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"We met in a bar by happenstance": Master narratives in couples stories

Brent A. Miller

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"We Met at a Bar by Happenstance": Master Narratives in Couples Stories

by

Brent A. Miller

Thesis
Submitted to the Department of English Language and Literature
Eastern Michigan University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
in
Linguistics

Thesis Committee:
Eric Acton, PhD, Chair
Daniel Seely, PhD

April 2, 2017
Ypsilanti, Michigan
Acknowledgments

I would like thank my mother, Dawn Maria Martin, for being the first person to read to me. My earliest memories are of listening to you bring *The Berenstain Bears* stories to life. Without your commitment to teaching me to read and to listen to stories, I would not be the person I am today.

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Many thanks to Andrew for being my rock. Your cheerleading, your consistent check-ins of "How's the thesis going?" and your love have made this possible. Thank you for challenging me to grow as a professional and as a partner.
Abstract

The focus of this study is on uncovering the underlying cultural assumptions, or Master Narratives, across four couples narratives that I elicited. I use Deborah Tannen's work and definitions to frame my analysis (2008). She identifies three narrative types: small-n narrative, the accounts of specific events or interactions that speakers said had occurred with one another; big-N Narrative, the themes speakers develop in telling about one another and in support of which they told the small-n narratives; and Master Narrative, the culture-wide ideologies shaping the big-N Narratives.

Specifically, I identify two Master Narratives that underscore couples narratives in a broad sense: (1) relationships occur by happenstance and (2) adversity enhances the coupling bond. These assumptions are identified in locating the big-N Narratives and small-n narratives across four couples stories. Like Tannen, I aim to show how these three narrative types operate on different levels of abstraction and how couples conceptualize and talk about their relationships with one another.
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</tr>
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</table>

Table 1: Quantity of Recorded Speech

Table 2: Transcription

Table 3: Conventions

Topics in All Groups' Narratives
1 Introduction

HARRY
The first time we met we hated each other.

SALLY
You didn't hate me, I hated you. The second time we met he didn't even remember me.

HARRY
I did too. I remembered you. The third time we met we became friends.

SALLY
We were friends for a long time.

HARRY
And then we weren't.

SALLY
And then we fell in love.

HARRY
Two months later we got married.

SALLY
It was a beautiful wedding.

HARRY
Yeah. We had this incredible coconut cake—

SALLY
With a very rich chocolate sauce on the side—

HARRY
Yeah, you know, because everybody doesn't like sauce right on top of their cake.

*When Harry Met Sally*

Pair bonding between humans, or coupling, dates back many thousands of years (Isaac). It is a process that most human cultures experience and encourage, and one that many have legislated. The effects of coupling have been studied in many scientific fields of inquiry, especially in psychology, sociology, physiology, and neuroscience. In the field of linguistics, studies on couples have been relatively few and far between. Holmberg et al. note that the focus on stories of human relationships is a recent one: "Since the late 1980s, social scientists have
begun collecting and interpreting the stories individuals tell about their lives and relationships" (4). As one narrows in on the stories that couples tell about their relationships, the research becomes increasingly sparse.

For the central goal of this study, I wanted to investigate commonalities among four couples narratives in terms of how each couple constructs a story, especially one relevant to the shared experience of coupling (i.e., the story of how they met and became a couple). I wanted to examine this story in three different telling events, namely, each partner's separate telling and the pair's co-told telling, or shared telling, in order to compare and contrast each partner's telling event. My goal was to elucidate aspects of the coupling experience and story that were until now unknown or uncatalogued in the literature.

The inspiration for this study comes from the film *When Harry Met Sally*. Throughout the film various cutaway shots appear in which couples share the story of how they met. Most are only a few minutes in length, but I was intrigued by the idea of interviewing couples in this manner for the purpose of a narrative analysis. The final scene in the film focuses on the two main characters, Harry and Sally, sharing their story, which the audience has just witnessed unfold. The couples narratives that I collected in this project each feature their own storylines, evaluations, and dramatic elements.

1.1 Aim of This Study

The focus of this study is on uncovering the underlying cultural assumptions, or Master Narratives, across the four couples narratives that I elicited. I use Tannen's work and definitions to frame my analysis ("All Relationships are Stories"). In her work, Tannen identifies three narrative types: small-n narrative, the accounts of specific events or interactions that speakers
said had occurred with one another; big-N Narrative, the themes speakers develop in telling about one another, and in support of which they told the small-n narratives; and Master Narrative, the culture-wide ideologies shaping the big-N Narratives and that form "a canopy over the discourse" (210).

Specifically, I identify two Master Narratives that underscore couples narratives in a broad sense: (1) relationships occur by happenstance and (2) adversity enhances the coupling bond. These assumptions can be identified by locating the big-N Narratives, or themes, across the four couples stories I have elicited. Furthermore, the involvement strategies that speakers use to create scenes give life to the big-N Narratives. Like Tannen, I aim to show how these narrative types operate on different levels of abstraction and how the couples I talked to conceptualize their relationships with one another.


2 Literature Review

2.1 Narrative Studies

There has been a shift in narrative studies over the course of the past few decades stemming from early critiques to Labov's model of narrative analysis (Labov; Labov and Waletzky), which challenged text-centered approaches in the field until the late 1980s. Labov situated his analysis on narratives of personal experience and defined narrative itself as "one verbal technique for recapitulating past experience, in particular a technique of constructing narrative units which match the temporal sequence of that experience" (Labov and Waletzky 13). This model emphasizes the structural characteristics of narratives because Labov's focus was on well-formed stories that reflect a well-defined message of the narrator and reconstruct a significant past experience.

The classic definition of narrative, at least from the linguist’s perspective, has been attributed to Labov. His model identifies the following structural elements: (1) an abstract: the initial clause in a narrative that reports the entire sequence of events of the narrative; (2) an orientation: the clause that gives information on the time, place of the events of a narrative, the identities of the participants, and their initial behavior; (3) a clause of complicating action: the sequential clause that reports a next event in response to a potential question, "And then what happened?"; and (4) a coda: the final clause which returns the narrative to the time of speaking (Labov and Waletzky).

Some of the critiques made against Labov's model (Edwards; Goodwin; Ochs and Capps; Schegloff) focus on its inability to deal with narratives that are not monologic (i.e., narratives with more than one speaker), its ambiguity in relation to his categories of analysis which mix
structural and functional criteria, and its treatment of the narrative as decontextualized (i.e., the deletion of contextual information as to how narratives are initiated and how they emerge in specific circumstances). These critics of Labov's model also note his reliance on text-centered approaches and the methodological implications such as privileging narratives told in interview; the focus on one narrative genre, the canonical story (as opposed to hypothetical, habitual narratives, and uneventful conversational stories); and the lack of attention on the social functions of narratives besides the "encoding of personal experience."

In the past few decades, interest in narrative research has also shifted from texts to contexts, i.e., from the content of narrative to the conditions and circumstances surrounding a narrative event. In this paper I draw on both schools of thought in order to elucidate a broader picture of the text of couples narratives and the larger context of couples narrative tellings. Holmberg et al. acknowledge the recent shift toward more contextual narrative research in stating, "This narrative approach, in which scholars investigate participants' stories told in their own words, has become an important part of the social sciences" (4). This study is an effort to continue that narrative approach.

Building from that trend, Tannen has identified three interrelated levels of narrative: (1) small-n narratives, accounts of specific events or interactions speakers said had occurred with each other; (2) big-N Narratives, themes speakers develop in telling about the other and in support of which they tell the small-n narratives; and (3) Master Narratives, culture-wide ideologies shaping the big-N Narratives ("All Relationships are Stories"). She posits a framework for identifying the unstated Master Narratives by describing how the big-N Narratives are organized and how small-n narratives anchor the telling through scenes that are
created and supported by the involvement strategies of dialogue, details, and repetition. I use this framework to analyze my data and demonstrate how couples conceptualize and create scenes in telling stories about their relationships.

2.2 Couples Narratives

Linguistic analyses of couples' narratives are relatively sparse, but several scholars have addressed how speakers tell stories of shared experiences, retold tales, and co-told narratives. Falk's "conversational duet" remains the seminal work on co-told stories of romantically involved participants ("The conversational duet"). She explains that a duet is a joint production (in between speaking and listening) in which "two speakers carry out a communicative task to a third in such a way that a written version of their resultant in-sequence text would be indistinguishable from that of a single speaker" (507). Falk later states that a duet occurs when the following six criteria are met: (1) "partners have mutual knowledge of the topic at hand," (2) "equivalent authority to express that knowledge," (3) "a sense of camaraderie between them," (4) "a like communicative goal," (5) "a mutual audience," (6) and "each of their contributions counts on both their behalves" (507). Using Tannen's framework, this study expands (and reorients) some of Falk's claims while highlighting the underlying assumptions, or Master Narratives, that influence couples stories about their relationships.

Norrick touches on collaborative narration of stories that are familiar to participants and describes the group dynamics of the speakers telling these tales and the functions of retelling ("Twice-told tales"). He claims that joint production of a story aligns participants together and fosters a high level of involvement, a claim substantiated in my study. Norrick also illustrates how shared experiences and values can be expressed by co-tellers. I use Tannen's framework to
identify involvement strategies in each couple's individual and co-told telling events and showcase how each couple's shared experiences are expanded from the individually told events to the co-telling event.

Norrick addresses twice-told tales in spontaneous conversation, and Falk examines conversational "duets." Both of the aforementioned scholars have posited that speakers who co-tell a story generally build off one another's narration, express shared values, and exhibit a high level of involvement with one another. Tannen's work expands on those ideas and shows how involvement strategies reinforce shared cultural assumptions (i.e., Master Narratives). I use her framework to explain the cultural assumptions underlying couples narratives and identify how involvement strategies like dialogue, details, and repetition are put to use to create scenes and, in effect, to dramatize couples stories.

There are multiple approaches one could take in analyzing narratives to uncover cultural assumptions. Maines touches on three ways in which one can analyze the content of any narrative: through the events, the sequence, and the plot ("Narrative's moment") . Holmberg et al. narrow in on one of these methods in stating that the plot "best conveys and represents meaning through narration (Thrice-Told Tales). The plot connects the beliefs, emotions, and behaviors together. A plot gives structure or coherence to possibly random events" (11). Holmberg et al. also examine the "affects" that emerge while a couple tells their story, e.g., feelings, emotions, wants, and needs, and how to find meaning expressed in couples narratives: "by examining their overall plots, the more specific themes or issues that may emerge in relating these plots, and the affects described or catalogued in the process of exploring these themes" (11).
Recent research has also highlighted a more interpretative approach to narrative research, in that the very definition of narrative varies from one scholar to the next. To establish the forthcoming research in the realm of narrative research, I will define the understanding of narrative that has guided this project.

2.3 Definition of Narrative

At a base level, narratives involve "a recounting of things spatiotemporally distant: here's the present teller, seemingly close to the addressee (reader or listener), and there at a distance is the tale and its topic" (Toolan 1). This broad definition has been widely accepted in recent literature because it encapsulates the human relationship at the very nature of narrative: narrative is a human activity whereby we develop a story and that story's meaning.

I focus this research on individually told stories elicited in an interview setting as well as co-told stories elicited the same way. As such, I use the word "narrative" in this research to mean "storylike constructions told to other people, in which individuals try to summarize, explain, and make sense of stressful, complex, or emotion-laden events in their lives" (Holmberg et al. 11). The "emotion-laden events" of the narratives that I elicited include the circumstances and results of each couple meeting and becoming romantically involved. The couples whose stories are featured in this study address not only the chronological events of their meeting and coupling, but also the emotional and physical circumstances at the time of their meeting and through their early courtship.

When narrative is defined as a story attempting to make sense of events, it is easy to see the potential in conducting research on these sorts of narratives. The research can focus on the events themselves (i.e., the linear plot), the making sense of those events (the interpretation of
the data), and how others make sense of (or seek meaning in) those narratives (the answer to the question "What can we learn in studying these stories?"). To complicate such research, narratives can also serve distinct functions and can help develop and maintain various identities (Holmberg et al. 10). It is the function of knowledge gleaned in studying narrative that I aim to address in this study.

2.3.1 Tannen's narrative types. The work of Tannen frames my analysis and inspires my understanding of narrative and how it relates to culture. She defines three narrative types that operate on different levels of abstraction: (1) small-n narratives, accounts of specific events or interactions that speakers said had occurred with one another also referred to as Labovian narrative; (2) big-N Narratives, the themes speakers develop in telling stories about one another, and in support of which they told the small-n narratives; and (3) Master Narratives, the culture-wide ideologies shaping the big-N Narratives (214-216).

2.3.1.1 Small-n narrative. In exploring the interrelationship among these three narrative types, Tannen examines the small-n narratives told by women who share with her stories about their relationships with their sisters, with particular attention to the ways that the involvement strategies of repetition, dialogue, and details work together to create scenes. Tannen states that scenes are the context in which meaning is conveyed and understood in interaction…the scene is the heart of a small-n narrative in conversation much as it is in a play. Speakers create scenes in order to support the point of their discourse—what they are telling me about their sisters. By presenting themselves and their sisters engaged in activities that are culturally recognizable and interpretable, speakers dramatize their sense of their sisters; of themselves in
relation to their sisters; and consequently of their sisters' and their own characters (208).

Scenes anchor the small-n narratives, helping them support the big-N Narratives, which are motivated in turn by the culturally-driven Master Narrative. I apply Tannen's approach to discern where the speakers in my interviews use repetition, dialogue, and details to create scenes and convey meaning.

2.3.1.2 Big-N Narrative. Tannen posits that big-N Narratives represent the theory of causation or the plausible explanation of telling a story. Referring to her own research, she says "...a large part of understanding sister discourse lies in discerning patterns in big-N Narratives across multiple speakers" (214), e.g., whether, how, and why sisters are close to their sisters or not, and whether, how, and why they and their sisters are similar or different, two themes Tannen identified in nearly every one of the interviews she conducted with women who had a sister.

Tannen shares examples of these two themes in the big-N Narratives she discovered across speakers: younger sibling idolizing the elder (closeness), older sibling being bossy (distance), family trauma (drove apart or brought together), and living on a farm (made us close). These examples demonstrate how speakers characterize their relationships with one another. I identify similar themes in my speakers' narratives, such as whether, how, and why each couple met by happenstance.

