never heard of such nonsense!

SFX: DIALING, RINGING

OPERATOR: Your call, please?

AGNES: Police department -- get me the police department. Please!

OPERATOR: Ringing the police department.

SFX: DIALING

AGNES: Oh, can't you ring them direct!

SFX: RINGING

MARTIN: Police station 43, Sergeant Marting speaking.

AGNES: Police Department? This is Mrs. Stevenson. Mrs. Elbert Smythe Stevenson of fifty-three, 5 - 3 --North Sutton Place. I'm calling to report a murder ...

MARTIN: Ehh?

AGNES: I mean -- the murder hasn't been committed yet. I just overheard plans for it over the telephone. Over a wrong number

that the operator gave me. I've been trying to trace down the call myself but everybody is so stupid and I guess in the end you're the only people who could do anything.

MARTIN: (PATRONIZING) Yes, m'am.

AGNES: It was a perfectly definite murder -- I heard their plans distinctly -- two men were talking -- and they were going to murder some woman at 11: 15 tonight. She lived in a house near a bridge ... Are you listening to me?

MARTIN: Ehh? Oh, yes, m'am..

AGNES: And there was a private patrolman on the street. He was going to go around for a beer on Second Avenue. And there was some third man -- a client -- who was paying to have this poor woman murdered. They were going to take her rings and bracelets -- and use a knife ... Well, -- it's unnerved me dreadfully -- and I'm not well...

MARTIN: Mmmm, yes, yes, I see. When was all this, m'am?A

AGNES: About 8 minutes ago. Oh, then you can do something! You do understand!

MARTIN: What's your name m'am?

AGNES: Mrs. Stevenson. Mrs. Elbert Stevenson.

MARTIN: And your address?

AGNES: Fifty-three...FIVE THREE North Sutton Place. That's near a bridge. The Queensborough Bridge -- you know -- And we have a private patrolman on our street...

MARTIN: Yeah...

AGNES: And Second Avenue is...

MARTIN: And, ehh, what was that number you were calling?

AGNES: Murray Hill 4-0098 but -- that wasn't the number I over heard. I mean, Murray Hill 4-0098 is my husband's office.

MARTIN: MmmHmm.

AGNES: He's working late tonight -- and I was trying to reach him to ask him to come home...

MARTIN: Yes...

AGNES: I'm an invalid, you know -- and it's the maid's night off and I hate to be alone even though he says...

MARTIN: Yeah, well...

AGNES: ...as long as I have the telephone here right beside my bed...

MARTIN: Well, we'll look into it, Mrs. Stevenson and see if we can check with the telephone company...

AGNES: The telephone company said they couldn't check the call! The parties have stopped talking! I've already taken care of that!

MARTIN: Oh, you have!

AGNES: Yes, and personally, I feel you ought to do something more immediate and drastic than just check the call. What good does checking the call do if they've stopped talking. By the time you track it down, they'll have already committed the murder!

MARTIN: Yeah, well, we'll take care of it. Don't you worry...

AGNES: I say the whole thing calls for a search! A complete and thorough search of the whole city. I'm very near the bridge and I'm not very far...

MARTIN: You said...

AGNES: From Second Avenue and I know I'd feel a whole lot better if you sent around a radio car to this neighborhood at once.

MARTIN: Well, what makes you think the murder is going to be committed in your neighborhood, m'am?

AGNES: Well, I - I - I don't know, only the coincidence is so horrible: Second Avenue, the patrolman, the bridge...

MARTIN: Yeah, well, Second Avenue you know, is a very long street, m'am. And you know how many bridges there are in the city of New York alone. Not to mention Brooklyn, Staten Island and Queens and the Bronx...

AGNES: I know all that!!

MARTIN: How do you know it isn't some little house on Staten Island on some little Second Avenue you never heard about? How do you know they're even talking about New York at all?

AGNES: But I heard the call on the New York dialing system...

