



## ***Lotzer brought order to potential chaos in Cardwell no-hitter telecast***

*By George Castle, CBM Historian  
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*First of a two-part series about two men, their memories sharp at 86, who both started at WGN-TV in 1954. Behind the scenes, these all-time broadcast pros helped make WGN the pre-eminent local producer of baseball telecasts in the country.*

*Today's feature looks at Bill Lotzer's work directing the telecast of the famed Don Cardwell no-hitter at Wrigley Field on May 15, 1960. And Lotzer recalls other experiences, such as the colorful announcers he directed at WGN and a president who wanted to be Harry Caray's partner in the booth.*

A director brings order to chaos, whether running an orchestra, movie or 12 other men using cables, cameras, anticipation and improvisation to put a baseball game live and in color on the air.

Bill Lotzer brought a rhythm and flow that was preserved for all time in the telecast of Cubs pitcher Don Cardwell's no-hitter against the St. Louis Cardinals. His split-second decision-making can be observed on the oldest sports videotape (as opposed to a kinescope, a film of a telecast) known to exist.

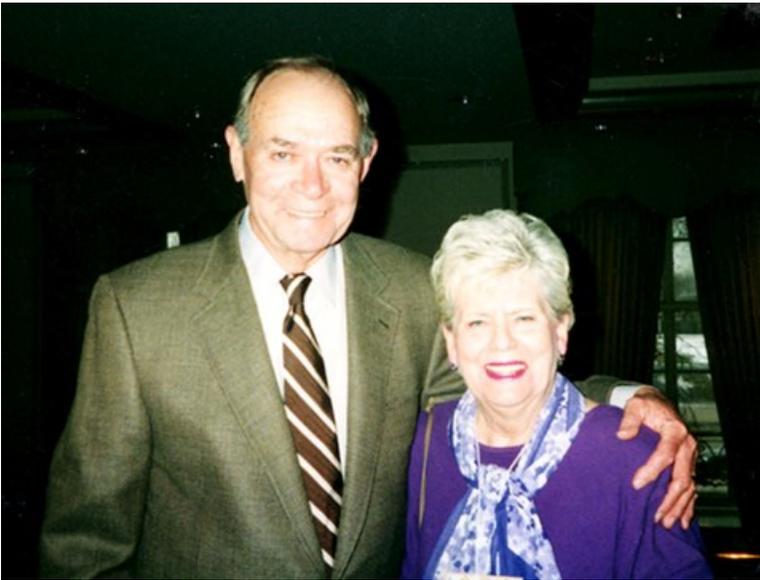
Lotzer never went the Hollywood route like former WGN colleague Bill Friedkin. Chicago sports events and WGN studio productions were good enough him. He was a man of the North Woods, growing up in Ironwood, Mich.



**Colleen and Bill Lotzer enjoy a quiet retirement next to a picturesque pond in Palatine, Ill.**

Lotzer started moving south, attending Michigan State and cutting his director's teeth at WMAL-TV in Washington, D.C., where he helped put on Dwight Eisenhower's 1952 inauguration for the fledgling ABC network. He directed shows starring syndicated political muckraker Drew Pearson, whose fedora-adorned WMAL image narrating a fictional flying-saucer landing in the capital was shown in the 1951 sci-fi classic "The Day The Earth Stood Still."

In 1954, Lotzer landed at WGN when he heard the station was looking for directors. The era of videotape was at least a half decade into the future, so Lotzer continued to learn the craft under the gun of live TV. Low man on the director's totem pole in 1955, he did not get the chance to maestro the first WGN no-hit telecast of the Cubs' Sam "Toothpick" Jones on May 12, 1955. A fella named Leroy Olliger had those honors.



**The late Don Cardwell and wife Sylvia at the Cubs Convention in 2004.**

Meanwhile, Lotzer gained more experience with all manner of production, including directing the first live WGN color telecast, a travelogue show, from studio 7-A in the station building next to Tribune Tower in Nov. 1957. Within 2 1/2 years, he'd pass the trial by fire of a full-fledged historic baseball event at Wrigley Field using bulky color cameras amid creeping late-afternoon shadows. Instant replay was still another 3 1/2 years in the future.

Lotzer and the 12-man broadcast crew, including announcers Jack Brickhouse and Vince Lloyd, were able to pull off the Cardwell broadcast with hardly a hitch. The narrative suggests the odds were against them, given

the thousands who stormed the field like a World Series celebration. But the end result sprouted from some engineering ingenuity and the professionalism of cameramen who had worked Chicago baseball games since the station signed on in April 1948.