2.3.1.3 Master Narrative. Tannen identifies Master Narratives as the culture-wide ideologies shaping the big-N Narratives that form "a canopy over the discourse" (210). Specifically, she pinpoints the apparent assumption that sisters are expected to be close and similar. This assumption explains why almost every woman Tannen spoke to told her early on in
the interview that she and her sister(s) were close or not close, similar to or—more
often—different from each other, or similar in some ways and different in others.

The ubiquity of this Master Narrative in sister discourse leads Tannen to revisit and
interrogate the dynamics of closeness/distance and sameness/difference as interrelated continua
along which speakers array their relationships. In my study, I identify two underlying
assumptions that couples share: Relationships occur by happenstance and adversity enhances the
coupling bond. Like Tannen, I aim to show how these narrative types operate on different levels
of abstraction and help illuminate how the couples I interviewed conceptualize and talk about
their relationships with one another.
3 Method

3.1 Participants

The participants in this study consisted of personal acquaintances. I describe the specific group demographics in sections 3.1.1 through 3.1.4 below to give the reader a sense of where the speakers grew up and what sorts of cultural assumptions they might share. The youngest participant was 22 at the time of the study, and the oldest was 32. The median age for participants was 26 years old. All members of the groups are Caucasian and speak American English. Each group is a romantically involved couple that has been in a committed romantic relationship for at least three years (the maximum being eight years). All couples lived in Washtenaw County, Michigan, at the time of the interview. They were interviewed in their residences. Each speaker's education level in sections 3.1.1 through 3.1.4. Income information was not collected from participants.

As the interviewer in each group, some of my own speech is present in all six narratives as that of Speaker B. I attempted to limit my contribution to each narrative, but I have found that I did participate in giving backchannel signals and providing a few instances of evaluation and involvement. However, I did not find this involvement to significantly influence the course of any of the narratives I collected. For the most part, the narratives were remarkably self-driving and needed no coaxing on my part. All the couples let me know after the interviews that they very much enjoyed sharing their stories with me and looked forward to reading the transcripts of their speech.

3.1.1 Group 1 information. Group 1 consisted of Speaker K, a 29-year-old female, and Speaker J, a 30-year-old male. Both had earned bachelor's degrees at the time of their interviews,
and Speaker K was enrolled in a graduate program. They had been a couple for approximately eight years. Both narrators are speakers of American English as it is spoken in Southern California.

3.1.2 Group 2 information. Group 2 consisted of Speaker S, a 22-year-old female, and Speaker M, a 26-year-old male. Speaker M had earned a bachelor's degree while Speaker S was enrolled in a graduate program. They had been a couple for about four years. Both narrators in Group 2 originate from the Great Lakes region and are speakers of Midland American English.

3.1.3 Group 3 information. Group 3 consisted of Speaker E, a 30-year-old female, and Speaker P, a 32-year-old male. Both speakers had earned bachelor's degrees. At the time of the elicitation, the group had been a couple for six years. Speaker P originates from Southern California and Speaker E originates from the Great Lakes region.

3.1.4 Group 4 information. Group 4 consisted of Speaker R, a 22-year-old female, and Speaker D, a 22-year-old male. Both speakers were enrolled in graduate programs at the time of their interviews. At the time of the elicitation, the group had been a couple for three years. Both speakers originate from the Pacific Northwest.

3.2 Data Collection

I asked each couple to tell a story in interview format because it adds pressure to tell a coherent story: The stakes are higher, rather than in casual conversation where stories can be pushed under the rug to avoid face-threatening acts, and the obligation to tell a coherent narrative is not present. I gathered the narratives using Riessman's and Holmberg et al.'s method for interviewing narrators. Riessman says to provide as little structure as possible in constructing interview questions and prompts "in the interest of giving greater control to respondents" (55).
To elicit the interviews, I asked one broad question ("How did you meet and become a couple?") and was prepared to use probing questions (like "Can you tell me more about that?") if the need arose. I chose to use this interviewing method, rather than trying to foster spontaneous conversation, to elicit as many details as possible from the couples concerning all aspects of the early stages of their relationships.

I decided to collect three narratives from each group: one narrative collected from each individual speaker plus one narrative collected from both speakers co-narrating (or co-telling) the story of how they met and became a couple. I did this because I wanted to investigate how each person's story differed from the other's and how the individual narratives varied from the co-told narrative.

The narratives were collected within the apartments of each group. An internal microphone on my personal MacBook laptop was used to record all speech. I recorded individual narratives before I recorded co-told narratives to prevent the narrators from influencing one another's individual stories during the co-telling event. I collected each couple's individual narratives on the same day, but I made sure the partner I was eliciting from was completely out of earshot of the other partner. After at least 24 hours, I collected the co-told narratives from each couple. The transcription conventions used in the appendix transcripts are those of Deborah Tannen, but they have been adapted for use with Google Docs (see section 3.4 for a description of transcription conventions).

### 3.3 Quantity of Data

I collected two hours and 41 minutes of recorded speech. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the length of each transcription:
### Table 1: Quantity of Recorded Speech

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Time (minutes:seconds)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1 (K, J) Co-Told</td>
<td>29:03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>24:47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>4:09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2 (S, M) Co-Told</td>
<td>10:09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>5:49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>3:42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3 (E, P) Co-Told</td>
<td>19:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>7:59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>5:56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4 (R, D) Co-Told</td>
<td>24:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>8:34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>17:28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Transcription Conventions

Transcription conventions are used as follows in Table 2 (based on and modified from Tannen 1984):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>..</td>
<td>noticeable pause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPITALS</td>
<td>emphatic stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>second speaker's talk is latched onto first speaker's without a noticeable pause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[[ ]]</td>
<td>indicates overlapping speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:</td>
<td>lengthened sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>()</td>
<td>author notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Transcription Conventions

Each line of transcribed speech ends when the speaker takes an audible breath.

3.5 Narrative Content

The content of each speaker's narrative differs slightly from the speaker's partner's individual narrative and from the couple's combined narrative, even though all narratives concern the same experience. Each speaker's individual narrative contains most (but not all) of the same topics as the speaker's partner's narrative, and the combined narratives contain all of the topics in each individual narrative plus elaboration, correction, and sorting out of details, as can be seen in Table 3.
### Table 3: Topics in All Groups' Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker K's Narrative</th>
<th>Speaker J's Narrative</th>
<th>Co-told Narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>High school (including Mortal Kombat and Austin Powers stories)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falling out</td>
<td>Falling out</td>
<td>Falling out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invitation</td>
<td>Invitation</td>
<td>Invitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Party (with more details)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car accident</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Car accident (and Speaker K's resolve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving in together</td>
<td>Moving in together</td>
<td>Moving in together (and apartment shopping)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Natalie and her boyfriend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Speaker J's living situation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker S</th>
<th>Speaker M</th>
<th>Co-told narrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calc class</td>
<td>Calc class</td>
<td>Calc class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad professor</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Bad professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Pirates of the Caribbean</em></td>
<td>--</td>
<td><em>Pirates of the Caribbean</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive Garden</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Olive Garden (and what was ordered, how they joked with the waitress)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bad student</td>
<td>Bad student (and more information about specific difficulties)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bombed test/first words</td>
<td>Bombed test/first words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking for help</td>
<td>Asking for help (and the location where Speaker M asked Speaker S for help)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Speaker M's roommates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker E</td>
<td>Speaker P</td>
<td>Co-told narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
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Group 1 (Speakers K and J) met in high school through mutual friends. After a falling out she experienced with those friends, Speaker K did not interact with Speaker J again until three years after graduating high school. Speaker J talked to Natalie—one of the couple's mutual friends in high school—through an instant messenger service on the Internet and invited her to a party he was throwing at his apartment. Natalie asked if she could bring Speaker K to the party,
and Speaker J agreed. Speakers K and J "hit it off" at the party, started interacting more, became a couple shortly after a car accident, and moved in together.

Group 2 (Speakers S and M) met in a college calculus class taught by a professor neither speaker thought was very good at teaching the material. Speaker M did not do well in the class and asked Speaker S for help with assignments and studying. A short while after becoming acquainted in class, the speakers had their first date at Olive Garden and soon after became a couple.

Group 3 (Speakers R and D) met while attending college. They lived in dorms that shared a laundry room and spoke to one another for the first time while washing their clothes. Speaker R's roommate was interested in pursuing Speaker D, so Speaker R hesitated at first, and Speaker D was unsure if he could pursue Speaker R because she was dating someone else at the time. They began hanging out in the same social circle and within a year were engaged to be married.

Group 4 (Speakers E and P) met "at a bar by happenstance" in California. Neither speaker was expecting the relationship to become serious, but they both became quickly involved with one another and deepened the relationship in the course of facing hardships together.
4 Analysis: Master Narratives

This study uncovered two underlying cultural assumptions, or Master Narratives, using Tannen's framework: relationships occur by happenstance and adversity enhances the coupling bond. To identify these Master Narratives, it is necessary to first identify the other two narrative types as defined by Tannen: small-n narrative, the accounts of specific events or interactions that speakers said had occurred with one another, and big-N Narrative, the themes speakers develop in telling about one another and in support of which they told the small-n narratives (210).

4.1. Relationships Occur by Happenstance

One Master Narrative that came to light in this research was that couples are brought together by happenstance. The idea of there being a soulmate for every person dates as far back as Plato (*Symposium* circa 385-370 BCE) and heavily influences modern American media and culture in television shows like *The Bachelor*. All of the couples that I interviewed touched on how they met by happenstance, randomness, or by coincidence, seemingly shirking the idea that they met because it was fated to be that way, contrary to established cultural conventions. The way that couples address happenstance bringing them together is reminiscent of how Tannen's sisters addressed in one way or another the assumption that they were close/distant from their siblings of their own volition, without Tannen ever specifically asking during the course of her interviews.

In attributing happenstance as a cause of their becoming a couple, the speakers give it meaning. It becomes the answer to the question "*Why* did you meet?" whereas the big-N Narratives and small-n narratives describe the *how*. 
Throughout their individual and jointly told stories, Speakers E and P strongly attributed the success of their meeting and becoming a couple to coincidence. This big-N Narrative, that of E and P meeting by happenstance in a bar through mutual friends, is supported by the details and repetition in their stories and in turn supports the Master Narrative that couples are brought together by happenstance.

Speakers E and P use a variety of terminology to illustrate how coincidence played a role in their courtship. For example, the word "happenstance" is used three times in their jointly told story:

(line 2516) P we met through mutual friends in a bar by **happenstance**

...  

(line 2531) E It was magical **happenstance**

...  

(line 2789) P which is another sort of fortuitous **happenstance**

These small-n narratives establish how Speakers E and P view the role of happenstance in bringing them together. The very first use of "happenstance" in their jointly told story occurs in the second line of their story. Speaker P goes on to repeat this idea in various ways by using the words "random" and "coincidence" during his telling of their coupling story:

(line 2526) P we met through mutual friends

u:m..just by **random coincidence**

...  

(line 2550) P I just kind of decided at **random** to go back in

...
not just randomly deciding to be there, and her randomly being there and all that other physical randomness

The influence and existence of Master Narratives about coupling becomes especially evident in the following example in which Speaker E shares some of the wisdom her father passed on to her about the role timing has on relationships:

my dad has always said that a successful relationship is like ten percent love and ninety percent timing and..yeah I wholeheartedly believe that and I think that (Speaker P) and I just had perfect timing when we came into each other’s lives

And you know then when you’re going through a relationship you do cycle through periods where your timing isn’t lining up that well

The scene that Speaker E creates above shows that the Master Narrative of couples being brought together by happenstance is also shared generationally, from parent to child. Repetition of the words "coincidence," "happenstance," and "timing" reinforces the impact of these small-n narratives in the creation of scenes through which "speakers convey and listeners glean meaning" (Tannen 31). These small-n narratives support Speaker E and P's big-N Narrative that they met in a bar by happenstance. The point of their narratives is highlighted by repetition and ultimately serves the culture-wide Master Narrative that couples are brought together through happenstance.

Speakers K and J also attribute randomness to their becoming a couple and use repetition and emotional description to dramatize scenes. The word "randomly" occurs twice in Speaker
K's small-n narrative about how she and Speaker J reconnected. Speaker K was invited to Speaker J's party by her friend Natalie:

(line 481) K when I was talking to Natalie online randomly

...  

(line 499) K we ended up randomly talking just online

Speaker K and Natalie drive together to Speaker J's apartment complex, which Speaker K describes as very complicated to navigate. Speaker K and Natalie were on the verge of leaving the apartment complex when Speaker J ran into them on his way to get more beer for the party:

(line 681) K the basis of our relay- the relationship hinges on a minute

...  

(line 685) K I just don't think it would have, I dunno, it may not have been the same if we had already left

If we hadn't decided to actually wait or if they hadn't went to go get beer

The urgency Speaker K shares helps create the scene and describes the impact that the confusing nature of the apartment complex could have had on her and Speaker J's relationship. This small-n narrative scene supports the Big-N Narrative of Speakers K and J meeting at a party and reconnecting after years apart. These narratives, in turn, support the Master Narrative of becoming a couple through happenstance.

Speakers S and M also employ a small-n narrative to support their big-N Narrative of meeting in a college course. Speaker M implies coincidence in his scene about doing poorly on a math test:
(line 1050) M  So..it had just so happened that..(Speaker S) had turned in her
test..fifteen, twenty seconds before I did mine, I'm sitting there looking at this
stuff I'm like

"I have no idea what this is"

They're like "Do this, and this- this" and I'm like "I have no idea what those words
mean..let alone how to do these functions"

So I'm like "Um..here's a little bit on this one," I'm- I'm..paging through trying,
you know, maybe something a later problem will help

Nothing

So I- she goes and turns her's in and I've..got nothing and went and turned mine in
and

that's when I made the decision to, it's like "Hell

that just kicked my ass, so I might as well just..you know, approach her and

see what happened, I've got nothing to lose at this point it's not like my ego is

going to get shot down any worse than it already has"

So I- ah

the first words I ever said to her..was "Well, that was kind of rough now, wasn't

it"

Speaker M's description of seeing Speaker S turn in her test and his use of dialogue to illustrate
his thought processes in sharing how he did not know the material dramatizes his inner conflict
and motivations in approaching Speaker S for the first time. The Master Narrative that
happenstance drives coupling shapes the scene: "it had just so happened that" Speaker S turns
her test in early, causing S and M to be near each other and that, coupled with the description of Speaker M's inner struggle, accounts for their first exchange of words. The scene supports the big-N Narrative of Speakers S and M meeting in a college math course, which is shaped by the Master Narrative of meeting by happenstance.

