The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street

Screenplay by Rod Serling
Rod Serling (1924-1975)

- Became serious about writing in college
- Loved radio drama
  - 2nd place in a national script contest
- Began his career writing for radio drama.
  - Wrote 200+ television scripts
- Won 6 Emmy Awards
Screenplay/ Teleplay

• Play written for television. Written to be filmed by a camera and not acted on stage.

• Deliver ideas through dialogue and stage directions.
Stage Directions

• Written for actors, directors, and crew members
  – Helps cast & crew understand what they need to know and do
  – Describes characters, setting, costumes, mood & atmosphere
Stage Direction Terms

- **Pan** - turn the camera to follow a person or object
- **Cut** - switch camera from one scene to another
- **Close-up** – camera moves in for a “zoomed in” shot
- **Long shot** - camera films from long distance
Twilight Zone

- Serling was creator of the Twilight Zone television series.
  - Science fiction
  - One of the most popular shows in television history.
  - Writing known for surprising twist endings & thought provoking social commentary
Social Commentary

• Serling wrote about important social issues.

• Television executives thought his topics were too controversial.

• In the 1950s & 1960s scripts that questioned American Society were banned.
**Twilight Zone Settings**

- Science fiction & fantasy genres
  - Had more freedom because his teleplays were not realistic.

- *The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street* aired March 4\(^{\text{th}}\), 1960.
Background

- *Monsters* was written during the Cold War (1946 – 1989),
  - U.S. & Soviet Union were engaged in a nuclear arms race.

- Results
  - Fear
  - Suspicion
  - Anti-communist feelings
HUAC

- **House Un-American Activities Committee**
- Prominent Hollywood actors & directors (and other Americans) were interrogated about involvement with the Communist party.
  - Some were “blacklisted” for alleged involvement with the Communist Party
Fifth Columnists

• Ernest Hemingway
  – *The Fifth Column*
  – coined phrase *fifth columnists* to describe spies working against country from within
  – Based on his experiences around during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)
Setting = 1960s

- No cordless phones
- No cell phones
- "Regular" phones do not use electricity.
- Phone calls often still went through an operator.
- No Ipods or cd players.
- "Portable" radios were battery operated.
- No remote starters for cars.