MARTIN: Well, maybe it was a long distance call you overheard.

AGNES: No!!

MARTIN: You know, telephones are funny things. Now, look, why don't you look at it this way: Supposing you hadn't broken in on that telephone call. Supposing you got your husband the way you always do. You wouldn't be so upset, would you?

AGNES: I - I - well I suppose not. But it sounded so inhuman, so cold blooded...

MARTIN: Well, a lot of murders are plotted in this city everyday, m'am. We manage to prevent almost all of them, but a clue of this kind is so vague, it isn't much more use to us than no clue at all...

AGNES: But surely you can...

MARTIN: Unless of course you have some reason for thinking this call was phony and somebody was planning to murder you.

AGNES: Me?! No! I hardly think so. I – I mean, why should anybody? I'm alone all day and night. I see nobody except my maid, Eloise. She's a big two-hundred-pounder.

MARTIN: Yeah.

AGNES: She's too lazy to bring up my breakfast tray...

MARTIN: MmmHmm.

AGNES: ...and the only other person is my husband, Elbert. He's crazy about me. He adores me. He waits on my hand and foot and...

MARTIN: MmmHmm.

AGNES: ...has scarcely left my side since I took sick twelve years ago...

MARTIN: Yeah, well, then there's nothing for you to worry about and you just leave the rest of this to us, we'll take care of it.

AGNES: Well, what will ya do? It's so late. It's nearly eleven now!

MARTIN: We'll take care of it, lady.

AGNES: Well, will ya, broadcast it all over the city? And send out squads. And warn your radio cars to watch out especially in suspicious neighborhoods like mine...

MARTIN: Lady, I said we'd take care of it...now, uh, I've got a couple other matters here on my desk that require immediate attention, so, uh, good night, m'am. Thank you.

AGNES: Oh, you! You idiot!

SFX: SLAMS TELEPHONE

AGNES: (*pause*) Oh, why did I hang up the phone like that. (*breaking up*) Now he'll think I am a fool. (*crying*) – oh, why doesn't Elbert come home? Why doesn't he?

SFX: DIALING

AGNES: (*To herself*) I'll get the operator again

SFX: RINGING

OPERATOR: Your call, please?

AGNES: Operator -- for heavens sake -- will you ring that Murray Hill 4-0098 number again? I can't think what's keeping him so long.

OPERATOR: I will try it for you.

SFX: DIALING BUSY SIGNAL

AGNES: (*quietly whimpering*)

OPERATOR: I'm sorry, Murray Hill 4-0098 is busy. I will try...

AGNES: (*angrily*) I can hear it. You don't have to tell me. I know it's busy!

SFX: *SLAMS PHONE*

AGNES: (*groans*) If I could only get out of this bed for a little while. (*losing it*) If I could get a breath of fresh air – or just lean out of the window -- and see the street ...

SFX: *TELEPHONE RINGS*

AGNES: (*Picking up phone instantly*) Hello -- Elbert? Hello.

Hello. HELLO!... Oh -- what's the matter with this phone? --
HELLO. HELLO --

SFX: *SLAMS PHONE*

SOUND: *PHONE RINGS ONCE AND STOPS*

AGNES: (*Picking up phone instantly*) Hello? Hello ... Oh, for
heavens sake -- who is this? Hello -- hello. HELLO.

SFX: *SLAMS PHONE. PICKS UP PHONE AND DIALS OPERATOR*

AGNES: (*To herself*) Who is trying to call me? What are they
trying to do to me?

SFX: RINGING

OPERATOR: Your call, please?

AGNES: Hello, Operator -- I don't know what's the matter with
this telephone tonight, but it's positively driving me crazy.
I've never seen such inefficient, miserable service ... Now, look!
Look, I'm an invalid, and I'm very nervous -- and I'm not
supposed to be annoyed, but if this keeps on much longer...

OPERATOR: What seems to be the trouble?