Speakers R and D touch on happenstance in describing how often they bumped into one another on campus after initially meeting:

(line 1762) D  it was only like a week later

That **we saw each other** on campus

And then do you remember we saw each other on the quad area?

...

(line 1844) R  **We ran into each other** on campus

or I would see you on campus anyway

...

(line 1872) D  like from that point on **we would see each other** like..really consistently

Repetition of the phrase "we + saw/ran into/would see + each other" reinforces the impact of their narrative of meeting in a dormitory laundry room, a circumstantially random event according to Speaker D's narrative:

(line 1404) and..I was using the laundry at like the- **some random time of the day**

[Speaker R] **happened to be doing laundry** at the same time

u:m..and I was reading in the laundry room and I remember..that
she commented that she liked my glasses

and..I thought that was pretty awesome

The repetition of "we + saw/ran into/would see + each other" sets up a parallelism by which the middle verb (saw/ran into/would see) can be altered, and where "we" is understood to be the first word and "each other" is understood to be the last word of the phrase. This repetition supports the point of the big-N Narrative of Speakers R and D meeting in a laundry room by chance and serves the culture-wide Master Narrative that couples meet by happenstance.

4.2 Adversity Enhances the Coupling Bond

A second Master Narrative that I discovered in this study was that adversity enhances the coupling bond. All couples that I interviewed mention a conflict or hardship that brought them closer together or that influenced them in a way to ready them for being in a relationship. Each big-N Narrative about these hardships is explained as enhancing the coupling bond. These big-N Narratives contain small-n narratives that employ involvement strategies to create scenes. The scenes, in turn, support each couple's theory of causation present in the big-N Narratives.

In their co-told narrative, Speakers E and P discuss the hardships they faced early on in their courtship, including the big-N Narrative of E's parents' divorce, the death of a close friend, E's brother being diagnosed with Type I diabetes, the death of P's grandfather, and the death of E's horse. Immediately after this big-N Narrative is a scene in which E and P evaluate how these events influenced their courtship:

(line 2825)  P  It was very dramatic

E  [[It was really dramatic

P  [[in our personal]] lives
E: U:m..and..it’s interesting 'cause I’ve actually talked a little bit with my 
EX-boyfriend about

his kind of path of relationships since he and I broke up and for HIM

it's been very hard for him to be close to anybody and he’s led this very kind

of

simple fortunate existence, he has hobbies, he has a really good high-paying

job,

and he just doesn't know how to be close to anybody

And so I feel like something that went really right for (Speaker P) and I

was all the personal drama

because it forces you..to open up

and depend on somebody and ask for help more than a lot of people are

comfortable doing

and so..you can..much more quickly

u:m learn about that tougher stuff=

P =Sure=

E =underneath

P It’s hard to be pretentious when life humbles you

These evaluations ("It was very dramatic" and "it forces you..to open up") help emphasize the

point of Speaker E and P sharing the big-N Narrative of their hardships: showing whether, how,

and why they faced adversity, in their words, to "open up" with one another and "depend on
somebody to ask for help." These evaluations serve to support the Master Narrative that adversity enhances the coupling bond.

Speakers K and J's big-N Narrative about adversity involves a car accident. Speaker K gives a thorough description of the event in her individually told narrative:

(line 186) K and **we got in a really bad car accident**

B (gasp)

K and **we- we- we could've died, it was really bad 'cause it was in** Topanga Canyon in- in- up in the hills and right above Santa Monica and Malibu and **those roads are really dangerous and it's really high up** and we kind of- we like corner to corner, not exactly head on but corner to cornered with another car coming around a corner and we- we were like right on the line and he was just a little over and we both just hit and spun and **we could have flown off the- the road**

B [[You stay-]] you stayed on the road?

K We did=

B =Okay=

K =but we- we turned like this down, like, and the canyon was right there and **we could have easily have died**
could have easily died

It was really bad, (Speaker J) like

had burns on his face from [[the impact of the-

B

K of- of the- um- the airbags

Um I like-

it seems silly

I jammed my hand really bad and for a while I couldn't move my thumb

um I had HUGE bruises

and we were both like super shaken, super shaken

and

So..being- being that distraught and that, like, freaked out about the fact that

we- we could have died

we went home and..uh..got super super drunk

(laughter)

Yeah it was- we sat with our friend Gus and we were like double shotting

tequila

for most of the night and then at the end of the night we were super drunk and

we were sitting outside on the couch they had on the patio and

we- we kind of just were like "Oh my God if I would have lost you I can't-

I can't even think about what that would have been like and I- I love you

and I just need you to know this
we could have died and..I don't want to lose you and that- that's really scary"

The car accident is also addressed in Speaker K and J's co-told narrative:

(line 884)  J  and we moved in together
K  Pretty much

[[in January
J  [[So that's how it started]] pretty much
K  Well..minus the whole we almost died in a car accident but yeah
J  Yeah..but that was- that was definitely
  I wouldn't say it brought us together but it made us like
    kind of talk about it more I think right off the bat
K  I think we finally just realized how important we were to each other at
   the time=
J  =Yeah=
K  =or at least that's how I feel
J  Yeah no I agree with that
  Like it was very much like..like I-
    First of all I was kind of impressed with how well you dealt with it
    and how well- like I had never been in kind of a nasty situation like that with
    someone that I was, you know, in a relationship with before
So..like putting all that together it was like
Oh..like..this works, like I like this
As with Speaker E and P's big-N Narrative about the hardships they faced during their courtship, Speaker K and J's treatment of this story about their car accident addresses how they faced adversity and the effect of realizing how much they meant to one another. The descriptions they offer concerning their emotions and understanding of the event work together to create an intense scene for the listener. This scene dramatizes and provides an interpretation of the big-N Narrative about the car accident and in turn supports the Master Narrative that adversity enhances the coupling bond.

 Speakers S and M's narrative addresses the adversity they faced in a college math course. The big-N Narrative about a particularly difficult test provides an explanation of Speaker M's motivation to approach Speaker S for the first time:

(line 1041)  M  Um..after a particular quiz..or test or something that I just

bombed=

B =Yeah=

M =hardcore, just kicked my butt

I had no idea what I was doing

And..no re- no idea why or how I got into Calc two but

that's an entirely different story

Um..I'm like "You know what? This test just kicked my ass

I- I might as well get shot down..while I'm already down"

Speaker M shares that his perceived failure caused him to approach Speaker S in the first place. The "bombed" test is also referred to in Speaker S and M's co-told narrative:

(line 1147)  M  my first [[words to you]]
S      [[I was- yeah
M  "Well, that kind of sucked now, didn't it?" it was after a test..or a [[quiz
S          [[There
were a lot]] of shitty tests in that class
they all kind of merged together
I wouldn't remember which one I hated

Speaker S shares that she also believed the tests to be difficult. The heightened language
("kicked my ass" "shitty tests") adds excitement to the scene about test taking, much like foul
language does in a particularly dramatic scene in a movie. These descriptions support the big-N
Narrative of the couple facing a challenging math test which is, in turn, shaped by the Master
Narrative that adversity enhances the coupling bond.

Speaker R and D share a big-N Narrative about the adverse effects of the uncertainty
each of them faced prior to their coupling. Speaker R's narrative shares how her roommate at the
time was interested in courting Speaker D:

(line 1353) R  u:m..**plus my roommate really really liked (Speaker D)**

u:m..and she- sh- she was kind of like more shy
or more selective about her friends anyway
she- she didn't do well
with acquaintances you know just talking here and there
u:m..and so **she was like pretty into (Speaker D)**
and they listened to the same music
I didn't know anything about music
u:m...and so she was like "Oh yeah, like, he's so perfect for me"

I was like "Oh, like..no problem" like I didn't have a problem with that

u:m..there were other guys

u:m..so:.yeah that's how it was for a couple months where like

my roommate was really really into him

Her evaluations are characterized by the repetition of "really" and the quoted speech from her roommate "he's so perfect for me." These descriptions support the big-N Narrative that is characterized by uncertainty: Speaker R was unsure if she should pursue Speaker D due to her roommate's interest.

Speaker D faces a similar big-N Narrative of adversity. He was unsure if Speaker R was committed to another man, which he admits influenced his behavior in courting Speaker R:

(line 1880)  D  She like hinted that like (Speaker R) was dating someone

And like I got the impression that like she was like in a serious like

relationship

with this

dude

R  Yeah

D  Um..who was like a family friend and like back in Washington and everything

and I was like "Oh now, that's awful"

it would have been good for you if that were the case but whatever

um but so like when we were hanging out

I was- I was also so like
"thats right
she APPEARS to be not taken when in fact there's some guy a few states away
who is [[occupying her mind"

R  [[Did that affect your behavior?
D  It did 'cause like I didn't=
R          =Really?= 
D          =Yeah

'cause like if you would have been dating someone like in Utah and I would have like seen you with them it would have been like
oh well then ok
OK I can't obviously even do anything
but then since like it was just this spectre
R    mhm
D  that didn't even really exist I found out..u:h..later

Speaker D's description uses the literary mechanism of metaphor in choosing to use the word "spectre" which indicates the ghastly nature of Speaker R's assumed relationship status at the time of their budding courtship. The exchange between Speaker R and D beginning with "Did that affect your behavior?" heightens the scene and pressures Speaker D to explain his inner turmoil in dealing with the uncertainty of Speaker R's relationship status. Both speakers face
adversity in dealing with the information they lack, and this deficit influences their early courtship behavior.

5 Conclusions and Future Research

The analysis presented here on couples narratives adds to Tannen's framework in showcasing two new Master Narratives not yet explored in the literature. It shows that the relationships between small-n, big-N, and Master Narratives can be used to uncover the underlying assumptions that influence how we shape and tell stories. Two of the Master Narratives that couples in this study touched on were (1) relationships occur by happenstance and (2) adversity enhances the coupling bond. The involvement strategies of details, dialogue, and repetition present in each couple's small-n narratives work to create dramatic scenes that support the big-N Narratives and, in turn, reinforce the Master Narratives. The Master Narratives identified in this study also shape the big-N Narratives in each couple's story. I have aimed to show in this project how these narrative types operate on different levels of abstraction and how the couples that I interviewed conceptualize and talk about their relationships with one another.

The research presented here shows that Tannen's framework elucidates Master Narratives in story types other than sister stories, such as couples' stories of how they met and became a couple. Beyond what we know to be common to romantic relationships in our society, this study aimed to explore that which we may not know to be common. For example, the cultural assumption that relationships occur by happenstance was uncovered in this study, which runs counter to the idea that couples are fated to meet, an idea that is seemingly pervasive in our society.
In seeking to uncover the Master Narratives mentioned in this work, other potential Master Narratives presented themselves, including the age-old adage "opposites attract." Speaker E, in her individually told narrative and in portions of her co-told narrative, touches on how different she and Speaker E are at the time of their meeting, but how well they meshed together despite these differences. I expect that with further study on Master Narratives in couples stories, other Master Narratives can be discovered and described using Tannen's approach (2008). I also expect that Master Narratives vary according to the speakers' cultural origin, native language, and age, much like the structure of narratives themselves.

Another avenue of research worth exploring would be uncovering how the Master Narratives in individually told versus co-told stories compare. Specifically, are Master Narratives about coupling the same across all individuals or do they differ between those who have been in romantic relationships versus those who have not, i.e., are Master Narratives internalized through experience? This analysis makes a case for further comparative research on couples and other types of storytellers.

There is also much to be learned about how speakers in general construct and reconstruct their stories and how these speakers share the floor with someone else who is familiar with the story. Tannen interviewed sisters, I interviewed couples, but what about other human relationships? Do brothers elicit similar Master Narratives as sisters do?

Another direction of interest would be to examine how males and females cooperate with others to build narratives and how they manage their evaluations in these settings. Speaker J provides a different (in content) and smaller set of evaluations in his individual narrative than he
gives in the co-told narrative with his significant other. It may be fruitful to examine the contexts in which speakers are more comfortable or more vocal with their evaluations.
References


Tannen, Deborah. "'All Relationships are Stories': Three Narrative Types in Sister Discourse."

