

THE BICKERSONS
"John's Operation"

ANNOUNCER: Now here are Don Ameche and Frances Langford as John and Blanche Bickerson, in "John's Operation." After seven years of cycloid insomnia, or slugger's disease, John Bickerson had finally consented to allow Dr. Hershey to relieve his condition. In room 113 at the General Hospital, Mrs. Bickerson watches anxiously as a surgical nurse ministers to poor John, who is suffering an attack the night before the operation. Listen.

JOHN: (FAMOUS JOHN BICKERSON SNORE)

BLANCHE: It's like being married to a steam shovel, Nurse.

JOHN: (SNORING)

NURSE: Cough's normal. Enjoy yourself, dear.

JOHN: (SNORING)

NURSE: Dr. Hershey's waiting for you in the corridor, Mrs. Bickerson.

BLANCHE: Oh, hello, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Is he resting? I gave him a sedative that'll quiet him down.

BLANCHE: Well, he isn't very quiet.

DOCTOR: Oh. Well, actually I could of done the operation in my office it's so trivial. He won't be in surgery over fifteen minutes, and there's absolutely no danger whatever.

BLANCHE: Will it hurt him?

DOCTOR: Not the slightest. All we do is take a stitch in his pallet and shorten his uvula.

BLANCHE: I hate to bring this up now, Dr. Hershey, but how much will it cost?

DOCTOR: The fee will be fifty dollars with the anesthetic.

BLANCHE: How much is it without the anesthetic?

DOCTOR: Oh, I should say about forty dollars. BLANCHE: Would there be any discomfort if he didn't have an anesthetic?

DOCTOR: Not for me there wouldn't. But I wouldn't advise the operation with out it.

BLANCHE: And you're sure he'll be cured when you're through?

DOCTOR: Oh, practically certain. Well, it's almost midnight now. I'll do his case first about seven. He just needs a good night's rest.

BLANCHE: Well, I'll just stay a little longer.

DOCTOR: Good night. Call the floor nurse if you need anything.

BLANCHE: Oh, I will. I hope that pill's quieted him down.

JOHN: (SNORING)

BLANCHE: I'm sure that isn't doing him any good.

JOHN: (SNORING)

BLANCHE: John! John! Wake up!

JOHN: What's the matter, Blanche? What's the matter, huh? I put the cat out, I locked the windows, I left a note for the milkman, and I hung up . . .

BLANCHE: John! We're in the hospital.

JOHN: What for? Is somebody sick?

BLANCHE: No, you're going to have an operation. Dr. Hershey's going to shorten your uvula in the morning.

JOHN: Well, then what did you wake me up now for?

BLANCHE: Well, you were snoring, and I was afraid you'd wear it off before he got a chance to operate. You've been snoring steadily for three hours. Don't you suppose I want to sleep, too?

JOHN: You're not sleeping here are you?

BLANCHE: Yes, I am. It costs another five dollars to put another cart in the room, and I intend to use it. Where's my nightgown?

JOHN: I can't get one night's sleep. Even in the hospital.

BLANCHE: I don't understand why you have to have an operation to cure your snoring.

JOHN: I didn't want it. You've been working on me for seven years to do it.

BLANCHE: I'm beginning to think it was a waste of money. I could have used that forty dollars. I'm still walking around in a short dress.

JOHN: What are you beeping about, tomorrow I'll be walking around with a short uvula.

BLANCHE: Don't be so crabby.

JOHN: I'm not crabby, I'm sleepy. Why don't you stop fiddling with that mirror, and put out the lights?

BLANCHE: I have to get undressed, don't I?

JOHN: Well, take your dress off. Why are you plucking your eyebrows at

this time of night?

BLANCHE: I'm not plucking my eyebrows, I'm taking off my false eyelashes.

KOHN: False eyelashes? I didn't know you had bald eyelids.

BLANCHE: My eyelids are not bald, it's just that my lashes are short, and they don't bring out my eyes. Lot's of women use false eyelashes.

JOHN: Well, throw them away. You don't need anything to bring out your eyes.

BLANCHE: Really?

JOHN: Really. I'm satisfied with the way they bulge now.

BLANCHE: What kind of a remark is that?

JOHN: Oh, hurry up, Blanche, I'm groggy. Blanche, what on earth are you taking out of your hair?

BLANCHE: It's a rat.

JOHN: A what?

BLANCHE: A roll of false hair. I have to wear it for the new hairstyles. My own hair is too thin with a pompadour. Darn it, I can't get out of this dress.

JOHN: Blanche! What are those things?

BLANCHE: Don't be so silly. Haven't you ever seen shoulder pads before.

JOHN: Oh, I've never heard of such a thing. Your eyelashes are on the dresser, your hair is in the drawer, and your shoulders are on the chairs.

BLANCHE: What about it?

JOHN: That's you all over, Blanche. No one can think of more ways to spend money. Are you ready for bed now?

BLANCHE: Yes, dear, I'm ready for bed. Shall I crank yours up a little?

JOHN: No. Put out the lights.

BLANCHE: I wanted to glance at the paper first. You go to sleep.

JOHN: I can't sleep with the lights on, I left my sleep shade at home.

BLANCHE: Well, I won't be a minute.

JOHN: Oh, no one would believe this. In six hours they're going to carve me to pieces, I'm suppose to rest, and here I'm . . .

BLANCHE: Shh! I can't concentrate with you mumbling.

JOHN: Eh, mumbling, mumbling, mumbling.

BLANCHE: There's certainly a lot of activity in Washington. What's all this tax reduction talk?

JOHN: Talk.

BLANCHE: Listen to what's . . .