### **Color brand-new for Cardwell no-no**

Lotzer and Co. were in the second month of using WGN's first color mobile unit in 1960, a year after WLWT in Cincinnati became the first local station to televise baseball in color. Stored under the stands down the left-field line in Wrigley Field, the unit employed four RCA TK-41 color cameras, each weighing about 300 pounds as the largest regular TV camera ever used. WGN engineers had vetted the TK-41 and a color film chain at the station's Prudential Building transmitter starting a year before Lotzer's pioneering tint telecast.

One TK-41 was then used at the old station headquarters to televise children's shows such as "Garfield Goose" and some other studio-bound programming. The majority of WGN's studio schedule was still in black and white. But the baseball games were the first WGN attempt to use four cameras for a regular color production.

Pre-1969 tapes show the coverage cameras were in different locations than the more accustomed North Side setup of one above third base, one high above the plate and one above first base. The center-field camera shot had already been established.

But in 1960, as a result of the behind-the-plate netting extending to the upper deck that blocked a televised upstairs shot, WGN had two cameras stationed behind third base on the old catwalk near the broadcast booth, hanging from the upper deck. One of those cameras was assigned to follow the ball from the hitter to its destination, a potentially dizzying proposition compared to the quick switches between more strategically-placed cameras today. Another camera was placed at ground level behind home plate.

WGN had a dilemma from the get-go with losing the color camera's images when "Camera 1" one of the pair above third base, tried to follow the ball from light to shadow in the early season.

"We learned when shadows came over and when the ball was hit, Camera 1 following the ball, and it went into the shade, you had to change the 'F-stop,'" Lotzer recalled while sitting in his Palatine, Ill. townhouse, a picture of peace and tranquility compared to the frenetic pace of the remote truck.

"The control to do it was a large disc. You went and turned it and tried to arrive at the right F stop. You'd have a dark picture. It was a problem. One of our engineers, John Breister, came up with the idea of drilling a hole into that big iris changer. He ran A rod thru it, and put on a crank handle. We put in cameras 1 and 2—No. 2 handled close ups. The shader, to adjust it, as he sees the ball hit, gave it a quick turn. In directing the game, when the ball was hit, I would holler 'Breister wheel,' alerting the shader.

"When we first started doing it without the hand crank, the ball would go down third-base line into the shaded area, and the picture would be dark. We had the intercom between Brick-house and the truck. One of his first (off-camera) comments was, 'Are we losing some of our coverage because we've gone to color?'"

With the shading problem fixed, the crew could handle the poor lighting conditions of a second game of a doubleheader, the environment in which the no-hitter was played. The cameramen were able to swivel the monster TK-41s right to left to follow the action via camera heads. They did not immerse themselves in the viewfinders.

"Cameramen operated with one eye on the viewfinder, with the other eye following the ball outside the viewfinder," Lotzer said. "Or they'd back off, looking over the viewfinder to see where the ball was going. Sometimes they stood on a box eight inches high to look over the camera."

### **Low-man on totem pole drew the memorable gig**

On this spring afternoon, Lotzer drew the nitecap directing assignment. The legendary Jack Jacobson, who possessed more seniority and had experience as a cameraman, was able to pick first-game duties with its bigger audience. Jacobson's work also was seen in St. Louis, as KPLR-TV aired the first game of the doubleheader. The second game was seen only in Chicago.

As Cardwell struck out pinch-hitter Stan Musial for the final out of the eighth, Lotzer and crew went to high-alert status. Vince Lloyd did a live 60-second commercial in the booth for Oklahoma gasoline, but soon was on the move downstairs.

“We wished we had replays,” he said. “With that era of baseball coverage, you had to work so hard and be so alert. There was no chance for a replay...We didn’t want to miss anything.”

WGN had a microphone hookup in the dugout for its “Leadoff Man” interviews, then held near home plate for the field-level camera. The cord was long enough to stretch out to the pitcher’s mound. Lotzer alerted Lloyd and assistant director Arne Harris, normally stationed by cameras 1 and 2, to be ready to go to the dugout to be in position to interview Cardwell on the field if the no-no was completed.

Cardwell retired Carl Sawatski and George Crowe, the first two hitters in the ninth, as camera 1 dutifully caught the flight of the fly-ball outs. Camera 2 began showing close-ups, such as they were with the lenses of the day, of Cardwell on the mound.

Lotzer kept the center-field camera on the pitcher-batter shot as Cardwell worked on Joe Cunningham, the final batter. He switched to camera 2 to show Cunningham jawing with plate umpire Tony Venzon on a close 3-and-1 pitch called a strike. Then, on the climactic full-count pitch, Lotzer went from the center-field camera to camera 1 to show Cunningham slicing a low liner in the direction of lumbering Cubs left fielder Moose Moryn.

