

A PRIMER FOR AIR RAIDS

by

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AMERICA 20TH CENTURY

WNYC

TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 1942

8:30 to 8:45 p.m.

Drums

If an air raid should come, would you know what to do?

Would you run, would you scream, would
be afraid?

Listen! This is meant for you!
This is a primer for ^{an} air raid.

SOUND: DRUMS

AXER: Welcome to this program, the third in the series
Answering in playlet form, all your wartime queries.
America 20th Century's the title we've displayed,
Tonight we're taking up the question of ---An Air Raid.

CHORUS: Do you take in the washing? Do you turn out the lights?
What happens in the daytimes? What happens in the nights?

WOMAN: It's not soap we want to sell you
It's something we must tell you
Some special information
From your city's own station.

AXER: Seven million people
In seven million places
Want to know what happens
So let's get down to cases.

CHORUS: You'll know you're in an air raid when the siren sings
High notes, low notes, war-bul-lings!
You'll know you're in an air raid when the siren warbles
Brother that's the cue for you to quick, pick up the marbles.

AXER: O.K.? Got that?
That's the start
All set? Got it pat?
Now the next part.

CHORUS: The Home!

WOMAN: If you're at home,
Don't roam.
Keep your hands off the telephone.
Remember the sight
of electric light
Is fine for the enemy any night.

CHORUS: Turn off the gas
Keep away from glass.
Leave the windows open and wait for it to pass.

WOMAN: Pick out a base
Plenty of space
That you're sure is bound to be the safest place.
Have some water
In a handy quarter
Also a mattress if you feel you oughta.

CHORUS: E-lee-tric-ity
Is a com-mod-ity
That doesn't have to be
A nec-ess-ity

WOMAN: If you've gotta see,
Take it from me,
Get yourself a flash with an extra battery.
If you're certain
Darkness is hurtin'
Make yourself a blackout curtain.

CHORUS: And for information
On the situation
Keep your radio tuned to your city's own station.

SOUND: DRUMS

AXER: O.K.? Got that?
Got it clean?
Then let's get going
To the second scene.

CHORUS: A Store!
Factory!
Office Building!

AIR WARDEN: Follow the orders of the warden in charge,
Don't run, don't shove, don't elbow, don't barge.
No matter what the building--how small or how large,
You'll be safer there than in your own garage
We air raid wardens know our job.

CHORUS: That's what they're there for!

AIR WARDEN: FOLLOW our orders or you'll catch hob.

CHORUS: After all, it's you they care for.

ARW: When we blow our whistles....

CHORUS: Listen closely, please.

SOUND: WHISTLE

ARW: You'll avoid the missiles
With the greatest ease.
If you're sitting on a roof on the 25th floor,

CHORUS(MEN)That's us!

ARW: We'll know what floor to head you for.
If you're sitting in the corner of a grocery store.

CHORUS(WOMEN)That's us!

ARW: We can give the benefit of all our lore.
In short, stand pat 'til we take over,
Then you won't get hurt--you'll be in clover.

SOUND: DRUMS

AXER: That's all very well for a daytime blitz,
But who can tell when an air raid hits?
Sometimes daytime, sometimes not,
Listen to the answer for the night time spot!

CHORUS: The Street!

YOUNG MAN: Just when I meet a pretty girl,

Meet her on the street--

The planes come over

And the sirens bleat.

I stay very calm

I'm the master of the minute

I find a nice big building

And 1-2-3, we're in it.

Opportunity

Can't sneer at me.

CHORUS: That's the stuff!

GIRL: From the funny way he looked at me

You'd think he'd seen it coming.

First we hear the sirens

Then we walk--not running.

Let me make that clear--not running.

To the nearest office building

That's the one---with the pretty gliding.

We stayed there an hour

Maybe two.

'Til the planes were gone and the sirens blew.

CHORUS: That's the stuff!

Y.M.: I followed all the rules

And every regulation.

Maybe someday you'll be in the same situation.

Take her gently by the arm.

Get her off the street.

Y.M.: She will never come to harm
In a building neat.
Never run, just stick to walking.
If you're scared, just keep on talking.
That's the way you'll save her life.
And who knows? Maybe get a wife.

CHORUS: Like you?

Y.M.: That's right!

SOUND: DRUMS

AXER: Even in an air raid, we get romance.
They think they're gonna scare us, but they haven't got a chance.
But sotto voce comment won't get us very far.
Suppose we talk about what happens with a car.

CHORUS: A car?!

GUY: If you're in a car
And you want to stay alive.
Don't drive.

Park your car in the nearest space,
Turn off the lights--then walk, don't race
To the nearest clean, well-lighted place.
He'd also say take off the tires,
As a movement tactical.
Though the shortage this inspires
Still--it isn't practical.

CHORUS: We know!

Let 'em go!

GUY: Oh, yes! While we're at it, be careful where you park.
A hydrant or a hospital is not the smartest mark.

GUY(CONT'D): Also
~~xxx~~ stay away from any building that's official
Or you may shortly find yourself attending courts judicial.

CHORUS: Turn off the lights...Did you say that before?
Well, it won't hurt to say it once more.

GUY: Take out the ignition key,
Don't lock the doors.
Go into a building,
Climb a couple floors...
When you get there...pause.

