

Bindi Williams—he wants to be a great actor

Bindi Williams is 20. He is an Aboriginal, justly proud of his heritage and filled with the aspiration that one day he may be a great actor.

Viewers will remember Bindi as Kevin, the curly headed Aboriginal boy with the mischievous grin in ABN 2's long-running series "Woobinda: Animal Doctor." The series ran for two years and firmly established the young Mr Williams as a professional actor. He won the part after dozens of others were tried and tested for the role.

He even went to England and Europe to promote the series.

On Thursday at 7.30 pm, Bindi Williams is a guest star in ATN 7's Boney episode "Boney Picks a Widow." The story begins when two women are criminally assaulted and killed at a small coastal town. The local law believes an Aboriginal youth is responsible.

Enter Bindi Williams.

"They suspect me as the culprit up to the end," Bindi said last week. "I suppose because this fellow is black they naturally expect him to be bad," he added with a grin.

"I mostly play mischievous parts and I suppose the only time I was the goodie was in 'The Rovers' when I was an Aboriginal boy who could not decide whether to become a jockey or a painter."

It is for the role of Kevin in "Woobinda" that people remembered Bindi most.

Even today his family and friends constantly remind him of it.

"Sometimes when I walk into the house my mother will say: 'Shut the

door Kevin' and whenever I join up with a few of my mates they will say: 'Oh, look here comes Mister Woobinda'."

Born at Cowra, Bindi Williams is one of 10 children of Harry and Ella Williams.

At the age of nine he first tasted the life of an actor.

"My father was working for Commonwealth Films in Victoria as an extra in the film 'Children of the Nullabor' and he heard they were looking for a young boy to play a role," he said. "My father said he had a son who would be just what they were looking for — so they sent for me and I got the part."

From there he went into "The Magic Boomerang" and "The Terrible Ten"—and almost any production that needed a pleasant-faced Aboriginal boy with an unusual amount of mischievous charm.

Bindi enjoyed filming so much that he decided to leave school to make acting his career — although his mother Ella kept warning him he would be sorry for leaving school so soon.

He has no regrets about leaving when he did. He enjoys acting but realises that as an Aboriginal his work is sparsely scheduled — and mainly typed as the mischievous "villain."

What about the Aboriginal playing the dashing romantic for a change?

He smiles and says: "Well that would be different — and I would like to have a try. But I fear I would be sent-up about it."

His real name is Ian. "The name Bindi was given to me by an uncle because one of my brothers could not say Ian. Bindi means three things — burrs, guts and sunflower. It was originally spelled Bindy with a Y. But the newspapers could never get it right so it was

left as Bindi to stop the confusion."

Bindi Williams lives with his mother Ella and some of his brothers and sisters in the Sydney suburb of Annandale. When he is not working he likes to join his friends over a few beers or go along with them to parties.

Bindi Williams is proud of his people. His father is a descendant of the Wooradgerie tribe — "one of the biggest tribes from the Murray River area."

Bindi is joining the recently established National Black Theatre, the brain-child of Aboriginal actor Bob Naza from the "Bellbird" television series.

Bindi said: "It consists of a group of people dedicated to helping the Aborigines. It is for black people only. For example, when the part of a white is called for, they paint an Aboriginal white—just as they often paint a white person black to play an Aboriginal."



Bindi Williams . . . "the black sheep of the family."

"The plays are protest things, mostly comedies, but with one exception. This time the Aboriginal is not necessarily the villain."

An actor outside his

home Bindi Williams with his family is "nobody special."

"If anything," he adds with a grin, "I suppose you could say I am the black sheep of the family."

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