



**Wyllis Cooper** was a brilliant writer and producer with a taste for challenges. He wrote for advertisement agencies, radio spots and series, movies, and even television in his more than thirty-year career.

Cooper was born in January, 1899 in Illinois. Immediately after he graduated from high school, he joined the U.S. Cavalry, serving on the Mexican border. He was only 17 years old. The following year, he joined the Signal Corps and fought in France during World War I where he was exposed to mustard gas, a chemical compound that causes permanent lung damage. Nevertheless, he remained on active duty until 1919 where he began writing advertising copy in Chicago. He migrated to radio, and his first radio scripts were written for *The Empire Builders*, an NBC production, airing from 1929 to 1931. In 1934, he developed, and directed, *Lights Out*, a gruesome horror show that aired at midnight. Despite its great success, Cooper chose to move to Hollywood. Even though he continued to write radio plays, he also generated a number of screenplays there. His most notable effort was the 1939 movie *Son of Frankenstein*.

In 1940, Cooper moved from Hollywood to New York City to write radio scripts for all of the major networks. Here, he changed the spelling of his name from “W-i-l-l-i-s” to “W-y-l-l-i-s” to please his wife, who felt that the numerology of the new name would make him more successful.

When America joined World War II, he produced and directed *The Army Hour* under the auspices of the Secretary of War. In 1947, his military career behind him, he developed the renowned radio show, *Quiet, Please*, and in 1951, Cooper wrote and directed NBC’s *Whitehall 1212*, which focused on a range of artifacts from England’s famous Black Museum of crime. The show featured a reputedly “all-British cast,” and had all the earmarks of an actual BBC production.

Always interested in a new field, Cooper switched his interest to television, where he experimented with various genres in the early 1950s. He is best remembered for a series called *Volume One*.

Cooper soon moved to New Jersey, where he died on June 22, 1955. He was 56 years of age.

Information for this synopsis was taken from John Dunning’s *The Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio*, also from Radio Nospace, The Digital Deli Too, RUSC.com, and from Wikipedia. For Old Time Radio Researchers, I am your announcer, Patrick André. Thank you for listening.