

Bachelor Father Notes

Episode for class:

Crush On Bentley - Season 4 Episode 5 - with Linda Evans
(Aired October 13, 1960)

Bachelor Father was a situation comedy starring John Forsythe, Noreen Corcoran and Sammee Tong. The series premiered on CBS in September 1957, then moved to NBC for the third season in 1959. The series' fifth and final season aired on ABC. A total of 157 episodes were aired.

The Bachelor Father was a 1931 comedy drama film starring Marion Davies. The plot centers around a stuffy British nobleman whose three grown children suddenly arrive at his estate and decide to move in with him.

Bachelor Mother is a 1939 film starring Ginger Rogers as an unemployed woman who discovers an abandoned baby on the steps of an orphanage. She accepts an offer to take responsibility for the child in return for a job. In 1956, this film was remade as *A Bundle Of Joy* with Debbie Reynolds and Eddie Fisher.

Father Is A Bachelor is a 1950 motion picture starring William Holden who plays a drifter arriving in a small town and discovers a cabin in the forest where five kids are living on their own. Holden's character moves in with the kids and poses as their uncle to take care of them while romancing the teacher. However, in order to keep the children, he must get married.

Bachelor Father television pilot was an episode of *General Electric Theater* titled "A New Girl In His Life" which aired on May 26, 1957. It starred the same cast that went on to do the series.

According to John Forsythe, the Bentley Gregg character was based on two well-known Beverly Hills bachelors at the time. He combined their names and used them for the characters in the program.

Forsythe also said that the producers had originally decided on another young actress named Helen Green to play his niece Kelly. After viewing the auditions, Forsythe's friend, Ronald Reagan, was sitting in the back of the theater and told them they were making a mistake and were hiring the wrong girl. He told them they needed "someone who looks like a niece, not Hollywood's idea of a niece". At first, they told Reagan that the idea was ridiculous. So after, they came to the realization that he had a point, that Noreen Corcoran "was everybody's daughter". So they looked at the film again and gave Noreen Corcoran the part.

In the opening credits, Bentley is seen picking up his niece Kelly, outside a school. The large building behind was actually part of the Beverly Hills High School, the alma mater of many Hollywood celebrities, including Marlo Thomas, Richard Dreyfuss and Betty White.

John Forsythe (Bentley Gregg) - was born Jacob Lincoln Freund in Penns Grove, New Jersey. In 1936, at the age of 18, he took a job as the public address announcer for Brooklyn Dodgers games at Ebbets Field. He did some work in radio soap operas and on Broadway before signing a movie contract with Warner Bros.

In 1947, Forsythe joined the initial class of the Actors Studio, where he met Marlon Brando, Julie Harris and many others. During this time he appeared on Broadway in *Mister Roberts* and *The Teahouse Of The August Moon*. In 1955, Alfred Hitchcock cast him in the movie *The Trouble With Harry* with Shirley MacLaine in her first movie appearance.

After his days on *Bachelor Father*, Forsythe returned to acting in movies including *Kitten With A Whip* in 1964, *Madame X* in 1966 and *In Cold Blood* in 1967.

He starred two other television programs in the 1960's: *The John Forsythe Show* from 1965 to 1966 and *To Rome With Love* from 1969 to 1971. In 1976, he was cast in the role of mysterious unseen millionaire private investigator Charles Townsend in *Charlie's Angels* from 1976 to 1981.

In 1981, Forsythe was selected as a last-minute replacement for George Peppard in the role of Blake Carrington in *Dynasty*. The series reunited Forsythe with one-time *Bachelor Father* guest star Linda Evans, who would play Blake's wife, Krystle.

Forsythe was nominated for Emmy Awards three times between 1982 and 1984 for "Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series" but did not win.

Forsythe reprised his role as the voice of Charlie for the film *Charlie's Angels* in 2000 and its sequel *Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle* which was his film role in 2003. John Forsythe was awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk Of Fame located at 6549 Hollywood Blvd. for his work in television on February 8, 1960.

Noreen Corcoran (Kelly Gregg) - was born in Quincy, Massachusetts, the third of eight children. Her siblings, William Henry "Bill Jr.," Donna, Kerry, Hugh, Kevin, Brian and Kelly all acted as children.