APPENDICES
Appendix A: Speaker K & J's Narratives

Speaker K's Narrative

K  We actually met...originally
    We- we have our own terminology for our relationship
    We met originally in high school=
B  =Okay=
K  =And um..I'd been friends with my
    sort of best friend
    she's not really my best friend anymore, Natalie
    and we'd been friends since junior high
    and..when we got into high school we kind of like got into this big group of
    friends and we kind of all smashed together
    and you know I don't even know whose friend (Speaker J) was anymore but
    he just got kind of smashed into the group
    and we had this huge group of friends and we- like I think there was like ten
    or fifteen of us and
K  we hung out at all the breaks and at lunch and recesses and all that stuff and
    in classes we had together
    and..like, for pretty much the first two years of high school
    we were pretty much together all the time
    and then at the end of our sophomore year our friend Sarah
    um..had a- well, we- we know now she had a
    uh the beginnings of...schizophrenia
B  Oh dear=
K  =so she had a psychotic episode
    and uh..it kind of tore our friendship group apart
    and it was- at the time we didn't know that's what it was, but it was kind of
    at the time
    you were either on her side or on Natalie's side and they're both really good
    friends and I didn't want to pick so I didn't
B  Yeah
K  And then..eventually..just- things came to a head between me and Sarah and
    I was done having friends
    and by that time most of us had already..split off the group and there weren't
    many of us anymore and (Speaker J) had split off and
    went and found other friends and other stuff to do and
K  I pretty much stepped away from the group at that time and..for the last two
    years of high school
    I spent all my time..with my science teacher..at every break and lunch
    I would sit in his office- sit in his classroom and eat my lunch by myself
    and do my homework
K  for the whole last two
    years..and Natalie knew where I was so like if somebody really needed to
    come talk to me or really come- needed to come and find me everybody
    knew where I was and that's where I could be found and I didn't leave
if I didn't have to
So pretty much um I hated high school
So pretty much when it was over I just wanted out
So..I really don't..even think
I think I saw (Speaker J) one more time before the end of school and like signed yearbooks and=

B =Yeah=
K ="Oh nice to see you and nuh nuh okay see you later..have a nice life going this way now"

Um..so like once high school was done Natalie was pretty much the only person I talked to
and then she got a boyfriend
and he- it- she kind of did her own thing with him for a while so I didn't really talk to her for three years
which wasn't any big- wasn't a big to me it was like "whatever, whatever you wanna do, it's fine," you know, "I know you're busy"
So..I just did stuff on my own most of the time, I had work and school, and you know I was busy anyways so it was no big deal

Well one night like, I dunno, three or four years after high school
I got on- just got online just doing my normal thing and then she popped up- and she popped up in my IM messages and was like "(Speaker K)!" and uh-
She was like "I'm so sorry I haven't talked to you" and like- it was like "No big!" and we kinda hit off our friendship all over again and it was like nothing had ever happened so we- we spent a lot of time together and she was like "Well the only reason I talked to you is 'cause I was talking to (Speaker J) and telling him I" like, she had just broken up with her boyfriend and she had- was talking to (Speaker J) and he was like "Well just talk to (Speaker K), she'll- she'll be okay, she- she'll- she's- she's pretty relaxed, she's not gonna care" and I didn't so we- we were friends again and it was like yay and we're all happy and she was like "Oh I've been talking to (Speaker J)" and she was like "He's having a party and he wants me to come so you gotta come with me"

'Bcause it was in Santa Monica and she doesn't like to drive- she doesn't like to drive far by herself=

B =Yeah
K so basically it was "I wanna go to the party, I want you to come too, but I want you to drive and take me there"
and I was like "Okay"
and I was like "Okay, it sounds like fun"
'cause I- we were both- we- I had- had-it was...the year I turned twenty-one and my birthday's in April and that was-the party was in September

So...Natalie and I drove up there and we- (Speaker J) lived in this inSANE apartment complex in Santa Monica, it was HUGE it was HUGE it was like at least a city block long up a hill, so part of it was like down here and part of it was up here so like- there's like, four stories up here and like, eight stories if you're down here

B Mhm
K and..it's not well-marked where you can park and it's- the- not- one starts up here and so it continues so all these ones that are below it are all letters So when somebody tells you their apartment number they're like "Oh my apartment's like, you know, one-oh-four," you're like "Oh, one" "No, you're wrong"

B (laughter)
K So Natalie and I spent FIFTEEN MINUTES walking around this apartment complex trying to call and no answer So finally we just went to the front of the building and were like "Okay, we're gonna sit here for ten minutes and SEE if somebody comes"

and like..TWO MINUTES before we were sup- we were about to go back to the car (Speaker J) and a group of his friends like came walking around the corner, we're like "What the HELL?"

B (laughter)
K "We've been trying to find you for like HALF an hour" and he was like "Oh I'm sorry"

And like- so we ended up- he ended up uh walking us back to the apartment and they all went and got booze and stuff like that and- 'cause it was like a- it was a college party

B Oh
K So we all got- we all got really drunk and it was kind of- it was kind of funny like it was a funny feeling as we saw each other and I know for me it was kind of like "I don't remember (Speaker J) being this..HOT in high school" he was DEFinitely not the same person I knew in high school, this is-this is kinda interesting

B [((laughter) Oh hey
[[So like-]] but I had just gotten out of like a four-year-long relationship so like for me it was more like "Let's see where this goes but that guy's also cute so we'll see where that goes"

"We'll just see what happens" but I end- we ended up really hitting it off and I- we spent most of the- the time we were there together and actually it- we got really drunk and we ended up spending the night and both of our moms were like freaking out 'cause they hadn't heard from us it was like five in the morning before we had any forethought to call somebody and let them know we weren't coming [[home]]

and we were just- we spent like- we were- we had a lot of fun like reminiscing about high school and (Speaker J) tied my shoelaces together, duct-taped my feet together 'cause he thought it was funny and then I tried to get up and walk (laughter)

It was pretty funny and then we all fell as- we- (Speaker J) was in the- the middle and I was on one side and Natalie was on the other and we all fell asleep like wa- like..just watching random TV, and then we watched a- we woke up all and it was the end of some ridiculous movie and the news- the news came on and they- it was the- it was the news about Suddam Hussein being killed

Yeah that- that makes it- that gives it a date, [[dudn't it?]]

So um..and pretty much from then on (Speaker J) and I- we talked back and forth for a few months after that so we consider like that was our re-meeting date and then like we spent like the next three months kind of like talking and I- every weekend I progressively stayed longer and longer at his house

Until I was going there like Friday right after work at three at- for my old job and I would stay till like Sunday at like nine or ten o'clock and then drive all the way back home which I lived like over an hour away so=

But we just-
we slowly decid- realzed like how much we like got along and really liked each other and then um..he came and stayed with me for Christmas
and we were driving back home and we got in a really bad car accident (gasp)
and we- we could've died, it was really bad 'cause it was in Topanga Canyon in- up in the hills and right above Santa Monica and Malibu and those roads are really dangerous and it's really high up and we kind of- we like corner to corner, not exactly head on but corner to cornered with another car coming around a corner and we-
we were like right on the line and he was just a little over and we both just hit and spun and we could have flown off the- the [[road You stay on the road? We did=
Okay= but we- we turned like this down, like, and the canyon was right there and we could have easily have died could have easily died It was really bad, (Speaker J) like had burns on his face from [[the impact of the-
[[Oh my God of- of the- um- the airbags
Um I like-
it seems silly I jammed my hand really bad and for a while I couldn't move my thumb um I had HUGE bruises and we were both like super shaken, super shaken and
So..being- being that distraught and that, like, freaked out about the fact that we- we could have died we went home and..uh..got super super drunk (laughter) Yeah it was- we sat with our friend Gus and we were like double shotting tequila for most of the night and then at the end of the night we were super drunk and we were sitting outside on the couch they had on the patio and we- we kind of just were like "Oh my God if I would have lost you I can't- I can't even think about what that would have been like and I- I love you and I just need you to know this we could have died and..I don't want to lose you and that- that's really
scary"
And I was- pretty much- from that- then on we pretty much, that was Christmas Eve, er, day after Christmas
and we pretty much just, that was our- that was when we started dating and then actually probably like three or four weeks later we moved in together

B Wow
K And we pretty much have been together ever since like, it was like eight years ago now, over eight years ago
B I want eight years
K It's a lot of years

Speaker J's Narrative

J Well, we originally met in high school um...but...we...it was like freshman and sophomore year kind of we knew each other and then we kind of like split up, we went to different groups=
B =Yeah
J we were just friends, we had the same friends and we really didn't see each other for a couple years, probably till like, two-thousand-three? I think, somewhere around there and uh I..was talking to our mutual friend Natalie, who's her best friend online..and uh Natalie was having some hard times with social stuff for whatever and so I asked her to come down..to LA where I was currently living..uh from Ventura where she was living and uh just come to a party that me and my friends were having and..so she did and she- I told her to bring (Speaker K) 'cause she was like "yeah you haven't talked to (Speaker K) in years, you should talk to (Speaker K) and bring her along" and she did and (Speaker K) said yes and they came down and uh..apparently..they..couldn't get a hold of me when they got to the apartment complex the complex is really com- complex so uh (laughter) it's really hard to find our apartment and you couldn't get in anyway so they were kind of screwed and then they walked around for a while and they basically sat down on the curb in- in LA out in front of the complex and said "We're waiting for ten minutes and
if nobody shows up we're leaving"
(laughter)
and we happened to walk outside shortly thereafter apparently
and caught them on the curb and said "Hey! What the hell are you guys
doing here?" and
said hi and everything and
So that's- that's how we re-met
[[I guess
280 B [[Re-met]]?]] And then it was just kind of..from there it was just like
J Yeah we- she came down a couple more times over the next couple weeks
and we hung out more and more
and then we just got closer and then eventually
uh we made the decision to move in together
285 and I moved up to Ventura with her
B Oh
(laughter)
J Yeah it was pretty quick
like it was- I mean it was over a couple months like uh
290 just..a little while after Christmas and I think we first met like in October

Speakers K and J's Co-Told Narrative
K Do you want to start or would you like me to start?
J Uh start where you want to
K So we first met when we were in high school
Um..I don't..know if- were you friends with Natalie..first?
295 J Uh..yes
I was friends..with John?
K Okay
J Yeah, random, actually I was friends with a friend of John's
and then I met John and then I saw John at the Circle
300 and so I started talking to him, and he was friends with Natalie so that's /?/
K Okay
J It was kind of long and like drawn out and it only happened over the course
of like two days
so it's not like=
395 K =It was like right in the beginning of freshman year
and I had been friends with Natalie since, like- oh well- since three- two
years' previous
'cause I was- knew her in junior high
J Yeah
K and so we all kind of hang out and knew each other from then
390 Um..and then about..we- we used to hang out like occasionally during high
school, like
we always hung out during class, like during school time
but there were like- we went and saw..Mortal Combat together at the
400 movies=
Yeah, as a group it was like=
=it was always me and (Speaker K) and
Natalie and Sarah that one time=
=Yeah=
=and like
like maybe one or two other people other times like that
it wasn't very [[often
of the like-]] yeah, when we could
we were..[[sixteen or whatever so we didn't really have cars or anything
[[Do-.do you remember Natalie's..]] birthday party when it was
Austin Powers [[themed?
[[Yes..I remember that..very]] [[well
[[For]] Natalie's sixteenth
birthday she had an Austin Powers themed party
Oh baby
(laughter) It was-=
=Yeah.||(it was like that
I didn't stay very long
It wasn't anything personal I just
I had never been a big party person and I didn't-
I was even worse when I was in school
Aw
Um..so basically that- there was like- after two years
um..one of our friends, Sarah, kind of had like a
feud with Natalie, so it was either be friends with Natalie or be friends with
Sarah
and I didn't want to choose
And-
who I was gonna be friends with
Yeah and I had already pretty- pretty much left the group at that point
[[Yeah
[[Like I had]] gone and like made friends with a bunch of video and- and
uh- drama people
So I spent most of my time=
=hanging out
=away from where you guys were
Yeah, he kind of like, left when all the stuff was starting and like
found his own thing and I-
I actually don't even think I saw him again=
=Wow=
K =until like the end of se-
the end of senior year when I had him like sign my yearbook
and at the same time I was kind of like "Oh, I remember you..will you sign
this?"

Everybody else is signing it, do you wanna sign it [too]?

J [Right yeah

(laughter)

K It was like a weird like "Okay see you later" [kind of thing

B [Aw

(laughter)

K And then like- I dunno I- I..really hated high school anyways so I just didn't
really
want to pay attention or hang out with anybody anymore anyway, I pretty
much
still was friends with Natalie and talked to her occasionally
but then she got a boyfriend and she was- I pretty much didn't talk to
anybody from
high school for like three years afterwards

J Just kind of did my own thing

I moved..uh..back to the boat, I mean after high school and then I moved to
San Diego in preparation for going to school in LA

K [?/]

J [but it was]] like still a couple months before school started=

K =Yeah=

J =so I

went and lived with my mom in San Diego
and then..uh moved to LA, went to school for a while and then when I was
there
uh..that's when Natalie- when I was talking to Natalie online randomly
it was a couple years later, I think it was like two-thousand-two, right?
Something like that, maybe three

K Two-thousand-three

J Yeah

And uh I was talking to her and uh she had broken up with her long-time
boyfriend

K That you also knew

J Yes that's Mike Zats=

K =Yeah=

J =he wa- he was actually one of my best
friends
So..like I had seen Natalie in the intervening time because I had gone to my
friend's house and stuff like that

B Yeah

J But like I didn't go to hang out with Natalie, I went to go hang out with my
friend Mike and all of our other friends who all hang out together
to do like haunted houses and random shit and- and..whatever
And uh- and so..like..I dunno, we ended up randomly talking just online
because I was bored and she was bored and we were talking and
then yeah I was like "Well, I mean, you're having a really hard time like
getting socialized, you feel really lonely because there's-
you don't know anybody anymore because the only people you knew where
Mike's friends" because

that's the kind of person Natalie is and then
it was like "Well, I mean, we're still friends, like why don't you come down
to LA"
and it took a lot of convincing because she doesn't like to drive on the
freeway

She has a deathly fear of semi trucks=
K She has a- one of her aunts was in a really bad car accident on the freeway
with a semi
where her top half of her car got chopped off
B Ah

so Natalie's like deathly afraid of driving on the freeway especially when
there are semis like
J Well she was
K She [[was
J [[She's gotten]] over [[it
K [[It's- it's-]] it's not as bad now
but there were- would be- basically if I was driving
and she was in the car with me I would have to like full- pedal to the metal
to get past the semi or else she would be freaked out the whole time we
were [[behind it
B [[Right
J And uh so anyway I- I said "Yeah come down"
I got her to come down and
she didn't want to come down on her own and so I said "Well, do you still
have (Speaker K)'s number, can you talk to her?" like
because I had asked her like "You don't have any friends?"
she's like "(Speaker K)'s like the only person I still know" (laughter) pretty
much
K And we hadn't talked in like three years
J Yeah, exactly, she's like "She was kind of my best friend" and I was like
535 "Aw whatever I'm sure she'll be glad to hear from you, say 'What's
up?'"
And so she did and then (Speaker K) said "Yeah, sure, I guess" essentially
K Yeah she basically- she like IMed me and she was like "I was"-
she's like- I popped- I popped on the Internet and she pa-
emailed or messaged me on the- the instant messenger and was like
"(Speaker K)?" and I was like "Yeah?"
and we kind of like reconnected and then like
she was like "Well, (Speaker J) said I should talk to you
'cause he said you wouldn't be mad at me" and I was like
"Why would I be mad at you? I'm not mad at you"
and she's like "Oh I know I haven't seen you in forever, I'm a bad friend"
and I was just like "No it's-
it's cool. You got stuff to do" and then she told me about the whole breakup
and their
whole relationship and I had met the guy that she was dating like
when they first started dating and was totally annoyed by him
so that's pretty much why I never-
He like- we went out to this restaurant, this like really nice like fish
restaurant, like
seafood restaurant
and..he was like..playing with his french fries and like making them dance
and like
covering himself in ketchup and then like
he got underneath the table and [[he was like
[[What?
acting like a child and like yelling for Natalie like a little kid
and I was like- I was done, I was like "Okay, I'm- I'm gonna go home now, I
can't handle this
I'm not..mentally"
=It's just gross, [[it's just gross, like "What are you doing?"
[[It was- it was really gross
And then like we were driving and I was like
afraid for my life 'cause he was-
half the time he was playing with his little alien doll while he was driving
or like turning around to like ask me questions or like talk to me
and I was like "We're going like fifty and you're not even looking straight
ahead and you're not even paying attention at all, are you?
You're just playing with your stupid little alien toy"
So I was like "Okay, I don't really-"
I- I- the- uh- for me it was like
I wasn't mad at Natalie=
=Right=
=and it was like I didn't ever wanted to see
her again but it was like
I don't really need to be included if like he's going to be there=
=Right
I don't really- I don't really care=
=Right
So when she messaged me I was totally fine and she was-
then she was like-
a couple of..weeks later when the party actually was=
=Mhm=
she was like
"Come with me 'cause I don't want to go by myself" and then I was like
"That sounds like fun" she's like "(Speaker J)! You remember (Speaker J)!
and I was like
"Sure..whatever (laughter)..let's go to a party, whatever that's fine"
So we drove down to- to Santa Monica and..Malibu, and
(Speaker J) lived in this really intense crazy..apartment complex

