



To help us celebrate Halloween this year, we will be rebroadcasting War of the Worlds. Tune in to KBEC on Thursday, October 30th, at 7pm.

The War of the Worlds is an episode of the American [radio drama](#) anthology series [The Mercury Theatre on the Air](#). It was performed as a [Halloween](#) episode of the series on October 30, 1938, and aired over the [Columbia Broadcasting System](#) radio network. Directed and narrated by actor and future filmmaker [Orson Welles](#), the episode was an adaptation of [H. G. Wells](#)'s novel [The War of the Worlds](#) (1898).

The first two thirds of the 60-minute broadcast were presented as a series of simulated [news bulletins](#), which suggested to many listeners that an actual [alien invasion](#) by [Martians](#) was currently in progress. Compounding the issue was the fact that the

Mercury Theatre on the Air

was a

[sustaining show](#)

(it ran without commercial breaks), adding to the program's realism. Although there were sensationalist accounts in the press about a supposed panic in response to the broadcast, the precise extent of listener response has been debated.

In the days following the adaptation, however, there was widespread outrage and panic by certain listeners, who had believed the events described in the program were real. [\[1 \]](#) The program's

[news-bulletin format](#)

was described as cruelly deceptive by some newspapers and public figures, leading to an outcry against the perpetrators of the broadcast. Despite these complaints--or perhaps in part because of them--the episode secured Welles' fame as a dramatist.