Corcoran began acting in the film *Apache Drums* playing the role of the child in 1951. In the following years during the 1950's and 1960's, she had parts in *Dr. Kildare*, *Hans Christian Andersen*, *Channing*, *Gidget Goes to Rome*, *Cavalcade of America*, *Mr. Novak* and *So This Is Love*. Her final acting appearance was in an episode of *The Big Valley* in 1965. She then retired to pursue a career in dance and theatre at the Lewitsky Dance Studio.

Her younger brother, Kevin Corcoran, played the character "Moochie" in several Disney television programs in the 1950's and early 1960's.

Samme Tong (Peter Tong) - was born in San Francisco and lived in Palo Alto before moving with his family to Honolulu. He graduated from Stanford University.

Early on, Tong tried breaking into acting on the stage during the Depression with an act called the Three Celestials that was booked into the Los Angeles Orpheum theater.

He changed the spelling of his name to "Samme" because he said "It looked better in print."

After signing with Columbia Pictures in 1934, he made his film debut in a bit part in the comedy film *The Captain Hates The Sea*.

Tong made his television debut in 1953 in an episode of *You Are There*. The following year, he appeared in a recurring role as "George, the cook" in *The Mickey Mouse Club* series *The Adventures Of Spin and Marty*. In 1955, he reprised his role in the feature length film *Spin and Marty: The Movie*. He also had a role in the sequel series *The Further Adventures Of Spin and Marty*.

After the cancellation of *Bachelor Father* in 1962, Tong was cast in the sitcom *Mickey* starring Mickey Rooney. Tong's final screen appearance was in the film *Fluffy*, released posthumously in June of 1965, starring Tony Randall and Shirley Jones.

Sadly, Tong was a heavy gambler and committed suicide in 1964 over the money he owed.

Linda Evans (Liz McGavin) - was born Linda Evenstad in Hartford, Connecticut. When Evans was six months old, the family moved from Hartford to North Hollywood, California. She attended Hollywood High School.

After guest roles in *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* between 1960 and 1962, plus appearances on television series such as *The Lieutenant* and *Wagon Train*, Evans gained her first regular role in 1965 on *The Big Valley*. She played Audra Barkley, the daughter of Victoria Barkley (Barbara Stanwyck).

In the 1970's, Evans appeared on television shows such as *The Rockford Files*, *Mannix*, *Harry O*, *Banacek*, *McCloud* and *McMillan & Wife*. In 1981, Evans was cast as Krystle Carrington in *Dynasty*, the role for which she is best remembered. She was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama Series in 1983. After leaving *Dynasty*, she semiretired from acting and made only occasional television appearances.

For her contribution to the television industry, Linda has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6834 Hollywood Blvd.

Frank Wilcox (Ben McGavin) - was born Frank Reppy Wilcox in DeSoto, Missouri. He was raised in Atchison, Kansas.

Wilcox became a contract player for Warner Bros., beginning with the 1939 short film *The Monroe Doctrine*. Another film role for Wilcox was as the circus doctor in *The Greatest Show On Earth* starring Charlton Heston in 1952.

In the film *Dark Passage* from 1947, the photo shown in the film of Humphrey Bogart's character (Vincent Parry) before his face goes under plastic surgery is Frank Wilcox.

In television, Wilcox was making guest numerous appearances on programs such as *Racket Squad*, *The Lone Ranger*, *The Gale Storm Show*, *The People's Choice*, *Sugarfoot*, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *I Love Lucy*, *Private Secretary*, *The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show*, *Pete and Gladys*, *Leave It to Beaver*, *The Donna Reed Show*, *The Real McCoys* and *Perry Mason*.

His hometown of De Soto, Missouri hosts the Frank Wilcox Film Festival in his memory every March during the weekend closest to his birthday.

Angela Greene (Phyllis McGavin) - was born in Dublin, Ireland as Angela Catherine Williams. When she was six years old, she was adopted by her maternal uncle, Eddie Greene of Flushing, Queens, New York.

Greene was a model for the John Robert Powers agency before becoming an actress. She once turned down a Paramount contract because she objected to being called a "starlet", claiming "Girls given that label get stuck with bit parts, pin ups and wolves".

Some of her film and television credits include *Shotgun*, *The Lady Wants Mink*, *Hollywood Canteen*, *The Time, The Place and The Girl*, *Stallion Road*, *At War With The Army*, *A Perilous Journey*, *The Cosmic Man*, *Futureworld*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*, *Tales of Wells Fargo* and *Perry Mason*.

