

## AN INTERRUPTED DIVORCE

Year of release: 1917 • Scenario by Agnes Gavin

*An Interrupted Divorce* is a three-reel comedy film starring well-known vaudeville comedian Fred Bluett and emerging dramatic actress Vera Remeë. It was directed by John Gavin. The scenario, written by Agnes Gavin, concerns a wife with a torturing toothache and an apparently faithless husband. Bluett played the husband, with Remeë given the role of his wife. Variety entertainer Gwen Lewis also had a prominent role. Although production had been planned as early mid-1916, filming did not begin until May the following year, reportedly due to a lack of film stock in the country.<sup>1</sup> Lewis had initially been cast as the wife.<sup>2</sup> With Bluett in England at the time (he did not return home until December 1916), the husband was presumably to be played by another (as yet unidentified) comedian. *An Interrupted Divorce* was eventually given its premiere in early-August 1917.

FRED BLUETT goes over to the "Movies."  
Starred in Comedy, Piccadilly, To-day.

WERE you in the picture? "Interrupted Divorce,"  
Featuring Fred Bluett. Scenes laid in Sydney.  
Showing Piccadilly To-day.

FAMILIAR Scenes in Sydney depicted in Fred  
Bluett Comedy Film, Piccadilly, Pitt-st., To-day.

*Sun* (Sydney) 1 Aug. 1917, 8.

In a review of the film's premiere season at Sydney's Piccadilly Theatre, a *Sun* newspaper critic wrote:

The situations are good, and the incident of the arrival home of the inebriated hubby and his consequent warm welcome, will no doubt cause some married men to have a distinct laugh at themselves. Quiet, but decidedly funny is Mr. Bluett in the court scene. Other parts of the picture reflect scenes in Sydney streets. The picture has a surprise finish, and as a comedy is quite satisfactory, despite detractors in the past, who have said Australia cannot produce comedy films.<sup>3</sup>



The critic writing for the *Arrow* (Sydney) writes of Gwen Lewis, "the clever monologist of the [Royal Strollers](#)," has "proved her versatility by giving an excellent portrayal of the character entrusted to her." The critic goes on to suggest that "everything points to Miss Lewis making as big a success on the screen as on the speaking stage"<sup>4</sup>

Reports concerning the film were published in the American *Motography* magazine in 1916, courtesy of [C. Post Mason](#), who was then handling publicity and exhibition for John Gavin in New York (primarily for *The Martyrdom of Nurse Cavell*). Mason's piece notes that the general manager of Sydney's Palladium Theatre, T.H. Eslick, gave permission for his ballet to work in the film. "A lot of good work is put in by the Palladium Ballet, headed by Vera Murray and Rae Anderson, both well-known in Australian vaudeville," he writes. One of the scenes involved motor car loads of the "Pally" girls being driven out to the studios in their cabaret costumes.<sup>5</sup> The *Arrow* (Sydney) notes in its 19 August

Vera Remeë  
*Daily Mail* (Brisbane) 18 Nov. 1916, 12.

<sup>1</sup> Most secondary sources, including *Wikipedia* and the *Internet Movie Database* record the film's release as being 6 August 1916 (sighted 31/03/2017) However, reports published in the *Arrow* (19 Aug. 1916, 3) and *Sunday Times* (20 Aug. 1916, 28) indicate that production shooting was still in progress at that time. The *Sun*'s "Notes from the Picture Shows" (5 Aug. 1917) includes a section titled "This Week's First-Release Pictures." *An Interrupted Divorce* is one the films listed. Advertisements for the film begin appearing in Sydney newspapers from 1 August 1917.

<sup>2</sup> "Lyric Programme." *Sunday Times* (Sydney) 20 Aug. 1916, 28.

<sup>3</sup> "A Local Comedy." *Sun* (Sydney) 5 Aug. 1917, 18.

<sup>4</sup> "At Sydney Shows." *Arrow* (Sydney) 19 Aug. 1916, 3. Please note: The critic mistakenly refers to Gwen Lewis, as having been "entrusted with the leading role."

<sup>5</sup> *Motography* July-Sept. 1916, 798. (Access via *Lantern* - sighted 31/03/2017)

1916 edition that this scene caused a sensation outside the Palladium in William Street as the damsels dressed in full Maori costume waited for the motor cars to arrive. The puzzlement expressed by the huge number of people who stopped to watch the proceedings was eventually answered when the director informed them that the ladies were on their way to his studios in Pitt Street to appear in his latest film.<sup>6</sup>

In September 1916 Melbourne's *Graphic of Australia* reported that *An Interrupted Divorce* had mostly been shown in the Sydney suburbs to that date.<sup>7</sup> Few details relating to its exhibition outside Sydney are currently known, including any seasons in Melbourne. An advertisement placed in the *Leader* newspaper, Orange, New South Wales, records that the film opened at the town's Star Theatre on 20 May 1918 (5).

No surviving prints of the *An Interrupted Divorce* are known to exist.

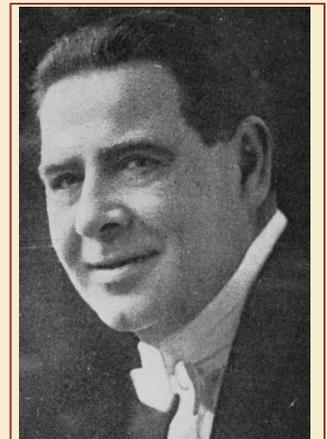
- 1917:** Piccadilly, Sydney; 1 Aug. - [premiere]  
- Approx 30-35 mins; black and white; silent (3 reels / 3,000 ft)  
- **Dir.** J. F. Gavin; **Prod.** Famous Films Company; **Dir of Ph.** Alf Moulton.  
- **Cast** incl. Fred Bluett, Vera Remeë, Harry McDonna (aka Tom Cosgrove), Gwen Lewis, The Revue Girls (featuring Vera Murray and Rae Anderson), and the Palladium Ballet.

### SEE ALSO

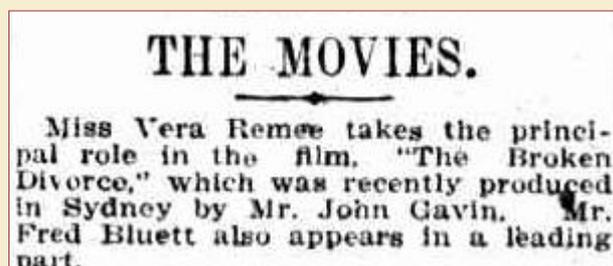
[John Gavin](#) • [Fred Bluett](#)

### FURTHER REFERENCE

Pike, Andrew, and Ross Cooper. *Australian Film 1900-1977*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1998, 60.



**Fred Bluett**  
State Library of Queensland



*Daily Standard* (Brisbane) 14 July 1917, 9.

<sup>6</sup> "At Sydney Shows." *Arrow* (Sydney) 19 Aug. 1916, 3.

<sup>7</sup> "Star Student." "Stage Lights." *Graphic of Australia* (Melbourne) 14 Sept. 1917, 32.