AGNES: Well, everything's wrong! I haven't had one bit of
satisfaction out of one call I've made this evening! The whole
world could be murdered for all you people care. And now my
phone keeps ringing and ringing and ringing and ringing every
five seconds or so and when I pick it up there's no one there...

OPERATOR: I am sorry. If you will hang up, I will test it for
you.

AGNES: I don't want you to test it for me! I want you to put
that call through, whatever it is, at once!

OPERATOR: I'm afraid I cannot do that, I...

-AGNES: You can't! And why? Why may I ask?

OPERATOR: The dial system is automatic. If...

AGNES: (*OHHH! Frustrated*)

OPERATOR: ...someone is trying to dial your number, there is no way to check whether the call is coming through the system or not...

AGNES: (Arghh)

OPERATOR: ...unless the person who is trying to reach you complains to his particular operator.

AGNES: Well, of all the stupid...and meanwhile I've got to sit here, in my bed, suffering every time that phone rings. Imagining everything...

OPERATOR: I will try to check the trouble...

AGNES: Check it!! Check it!!!

OPERATOR: ...for you m'am.

AGNES: Oh, what's the use of talking to you! You're so stupid!

SFX: SLAMS PHONE DOWN.

AGNES: I'll fix her.

SFX: FRANTIC DIALING, RINGING

AGNES: How dare she speak to me like that. How dare she speak to me like that.

OPERATOR: Your call, please.

AGNES: Young woman, I don't know your name. But there are ways of finding you out. And I'm going to report you to your superiors for the most unpardonable rudeness and insolence that's ever been my privilege--- Oh -- give me the business office at once!

OPERATOR: You may dial that number direct.

AGNES: Dial it direct? I'll do no such thing! I don't even know the number.

OPERATOR: The number is in the directory or you may secure it by dialing infor...

AGNES: Listen here! You -- what's the use!

SFX: SLAMS PHONE. ALMOST INSTANTLY PHONE RINGS

AGNES: (*To herself*) Oh, for heavens sake! I'm going out of my mind!

SFX: *PICKS UP PHONE*

AGNES: Hello. Hello. Stop ringing me, do you hear? Answer me! Who is this? Do you realize you're driving me crazy? Who's calling me? What are ya doing it for? Now -- stop it -- stop it -- stop it, I say! If you don't stop ringing me I'm going to call the police, do you hear? HELLO -- hello. (*Sobs*) If Elbert would only come home.

SFX: PHONE RINGS

AGNES: (*crying*) Oh, let it ring. Let it go on ringing. I won't answer it. I won't answer it this time. If it goes on ringing all night, I won't answer it. (*sobbing*) I won't answer it.

SFX: RINGING STOPS

AGNES: It stopped. Why did it stop ringing all of a sudden? What time is it? Where's my clock? Where is it? Five to eleven. They've decided something. They're sure I'm home. They've heard my voice answering. That's why they've been ringing.

SFX: DIALING, RINGING

AGNES: Oh, where is she? Why doesn't she answer?

OPERATOR: You-er call, please?

AGNES: Where were you just now! Why didn't you answer? Give me the police department.

SFX: DIALING, BUSY SIGNAL

AGNES: (*loud groan*)

OPERATOR: I'm sorry the line is busy, I will call you when...

AGNES: Busy!! That's impossible. The police department can't be busy. There must be other lines available.

OPERATOR: The line is busy. I will try to get them for you later.

AGNES: NO! I've got to speak to them now. It may be too late. I've got to talk to someone...

OPERATOR: What number do you wish to speak to?

AGNES: I don't know but there must be someone to protect people besides the police department (*hysterical, catching her breath-hyperventilating*) a detective agency—a — a

OPERATOR: You will find agencies listed in the classified directory...

AGNES: I don't have a classified! I mean I'm too nervous to look it up. I don't know how to use the book...

OPERATOR: I will connect you with information. Perhaps, she will be able to help you.