Greene later took up painting seriously and had several exhibitions of her work. One of her canvases was reportedly used in the animated feature *Plague Dogs* in 1982.

Bernadette Withers (Ginger) - had guest starring roles in television series such as *Leave It To Beaver*, *Wagon Train*, *Buffalo Bill, Jr.*, *Father Knows Best*, *My Three Sons* and *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*.

From 1957 to 1962 Withers had the recurring role of Ginger, Kelly's best friend, in *Bachelor Father*. During the program's five seasons Ginger had two different sets of parents and three last names. They were Farrel, Loomis and Mitchell. During the 1964 television season she had the recurring role of Janis on *Karen* with Debbie Watson.

Withers became a partner in a software company after her acting career came to an end.

Some sources claim that actress Jane Withers was her aunt, but since Jane Withers had no siblings, she did not have any nieces. Jane Withers was the only child of Walter Edward Withers and Lavinia Ruth (née Elble) Withers.

REFERENCES

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The Boston Globe (May 1942)

X Child Stars - Where Are They Now? **by Kathy Carver and Fred Ascher**

The Patty Duke Show

The Patty Duke Show was on for 3 seasons beginning on September 18, 1963 through April 27, 1966 with 104 episodes.

Episode for class: Season 2 Episode 17
Every Girl Should Be Married - Aired January 6, 1965

ABC became interested in developing a series starring Patty Duke after she won the Academy Award for her performance in *The Miracle Worker*. Writer **Sidney Sheldon** came up with the concept of identical paternal cousins with contrasting personalities. According to Duke, he successfully captured her personality in the two characters.

While in development, Cathy was going to be from Scotland. However, Duke's Scottish accent was too good to the point that no one could understand her.

The pilot episode was filmed on New Year's Day in 1963. The many differences in the pilot included the story being set in San Francisco and not New York. Patty's father and brother were played by **Mark Miller** and **Charles Herbert** portraying Martin and Ross Lane.

With Patty Duke being 16 years old, she fell under California's strict child labor laws which limited the number of hours that child actors could work. Since New York did not have such strict laws at that time, the network relocated production of the series to **Chelsea Studios** and moved the series location to Brooklyn Heights.

Mark Miller declined to stay with the series. In his place, William Schallert was hired and reunited him with Jean Byron, his co-star from *The Many Loves Of Dobie Gillis*.

The series was cancelled as a result of disagreements between ABC and United Artists Television over filming the series in color. ABC wanted all of its shows for the upcoming 1966–1967 season to be in color, while UATV felt that filming *The Patty Duke Show* in color would be too costly.

The Patty Duke Show theme song was performed by a vocal group called **The Skip-Jacks**, featuring actress Stella Stevens.

On April 27, 1999, CBS aired the television film *The Patty Duke Show: Still Rockin' In Brooklyn Heights*. The movie reunited Patty Duke with William Schallert, Jean Byron, Paul O'Keefe and Eddie Applegate.

Patty Duke (Patty and Cathy Lane) - was born Anna Marie Duke. She spent her early life in the Elmhurst neighborhood of Queens with her brother Raymond and her sister Carol. When she was eight years old, her care was turned over to talent managers John and Ethel Ross, whose methods of managing Duke's career were often unscrupulous and exploitative. The Rosses made Duke change her name. "Anna Marie is dead," they said. "You're Patty now." They had hoped that Patty Duke would duplicate the success of child star Patty McCormack.

When she was 15 years old, Duke portrayed Helen Keller in the film *The Miracle Worker*, a role she had originated on Broadway. She won an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress for her performance in that film.

After *The Patty Duke Show* ended she co-starred in feature films such as *The Valley Of The Dolls*, *Me, Natalie*, *By Design* and *Prelude To A Kiss*.

In television, Duke could be seen in movies for television such as *My Sweet Charlie*, *Captains and The Kings*, *The Miracle Worker*, this time playing Anne Sullivan to Melissa Gilbert's Helen Keller, *The Women's Room* and *George Washington*. In the 1980's, she could be seen in television series *It Takes Two*, *Soap* and *Benson*.

In 1985, Duke became the second woman to be elected president of the Screen Actors Guild until 1988.

In 2015, Patty Duke made her final television appearance, guest-starring on *Liv and Maddie* as Grandma Janice and Great-aunt Hilary, a pair of identical twins.