J Yeah [[it was huge
K [[It was huge
J Yeah it was just- it was really really big
um..and it was complicated by the fact that it was on a hill
and so like the entrance is at the top of the hill
but it runs like down the side of the hill
so the entrance floor is the ground floor
and everything else is like basement levels
except for at the bottom you can be like two stories over the street
but you're in basement level three

B [[Oh
J [[Yeah
K [[Floor A
J Yeah yeah yeah exactly
And yeah I think it was, it was like one, two, three up and it was A, B, C
down
So..yeah..so I'd be like "Oh we're in uh B-two-zero-zero-two"
"Okay, cool" and you get in
and if you in at the elevator at the ground floor
it doesn't go down
because it doesn't actually go underground
you have to like just go down the hill essentially
B Oh
J So you get in the elevator and it's like one, two, three, four, five, (laughter)
or whatever
and "What?"
So..it led to a lot of confusion and uh
and so you guys couldn't even get in, I don't think, right?
K [[No we
J [[There's no guest parking]] or something or
K You gave us..John that lived with you's phone number
J [[/?/
K [[and we kept-]] we kept calling and calling and nobody was answering
'cause there was a- a raging college party

so no one's answering the phone
So Natalie and I are like standing there
we were out at like- we didn't know, we were parked in the bottom
basement level on probably the opposite end of the complex from
where they actually lived=

J =Yeah
K and we were parked down there and we go up a floor um...and it's like a regular lobby except for like you have to have like a pass to get in the elevator and like the- it doesn't have a map, it just has a bunch of letters and numbers on it and we're both like "I think he said like (laughter). seventeen something? Or eleven something? I don't know"

the like- the map doesn't tell you where anything is and we're just kind of like

So we like walked around like out front a little bit and we- we're starting to get tired 'cause we'd already been like walking around and trying to figure it out for like twenty minutes

B Yeah

K And then we were like "Okay, we're just gonna sit here if we don't see anybody we know in like ten minutes..we're leaving"

And she was like "Okay" and I was like "We'll just tell him we're sorry" and we'll go find somewhere to have dinner and go home and she was like "Okay, we tried" it wasn't like we could do anything else=

J =Right

K No- it wasn't- we were- I got tired of calling and it was like whatever So we thought- we sit- we're sitting at this like- in front of the sign for the apartments=

B =Mhm=

K =and like just about ready to go and like this group of guys comes out of the- out of the parking structure and like starts walking towards us and we notice (Speaker J) 'cause (Speaker J)'s way taller than anybody else (laughter) and he always had been

So we're like "Oh, there we go" so I'm like "We're just getting ready to leave, where the heck have you been? (laughter)

We couldn't figure out how to get to where you live It's really confusing here and nobody was answering their phone" And then uh (Speaker J)'s like "Oh, yay, come- come, I'll show- show you" and so (Speaker J) broke off with us and walked us like the ten miles to the apartment (laughter) and the other guys- the other guys all went and got more beer or whatever they [[were doing

J [[Yeah that's why we]] left is to go

K So all the- the basis of our relay- the relationship hinges on a minute
B    Oh
K    Where if- 'cause [[I mean if
J    [[A beer run]] yeah
685  K    I just don't think it would have, I dunno, it may not have been the same if
    we had already left
    if we hadn't decided to actually wait or if they hadn't went to go get beer
J    It could have been /?/
K    Yep, then we
690  B    God bless the alcohol
K    Pretty much, we all- we had-
    We had like- we hit it off like part way through the night and we just kind
    of
    hung out together and laughed and talked and drank and
695  reminisced about high school with Natalie and
    'cause Natalie and I didn't know anybody else so we pretty much just
    talked to (Speaker J) for most of the night
J    Yeah, I was just trying to like do the normal party thing and just introduce
    everybody to everyone else
700  But that still never works like
    Do you know what I mean?
    Like if you dee- everybody's like "Yeah, cool, you're (Speaker J)'s friends,
    I'm gonna go talk to mine"
    They pretty much switch and so- and then, you know, maybe they're like a
    little friendly or whatever
705  Most of the people were pretty friendly, especially after a couple drinks
    But it was still like- yeah, still uncomfortable if you're the only people that-
    the only person you know is me or Natalie
    and you haven't talked to me in three years
710  So, yeah
    But yeah- so then we did that and then we hit it off and then after that, came
    down like a couple weeks later or something like [[that
    [[Yeah]]
J    [[Like we talked online]] a couple of times [[and
715  K    [[A couple weekends later
K    Yeah
J    she came down and then
    she started cooking for me
    because I was super broke and didn't have any food like at all
720  so she would cook food and bring it down on the weekends
    and then hang out all weekend and then go back
K    I pretty much won over the entire fl- apartment, everybody they knew
    All the boys, 'cause they were all boys /?/
    I never really met a girl that hung out
725  J    No we didn't do that
K    Yeah so like once they knew I cooked
J    We were all nerds
it was like

All my- okay, so I went to an art institute school which means that I was going for film and everyone else I know pretty much- knew pretty much

I think there was like one other video person but everybody else was all game design

And animation

And animation

Oh and there was one culinary

Yeah

but that was it

Like every- like one random culinary dude

Because they don't- the way they work there is really dumb but they- the way they put the apar- apartments together they just throw people in I don't know if it's like a lottery or they're just like ever- "You wanted a two-bedroom apartment blah" and you get in with these random people rather than trying to like match people or do anything like that they don't do that shit So they just- they- so yeah it'd be like just because game design and animation was one of the most im- like biggest fields you get a lot of those dudes in the apartment complexes and then culinary was the second biggest so like it was like random culinary people pretty much every- every apartment had at least one which I don't know if they intended to do that or not but like those people are not like- they're not gonna be like "I'm gonna cook for the whole house" they're like "I'm gonna cook and take my assignment to school, and fuck you guys"

[["Don't touch it"

[["Don't eat this]], you bastards"

Yeah so like every weekend I'd come down and like I'd bring (Speaker J) something and then after a while they were all like they look- they gave me their sad puppy face

Yeah

"We're hungry"

Yeah so initially it would be like- like little stuff and then after the, I think it was the second or third week, I was like "Just bring a whole tray of enchiladas"

Yeah I'd make like

Just bring as much food as you can

a giant pot of soup, just for (Speaker J) or like trays of enchiladas [[and then
"This stuff]] should last you for a week" and we'd be
like "No"

and then like finally they were all like "Would you make us some food /?/"
and I was like- they're like "We really like your enchiladas"
and I was like 
[[Speaker J]] you're not supposed to share that
it's supposed to last"
So I made like..trays and trays of enchiladas and like
It- there was one guy, we called him Asian John because
there were like four Johns, and that was the-
There was Asian John, there was John Bear, there was Just John, and there
was John something else
But like Asian John was like the super nicest guy, he was like
"Do you want me to help you do the dishes now?"
after everybody had gotten..stuffed full of enchiladas
He was one of the dirtiest people I've ever met
Like, not like living-wise but just like mind-wise and mouth-wise most of
the time
But he's super super nice and like very much like "Yeah, all right, I'll help
out with the dishes"
You're not gonna- you're not gonna bite the hand that feeds you [[anyway
much-]] but very much he would- like the next day after we would get
drunk
then we- he would- like the next morning we'd all woke- wake up like semi-
hungover and he-
like, I remember one morning he's like "I really wanna go get something
just super greasy because my stomach hurts"
and like that's-
that was his home brew remedy to like settle his stomach was to get some
super greasy food to like
I'm like "Okay"
And he's like "I know this Mexican place they have really good
um="
=Menudo
"Menudo" yeah
And uh he's like "I don't have a car, can you give me a ride?"
and we were like "Yeah sure okay cool" and so
we had went out and- with just him and got Mexican food in the morning
and then-
at eight and came back
Mexican food breakfast after drinking..oh
(laughter)
It worked well for him
It did for him
Not for me
K so we basically it went on like that for like three months
So we- we- I would go down there like..pretty regularly, like
after like- probably after like the first month I probably went down there
every weekend
and it would progressively get longer
to the point where I would like
leave straight from work on Fridays and I wouldn't come home until like
ten to twel- ten to midnight on Sunday
and then..just go back to work and do it all again the next weekend
J Yeah
K Yep..pretty much
And then..it came down to..I was gonna have to move out
of my apartment because I lost funding for school
and..like..pretty much there was no way I was gonna be able to stay
I couldn't find a job or anything
K and (Speaker K) was pretty anxious to leave her house at the time
J just 'cause she wanted to move out
K My mom was..not happy with me being gone
J A lot
K But yeah, and then it was- it was kind of like "I don't know if this is too
soon, but like
this seems like it could work out and it-
I mean, I feel right about it, I don't know how you feel"
K and then she was like "Yeah, I kinda like that idea" so we kinda worked it
out and
J over the course of like two, three weeks
K we put it all together
J like she would rush down like in the middle of the week sometimes
K and like bring me paperwork to sign
J for like apartment contracts and like leases
K and like- or lease applications and- and uh
J 'cause they just had to have my name on it
K and then she brought it back up, get it done
J And there was like one that was like
K "Yeah, we're- come down sign- you gotta sign the paperwork and then run it
J back up, then we're gonna be done"
K And while we were like in Barnes and Noble and I was signing it we get a
J phone call
K and they're like "No we gave it to someone else"
J like "Fuck you"
K So then..yeah, I mean we eventually got an apartment and then it was "Okay
J cool!"
K so I threw everything I owned in the back of her Suzuki and then moved to
J Ventura with her
K and we moved in together
K Pretty much
In January

J: [So that's how it started] pretty much
K: Well..minus the whole we almost died in a car accident but yeah
J: Yeah..but that was- that was definitely

I wouldn't say it brought us together but it made us like
kind of talk about it more I think right off the bat

K: I think we finally just realized how important we were to each other at the
time=

J: =Yeah=

K: =or at least that's how I feel
J: Yeah no I agree with that
Like it was very much like..like I-

First of all I was kind of impressed with how well you dealt with it
and how well- like I had never been in kind of a nasty situation like that

So..like putting all that together it was like
Oh..like..this works, like I like this
So..and then we started talking about it
and it was pretty much like-

that didn't solidify- we weren't like "Okay we should move in together right
now"

K: No
J: But it was-
K: That was [like

J: [[it was]] very much like "Oh okay so this is kind of serious"
and then a couple of weeks later=

K: =Right=

J: =it was like

okay the hammer has dropped on my life

so..I need somewhere to go, you want to leave your house so
why don't we get cracking on that real quick and like
put it together
and like..(Speaker K) as usual performed miracles and managed to get some
shit done

K: It was- it was actually pretty disappointing like
all the apartment searching and always finding either too expensive, crappy
There was one I went to where it was like
a house that they had turned into three separate studio apartments
and they turned a kitchen pantry into a bathroom

And like I was like it- it was one of the place- one of the two places I could
afford- and that we could afford

and I was like looking- I was thinking about it and like-
I was like "Man, if we don't get anything else this is gonna have to be it"
but I really don't think that

(Speaker J) would have been able to have like ever taken a shower there

standing up
and like- because of- the door was only slightly taller than me
and like this- this- it was like- it was like- like a- like a little closet
like that little closet
like where- like you basically walk in a door that's about the same size as
you
'cause it's a pantry, not a- not a door door

B Yeah
K So it's like, you know, two, maybe three feet across, maybe
Nah, it's probably more like- like this, like two, two feet open- two feet
wide
and maybe like, maybe five and a half, maybe six feet
maybe..tall
B Oh my God
K And then you walk in the door which is hard to open
and then once you open it, you like block off half the bathroom
so like you- you have to walk in all the way to the back of the bathroom
turn around, close the door
and then you can use the sink
and then..you can go- then you have to kind of like
turn yourself again and walk back down
and then turn again and there's the toilet
'cause it's not- it's literally like this wide
so then you have to turn around and use the toilet
and then- but once you use the toilet you have to get up and turn around
again
to get back in the shower
'cause it's right across from the toilet
but it's like literally, like- like=

B =Like my bathroom
K It's- it's- it was like your bathroom if there was like a hallway
B [[Yeah
K [[in-]] like in there
Like it was that tiny, it was really a-
and it had very low ceilings too
And I kept thinking "If we get this apartment, (Speaker J)'s probably gonna
hate it
He's probably gonna hate life
for a- for a long time"
or we're both gonna have to get like- we're gonna have to both lose weight
and get like
shortening surgery or something
(laughter)
But yeah
And we finally found a really nice studio and like
the only reason=

J =In Ventura=
=One of the main reasons I think we got it was because the lady was super nice and when I was telling her it was me and my boyfriend's first apartment she was like "Oh I remember when I- when I moved in with my first boyfriend and we had a studio apartment too and you seem like a responsible person and"

We had like a- a really cool- it was a pretty big studio it was nice

[[It was]] pretty much

[[Yeah It was pretty much the size of this room]]

Now it's and the kitchen

eight years [[later]]

