

# 30th Anniversary Special Interview

**Irina Irvine**

Actor

(Jamie)

*This is the transcript of a telephone interview with Allison*

**Allison:** What influenced you to become a wildlife specialist for the National Park service?

*Irina: I'm actually more of a restoration ecologist, ocean resources person. After I finished high school I always wanted to be a biologist and I didn't pursue that tack. I did the kind of easy out, which sounds kind of strange, but to do what I already knew how to do, which was be a performing arts person. And so I kinda did that and I never, even though that was a big part of my life, I always really wanted to be a biologist. So, I went back to school as an adult, and got my degrees and then two internships with the National Parks Service. I was able to finish school and work for them at the same time. And then I was appointed as a permanent person at Santa Monica Mountains national operation area. I just recently took a position at the Pacific West regional office Pacific and coastal resources program manager. I love working with the NPS. It's a privilege to work with the people I have the honour working with. Dedicated fabulous people who care about the planet and do good things every day, you know – mentor youth and reach out to important sectors of the community, and protect all the resources that we protect, for now and future generations. I don't think it gets really better than that.*

**Allison:** That's fantastic. I wanted to let you know that the fans are very proud of all the work you've done i. and everything you've accomplished.

*Irina: Well that's very sweet. Thank you.*

**Allison:** What was your first impressions of the series when you worked on it?

*Irina: Again, I think I've just been really blessed in my life that I've gotten to work with really*

*outstanding people, for most of it, and learned a lot. I think that the quality of the acting, writing, directing – everything up and down – you know the fabulous art direction and beautiful set making, and editing and sound. I mean just a really quality operation. The actors were great to you, they took good care in casting, and really excellent actors I thought, really great.*

**Allison: Was there anything that surprised you about your role as Jamie?**

*Irina: Surprised me. That's an interesting word. What was really surprising was how I actually got the job. Once I was in the job it was pretty standard stuff. You learn your lines, you get on stage - and hopefully execute them in a meaningful way and don't screw up. But the thing I always thought was really cool is that I got the job only because I said one line right in my audition. And it was a line, apparently, that no one else had said the way the writer wanted it said. And the line was about Mouse and his contraptions, and one of the other characters says, 'Well you know Mouse, only half of his contraptions work,' and I said, 'Yeah, but the other half do' (ed note: *Shades of Grey*). It was the first episode that I worked on. Apparently, no one else executed that line the way the director and writer wanted it said, so they gave me the gig.*

**Allison: What episode was most challenging?**

*Irina: Oh gosh. There was one where I had to shoot a crossbow and they had to teach me how to do that, and then I had to make sure I didn't hit anybody. So that was a little bit challenging, but my aim was good towards the end. It wasn't a real one, it was a set prop – it didn't aim properly – but it did enough so that it wouldn't go completely awry, just not like a proper crossbow would have. It didn't have the energy, the strength that a real one would have, for obvious reasons, on a set. So that was challenging. And then anything where I had to cry for long periods, like take after take after take. That was hard because it's hard to stay in that place for two hours, while they're moving cameras around and stuff. It's physically exhausting and your eyes hurt.*

**Allison: Drawing a blank on the name of that episode (with the crossbow) (ed note: *To Reign in Hell*)**

*Irina: I'll be perfectly honest. A lot has changed in my life and I don't remember the names of many of the episodes I worked on anymore. I'd have to go back and refresh my memory.*

**Allison: Do you have any hobbies or anything like that?**

*Irina: I like to ride my bike. I'm a sailor. I like to scuba dive, though I haven't done a lot recently. I'm an avid gardener now that I'm not a restoration ecologist anymore, and able to go on to the land in a national park and do the restoration myself with my team. I like to volunteer and do that in lots of places, whether they're parks or visits. Anyone who needs a hand pulling weeds. There's always more weeds.*

**Allison: Where did you meet your husband Michael?**

*Irina: He was recording a dear friend of mine's demo at the time, in Venice, Radio Tokyo, which was kind of famous for a while. She told me that she had met my soulmate, and I just*

*kind of stared at her blankly and thought, my god, she's trying to set me up. And she said, well he's in the studio, and he's a really nice guy, so I went down and met him and then six months later we were engaged.*

**Allison: Is there anything you would like to say to the fans?**

*Irina: Yeah, well the fans – that's really where the action is, right? So if there isn't anyone to watch the work, and support the projects, and tune in, then there's really no project, right. It's all about the fans and everyone has a deep appreciation for that connection and that love. Anyone who tells you different really doesn't have their eye on the ball.*

**Allison: I can tell you that 30 years later, the fans are still watching episodes every day or every week, we are still talking about them online, writing stories, there is a fan convention coming up in San Diego in about two weeks (July 2017), and the online con, where your interview is going to be posted, is going to be celebrated in September.**

*Irina: Cool. It's remarkable that 30 years later. First of all, it's 'My god, 30 years have passed' – first of all that's an eye opener ...*

**Allison: I've seen pictures of you and you still look amazing.**

*Irina: You're so sweet.*

*I think that's just remarkable and that level of dedication. I'd imagine that unless people are crazy they're having fun too. Everyone's still enjoying the community of it, which is what it's really all about - people making connections with one another and keeping those connections. In the end it just comes down to community, right?*

**Allison: Yes, and there are new fans popping up who happen to find the episodes either on YouTube or online or something and they're enjoying it now even though they never saw the original one.**

*Irina: Yeah, well, they were well done. They hold up over time.*

**Allison: I really appreciate your taking the time and I hope you do well in your future endeavours.**

*Irina: Thank you, you're a sweetheart. Thanks for being patient with me while we moved up here, the new job and I really appreciate that and I know it was a little frustrating at times*

**Allison: No, no no no. You taking the time to do this is really appreciated and I would have made accommodation for anything.**

*Irina. You're a sweetheart.*

*Well, thank you so much and everybody who is listening to this please wrap your arms around Allison and thank her for reaching out to me. She actually reached out to me through my husband, and I'm glad that you did. And it's a pleasure to know that everybody is out there. It warms my heart. Thank you.*