Brickhouse made one of his most oft-mimicked calls: *“There’s a drive on the line to left...C’mon Moose...He did it! Moryn made a fabulous catch! It’s a no-hitter for Cardwell...”*

Making his “dip-glove” catch as cheers went up from Lotzer and colleagues in the truck, Moryn kept running toward the infield to Cardwell, already swarmed by teammates – and many more. Thousands of the 33,543 in the house, desperate for any positives with the Cubs’ 9-14 record and 13 straight finishes in the second division, swarmed the field. Lloyd, then Harris, reached Cardwell seconds before the mobbed swelled. But soon both were lost in the sea of humanity while attempting along with Andy Frain ushers to move Cardwell toward home plate to get in line with cameras 1 and 2.



**Bill Lotzer with his 1961 Chicago Emmy Award shared with Arne Harris for production excellence across all sports WGN covered.**

“I was shocked at the size of the crowd on the field,” Lotzer said. “On the intercom, I said, ‘All right, Jack, throw it to Vince on the field.’ Arne’s down there, they’re all set. (Camera) 1 is on the wide side, 2 is as close as they can get.”

The diminutive Harris, still in his mid-20s and nearly bald (well before his hairpiece), began pushing back at the mob. “Get out of here, let him get on the air!” he hollered at the happy throng. Once he got Cardwell in position, he frantically signaled upstairs to Brickhouse he was ready.

“Arne was pushing some people and he gets pushed back,” Lotzer said. “He was tougher than nails.”

### **Brickhouse missed cues from Harris, Lotzer**

But Brickhouse kept missing the cues of both Harris and Lotzer. He began filling time with descriptions of the mob spilling out onto the field, while cutting his mic several times to respond to Lotzer.

“Brickhouse says, ‘I don’t see them down there!’” he said. “I said, ‘Jack, they’re down there on the field, throw it to Vinnie!’ We’re getting worried. Jack said, ‘Where are they?’ He’s looking on the field. I holler again.”

Lloyd began speaking. A second later, Brickhouse said, “Let’s give it to Vince.”

“He did have periods of time when things were happening, if they happened really fast, he was a little bit behind,” Lotzer said of Brickhouse. “He was very deliberate when he introduced someone, he’d give it his all, a long introduction.”

While still pushing forward, the crowd seemed to calm itself to listen in to Lloyd talk to Cardwell. After a couple of minutes, Cardwell begged to escape to the old, cramped locker room down the left-field line. As the mob moved with Cardwell up the line, they snapped Lloyd’s mic cord.

Other fans were so overjoyed they “came running to the truck, they were trying to get into the truck, wanted to say hello,” Lotzer said. None were admitted.

The final task of the crew was to fill the Tenth Inning post-game show to the half-hour or hour break. After interviewing National League president Warren Giles and Cubs general manager John Holland, corralled by sports editor Jack Rosenberg, Brickhouse gave copious credit to the WGN crew and its “esprit de corps.” The final image of the telecast was a card announcing “Directed by William Lotzer.”

All soon repaired to the Pink Poodle, the cozy Wrigley Field media lunchroom that served hard liquor after games. Lotzer had a long drive home to Elk Grove Village in those pre-expressway days.

“We drank a beer and waited for the traffic to clear,” he said. “I was a little bit tired, but exhilarated.”

Brickhouse had an apt description of his crew. Lotzer knew they would come through in a pinch for the Cardwell extravaganza.

“It was the prestige of being able to do the games, from cameramen, to audio men, to video shaders, to the technical director who punched the buttons, to the engineering supervisor,” he said.

“What they used to do on a doubleheader, they would have a relief cameraman come out. Cameramen decide it -- the relief man goes to center field, the easiest job. Then the (regular) center-field cameraman would give 15-minute relief to each of the other camera guys on hot days and doubleheaders. But the cameramen always wore long underwear. Wrigley Field could have a 10 - or 15-degree difference in temperature.”

Once in awhile, the crew and the primitive graphics got out of position – at Brickhouse’s behest.

### **Batting fourth, Ernie Banks, thanks to Arne**

“We had every player’s name on an 8-by-10 card,” Lotzer said. “It was a black background with white letters at the lower portion of the card. Camera 2 shot the card on an easel. Arne changed cards as they went along. You had to get off that card as soon as you could to cover action. I always try to put that name in there as fast as I could.

“We had a situation where there was going to be a pitcher change. Before he came out, the cameraman gives the shot, so I have his name: ‘Arne, get his name ready.’ The pitcher walks in, I’d insert the name. I’d tell Jack, the new pitcher is coming in. He was in one of these situations where he’s telling a story. I say, ‘Jack, the pitcher is so-and-so.’ He pushes the intercom system and said, ‘You scooped me, kid. What did you do that for?’

“Arne just stayed on the ramp. Brickhouse would say, ‘Hey, Arne, go to the pressbox.’ Then Arne would leave to question something. Another batter comes up and the wrong card is up. The cameraman will not go and change the card (due to union regulations). I suggested why couldn’t we have (Jack) Rosenberg go down and get that for you. Brickhouse said no.”