CHORUS: Now you're safe!
Feel a lot better?
You'll be O.K.
If you follow to the letter.

SOUND: DRUM

AKER: When you stop to think, you see,
The whole thing's pretty easy.
The trick, of course,
Is to try to keep yourself from getting queasy.
Take, for instance, the problem of mothers.
They naturally, worry more than most of us others.

CHORUS: Let us discuss the problems of mamas.
and papas.
The special problems of mamas and papas...
As distinguished from you, or us, or air raid wardens or coppers.
Let us discuss--The Children!

CHILD: If an air raid comes when I'm in school,
You stay at home...that's the Golden Rule.
Teacher's smart, she'll know the way.
If the planes come close,
In school I'll stay.
If the principal says there's time to spare,
I'll come home in teacher's care.
I like it when we stay in school,
We sit in the hall and play.
The teacher reads us stories, until the planes go 'way.
It's even nicer when she takes us home.
Especially after Noon.
And the siren rings at almost three,
School's over very soon.

CHORUS: Teacher knows just what to do.
Teacher'll do what's best for you.
Tell your parents not to 'phone.
Leave the telephone alone.
You'll be all right...don't you worry.
As soon as it's over, you'll get home in a hurry.

SOUND DRUMS

AXER: Now we come, by elimination,
To elaborate forms of transportation.
Subways, streetcars, els and buses.
None of them reason for any fusses.
Orders are easy...simple they are.
You'll find them posted in every car.

CHORUS : If you're in a subway,
If you're in a bus,
Don't get flustered
Count on us.

DRIVER: I'm driving my bus and I hear the wail,
My order's are to stop without fail.
So I pull the brake and bring her to a stop.
Lucky I am, it's next to a cop.
He takes the passengers off my hands
Leading them to a proper resort
And while we're sitting...Well, I'll make out the report.

CHORUS: Easy does it every time.
You've got no hard hill to climb.
If you're ever in any doubt
Common sense should help you out.
Let's take another situation....
You're on a train or a subway station.

AXER: We've no time to waste on that.
Easy as rabbits out of hat.
If you're standing on the station,
Stay there, that's my recommendation.
If the train's in ambulation
It will stop at the very next station.
Don't get out, just sit right there.
Nothing will your ride impair.
When the raid is over and donw with,
Then your business, you can go on with.

MAN: Wait a minute, here's what I say...
I live in Brooklyn, Avenue J.

AXER: BMT?

MAN: That's me.

And it's an el stop, see.

AXER: ~~Well, let's see.~~

For argument sake, suppose we say, you're coming into Avenue.....?

MAN: J.

AXER: Whatever you say.

Avenue J.

The train will pull into the station.

Now...you size up the situation.

MAN: The way I figure it, it's a cinch.

I leave the platform and head for a house.

The nearest one's the best in a pinch.

AXER: Right the first time!

Well, what did I tell you?

This is no soap we're trying to sell you.

ALL you have to do is use your brain.

To ^{now} what to do when you're on a train.

8:13

SOUND DRUMS

AXER; Now we come to some generalizations.

Orders to follow with no qualifications.

MAN: If you hear a rumor

Don't go out and spread it.

ASK yourself first: Is it true? Who said it?

WOMAN: Don't spread a rumor,
That'll give it force.
Best thing to do is
Track it to its source.

CHORUS: Don't spread rumors
Help to put the clip on
Adolph Hitler and the boys from Nippon!

AXER: If you're ever in any doubt,
Common sense should help you out.
Democracy says in words intense,
The one thing a man has is common sense.

CHORUS: Of don'ts we also have a few
Listen closely--Here's what NOT to do.

MAN: Don't run
Don't shout
Don't scream or yell.
If others do, then you rebel.
Otherwise you'll help towards panic
Favorite trick of the gang Germanic.

WOMAN: When the sirens sound, keep calm.
You will save yourself from harm.
Take it easy
Take it slow
You'll still be there when the all clears blow.

CHORUS: Two more things and we'll be through.
First, in the street when the bombs are dropping,

AXER: This is what you'd better do:
Lie down flat when bombs are popping.

AXER(CONT'D): Try to cover the back of your head.

The back of your head is what I said.

CHORUS: Right!

AXER: One final word...and that's the all clear.

A sound we're sure you'll want to hear.

CHORUS: It's a long, long blast on a single note.

10:30

AXER: A continuous blast on a single note.

CHORUS: Well isn't that what we ~~just~~ finished saying?

AXER: More or less--I was just re-laying.

Anyway, what's repetition?

It increases the strength of the deposition.

As a matter of fact, let's do a repeat....

AXER AND CHORUS: The all clear signal is a continuous blast.

AXEHL So we come to the end of our show.

We hope we've told you what you want to know.

As we've said, this information,

Is given to you by your city station.

This program's the third in a brand new set

AMERICA 20th Century's the title, don't forget.

Of actors on this show, we've had quite a few,

Mind if we read their names to you?

(CAST)

To Norman Corwin, we also owe a bow,

If he hadn't started rhyming, first, we couldn't do it now.

Edward Goldberger was author and director...so we'll list him,

And finally, This is the Municipal Broadcasting System.

11:30