AGNES: No! NO! (*sobbing but angrily*) Oh, your being spiteful aren't you! You don't care what happens to me. I can die and you won't care... (*sobbing*)

SFX: HANGS UP PHONE. PHONE RINGS

AGNES: (*screaming*) Oh, stop it! Stop it! I can't stand anymore.

SFX: PICKS UP RECEIVER

AGNES: (*screaming into the telephone*) Hello, what do you want? Stop ringing! Will you stop...

WESTERN U: Hello? Is this Plaza 3-2099?

AGNES: Yes. (*regaining her poise but still crying*) Yes, this is Plaza 3-2099.

WESTERN U: This is Western Union. I have a telegram here for Mrs. Elbert Stevenson. Is there anyone there to receive the message?

AGNES: I - I'm Mrs. Stevenson...

WESTERN U: The telegram is as follows: (*reading*) Mrs. Elbert Stevenson. 53 north Sutton Place, New York, New York. Darling, terribly sorry. Tried to get you for last hour, but line busy. Leaving for Boston eleven PM tonight on urgent business. Back tomorrow afternoon. Keep happy. Love. Signed, Elbert.

AGNES: (*softly*) Oh, no...

WESTERN U: Do you wish us to deliver a copy of the message?

AGNES: (*on the brink of despair*) No. No, thank you.

WESTERN U: Thank you, madam. Good night.

AGNES: (*weakly, resigned*) Good night.

SFX: TELEPHONE HANGS UP.

AGNES: No! (*in grief*) No, I don't believe it. He couldn't do it. He couldn't do it. Nobody knows I'll be all alone. It's some trick. It's some trick! I know it.

SFX: DIALING, RINGING.

OPERATOR: Your number, please?

AGNES: Operator, try that number, Murray Hill 4-0098 for me just once more. Please.

OPERATOR: You may dial that number direct.

AGNES: Ohhh!

SFX: HANGS UP. DIALING

AGNES: Four, Oh Oh nine eight...

SFX: RINGING.

AGNES: (*sobbing*) Oh, no! You're gone. Oh, Elbert, how could you? How could you? Oh but I can't stay alone tonight. I can't. If I'm alone one more second I'll go mad. I don't care what he says or what the expense is, I'm a sick woman. I'm entitled to some consideration. (*sobbing*)

SFX: PICKS UP PHONE, DIALING. RINGING.

INFORM: This is information, may I help you?

AGNES: I - I want to telephone number of Henschly Hospital.

INFORM: Henschly Hospital. Do you have the street address?

AGNES: No. No, it's somewhere in the 70s. It's a very small, private and exclusive hospital where I had my appendix out two

years ago -- HENCHLY, H - E - N - C - H - L - Y

INFORM: One moment, please.

AGNES: Please hurry, and please, what is the time?

INFORM: You may find out the time by dialing Meridian 71212

AGNES: Oh, for heavens sake, I've no time to be dialing!

INFORM: The number of HENCHLY Hospital is Butterfield 8-9970.

SFX: HANGS UP. PICKS UP AND DIALS BU 8-9970

AGNES: Is that HENCHLY Hospital?

RECEPT: HENCHLY Hospital.

AGNES: Nurses registry.

RECEPT: Who is it that you want to speak to?

AGNES: I want the Nurses Registry at once. I want a trained nurse. I want to hire her immediately -- for the night...

RECEPT: I see. What is the nature of the case, madam?

AGNES: Nerves. I'm very nervous. I need soothing and companionship. You see, my husband is away and I'm...

RECEPT: Have you been recommended to us by any doctor in particular madam?

AGNES: No, but I really don't see why all this is necessary. I want a trained nurse. I was a patient in your hospital two years ago and after all, I do expect to pay this person for attending me...

RECEPT: We quite understand that, madam, but these are war times, you know. Registered nurses are very scarce just now and our superintendent has asked us to send people out only on cases

where the physician in charge feels it is absolutely necessary...