[[just about]]

and we're still together

Yep

It's almost a decade

Shut your mouth (laughter)
Appendix B: Speaker S & M's Narratives

Speaker S's Narrative

1000  S  Um I don't remember the exact instance when we met because it was in Calc class of my freshman year at Toledo and..I wasn't dating anybody at the time but I was kind of looking for a boyfriend just..to have one, kind of a thing so I was dressing up pretty and stuff and was in the front row, I remember, and the professor was such as asshole he was..um..Japanese or something and it was his first semester, first like month in the US, right So he didn't know anything, would do like these huge equations on the board and would- would say "Okay, got it?" and then erase it right 1010  So..I remember leaving class pissed off all the time and he would ask me like "Oh that class really sucked" and it just kind of went from there and I remember one day in particular we were outside the classroom just waiting to get in and 1015  I was watching Pirates of the Caribbean on my Zune..thing and..he remember- I remember him asking me about it and found out that he liked it and I mean if you like Pirates of the Caribbean you got to be pretty cool, right? You know? 1020  So..and then we dated, I remember our first date was at the Olive Garden He got there first..and then..I came but I wasn't really sure if I should go back (laughter) You know? 'Cause I didn't know if he was already there or if I should look or if I should just wait, you know? 1025  So I ended up waiting out there for like five to ten minutes before I actually went out there to..talk with him and stuff, so It went well, we've been together pretty much ever since

Speaker M's Narrative

1030  M  It was uh Shit had to have been- had to have been fall semester..at Toledo Um..would have been my..second year there? It was her first 1035  B  Okay M  Um..calc two..and she was the pretty redhead the girl with the pretty red hair, who sat in front of me..two chairs and over one and..at the time she had no idea who the hell I was 1040  just..some guy in the class who didn't know what he was doing Um..after a particular quiz or test or something that I just bombed= 
B
M

=Yeah=
=hardcore, just kicked my butt

1045
I had no idea what I was doing
And...no re- no idea why or how I got into Calc two but
that's an entirely different story
Um...I'm like "You know what? This test just kicked my ass
I- I might as well get shot down...while I'm already down"

1050
So...it had just so happened that...(Speaker S) had turned in her test...fifteen, twenty seconds before I did mine, I'm sitting there looking at this stuff I'm like
"I have no idea what this is"
They're like "Do this, and this- this" and I'm like "I have no idea what those words mean...let alone how to do these functions"
So I'm like "Um...here's a little bit on this one," I'm.. paging through trying, you know, maybe something a later problem will help Nothing
So I... she goes and turns hers in and I've.. got nothing and went and turned mine in and
that's when I made the decision to, it's like "Hell that just kicked my ass, so I might as well just...you know, approach her and see what happened, I've got nothing to lose at this point it's not like my ego is going to get shot down any worse than it already has"

1065
So I- ah
the first words I ever said to her..was "Well, that was kind of rough now, wasn't it"
for the end of the test, of course and she's like "Well, I think I did okay"

1070
And...this was at I don't remember the building
Anyways, on one end of the campus and she had always parked on the other end of campus
So we're just sitting there walking and bullshitting and she got to..how she was..looking at some place in the French Quarter, about moving and talking about absolutely nothing that had to do with anything So I'm like.."So you kind of understand this stuff"
she's like "Yeah I really did well in Calc in high school" and I'm like
"Can you uh..wanna help me because I have no idea what's going on"
So she gave me her number and..that was..that was that

Speaker S and M's Co-Told Narrative

M Toledo
Uh..Calc two
S Yeah..crazy Chinese..[[professor

1085
M       [[Oh my God]], oh my God
Was he in fact Chinese or is he just
S He- I remember it was his first couple months in the states or something
So he had never been here
He was the worst, he made me hate math

1090 M I- I had already hated it before that
S Then why'd you take it?
M I had to, it was a requirement
S So was Astro two or whatever, or Optics
M I understood- well, the optics part I didn't understand because it was all
math-based
Theo- theoretical physics, no problem
The theory of why things work and how things work and
stuff like that, the theory side...no problem
The practical math application of..so this particle could in fact be in six
different places at the same time NO IT CAN'T
particles are in one spot
We have this potential, well and
NO..no no no
Give me the theory- the theory part

1095 S [[The theory part, I did fine
[[But math is all theory
M Theoretical is an ex- math is an exact science, it's not theoretical
That- that had nothing to do with how we met, dear
or our relationship other than that

1100 S So we met in Calc class, in Calc two
M I remember I was in the front row. [[and
S Second
M 'Cause you had your feet on the chair in front of you sometime- most of the
time

1105 S Yeah and I still do that..in class unless someone takes the seat next to me
um..and you were behind me
oh there was that crazy girl that always got
S [[the curve

1110 M [[I was two]] rows over from you
S Yeah she always blew the curve
Everybody..by everybody I mean everybody but her
failed the test
she would get hundreds on it so he wouldn't do a curve

1115 S Yeah and I still do that..in class unless someone takes the seat next to me
M Uh..anyway..[[fall semester?
S [[Ss-]] Yeah it would have been, 'cause it would have been my

1120 first semester there
my- one of my first classes
M I remember that
So it was our first semester there, well, my first semester you're... I'd have to do the math, third?

Three- third third

Talk with your mouth not full

Third semester, second year

Kay

So first semester of my second year

Yeah..so we met in that class, I don't remember exactly when we met, but I do remember like being outside and I was..watching Pirates of the Caribbean on my Zune and you had commented on how you liked it and I was always [[watching it]] before class

[[It was before that

Yeah you were watching that before class my first [[words to you]]

[[I was- yeah

"Well, that kind of sucked now, didn't it?" it was after a test..or a [[quiz

were a lot]] of shitty tests in that class they all kind of merged together I wouldn't remember which one I hated

No we stopped in- in we started in front of..hell's the name of that building?

Scott's building?

Yes..it's not the Ritter, that was the one next to it

Yeah

It's not the Stranahan

No it's the one right in between those two

Mhm

McMaster

Yes

McMaster

McMaster

Not that has any bearing on anything=

=Totally=

=but

No yeah so McMaster

and [[then

[[Started talking to you]] right at- right..outside McMaster, and we stopped in front of the Stranahan, outs- in front of Stranahan

Which one was Stranahan?

Stranahan was

if you're at the mall near the mall you had the com- the student union
the- the

1180  S  Am I looking at the field house or away from the field house?
M  If you're looking at the field house it's the building right behind you
S  Kay
I don't remember stopping there
I remember walking there

1185  M  We stopped there, and we chatted for a while about how
you were looking at a place, trying to move out of your mom's house and
you were looking in
French- French Quarter and
you had found a couple of apartments there that you liked..and you were
talking about
doing draperies and
S  I still got my drapery
M  Was it like this though?
Anyway
1190  S  And..I asked you to tutor me, or at least help me
I remember trying to tutor you and you couldn't figure out your=
M  =I=
S  =sine,
cosine, tangent

1200  M  Yeah=
S  =at all=
M  =Again
S  Not that complicated
M  Well
1205  S  I still remember those
M  I was never really taught those that well though
S  There're tutors
M  That doesn't help me now
B  Wasn't that- wasn't that your job, (Speaker S)?
1210  S  No, it was Calc two, you learn that stuff before Calc two
M  Yes, you learn that in Trig
S  Yeah
M  Which I didn't do very well in
I'm okay with numbers
1215  I'm okay with numbers and letters
It's when you start throwing Greek letters into math equations that I have
problems
Alpha, sigma
S  They're not [[that hard
1220  M  [[Theta
Anyway
S  Pi is Greek and you like pi
M  The type you eat
S  Pi is only a number, it's just put into a symbol, it's not that complicated
It's only infinite, you know
Yeah, yeah, it's only about three point
One four one five

[[Nine]] two six
Nine two seven

One point one four, nine two seven
Anyway
So we met there, I remember going on a date, though, at the Olive Garden and you were already in the Olive Garden
and I remember being outside in the lobby, not sure if I should go in and look for you or if I should call and text you and I think I ended up calling you and I don't remember what we ate but you probably ate

[[Garlic herb chick-]
[[The garlic fray-
Garlic herb chicken [[con broccoli

[[con broccoli
That was before they took it off the menu 'cause [[nobody ever ordered it

[[He still tries to order it
[[I do still try to order it

[[I've never heard of that, wow
It's all he ever gets at Olive Garden
It's so good

and the salad and the breadsticks
I at least change it up, I know how to try variety
Not really
Is that the first time you've been introduced to uh
[[Brandon

[[Smoked]].smoked
Oh..oh God
"Can I get a diet water?"

We went to Olive Garden [[with him for a date one night
[["Or a salad without lettuce?"

We were screwing with the waitress and we asked for a diet water and then a salad without lettuce
Was Beth there too?

Mhm
That was so funny
And Dan
[[Oh
[[and
I had purp- I had purposefully forgotten him

Sorry..and Justin..and Nick
I miss Nick

My roommates were an interesting collection in his dorm, his roommates were different, my first experience living with guys.

You didn't even live there

On and off

You slept over sometimes

Aw Jack

(laughter)

So, there's that

That's really the story of how we met

Yeah for the most part

Basically just Calc class

all of it
Appendix C: Speaker R and D's Narratives

Speaker R's Narrative

R: K..well..um..I came to BYU right after I graduated high school
So I was 18

1290 A:nd..moved into Riviera Apartments
A:nd..it was like..the first or second week so
pretty..like at- right at the beginning
U:m I was dating a guy from-
kind of from home

1295 he was like a family friend that I had known for a long time
U:m..and then all of a sudden we're like
Wow we're adults and like this- yeah
Let's like be a couple
Um but we had only been dating a couple weeks

1300 um but we were like 'Yeah long distance we can totally do this'
(laughter)
and- and it- that was my first boyfriend so
I don't know if you remember like your first boyfriend or girlfriend but
where you're like

1305 this will be forever=

B: =Yeah
R: and so like that was kind of where I was
um..so pretty into that relationship but also
pretty overwhelmed at all the opportunities I guess

1310 like so many new different people
um so I was also kind of..considering that
um..and..so I come down..to do laundry
and (Speaker D)'s there like on his laptop
he has these cool glasses

1315 B: (laughter)
R: and he's- he's kind of like just a cool looking guy
and so- and he has a really nice laugh
and he would like laugh at whatever I said
and so I was like "Oh he's like a really good conversationalist that's cool"

1320 um..and I- I open up conversation with "I like your glasses"
and by that I mean "You look like someone I'd like to talk to"
you know "have a conversation with"
um..and he was down there like
on his laptop watching, you know, his laundry

1325 I just like, you know, put it in there and walked back up to my apartment
um I was like "Oh maybe I could stay and talk"
um..and..we had-
I think it- we were talking about being vegetarian
u:m..so that was a big point

1330 and I had just like made some homemade granola
and I was like "Oh I should bring some down for him"
but then I was like "No that's way too weird"
(laughter)
but so that was our very first encounter
and then- I just like..see him..like..more than I see other people
like..campus is a huge huge place
but I would just like..run into him..like more than you would out of random
chance
someone else it seemed like to me
um and maybe because I was kind of like thinking about him I would like
see him
um..but..yeah so it was actually a couple months
so that was like..late August
and then we didn't hang out until..Halloween party
so: it was a couple months
and in those couple months like
I:dumped my boyfrie:nd..from ho:me and started dating another guy
um..and the:n..broke up with him
I think we were still dating when (Speaker D) and I hung out on Halloween
though
um..and so I still wasn't like totally looking for a new boyfriend
plus- I'm so curious what (Speaker D) told you
um..plus my roommate really really liked (Speaker D)
um..and she- sh- she was kind of like more shy
or more selective about her friends anyway
she- she didn't do well
with acquaintances you know just talking here and there
um..and so she was like pretty into (Speaker D)
and they listened to the same music
I didn't know anything about music
um..and so she was like "Oh yeah, like, he's so perfect for me"
I was like "Oh, like..no problem" like I didn't have a problem with that
um..there were other guys
um..so:..yeah that's how it was for a couple months where like
my roommate was really really into him
and we always hung out- it was like us three
so like two girls and (Speaker D)
or maybe one of his other roommates or something but it was like usually a
group that first semester
and then:..yea:h..and the:n..winter break came
a:nd spending time with my family
and I had to like get approval like "Well what would you think like if I
dated (Speaker D)"
um 'cause my little sister is like my best friend so
she always knows what's good for me
um and she's like "Yeah, sure, I- I could see that"
and so it was after uh Christmas break um..that we finally started dating
and so we come back in January and like the first week we're like
"Oh it's so good to see you"
and..we start taking these like long walks at night
which..was fine..but it was so cold..like so cold
because we didn't want to make it like official like
"Hey we should go somewhere alone together to like talk or"
so we were just- we would just like wander..for like hours and hours..in the
winter
and so yeah that was like for a whole week
and then like January 15th or 16th..we started dating
( Speaker D ) got it wrong once
and now I can't remember which day was wrong and which one was right
and..yeah and we were on a really long walk and..he held my hand
and..kissed me goodnight at the door
and..we were dating
(laughter)
So yeah that's how we met initially
and..a couple times I like wanted to not date anymore because like drama
with my roommate
and..my roommate's like my best friend now though still so
it's- it's like all good
that's really all I have to say about our meeting story
Speaker D's Narrative
D Uh..so..( Speaker R ) and I met..uh..while we were both..uh..in undergrad at-
in Utah
and..we were living in the same apartment complex
and..I was using the laundry at like the- some random time of the day
( Speaker R ) happened to be doing laundry at the same time
and I was reading in the laundry room and I remember..that
she commented that she liked my glasses
and I thought that was pretty awesome
and..so yeah like..I re- we talked really briefly and I just remembered
just thinking like "Aw she was really cute and that was cool"
and then I remember seeing her on campus like that very week
and I'm like "Aw it's the girl who liked my glasses"
and I couldn't remember her name
and so she was like "Hey ( Speaker D ) how's it going"
I was so- I felt awful
so I tried to do the whole "Hi you"..kind of thing
and she totally saw through that
which is a bummer
bu:t we didn't really talk..after that until..u:m a Halloween party that we were both at
a:nd..we just became really..good friends really quickly
so we like hung out all that night

1425
and the:n..u:m
oh goodness
I think our first like..hang out session after that we went and saw u:m
there's like a foreign film series
uh..at our old school

1430
and we went and saw a movie
that was kind of like our thing
we would always go see foreign films on campus
but yeah so like we were just good friends at first
um and uh she and her roommate were really close

1435
so we always hung out uh all three of us
and sometimes some of my roommates together
and it was really weird because um
I thought both (Speaker R) and her roommate were really cute
and so I was like "oh this is nice, like hanging out with pretty people..that's cool"

1440
but it got really awkward because..um..her roommate also had a pretty big

1445
crush on me
and..so that led to all sorts of drama drama
um..probably much more for (Speaker R) than for me

