

# 'I was never going to be Mrs O'Dowd'

**She may not have the Hollywood credentials of her hubby Chris, but Dawn O'Porter's career is thriving nonetheless. She tells Stephen Milton about her reaction to the public worship of her partner, and being labelled a 'traitor to feminism' by Janet Street-Porter**

STEPHEN MILTON - 27 APRIL 2013

There are surely an abundance of benefits when your partner is local hero turned Hollywood funnyman, Chris O'Dowd. One imagines a whirl of giggles and laughs, where every day is sprinkled with a dusting of merriment thanks to his signature deadpan delivery.

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But according to his new wife, Dawn O'Porter, life with a movie star armed with a devil-may-care attitude has its testing moments.

A week after their three-day nuptials last year, creatively branded Wedfest, the presenter and author experienced the fallout of her new hubby's comedic unpredictability when he posted a snap of his lingerie-clad love on his @bigboyler Twitter account.

Delighting his more than 350,000 followers, he wrote: "There are times for restraint and there are times to boast about your sexy new wife! LOOK WHAT I GOT!!!!"

Understandably, Dawn was initially not amused. "I was freaked out at first," she recalls, speaking to 'Weekend' from their home in south London. "You know, in my underwear for the entire internet, the world to see, I nearly went livid and was like, 'Chris we can't be doing that, that's going too far.'"

On closer inspection, however, the image was anything but unflattering. Scantly attired in a black lace negligee, toned stomach exposed, she looked rather stunning. Chris was forgiven.

"Eventually I thought, '\*\*\*k it, I actually looked great'. That was a snap shot from the photographer on the morning of the wedding. I was on

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the phone, ordering a bottle of Champagne. My body will never look like that again. It was the best I'll ever look.

"And Chris, he took a risk and was just very lucky that it worked out in the end."

O'Dowd and O'Porter (nee Porter, explanation to follow) seem cutely matched. The 'Bridesmaids' star's lanky goofiness is complemented by his wife's flirtatious sensibility. Together, they physically appeal with her Mary Quant-esque do and classic features balancing his hunched, apologetic 6ft 3in stature.

They met at an LA party celebrating her 30th birthday. The Boyle funnyman was skirting international fame with 'Bridesmaids', more than a year away from release.

She was a familiar TV personality thanks to probing series' including breast cancer documentary, 'The Booby Trap' and 'Super Slim Me', shrinking her then UK size 12 figure to a Hollywood zero, who fortunately had a penchant for, as she puts it, 'drunk Irishmen who smell like fags'.

Cupid's arrow did the job, and, three years later, Wedfest took place.

Eight months on, married life is bliss for the presenter and her movie-star beau. "We're having such a nice time," she cheerily muses, "although I'm really hungover today. We went on a date last night and started drinking whiskey on the sofa and went on 'til two in the morning."

She pauses, perhaps sensing a little too much information. "I underestimated just how lovely being married is."

Since they became an item, the striking brunette has watched as her man went from bit-player TV actor, recognisable from his stints on RTE's shamefully axed medi-drama 'The Clinic' and edgy laughs on 'The IT Crowd', to a bona fide matinee idol with an army of groupies.

Iconic chick flick 'Bridemaid's' gave him a star-making launch, principally a result of his puppy dog lost expression when Kristin Wiig's Annie callously dumps his lovelorn Officer Rhodes. A star, and an accidental sex symbol, was born.

Dawn (34) finds the attention oddly perplexing. "Chris and I got together just before it happened and we've gone through [the fame] from the beginning, but it doesn't make it any the less bizarre.

"You walk along the street with him, people are like, 'Oh my God, Oh my God', screaming and shaking, and I'm like, 'it's just Chris!' I find it hard to watch.

"I want to say, 'He doesn't do the washing up, stop fawning over him, stop this pedestal thing. He's just my husband. He's just a guy, my guy who you don't see all sides of."

She continues: "I see him falling asleep on the sofa and snoring. I see him drunk and dancing round, I see him hungover, yet the public reaction out there is really something spectacular.

"In Ireland, it's the strangest place. Everywhere he'll usually get recognised and have the occasional photos, but in Ireland, everyone's so proud of him and sometimes it gets a bit like the king's come home."