One longtime cameraman pulled one over on Brickhouse, though. He rigged up a contraption with a fan, a grate and a ribbon that blew out when the fan was turned on. The sly fellow convinced Brickhouse the device could both heat the booth in the frigid first month of the season and blow in air conditioning during the torrid mid-summer afternoons. “Jack was gullible,” said Lotzer. He turned on the contraption early in the season, but warmth never came. It took a couple of months for Brickhouse to realize he’d been had.

Lotzer alternated with Harris as baseball director on both Cubs and White Sox games through much of the 1960s. He employed WGN’s first replay machine – a 30-second disc that would continually record over if the clip was not selected for playback. He soon was promoted to head of directors, then became director of production for WGN in the mid-1970s.



**Arne Harris in calmer times. Then a WGN assistant director, he helped hold back the crowd and got Don Cardwell for a post-game interview after his no-hitter.**

“At one time we had 120 engineers and 27 stagehands,” Lotzer said.

He oversaw one unusual technical setup at Wrigley Field on Sept. 30, 1988.

He was told to supervise the crew installing a table in the dugout at dawn for a “special audition” for a future broadcaster. “That’s strange,” Lotzer thought. “Arne was incredulous.” As the crew worked, he noticed men with high-powered rifles suddenly appearing on rooftops across the street. Then he put two and two together – President Ronald Reagan spoke at a breakfast on the South Side. He’d be coming to Wrigley Field.

### **Reagan: I want Harry**

Lotzer went to the broadcast booth to inform a curious Harry Caray. “Bill, what the hell is going on?” was Caray’s greeting. When Reagan was informed he’d broadcast from the dugout, he insisted on another perch. “No, I want to be up in the booth with Harry,” he said. Reagan also

asked to warm up under the stands so he could throw the ceremonial first pitch on the fly to home plate. The Cubs hurriedly put tarp on the ramp leading up to the pressbox/broadcast booth level to prevent anyone from taking potshots at Reagan. Dogs sniffed the broadcast booth for explosives while Caray prepared for the broadcast. Former Cubs broadcaster Reagan immensely enjoyed his toe-dip into TV, jokingly saying he indeed needed to audition with unemployment facing him soon as his second term expired.

Lotzer was all business amid a colorful cast of characters. No other station in the country had a roster of baritone, midnight-voiced announcers who generated hilarious anecdotes about themselves.

The imperious Carl “Stormy” Greyson probably led the list of these great voices. Best remembered for anchoring the post-midnight “Nightbeat” news shows where he glared disapprovingly at images of student demonstrators on his monitor, Greyson also did the weather and filled in on children’s shows.

### **Hey, hey, I’m Greyson’s monkey**

One longtime urban legend had Greyson punching a monkey on a kid’s program. Turns out the monkey got the best of Greyson.

“The Greyson story got fabricated,” Lotzer said. “Bob Bell (best known as ‘Bozo’) got sick and was off for awhile. He couldn’t host the ‘Old Odeum Theater’ and the Three Stooges (at 4 p.m.). Greyson worked his announcers shift, 3 p.m. to sign off, so he was available to host. They got a monkey to work with Carl, and they filled time between the Stooges shorts.

“The show took a hiatus. Then it was coming back. Carl is coming on ‘Garfield Goose’ in color in Studio 7-A (downtown). He’s coming on the show with the monkey to promote the return of the Stooges. Carl’s got the monkey (off-camera). Frazier Thomas is doing a live Clark bar commercial, and he’s holding the candy bar.

“The monkey sees the candy bar. The monkey wants the candy bar. Carl’s trying to settle down the monkey. He gets real agitated. The monkey bites Carl. They got the candy bar out of there.”

Greyson survived, but wasn’t done with “wildlife.”

The announcer spotted a huge stuffed lion at the drug store in the Sheraton Hotel, next to the station on Michigan Avenue. The retail cost was \$200, huge for the cusp of the Sixties. Greyson negotiated the price down to \$125, bought the lion and had a brainstorm. He’d put the lion in the back seat of his Cadillac convertible.

Greyson had the lion looking out of the Caddy, which he drove slowly up and down Michigan Avenue, hoping to draw startled looks. Much to his chagrin, nobody stopped and fainted. Greyson brought the lion home, where it was also ignored.

They don’t make announcers like Greyson, or Brickhouse anymore. Both had a part in creating a legendary broadcast operation, operated for countless hours under the deft wand of Bill Lotzer.

*In Part 2: Jack Rosenberg was Jack Brickhouse’s top assistant and helped move his broadcasts along. Now he is just as busy helping honor his late wife, Mayora, by fund-raising for a women’s health center.*