AGNES: Well, it is absolutely necessary! I'm a sick woman -- I -- I'm very upset... Very. I'm alone in this house -- and I'm an invalid -- and tonight I overheard a telephone conversation that upset me dreadfully. A woman is going to be killed when a train crosses a bridge...

(beginning to yell) ... in fact, if someone doesn't come at once I'm afraid I'll go out of my mind!

RECEPT: (*patronizing*) Well, I'll speak to Miss Phillips as soon as she comes in. And what is your name, madam?

AGNES: Miss Phillips? When do you expect her to come in?

RECEPT: I really couldn't say. She went out to supper at eleven o'clock?

AGNES: Eleven o'clock! But it's not eleven yet! OH! Oh, my clock has stopped. I thought it was running down. What time is it?

RECEPT: Jus fifteen minutes past eleven.

SFX: TELEPHONE CLICKS

AGNES: (*whispering*) What was that?

RECEPT: What was what, madam?

AGNES: That. That click just now -- in my own telephone -- as though someone had lifted the receiver off the hook -- off the extension telephone downstairs.

RECEPT: I didn't hear it, madam. Now about this nur...

AGNES: But I did! There's someone in this house -- someone downstairs -- in the kitchen -- and they're listening to me now. They're list...

SFX: TELEPHONE DISCONNECTS

AGNES: (*To herself*) I won't pick it up. I won't let them hear me. I'll be quiet -- and they'll think -- But if I don't call someone now while they're still down there there'll be no time.

SFX: *PICKS UP PHONE. DIALS OPERATOR*

AGNES: (*To herself*) I've got to get that operator.

OPERATOR: Your call, please?

AGNES: (*Whisper*) Operator! Operator! -- I -- I'm in desperate trouble -- I...

OPERATOR: I'm sorry, I cannot hear you. Please, speak louder.

AGNES: ...I don't dare speak louder. There's someone listening. Can you hear me now?

OPERATOR: I'm sorry...

AGNES: But you've got to hear me! Please, please. You've got to help me. There's someone in this house -- someone who's going to murder me -- and you've got to get in touch with the...

SFX: CLICKS ON TELEPHONE

AGNES: There it is! Did you hear it? He's put it down. He's put down the extension phone. He's coming up the stairs. Give me the police department.

OPERATOR: One moment, please, I will connect you.

SFX: DIALING, RINGING

AGNES: OK. Hurry. I can hear him. Oh, no. Please, oh, god, hurry. --(*begins a scream, barely audible at first, then gradually louder until it merges with train whistle*)

SFX: Roar of train crossing the bridge.

SFX: AS TRAIN FADES, PHONE RINGING EMERGES

MARTIN: Police department, precinct 53, Sergeant Martin speaking.

GEORGE: Eh, er, police department? Oh, I'm sorry. Must have got the wrong numbah.

MUSIC: SUBTLE STING

GEORGE: Don't worry. Everything's OK.

SFX: TELEPHONE HANG UP.

MUSIC: DRAMATIC CHORD CLIMAX, THEN SWELL TO CLOSE

MAN IN BLACK: While things did not turn out too well for Mrs. Stevenson, fortunately, the author of tonight's tale spared you the embarrassment of including a song performed by our producer's wife. Mr. Stevenson, by the way, did not completely escape justice. He moved to California with his secretary, Marge, where he has won a seat on the San Diego City Council.

MUSIC: Loud chord--fade after last word.

ANNOUNCER: "Sorry, Wrong Number" was originally produced and broadcast live by Columbia Broadcasting on May 25, 1943, starring the legendary actress of the legitimate theater, Miss Agnes Moorehead.

Michael Winn directed Ms. Ruth Godley, Philip Van Oppen and John Chalmers in tonight's reprise of SUSPENSE.

This is your announcer, Tim Evans .

MUSIC: LOUD CHORD