1450
because I didn't have to live in the constant sphere of drama
but
(laughter)
so yeah like we
that- that was kind of weird and our- our hanging out was kind of strained

1455
for a while
because of all of that that was going on
mostly outside of my knowledge
but yeah
and I remember like I went- we went- we went back to our- our respective homes for

1460
winter break
and (Speaker R) was in Mexico with her dad
um and we were just like emailing each other all the time
and- and just like facebooking each other

1465
and it was like oh man I really miss her
like- but she probably doesn't really like me
and um..there were tons of other guys who were interested in her
so I was like "well it's probably not going to work out
but I really like her and we're talking all the time"

and so I was telling this to all my friends at home that I met this really cute girl
and that we were like..I dunno
and we were- like I was hoping it would go somewhere but it probably wont
so i resigned myself to that
and we went- we came back um..and..I think it was like two weeks later that
we..decided
that we were a couple
(laughter)
which worked out wonderfully for- for me at least
(laughter)
but that apparently led to even more drama drama with the roommate that
she was still
with
and that's not good
but she'll probably have more to say about that 'cause I don't really know the
whole side
of the story
(laughter)
I dunno it was like really fun being with (Speaker R) because we- we like
started off just like
friends
and we would go to concerts and like we went dancing once
and it was just really fun and it wasn't like- there wasn't any expectations
really
u:m..and so i thought that was like really cool
that it was just kind of like- we were just like friends
then it was just like "Now we're just like friends that kiss"
so yeah i dunno it was really fun
I think we dated..for
goodness
'cause we started dating in January and we dated..for..almost a year and a
half I guess
um..before we..got married
and it was pretty fun
like we would just
I dunno like our whole dating story was- was pretty normal I guess
I really like to- to cook
so like (Speaker R) would come over to my place and I would cook food
which was..I dunno
I thought that was really fun cause
I didn't really know this when we first started hanging out
but (Speaker R) didn't really ever cook for herself
and..that was not OK..with- with me
u:h so we- so I- I usually cooked and then we would either like
go see foreign films on campus
or we would go to concerts
and that was something that was really fun
that we would just always go to concerts together
so I thought it was really fun that like
we both seemed to enjoy the same things and that was really important to me
and it was really fun
so I don't know
it's uh- it's kind of weird to like-
I remember when we were moving away from Utah to move out to Michigan
like we would sort of just like drive around
um..and see places that might have been to together
'cause we loved eating out all the time which is why we're poor
it was really fun to like
have this sort of space where we just had these sort of memories and things
I don't know
it was- yeah like in a way like our courtship and like the majority of our marriage is like really tied to- to Utah
I guess
and- or also her dad's place in Washington
I remember
the first time I met her dad
like she warned me
that
the only thing she told me was like "My dad's kind of intense"
and I'm just like "well what does that mean?"
that's like a really ambiguous..ambiguous statement
and that's kind of weird for like-
it's sort of troubling for like the guy who gonna go meet his girlfriend's dad
that he's just intense
so that- that was the only image I had
as I'm driving up from Oregon to come visit him in Washington
but like her dad was super cool
and it was- that was another like really fun aspect of- of dating
and even now that we're married
like we spend a lot of time in Washington
up in her dad's cabin
so that place is also really important
as far as our- our story as well
I dunno
that's kind of fun
I guess I hadn't really thought about that before
weird
but yeah so let's see
and I can go as=
B =whatever you want= 
whatever you wanna do

so I remember I- I hadn't like..thought much about like..getting married
um..and it was like- we- we both come from like a religious background
where it's-
where it's pretty much normal that people get married early
and..like- but I like tried to put that out of my head as much as possible
because it was sort of just weird to me
and I remember
before I met (Speaker R)

um I was really bad at dating
like I- I would- I was just like such a terrible boyfriend
like all the time whenever I would date someone
'cause liked we'd be- we'd date for like three weeks
"oh this is the worst"

and like I could never get past three weeks
without being like "Oh this is terrible"

um and I remember like when we hit three weeks I was like "Oh no like it's
time again for
everything to- to be ruined"

and that's terrible..but we- we went past three weeks and that was a new for
me
and then like we- we were dating for like..a few months
I was like "oh man this is crazy"
but then it was also like

"oh no all these kind of expectations"
then it's like "you guys have been dating for more than like than four
months and
you don't hate each other
So..you know..when are you gonna get hitched"

and that was kind of weird to think about so I tried not to as much as
possible
but..um..I remember we were actually in- we were visiting my parents
um it's the first time (Speaker R) had ever like..come to my place in Oregon
and met my parents

I remember I was just kind of like thinking about I don't know every-
everything we had
been through up until that point
and how natural it was to be with her
and um the fact that she still inexplicably liked me after a few months of
dating

and so I-that was when I kind of started really thinking I could see myself
with this
person for the rest of my life
and that was kind of cool
and so I guess we kind of started talking about it a little
um..but it took us like another year before we actually got married
and we just
I don't know
so I guess after that point in time we were just always talking about- about
g got married
and trying to figure out when that would work
and when that would be best to happen
and actually that- that was probably the only thing that was like stressful
that was like THE only thing that invited stress into our relationship up until
that point
which was really ironic
that marriage- or the conversation of marriage is what does that
but whatever
that's okay
so yeah like
but
I don't know- I think the thing I love the most about our relationship then
and our
relationship now is that like
um..(Speaker R) is really patient and puts up with all of my crap really well
like
better than- than she should probably
um..I don't know, it was just like really cool like whenever I was being
weird about like
wedding plans
like she was..really I don't know
always like the steady person there
so I don't know it was- it was really cool like when we were like planning
the wedding
and everything
we just kind of were doing that together
even though (Speaker R) did like most of everything
and so yeah like we got married in Portland which is
so like I'm from like southern Oregon and most of (Speaker R)'s family is
from northern
washington
so Portland's like right in the middle of everything
and that was just really fun to have everyone's family there
um.. and that was where I kind of like for the first time understood that like
when you-
when you marry someone you're kind of like marrying their family
uh and that was interesting because (Speaker R)'s family is awesome
but like our family backgrounds are really different
uh so that was-
that was and has been interesting to sort of figure out my place in her family where I could fit in um and not like mess everything up um um so yeah that was-

that's another fun thing that's been ongoing and I'm sure it will be for uh the rest of ever but yeah so I don't know like it's um it's been like really fun since we've been married because we spent every waking moment together anyway when we were dating um and it was just nice because now we didn't have to pay two different rents 'cause we could live together it was awesome um and so I dunno like it's just fun to see how the things that we liked to do when we were dating just kind of continued and now it's like those are things that we still do uh except (Speaker R) turns out to be an amazing chef and makes delicious vegan baked goods now and yeah so I don't know how to bake and that makes me sad (laughter) uh so I don't know it's- it's fun we still cook together and we still watch movies together and we- we go out and do fun things around town it's weird 'cause a lot of people have told me that when you get married there's like- this sort of like change like that happens in your relationship and this- this sort of inexplicable thing that just happens and no one knows why I don't know like it's just kind of fun living with you know my best friend and just being about to do the things we've kind of always done it hasn't been too- too different

**Speaker R and Speaker D's Co-Told Narrative**

**R** You can start 'cause you were there first..so:

**D** (laughter) What?

**R** I decided to go do my laundry

**D** Oh OK cool We'll go chronologically

**R** Yeah
Unless you have a better idea
"It all started. I always knew I wanted to marry someone with glasses and curly hair"

I'm down with linear narratives

So it was a dark and stormy night=

=Yeah=
=Yeah=

in San Francisco when I was born in 1987

and then it was 2006- er- 2008 nevermind

2006? I was like seventeen..sixteen

U:h so yes

U:h..I..had to read..this long boring chapter for my..like pre-modern Japanese history class

and I was like "U:h..that sucks"

And so I decided to semi-procrastinate or..do other things at the same time and do laundry

[[a:nd

[[He's not very good at doing two things at once

I'm not..this is true

So basically-

But no when you came in I was reading=

=yeah you were=

=I was- I was being a good person

While waiting for my pants to dry

I..u:h..was sitting and reading

and (Speaker R) came in and she was doing her thing

and then..u:h..she noticed me..and [[my

[[You-]] you were up by the..machines

Was I?

Yeah..'cause=

=OK

(laughing)

'Cause I remember

[[Was I reading?

[[looking over]] and noticing

I [[remember

[['Cause I was at the]] desk thing right?

Yeah! Yeah!

OK right

But then I remember looking over and noticing your glasses

and thinking like "Should I say something?"
And then...I remember: my mom told me that I should never NOT say a compliment if I have one in my mind.

**D** Good for your mom=

**R** =So:

**D** Good- good- [[good advice

**B** [[That is like]] fantastic advice

**R** I know right?

**B** tell your mom I'm gonna try to like

**R** How many things good things do you think of and don't even tell people about it?

So I said "Hey"- not "Hey, (Speaker D)"

"Hey, I like your [[glasses"

**D** "[["Hey person"

**R** "I like your glasses"

and then I like..went right back..up to my room, I think, cause--

**D** We had like a very brief exchange

and you gave me your name and I told you my name

and then I promptly forgot your name

**R** Oh yeah

**D** and then, so like

it was only like a week later

that we like saw each other on campus

and then do you remember we saw each other on the quad area?

**R** Yeah

Usually I know people have forgotten my name if they like greet you with just like

"Oh hi!"=

"Hey what's up?"

**R** which it's fine

the first couple weeks of school

**D** It's not fine when you directly address me by my first name though

It's like "Oh hi pretty girl that I met in\- doing laundry the last week who complimented me"

**R** But I- so did I come-?

I must have come back down though

I remember

**R** We only had a small conversation

u: m...and then like I went up and I came down

and you were reading at the table

and then I come down and like sit by you to talk

and (Speaker D) does this thing, he did it earlier, where when he laughs he like

claps?
and I was like "Oh like that's like so cute
He really thinks I'm funny"

and

1790  D Sorry I do it for everyone, (Speaker R)
R Yeah, didn't find that out until later
D But I'm sure whatever you said I found it genuinely enjoyable
R Yeah so..
D or I was just trying to be really easy going

1795 because pretty girls don't talk to me
R Whatever..um..
D So yeah
R And I like thought about our encounter a lot
[[I remember

1800 D [[Did you really?
R Well I mean not like a lot but you know how when..[[you
D \[Stalker
R Yeah

like when you like meet someone and you kind of go over the situation and

1805 you

"oh it would have been awesome if I said or did this"
so just like regular
and we were talking I think..like I was making granola

1810 and we were talking about it or something
and I remember thinking like
"Oh I should have like brought some down to him or something"
and then I was like
"ew no:" but..[[so yeah you kind of were

1815 D \[If you would have brought me] food, (Speaker R)
oh my goodness
R if then=
D \[=I just would have=\]
R \[=what..you would have married me..or

1820 something?
D Yeah
R Yeah
(laughing)
\[u:m..so yeah

1825 that was the first couple weeks
when we met on campus (Speaker D)
kind of indirectly invited me to like

1830 \[=yeah=
D \[=cause he was on his way to a film class
R and BYU has this cool international cinema
like where it plays..uh..free films like from other countries
or older films in English
and he was like
"Oh like..we should go sometime"
but not in like a datey way
it was just more of like a
just putting that out there it's a cool place, maybe we could all hang out
and then..we only saw each other like a few-ish times

1840
D Yeah like I don't even remember seeing you until=
R =[until halloween=
D =Halloween
R Yeah
I- W- We ran into each other on campus
or I would see you on campus anyway
D These are all things that I'm learning for the first time now
goodness
Well=
R =So=
1850
D =I'm glad I made a good impression
my glasses are all to be thanked for our relationship
u:h..so yeah like
but then like Halloween, we were like
we met at this party

1855
and so just we basically hung out all night
so it was (Speaker R) and her roommate=
R =yeah=
D =and then me and my
roommate

1860
D Was Greg there too or just Brady?
R I don't think so
He was all..dating Lindsay and so
D Dating his future wife
R Yeah

1865
D and all that that entails.
U:h so yeah like we just started hanging out and I think that night
we like seriously hung out.][until like..forever
R ][Yeah we stood outside
D So we just like stood outside and then=
1870
R =And talked=
D =we basically
like from that point on we would see each other like..really consistently
like almost every day
but I knew that you were still-

1875
D I- so I found out from her- from her
not- not Rachel but Ashley
R So roommate that I wasn't super close with
but I mean you all know each other's business
D  So yeah she like
1880  She like hinted that like (Speaker R) was dating someone
And like I got the impression that like she was like in a serious like
relationship
with this
dude
1885  R  Yeah
D  Um..who was like a family friend and like back in Washington and
everything
and I was like "Oh now, thats awful"
it would have been good for you if that were the case but whatever
1890  um but so like when we were hanging out
I was- I was also so like
"thats right
she APPEARS to be not taken when in fact there's some guy a few states
away
who
is [](occupying her mind"
R  [](Did that affect your behavior?
D  It did 'cause like I didn't=
R    =Really?= =Yeah
1900  D  'cause like if you would have been dating someone like in Utah
and I would have like seen you with them
it would have been like
oh well then ok
1905  OK I can't obviously even do anything
but then since like it was just this spectre
R  mhm
D  that didn't even really exist I found out..u:h..later
R  yeah
1910  D  It was- I like- I didn't know what to do because I thought you were super
cute
but like..I didn't know if you were actually dating anyone
and then LATER
I don't remember when I found out that you had like broken up with this
person
and it
was actually like
the second guy you were dating, Taylor
R  and not the family friend
1915
1920  D  and not the family
so I was like WAIT A MINUTE
I found out that all my information was just totally wrong
R  Yeah
D  you just can't trust..roommates for anything
R 1925  No, never
D  So..
     but yeah like
     we just basically hung out and went to movies at the international cinema
     [[a lot

R 1930  [[yeah
D  and then=
R     =um
     And then- most- and then Christmas Break happened
     and uh

D 1935  [[we
R     [[we
D  Facebooked each other all the time
R     Oh yeah we facebooked
     and we texted a few times

D 1940  but that's kind of expensive
     'cause I was in Mexico with my dad
R     And I didn't know that so why were you texting me?
D  How didn't you know that?
R     I don't know

D 1945  You don't listen to anything I say, (Speaker D)
R     I'm sorry
     (laughter)
D     so yeah um and then
R     And was it before or after Christmas that I met your-?
D 1950  It was- it was before Christmas that I met your family?
     'Cause like what were we going and doing?
     that I went and picked you up at your mom's place?
R     Oh I don't remember that
D     I don't' remember either but like

R 1955  I knew you'd met Rachel and Timmy
D  Yeah the first time I was over
     I like- I picked you up at your mom's place or something
R     Maybe
D     I think you were like making granola with Rachel

R 1960  Yeah yeah we were going to a concert yeah
     it was- it was my Christmas present
     you just make some granola put it in a baggie and give it- give it to your
     friends
     B     I see a theme developing

R 1965  yeah
     love granola
D     it would- it would prove to be an important part of our- our courtship
R     yeah
D     So like

R 1970  well actually part of the reason I dumped the guy I dated right before I dated
(Speaker D)
was because I made him a huge bag of granola
it was like my- I love granola
I think it's delicious

1975
and we go over to his house like
two weeks after I had made it for him
and it was like sitting unopened on his bed
and I was like "o:h"

B  Dealbreaker
R  Pretty much
D  He didn't know what he was missing
R  Pretty much

Um so yeah we get back..from Christmas break
and I had talked to my sister and she had like given the approval
and the:n..um
I was really excited
like the first thing I was dropped off..um like
a family friend picked us up- picked my siblings and I up from the airport
and like dropped me off uh at my apartment

1985
and like (Speaker D) was there to meet me
I think we just like- right?

