

Isonychia Bicolor Nymph (aka- Coachman Nymph)

Several weeks ago, I was reading (for the second or third time) Arnold Gingrich's *"The Joys of Trout"* and in the book, Gingrich states Preston Jennings' dressing for the *Isonychia Bicolor Nymph*. Within Gingrich's book, he states that when Preston Jennings wrote *"A Book of Trout Flies"*, Jennings didn't include a dressing for the *Isonychia Bicolor* nymph (aka - Coachman Nymph), which I found to be true when reading Jennings' *"A Book of Trout Flies"*. But, Gingrich did mention that Jennings wrote an article in the July 1956 issue of *Esquire* magazine called *"There is a Royal Coachman"*.

For me, part of the fun I have with the old dressings / patterns is getting books and other information on the old flies and then trying to find as many of the original materials (or legal subs) in my feeble attempts to get close to the original pattern as I can with the materials and resources that I have available.

So being the totally anal son-of-a-gun that I am, I e-mailed *Esquire* magazine to see if I could obtain a copy of the Preston Jennings article from 1956. Low and behold, within a few days, I received an e-mail from *Esquire* Magazine stating that they had posted a color copy of Jennings' 1956 article to me, which I subsequently received.

I had been able to find some good / accurate pictures of the *Isonychia Bicolor Nymph*, so I did a posting on a classic (bamboo) rod forum. Several fellows then post pictures of some *Isonychia Bicolor* nymphs actually tied by Preston Jennings and / or by Art Flick, though differing slightly in appearance.

What has also been interesting to me in finding the old information is to see the variance in the materials and dressings called for in a specific pattern, even though the originator of a pattern may have stated and / or tied his / her pattern in several variations.

My first attempts at the IBN used a dressing similar as the one stated in Arnold Gingrich's book:



Tail: Brown Partridge
Body: A mixture of claret and dark red seal's fur
Thorax: Peacock herl
Ribbing: Round gold tinsel (I prefer gold wire instead of tinsel)
Hackle: A few turns of red or furnace cock's hackle
Hook: A No. 8 or 9 Sproat (I used Mustad #3906B – sizes 8, 10 & 12 hooks)

After I tied a few flies with the above dressing (using black thread), I realized that I used a hen hackle instead of a rooster hackle and that the dubbing needed a little trimming.

Shortly after doing a posting of my first attempts at the IBN, a fellow posted / sent me pics of some of these same nymphs tied by al Brewster / Art Flick, which used brownish partridge hackles, peacock sword tails and amber (gold) thread.



I then tied a few using pheasant for the tails and both wire and tinsel ribs plus black thread, trimming the dubbing a little closer to the hook shank, trying to get as close as possible to another picture sent to me.



For those interested in complete accuracy, it appears that Preston Jennings may have tied his Isonychia Bicolor nymph in several variations, although his 1956 article does state:

"My own dressing for the artificial Coachman Nymph is as follows:

Tail: Brown Partridge

Body: A mixture of claret and dark red seal's fur

Thorax: Peacock herl

Ribbing: Round gold tinsel

Hackle: A few turns of red or furnace cock's hackle

Hook: A No. 8 or 9 Sproat"