

an excerpt from

THE CIVILIANS'
YOU BETTER SIT DOWN: TALES FROM MY PARENTS' DIVORCE

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HOW THEY MET

(Projection: "How They Met")

BEVERLY: Okay, go ahead. Ask me the question.

(Projection: The name "Beverly" appears over Jennifer in her chair)

No, I need the cat. Seventeen years. Uhhhhh. We dated maybe about.... Uhhhhh... Two years? We met at a party I was throwing for Cesar Chavez and I had a very lovely apartment on Park Avenue – between Park Avenue and Lexington with Joanna Pettet, and I get a call from Washington – OH, it was Bobby Zarum knew about the apartment and called to see if I would be interested in putting on a fundraiser. And of course, being very, uhhhh, liberal and open minded and that time doing you know things against the war in Vietnam I said, fine, you know, absolutely. So, here I open my apartment to raise money for Cezar Chavez, uhhh, head of the grape union at that time grape and then lettuce and all of that. And all of the kind of celebrity types came and here came Dudley and umm of course I loved dressing and I looked rather pretty and here comes this very, very handsome man that I was immediately, immediately attracted to him.

MARY ANNE: He had absolutely magnificent, magnificent eyes.

(Projection: The name "Mary Anne" appears over Caitlin in her chair)

They were beautiful. *(beat)* He was funny and obviously very smart. And I was very impressed with smart back then.

Hot? "Hot" and your father, kind of don't go *(laughing)* in the same *(laughs)* sentence? Uhhh? But I must've? Well *(laughing)* I was trying to think of how much wine *(laughs)* would be

needed to think he was handsome. It's like that story Meghan goes, "How much did you have to drink, you're going with a guy who tucks in his sweaters?"

(Projection: The name "John" appears over Matt in his chair)

JOHN: So I guess the main question is – why do people fall in and out of love? Why is one second children are in the middle of a stable family, and the next moment, you know... you're driving up to a vacation in Maine, right? *(laughs)* And you know, who is this dark-haired woman sitting next to you... *Dad?*

As far as your Mom goes, there are two separate possible explanations, as far as I can see, and I don't know which it was, really... either she fell out of love with me, or she just wanted to fuck other guys, you know? *(Laughs)*

I met Frinde when she was in her senior year at Radcliffe. I went to this party on campus that was being thrown by the Aryn Aga Khan and Maury Weelock, for Jay Rockefeller, who had just returned from abroad. And your mother was there, and she was beautiful I thought. And then I remember I saw her a few days later in Harvard Square.

MARY ANNE: My roommate Marty had a crush on him – at Georgetown. He was teaching a couple of freshman courses at the time. And it was either that year or the next he was voted by the freshman as their favorite professor. No, he didn't come to my room! Oh, Caitlin, please! These were the dark ages! You couldn't have any guys to your room... unless you wanted to get drummed out!

(Matt shifts from playing JOHN to playing FRINDE)

FRINDE: You have to understand that era.

(Projection: The name "Frinde" appears over Matt, replacing the previous projection "John")

In 1962 thereabouts I had decided to stop being a preppy. I was just so bored with my then-boyfriend, and I was so bored with the whole preppy thing, and there was a scene in Harvard Square...this sort of bohemian—and by the way, all this sounds much more deliberate than it actually felt. I didn't experience myself at the time as being such a chooser, but looking back I was.

JANET: *(heavy Texas accent)* I was sixteen I guess. I was a sophomore and your father was a senior.

(Projection: the name "Janet" appears over Robbie in his chair)

And we did, uh, actually we did a musical together. And, um— It was some revue show. You know, it was a musical revue. No, it was just called a musical revue. It was a, it was a money-maker for the women's club. And I think he, uh, asked me for a ride home—if he, if I wanted a ride home from practice. PRACTICE, we were rehearsing.