



Sunday, 9 January 2022

Iris the Bride



"Whaddya want, Mac?" screeched the drug store waitress at Jack Benny.

She was new amongst Jack's secondary cast in the early '50s, but Iris Adrian had been around a lot longer than that.

Adrian left Hollywood where she grew up to become a show girl as the Depression hit. She left Broadway to return to Hollywood, where she had a steady career in movies with titles like *Too Many Blondes* and *Gold Diggers of 1937*. Benny hired her and pretty soon, TV producers had her typecast as a hardboiled waitress.

Her career in the '60s took her far away from the land of leggy, plumed dancers. She was hired to appear in squeaky-clean Walt Disney family comedies like *The Shaggy D.A.* and *The Love Bug*. But she was also a regular in Ted Knight's quickly-cancelled 1978 sitcom where he played the

owner of an escort service. I suspect her lifestyle in New York might have made her aware of such establishments in real life.

Here she is in part two of a feature profile in the *Charlotte News* published May 24, 1975 ([Click here for Part 1](#)). She talks about her time with Jack Benny and how Jack's wife played a role in her career. The photo below accompanied the article.

'I Was Always Getting Wed'

By EMERY WISTER

News Staff Writer

HOLLYWOOD — Iris Adrian wears a diamond ring on her hand and the gem itself looks as big as a silver dollar.

"You can call it a wedding ring if you want," she said. "I was always getting married, I would get lonesome for some guy I missed and I'd marry another."

"My first husband was worth \$60 million or so he told me. He forgot to mention his grandmother had already left her money to someone else."

"Then I married another guy. He expected me to support him so that ended right away. Then there was a third marriage in their somewhere."

"I MARRIED my fourth and present husband, Fido Murphy, 23 years ago. This marriage wasn't any better than the others. We should have got rid of each other right away but we just got used to each other."

"I guess we got on because he was on the road most of the time. He still is. He's a coach to the Chicago Bears professional football team. I don't travel with him. He doesn't want me."

"There was one rich man I liked. He had millions and I really should have gone ahead and married him and to hell with honour."

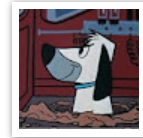
"He finally married a dame with big feet. If there was one thing I couldn't stand it was a man whose feet were smaller than mine and his were."

Iris Adrian was dancing in high school when she was in the ninth grade. That's when she quit.

"I couldn't see much sense to it," she recalled. "What did I have to learn about George Washington's habits for? So I just dropped out of classes altogether."

"BUT WHILE I didn't want to study, I didn't mind working. Once I was sweeping the sidewalk in front of my house and a Hindu man called me a pig. He thought it was disgraceful that a woman should be doing that kind of work."

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"I used to own a lot of real estate. At one time I owned four houses, but sold them. People were beginning to think I was some kind of madam."

It must have been 30 years ago that the late Jack Benny's wife Mary Livingstone called her on the telephone and asked her to go on Benny's stage show. This was after Benny's radio show had gone off the air.

Iris agreed and she and another actress were teamed as the Landreus Sisters, a takeoff on the Andrews Sisters, then, a top singing team.

"I stayed with Benny about 30 years," she said. "I guess he was about the nearest person to God I ever knew. 'He used to say to me 'why can't you think of me as just a boob and not a star?' But I never could. When he died I felt a little alone without him. We went all over the world together, saw every place worth seeing with him."

IRIS ADRIAN started young and, in her own words, tried to stay young. She was about 15 when she got her first job in Fred Waring's show.

"They called the show 'Rah-Rah Days.' I got the lead when Dorothy Lee became ill. That must have been about 1929."

Then came New York and later Hollywood and people like George Raft, Ray Milland, the Marx Bros. She can't remember it all but she does remember a man named Jimmy Durante.

"I could write a book about him. I remember he used to date a girl named Harriet Fish. Once he gave her a fur coat and a day or two later it was stolen. In those days men were accused of giving a girl a coat and then hiring some thug to steal it.

"I LOVED New York in those days. There weren't so many people in the world and it seemed like I knew everybody in town. Walter Winchell, Ed Sullivan and all those fellows would come to the restaurant where I liked to eat every night. Today I don't know anyone. And today's living has done something to men. They stopped cheating on their wives. They found TV is better.

"I don't go to the movies any more. I don't like 'em any more, and besides I'm too busy being interviewed about the good old days.

"Jack Benny gave me a wonderful party when I was 60. I don't mind telling my age. Like I said, I'm 62, and I don't look on my age as some disease I've contracted. If I say I'm 42, people will say 'Who does this old bag think she's kidding?' So then should I say, well, I'm really 48 and if you don't believe it, I'll punch you in the nose.

"Most people don't know this but Jack Benny contracted diabetes when he was just 56. It was the best thing that could have happened to him. It made him keep his figure and he was active right up until the time he died at 80."

TWICE A MONTH, Iris Adrian can be found standing in line at the unemployment office collecting a check for \$180.

"Many of the old stars won't do this, but I'm going to do it. I get \$90 a week but in order for me to collect, I still have to earn about \$3,000 a year. I was offered a television series but I don't want to start that now. I'm not running out of money but out of time. You have to do something with your life when you're young.

"I don't want to go back to New York now. I don't know anybody there. All my friends have either died or gone to the chair.

"I never had any children, not by any of my marriages. I didn't want any. All the time I was married to my millionaire I was afraid I'd get pregnant and be stuck with him and the baby. I had to take care of mother and grandmother and they were enough for me."



Posted by Yowp at 07:08



Labels: Jack Benny

1 comment:

Hans Christian Brando 9 January 2022 at 17:23

Poor Iris. Always a bride, never a bridesmaid. She had guts, though.

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opposite! Think about...

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Wolfman Jack on AFN 1976 - It's howlingly delicious.

More Wolfman Jack

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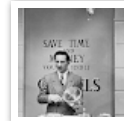


And This Blog Loves Vic Mizzy - *While attempting, with some

difficulty, to process the recent passin...

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Old TV History



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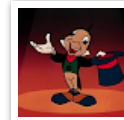


Flintstones Daily Strips, October 1961 - Over the years, the Yowp

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Dr. Grob's Animation Review

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