

# The Schmooze Stories with a Yiddish Twist

## “DER NOMEN” IS IRVING

Note: In Yiddish, “der nomen,” means “the name.”

by  
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During Obama’s recent trip to Kenya, three newborn girls were named Michelle, Malia and Malia Sasha, after the President’s wife and daughters. And two babies were named after the President’s airplane (“aeroplan”), Air Force One. And you thought such “narishkayt” took place only in the “Goldene medine”--Golden country (United States)?

In the situation comedy “All in the Family,” the bigoted Archie Bunker was carrying on about “the Jews,” and he ranted, “Oh, they have ordinary last names, like ‘Green,’ but then they have Jewish first names, like ‘Milton Green.’” His son-in-law (“eydem”), Mike, says, “Yeah, like Abraham Lincoln.” Long-suffering wife, Edith, says with surprise, “Mike, I didn’t know Lincoln was Jewish!”

Years ago, every Jewish family had someone named “Irving.” They also had an Izzy, Max, Sam, Sheldon, Morton, Sol, Ida, Adele, Ruthie, Sally, Shirley, and Lillian.

There are many famous people who were named Irving:

Irving Berlin (American songwriter)

Irving Thalberg (philosopher)  
Irving Kahn (entrepreneur)  
Irving Fyar (football player)  
Irving Levine (journalist)  
Irving Stone (non-fiction author)  
Irving Brecher (wrote vaudeville sketches for Milton Berle and jokes for Henny Youngman)

Have you heard these IRVING stories/jokes?

- Ruth and Golda were walking along Hendon High Street. Ruth says, “My son, Irving, is getting married. He tells me he is engaged (“farlobt”) to a wonderful girl, but....he thinks she may have a disease called herpes.

Golda says, “Do you have idea what this is, and can you catch it?”

Ruth replies, “No, but I am just so thrilled to hear about Irving’s engagement - it’s time he settled down. As far as the herpes goes...Who knows? (“Ver vaist?”)

“Well,” says Golda, “I have a very good medical dictionary at home. I’ll look it up and call you.” “Ruth, I found it. Not to worry. It says herpes is a disease of the GENTILES.”

And then: [overheard circa 1948]:

- So, Florence, you hear that they’ve declared independence? Really? What are they going to call the country? They said it’s going to be called “Israel.” I don’t know...why don’t they call it Irving?
- A “yung” Jewish boy is entering “kinder-gortn” (kindergarten) at a Hebrew Day School. Mom says, “Bubele, remember to behave in school. Remember, bubele, anytime you want to speak, you raise your “hant” (hand). If you nose is running, use your “noztikhl” (handkerchief), not your sleeve, bubele. And, don’t be an “opgelozener mentsh”—an untidy person.”

Three o’clock in the afternoon, Mama is standing in the parking lot and her son runs to her. She says, “Bubele, bubela, it has been such

an exciting day. Tell me, bubele, what did you learn today?"

He says, "I learned my name is Irving!"

- Irving goes into a kosher "restoran" (restaurant) in Boca Raton and orders potato latkes. When they come, he complains that they do not look good and he changes his order to blintzes. After he eats the blintzes, he stands up and starts to leave the restaurant.

"Wait a second," the manager shouts after him. "You have not paid for your blintzes."

"Vos zogt ir?" (What are you saying?), Irving says. "Those blintzes were in exchange." I gave you the potato latkes for them."

"Yes," says the manager, "but you did not pay for the latkes either."

"Why should I pay for them," asks Irving. "I didn't eat them."

- Irving was just coming out of anesthesia after a series of tests in "der shpitol" (the hospital)...and his wife, Sarah, was sitting at his bedside. His eyes fluttered open and he murmured, "You're 'shain vi di zibben velten.'"--beautiful as the seven worlds.

Flattered, Sarah continued her vigil while he drifted back to sleep ("shlof"). Later he woke up and said, "You're cute."

"What happened to 'beautiful as the seven worlds'? Sarah asked.

"The drugs are wearing off," he replied.

- So, Irving is sitting at home reading the Forvitz and he sees a little ad that says "Round-trip cruise to Miami, \$35."

He sees a phone number there. So, he calls the number and the guy answers and he says, "Is this for real?"

"Well, what do I do?"

"When do you want to go?"

"I'll go tomorrow."

“Well, you just pack a little bag, you stand in front of your building, and we’ll pick you up and take you to the boat.”

So, Irving packs a little bag, and the next “frimorgn” (morning) he stands in front of his building. Up pulls a van. Two big guys get out, they “khapn” (grab) Irving, throw him in the van. They take his little bag and throw it in the van, and drive to the Hudson River, pier 36. They take Irving out, schlep him out onto the pier, put him into a galley ship and tie him to an oar.

Suddenly, this big guy comes out and starts whipping everybody and they start to row. He’s yelling, “Row!” and he’s whipping them.

This goes on for 3 days, the rowing and the whipping, and, finally, they’re pulling into the Port of Miami.

Irving turns to the guy next to him and says, “Well, maybe you can tell me something (‘epes’).”

“What’s that?”

How much do you tip the whipper?”

- Two Texans are sitting on a plane from Dallas and an old Jewish Texan is sitting between them. The first Texan says, “My name is Roger and they call my place The Jolly Roger.”
- The second Texan says, “My name is John. I own 350,000 acres. I have 5,000 head of cattle and they call my place Big John’s.”

They both look down at the Jewish man, who says, “My name is Irving and I own only 300 acres.” Rogers looks down at him and says, “300 acres? What do you raise?”

“Nothing,” Irving says.

“Well, then, what do you call it?” asked John.

“Downtown Dallas.”

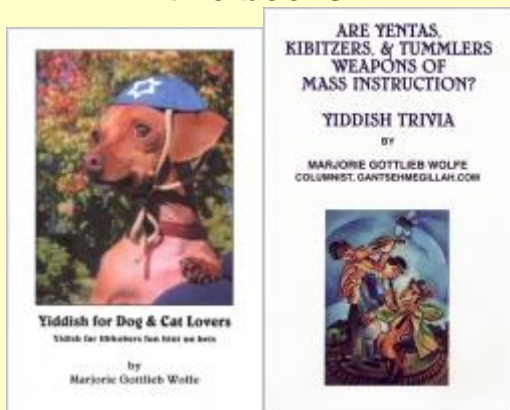
(Source: [www.oldjewstellingjokes.com](http://www.oldjewstellingjokes.com))

MARJORIE WOLFE has fond memories of her Aunt Sally and Uncle, Irving Rosoff.

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**Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe is the author of two books:**



**"Yiddish for Dog & Cat Lovers" and "Are Yentas, Kibitzers, & Tumblers Weapons of Mass Instruction? Yiddish Trivia." To order a copy, go to her website: [MarjorieGottliebWolfe.com](http://MarjorieGottliebWolfe.com)**

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