JOHN: Blanche, I read the paper, every word of it. Read it to yourself.

BLANCHE: Don't be so disagreeable. Dr. Hershey told me to keep you occupied so you wouldn't think about the operation.

JOHN: All I'm thinking about is sleep.

BLANCHE: That's a good boy, you mustn't get nervous.

JOHN: No.

BLANCHE: I see the stock market is going up.

JOHN: That's fine.

BLANCHE: We have some stock haven't we? Didn't you get some stock last year?

JOHN: Ten shares. Kentucky Salt Peter Mines. Preferred stock.

BLANCHE: My brother got you in on the ground floor, didn't he? Where is it now?

JOHN: In the ground.

BLANCHE: I can't even find it listed on the stock page.

JOHN: Look in the help wanted column.

BLANCHE: Are you getting relaxed dear?

JOHN: No! Now I'm starting to get nervous.

BLANCHE: I'm worried about you John. If anything happened to you on the operating table, it would all be my fault. So, you know what I think.

JOHN: We'll uh, sneak out, huh.

BLANCHE: No. I think you should make out a will.

JOHN: Make out a will. I thought you were worried about me?

BLANCHE: Well, you don't want to leave me at the mercies of all those grasping relatives of yours, do you? The minute you drop dead they'll . . .

JOHN: Don't talk like that! Can't you say pass on, or something like

that.

BLANCHE: Well, you always say drop dead.

JOHN: That's only when I'm talking to your brother. You could be a little more delicate when you're discussing wills.

BLANCHE: Why?

JOHN: Because you make it sound like I'm going to go any minute.

BLANCHE: Well, they don't give you two weeks notice you know. Every man should make out a will.

JOHN: Okay, I'll make it out tomorrow.

BLANCHE: You say it, but you won't do it. Get up and do it now.

JOHN: What?

BLANCHE: Go on, get up and make out a will.

JOHN: Why, you're out of your mind. In the first place a will isn't legal unless you have two witnesses, and in second place I haven't got anything to leave in the first place. Nobody is going to take anything, and I don't need a will.

BLANCHE: You're the most stubborn man that ever lived, John.

JOHN: Why? Why am I stubborn?

BLANCHE: It's the hardest thing in the world to make you admit I'm right, when you know I'm wrong.

JOHN: There's a woman's logic for you. Suppose I do make out a will, and nobody can touch anything besides you. Okay, so now you know you've got all my worldly goods. First thing you know, you'll get over your grief, and marry a guy without a dollar to his name, like that broken down snore specialist Dr. Hershey.

BLANCHE: Oh, I'm not going to marry anybody.

JOHN: He'll give up his practice, and take you for every penny. My hard earned money. He'll drive around my brand new car, drink my bourbon, loaf around like the French, never do a days work. Why don't you make the bum get a job, Blanche?

BLANCHE: Enough screaming like that. Hush up and go to sleep.

JOHN: Shush. Go to sleep she tells me. I'm a nervous wreck. She practically talks me into a funeral. Marries a doctor behind my back. Now she tells me to go to sleep. (FALLING ASLEEP) I'll never sleep, another wink as long as I. (SNORING)

BLANCHE: John, the telephone! The telephone, answer it!

JOHN: No. Who the dickens is calling?

F/X: END TABLE CRASHING

JOHN: Who moved the phone, Blanche?

BLANCHE: What'dja get up for? It's right on the night table by your bed.

JOHN: Uh, I thought I wasÉ. uh, hello.

NURSE #2: Mrs. Reenes? This is the maternity nurse. You can get ready now. I'm bringing your baby in.

JOHN: What? Blanche, how long have I been here?

NURSE #2: Isn't his 413?

JOHN: I don't know what this is, but I'm not feeding any babies. Oh, a way to run a hospital.

BLANCHE: It's just a mistake, John.

JOHN: Oh, I shouldn't have fallen for this operation deal. I could be so comfortable at home in my own bed. One of us should have stayed there.

BLANCHE: What for?

JOHN: How do you know a prowler won't break in? I left a whole bottle of bourbon on the dresser.

BLANCHE: Nobody will break in. The turkey would gobble and scare him away.

JOHN: The turkey would gobble, I can just seeÉturkey? What turkey?

BLANCHE: Well. I was going to surprise you. I won a turkey in a raffle, John.

JOHN: You've got a live turkey running around the house?

BLANCHE: He isn't running around. I've got him tied on your bed.

JOHN: On my bed! What'dja do that for? I'll have the whole thing full of feathers. What'll we do with a live turkey?

BLANCHE: Well. it's Thanksgiving tomorrow. John. And I thought you'd murder him for dinner.

JOHN: I'm not going to murder any turkeys. But if he lays a beak on my bourbon, I'll chop his head off. Blanche. you're the most impossible woman that ever lived.

BLANCHE: Oh. I'm sorry. John. I guess everything I do is wrong. I'll go home and put the turkey out.

JOHN: Now. wait a minute, wait a minute. Never mind. I didn't mean to

holler. Let's go to sleep, so I can feel good for the operation.

BLANCHE: I don't think I want to you have it.

JOHN: It's the least I can do for you. Kept you awake all these years with my snoring, and when Dr. Hershey gets through with me, I'll be as quiet as a mouse.

BLANCHE: Well, if you stop snoring I'll never wake you up, will I?

JOHN: No.

BLANCHE: And if I don't wake you up, we won't fight, will we?

JOHN: That's right.

BLANCHE: Well, that settles it. I'm not going to let him operate John.

JOHN: Why not?

BLANCHE: It's the only chance I get to talk to you. Come on home.

JOHN: Oh, I give up.

(MUSIC)