She was awarded a Star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 7000 Hollywood Boulevard in Hollywood, California on August 17, 2004.

William Schallert (Martin Lane) - He began appearing on television series in the 1950's. Some of his nearly 400 credits include Dick Powell's *Zane Grey Theatre*, *The Rifleman*, *Gunsmoke*, *Death Valley Days*, *The Andy Griffith Show*, *Perry Mason*, *The Rat Patrol* and *The Partridge Family*.

Schallert also appeared in several motion pictures such as *The Man from Planet X*, *The Tarnished Angels*, *Blue Denim*, *Pillow Talk*, *In The Heat Of The Night*, *Speedway*, *The Jerk*, *Teachers*, and *Innerspace*.

In addition to his onscreen performances, William Schallert did voice-over work for several television and radio commercials. His final television appearance was an uncredited role on *2 Broke Girls* when he was 91 years old.

In 2004, TV Guide recognized Schallert's portrayal of Martin Lane on *The Patty Duke Show* as No. 39 on its list of 50 Greatest TV Dads.

Jean Byron (Natalie Lane) - was born Imogene Audette Burkhart in Paducah, Kentucky.

Byron sang on Louisville radio stations WGRC and WHAS. In 1939, she was one of two winners of the regional Gateway to Hollywood competition in Louisville, which sent her to Hollywood to compete at the program's next level. Byron also sang with Tommy Dorsey's orchestra.

Byron's first film was *Voodoo Tiger* in 1952. During the 1950's, she was in several B-movies, including *The Magnetic Monster*, *Serpent Of The Nile* and guest roles on television's *The Millionaire*, *The Pepsi-Cola Playhouse*, *Science Fiction Theatre*, *Fury*, *Bourbon Street Beat* and *The Cheyenne Show*. Byron also served as spokeswoman for Revlon and Lux products on *The Rosemary Clooney Show*.

After her days on *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis* and *The Patty Duke Show*, she continued appearing in guest roles on *Batman*, *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, *Maude*, *Hotel* and as a regular on *Pat Paulsen's Half a Comedy Hour*.

Paul O'Keefe (Ross Lane) - was born in Boston, Massachusetts. He appeared on television with Sid Caesar, Sarah Vaughan and Bob Hope. By the age of 7, he was playing Winthrop Paroo in the 1959 musical *The Music Man* on Broadway. He was playing the title role in the musical *Oliver* on Broadway when he was hired for *The Patty Duke Show*.

In 1964, he co-starred in an unsold pilot for proposed ABC television comedy series called *Inside Danny Baker*. O'Keefe also guest starred on *Car 54 Where Are You?*, *My Three Sons* and *Naked City*.

Eddie Applegate (Richard Harrison) - was born in Wyncote, Pennsylvania. He made his film debut in *A Ticklish Affair* in 1963. In addition to *The Patty Duke Show*, he was on *The Lucy Show*, *Nancy*, *Daktari* and *Gunsmoke* in guest roles. He also played Emma Stone's grandfather in the 2010 movie *Easy A*.

As Patty Lane's high school boyfriend, Richard, Applegate was actually 11 years older than Patty in real life. He was 28 years old when the show began.

After his television days ended, became involved with painting. It was a hobby that he had taken up in order to relax when he was working regularly on television shows. He was an active member of the San Fernando Valley Art Club serving as Vice-President.

Frank Sinatra, Jr. (David Stone) - Professionally known as Frank Sinatra Jr., he was born Francis Wayne Sinatra in Jersey City, New Jersey. Sinatra Jr. followed his father into music as a teenager, eventually working for the senior Sinatra as his musical director and conductor.

Sinatra made headlines when was kidnapped at the age of 19 on December 8, 1963, at Harrah's Lake Tahoe. He was released two days later after his father paid the \$240,000 ransom demanded by the kidnapers. At the time of the kidnapping, Frank Sr. and the Rat Pack were filming *Robin and the 7 Hoods*.

He had appeared as a guest on several television shows including *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* with his sister Nancy. He

also hosted a 10-week summer replacement series for *The Dean Martin Show*.

Sinatra appeared in the Sammy Davis Jr. drama titled *A Man Called Adam* in 1966. He also played a deputy district attorney on *Adam-12* and provided his own voice for episodes of *Family Guy*.

During the 1997–1998 television season, he was offered the role of Vic Fontaine on *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. Not being a fan of the show, he turned it down.

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