Hardly trailing in her hubby's starry wake, Dawn is a victorious multi-tasker. Currently working on her latest series for Channel 4, focusing on internet dating, she'll also host another series, 'Undercover Mums', for the TLC network. Her pressing project today, however, is the release of debut fiction novel, 'Paper Aeroplanes'.

Loosely based around her own adolescence in Guernsey, it charts the friendship between disparate teens Renee and Flo, whose differences guide them through first love, their dysfunctional families and coping with heartbreak.

An entertaining read, O'Porter initially envisaged an autobiography of

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her younger years but found the fictional element liberating. "I think it's much more fun; you can hide yourself in it, but there's so much of me in there. It's not exposing, though. I've written about myself most of my career, so it's nice to not to do that for once."

"Renee and Flo are completely fabricated," she explains. "I didn't have a friend like that. It's not really how my life was at that age at all but what they go through is partially inspired by my own experience.

"I never had the one best friend and it's important to a girl to have that relationship, you sort of fall in love with that person. It's quite romantic."

'Paper Aeroplanes' is one of Dawn's first professional endeavours accompanied by her new married name. In a growing trend, she decided on a partial amalgam of O'Dowd, rather than a full adoption of her husband's title.

"It was never going to be O'Dowd," she explains. "Mrs O'Dowd is his mum and I definitely didn't want to change it.

"The O'Porter thing was initially sort of a joke, and it stuck between us and then I had the deciding moment when I had a book coming out and thought, 'Do I do it?' So I said, 'Bugger it, why not?'

"It's only recently, though, that it's just started to feel like my name now."

What happens with the possibility of children down the line? O'Porter-O'Dowd? Surely that'll warrant a call to child protection services? "It'll be O'Dowd. I don't mind having a different name to my children, just as long as I'm in there somewhere on the passport," she giggles quietly. "O'Dowd-O'Porter; no, that wouldn't work."

Dawn recently came under fire for fronting a slightly off-centre campaign for Andrex Washlets – basically wet toilet paper for women.

The critics brandished their knives and Janet Street-Porter vehemently labelled her a "traitor to feminism" for recommending a product that "99pc of women don't need".

She sighs exhaustively. "It's Janet Street-Porter, smashing another woman in the 'Daily Mail'. I think she should be ashamed of herself. It's women like this who say they're feminists who never have anything positive to say about women. That drives me nuts and she sounded like a silly old bag.

"AndreX gave me a great job and they said to me, be yourself and talk about something really awkward, which basically what my entire career is based on. So for someone to say I'm a traitor to feminism is so wrong."

Breezy, with an infectious manner, just like her fella, it's difficult to imagine O'Porter fazed by negativity. Although one wonders how she felt when an image featuring Chris and Megan Fox alongside actor Jason Segal in a pool together surfaced while shooting Judd Apatow's 'This Is 40' last year.

The pneumatic-lipped 'Transformers' beauty pouts seductively while O'Dowd seems in his element. Does the green-eyed monster ever rear its head in this instance?

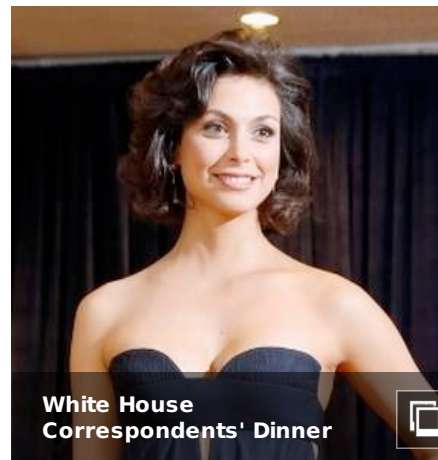
"If the wife of an actor has issues like that, they're doomed," she laughs. "I know exactly the picture you're talking about and I just thought that was really funny and they got on really well. She sounds lovely.

"I'd be lying there tossing and turning all night but I don't worry about that kind of thing. It doesn't even feature on my radar. I tend to give Chris a lot more credit and never presume he'll be a cliché and cop off with someone like Megan Fox."

'Paper Aeroplanes' (Hot Key Books) is released in book stores on May 2



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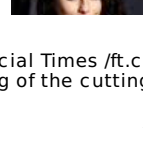
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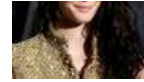
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