

Nerve Center of a Community of 850,000-- That's Station X, Cincinnati's Watchdog

Operators of Police Radio Broadcasting Station Act as Link in Constant March of Comedy and Tragedy, Crime and Carelessness

BY TOM GREEN JR.

The nerve center of a district of 850,000 persons—that's Cincinnati's two-year-old baby—Station X. It's the hub in the Police Department wheel of 25 cities and villages in six counties.

Station X is just a "two-by-four" room at City Hall, but there tragedy, romance and comedy join hands every hour, every minute of the day and night.

One minute an oil station attendant has faced the muzzle of a pistol. Would Station X track him down? The next, Little Mary out in Price Hill has lost her pet terrier, Snookums, and would Station X please find him, for Mary is just crying her eyes out.

Station X has been called on to do everything but perform a marriage. It's been asked to stop quite a few lovelorn children who have eloped.

Once there was a young man in a hospital. A blood transfusion was needed. His brother already had agreed to supply it. But when needed the brother had left his home in his auto. Soon Station WKDU—that's the radio station at Station X—was broadcasting the number of his car, telling policemen of the metropolitan district to send the driver to the hospital for the blood transfusion. The brother was found and a life was saved.

Telephone calls at the station average 30,000 a month, while there are approximately 11,000 broadcasts.

Storms Bring Calls

"During a severe storm the telephone calls are extremely heavy," said John Blandford Jr., safety director and "father" of Station X, for it's his baby and he's proud of it.

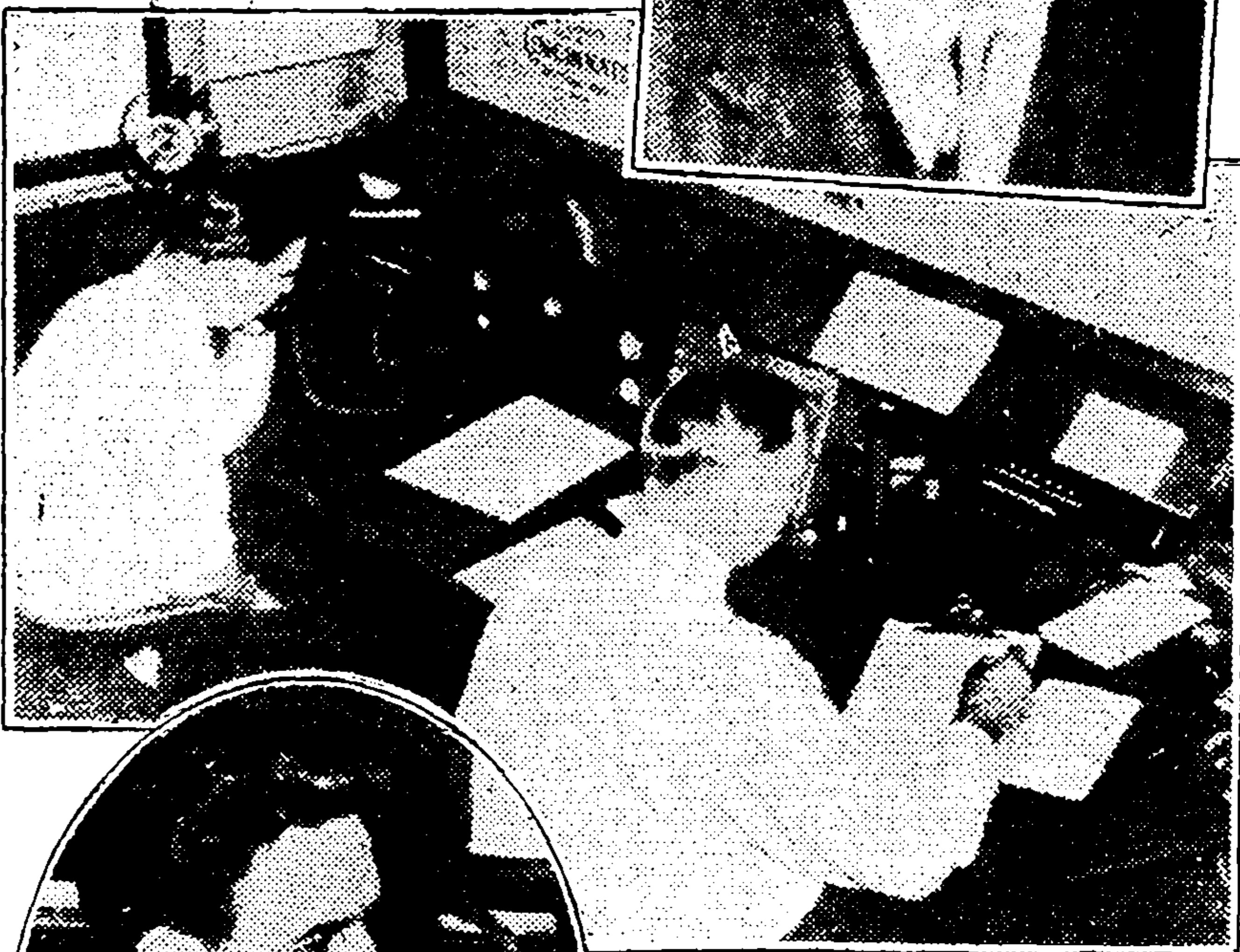
"That's when people need help, and to Station X they turn," he continued. "But that's what we want. We encourage people to keep the Police Department informed. If, when they see a suspicious character, they would call Station X, many a crime would be prevented."

And speaking of crime prevention, at the door of Station X can be placed the credit for materially reducing crime in Cincinnati.

For instance, in the first five months of this year there were 364 autos stolen, as against 475 in 1932 and 1033 in 1931. In the same period holdups were reduced from 307 in 1931 to 145 in 1933.

"Station X is the cause," said Mr. Blandford. "Criminals realize the radio can bring a policeman in a minute or two. It's different from the old days when a man walking his 'beat' only called every hour."

The radio has practically done away with the "flat-foot." Few po-



The "work bench" of Station X, the nerve center in Cincinnati and adjoining towns in police activities, is shown in the center photo above, with James Hearn at the left and Sergt. Charles Nelcamp right. Above is John Blandford Jr., safety director and "father" of the station. Below is Mr. Hearn broadcasting over Station WKDU.

licemen in the city walk these days—just those in the shopping district. Practically Cincinnati's entire force is motorized. A crime in any part of the city, can be "covered" by the police within a few seconds. And that's one reason why Cincinnati is being shunned by bank robbers, highwaymen and other marauding criminals.

Ahead of New York

Cincinnati had its Station X a year before New York did. It was among the first to try radio in apprehending criminals. Chicago recently sent a delegation here to see how Station X held its finger on the pulse of 850,000 people.

And here's the way it's done:

Not so long ago two couples of a nearby town came to Cincinnati. The women decided to window shop, the men to cruise about the city in their auto. A meeting place was agreed on, but something went

amiss. The women became lost. They appealed to a policeman.

"What's the license number of the car containing the men?" asked the officer. He went to a telephone and gave Station X the story. Soon the operator was singing over the radio:

"Have driver of auto No. — meet his wife at Fourth and Race streets."

Within six minutes the couples were united.

Station WKDU operators have many a laugh. For instance just the other night an irate citizen called that the man next door was snoring so loud he was keeping his (the caller's) dog awake, and the canine was barking fiercely.

And there was the woman who called Station X thus:

"Will you please send the officer back to my house to get the rest of the report. I mean the policeman with the big brown eyes."