D  Yeah no=
R  =we met and hugged and went for a long cold walk
D  'Cause I remember we=

1995
R  =the first of many that week
D  She- she like came back a few days after the semester had started
R  oh yeah
D  and so..like I knew you were getting back late
but like I was just like

2000
like anxiously looking forward to you coming back
I and think you came back like three or four days late
and so..on the night you were coming back
I was just like- I just remember being really excited
that- which is funny because we weren't dating

2005
I wish we were but

R  Soon enough
(laughter)
D  But like I- you know
So..I thought that was just funny

2010
because I was really anxious for you to comeback
and when I finally did see you
you were like walking down..the like- the sidewalk
and I remember thinking just "yeah"

R  Yeah

2015
(laughter)
D  Woo-hoo
R: I remember being like "Wow, (Speaker D) bought like three coats over Christmas Break" (laughter)
which you did I- I like the way you dress though so it was good
D: You're so kind
R: Yeah
2025
D: Correct
R: Do you remember that?
D: Yes
R: Um..so yeah then we went on lots of walks that week right?
D: Correct
R: Do you remember that?
D: Yes
2030
R: we went on a lot of walks and..I..tried..to get up the courage to like..make something that resembled a move
D: but I didn't
R: and [[so we just
2035
D: No! because remember like we would just go on these like FRIGID walks
R: yeah
D: At BYU like your- like your housing is all gender segregated and like you- you're not supposed to be in an opposite gender's dorm or like apartment past midnight
B: Ok
2040
D: and so I was like
R: or 1 o'clock on weekends
D: Yeah [[or 1 or 2 on weekends
R: [[Special privileges
D: I remember it's absurd
2045
R: Yeah there's like nowhere to go if you're a couple
D: There's nothing you can go and like Provo is like a small town well there is the..uh..like nasty like taco dive that you can go to which is delicious but (Speaker R) would NEVER come with me to there for some reason
R: It's pretty gross
D: or nothing else
2050
R: so basically if we wanted to keep hanging out after midnight we would just go out and take walks
R: Yeah
in January
in Utah
which is less committal than actually going somewhere anyway
'Cause it's like "we'll just walk oh! and if we just happen to keep walking for
lots of
hours
then there you go"
instead of being like "Hey we should go to..that taco place that you hate"
or something like that
So I remember it was the week- it was the night before
I was going to go up and visit my brother in Idaho
over was it- what- was it Martin Luther King day or something?
D
uh huh
we had the day off it was awesome
and we were walking
and I was like
"I'm going to be home over the weekend
and like
I- I should like..confess my feelings or something" I don't know what
like what- I don't know what normal people do to like..become a couple
but I- but I'm not sure
yeah
so like
I- I wanted to do something
some gesture
and I...didn't
and so as we were finally deciding that like
our feet are numb and we should go home before we get frostbite
I remember we were like about to cross the street
and (Speaker R) like put her hand in my coat pocket
and I was like "Oh! ok that is- that's nice"
and so we held hands all the way back and I was like shh
in your coat pocket?
in my coat pocket
I kinda remember that yeah
Do you remember that?
I think so- I couldn't remember
who held whose hand though
That was you
well I suppose
I was the the who interdigitated
or who initiated the interdigitation
yeah
but you put your hand in my coat pocket
and so thank you (Speaker R) for being the only one with bravery in our
relationship
It was just getting painful
it was like
really it was cold

D  yeah

R  So there we go like we held hands
and like we kissed that night
and then we were like "shoot yes we're a couple!"
and then I went away for like four days for the weekend
and then came back and she still liked me
and yeah

and that was the start of our..life as a couple
and what- after that do you remember or is it just a blur of JOY?

All joy
all of it
you know how relationships are
all good all the time

D  Exactly!
I never did anything remotely annoying to upset you

or- or anything

R  Nope
B  I mean they don't- they don't work in "for better or poorer" for
R  Yeah they don't do that
D  It's all bliss after

No that's- I think that's pretty much it
the story of how we became a couple

Yeah
and I dunno like
just to like

with hit
like really we just like hung out for two years
or like a year and a half I guess before we got married
and it was just kind of fun 'cause it didn't seem any different
and I remember I was so worried about our three week mark

Oh yeah yeah

'cause I had a terrible=

IT WAS!
like I had like a terrible track record

with like people I like dated before
and it seemed like after like three weeks I like
"man this is so boring" and like "I totally don't like this"
which makes me a really shallow jerk probably
but so I remember when three weeks were- were coming up
"No I really like her I don't want this to- to be it"
and I still liked you and you still liked me and it was super awesome
so I dunno
and then like after three months like
when you came back with me to- to like Oregon to meet my family and
everything
I was like "oh..I could get used to this"
R Yeah I think that was when too we had first brought up like getting
married=
D =yeah
R we'd be dating for four or five months
and it just kind of like came up
"oh oh yeah that's kind of cool"
and like it just- it didn't seem like super scary or weird
D yeah
R um
D So I don't know like I- we finally got engaged=
R =yeah=
D =for reals
R um..oh gosh it was-
2175
oh what- what was the day we got engaged
I don't even remember
R it was the week of my birthday
D Oh was it really? [[[That's nice
R [[[yeah you wanted to like propose on my birthday
2180
but I don't remember what happened
probably it was just really really cold
he wanted to do it all.. [[[romantically
D [[[I had this really grand idea like idea
so like um..we listened to
2185
we went to a lot of concerts
and listened to music a lot together
and I remember this one time
this was way before we were dating it was like
it was right before Christmas break
2190
our first Christmas break that we knew each other
R finals
D finals
and we were both walking to the library like at like..eight in the morning
to like study and like have an awful day of finals
2195
but we were walking together and I remember
we were like sharing my headphones
and we were listening to this song by Sigur Ros
and it's like this really pretty song
and we were walking and it's snowing and it's gorgeous in Utah at this time
2200
and so like we were walking and listening to this like beautiful music
I'm like "oh this is- this is really nice"
and so I wanted
my ideal was that..I would wait until it had snowed
[[and that

2205  
R  
[[oh yeah that's right!
D  
and so I told my=
R  
=but instead of snowing it just kept getting colder and
colder
D  
yeah so it was just frigid

2210  
R  
that was all
and it wouldn't snow
a:nd I remember I had told my grandma
'cause I had bought like a ring like over Christmas break and everything
over like the summer
D  
yeah it was over the summer
and I had kept this
in my dorm []room
R  
[[like it in your underwear drawer
(laughter)

2220  
D  
just like the entire semester waiting for the first snow
so we could go on a walk and listen to that song
and then like at this like really gorgeous moment where like the music
swells and
everything

2225  
D  
like then I would get down on one knee and I would like propose to you
and instead of snowing it just got frigid
so eventually
my entire plans were ruined
and..(Speaker R) knew I wanted to propose to her

2230  
R  
Yeah
D  
I could never find the right time to do it
so instead we had gotten into my car
R  
because he asked me if I wanted to go for a walk and I'm like
"really? like obviously he wants to propose"

2235  
D  
it was like five degrees outside
R  
yeah
D  
so (Speaker R) said no she didn't want to go for a walk
R  
yeah throw a little curveball
see if he could think on his feet

2240  
D  
there's no place to go in Utah
to like or like at least the place where we lived in Utah
there's no place to do anything inside after like ten P.M
R  
Yeah
D  
so it was just like

2245  
ok we can either- like I can propose to you in your living room
with like your roommate []eating cereal
R: [oh my gosh my roommates would have loved that]

D: With your roommate eating cereal
    watching Vampire Diaries on the couch
    or we can get in my car
    turn the heat on
    and go drive somewhere
    and then I can awkwardly fumble out this like ring

R: First ask me to join you in the backseat though

D: and then awkwardly fumble getting this ring out
    so basically my grand like
    romantic gesture that would like harken back to our days of dating and it
    would be
    like
    something we'd tell our grandchildren
    was transformed into me like
    shivering and proposing in the backseat of my Jeep
    huzzah

R: Yeah

B: you can tell them whatever you want

D: He has such a good point

B: You can tell them whatever you want

R: Yeah

D: There were fireworks going off
    doves flying

R: We did park on a pretty part of campus though
    it was- it was pretty nice

D: and there we go

D: and then the ring was too big
    and that was sad
    and I sent it back to get it resized
    like we were engaged for two or three weeks before you could - got to wear
    the ring

R: that's right
    at least though I didn't wear it when it was too big and it fell off
    we had a friend who that happened to
    and she lost it

D: that's a sad day

R: He just bought her a new one
    so yeah that's all

D: That's our story
Appendix D: Speaker E and P's Narratives

Speaker E's Narrative

E  Um...well I was in Southern California
and I had actually just moved back
to the Los Angeles area and moved back in with um an old trainer of my
and I was living in her barn
This was after a really big breakup with the guy whom I had moved out to
California for and we'd
started in LA, gone up to San Francisco together, broken up in San
Francisco
I came back down to the last like point of security I had
And..the woman that kind of took me in, who was my mentor and my boss
and everything,
she.. kind of put herself in charge of my..relationship recovery
u:m..and she told me that i had to like date a hundred guys and not actually
have a really serious boyfriend for a really long time and I had to figure out
what I wanted
So I was dating and it was great and it was really exciting
I uh- I had a lot of guys and they were really cute, and I made out with guys
a lot, and ran around and did irresponsible things on the weekends
u:m..and it was FUN..but
it wasn't really me..and dating was never really me, I had always liked to be
in relationships
And I was..in Pasadena
with another horse person and I was teaching her and her fiance how to
dance as a present to them for their wedding
and she was close to me and..all the other horse people we were involved
with and she knew I was dating and she said "Oh you know after our
dance lesson we should
go out tonight, we're gonna go out, they have like a drinking club that they
go to
and you should come with us, I know you don't drink"
And I was like "well, are there going to be any single guys there? Is
anybody cute gonna be there? that's all I care about right now"
she's like "well there is this one guy that sometimes comes,
and he is single..and he's cute and he'd probably be really fun to fool around with
not really boyfriend material"
And I was like "ok, all right, sounds promising
I'm not looking for a boyfriend anyway"
So we went out and uh..nobody showed up even though it was a drinking club
that they all had, there was only like one other girl that showed up
U:m..so we sat around and it was weird and I didn't drink
and then (Speaker P).did come
an hour, hour and a half into it, and apparently he hadn't been coming to this club for like six months and he just decided on a whim to go out to the bar and see if any of the drinking club people were meeting there

So he sauntered in and (laughter) his LA persona was very very confident and very..devil may care (laughter)

And right away he's like "I'm gonna buy shots, who wants to do whiskey with me?" and I was like "I'll drink some whiskey!"
even though I didn't- like you don't understand I didn't drink

So I drank some whiskey with him and we just talked and it was just- it was so...weird 'cause I felt for the first time out of ANYbody I had EVER met on the west coast I felt like I was talking with somebody I had grown up with that just came from the same place as me had gone to the same school as me and none of this is true but he just felt like such a similarly raised creature U:m..and that was just extremely comforting and I just- I couldn't believe how much i wanted to talk with him And- and so I don't remember anything else that night except..talking with

(Speaker P) And everybody else kind of got to the midnight..twelve-thirty mark and started to drift out

and I was like "I'm not..done hanging out, who wants to still go out?" (Speaker P) was like "I'll stay out with you!"
And so we went to an all-night diner and we stayed out til like four just talking and be- I can't even remember anything we talked about It was so fun though

And then..he had to drive me back to this girl's house at like four in the morning and uh..it was really cute he drove me in his little truck and I was really attracted to him once I saw his truck because it was this little Toyota piece of shit and I drive a Toyota piece of shit (laughter) and it was a stick shift and I was really excited about that so I- I liked everything about him that I could gather from his upbringing and his values

and it- it was just very homey and very great U:m..and..he parked and I got out of the truck and I started to walk away
and turned and like ran back to the truck and asked
"Are you gonna ask for my number?"
like, we had just talked for like six hours

and he- he was like "Oh! Oh right, okay,
yeah what's your number?"
U:m..and then you know I still- he had such a different lifestyle from me I
didn't really think there was any way I was going to develop a
relationship with him

'cause he drank and he smoked and I was sure he smoked pot
I was SUPER straight edge and came from- he was WAY too intimidating for me
like I- I was open to hanging out with him but I-
I didn't think that I could trust him basically

because he was a little too much of a bad boy
U:m..but you know what we went- we went out on a couple of dates
and we- we slept together pretty early on (laughter) in the dating
and I just- I couldn't believe just how much I could trust him
and he- he's just always been somebody that I've just been so:..drawn to
and I mean..I had a lot kind of- a lot was stacked against him because
you know if I could have given you a checklist of what I was looking for in
a guy (Speaker P) would have..had almost none of these check
marks, you know?
U:m..but it still felt so right despite it not being right on paper necessarily

So I did a lot back and forth and a lot of of calling my dad and my best
friend and trying to figure out like "Am I crazy..or does this have
potential?"
and then once I kind of let go and embraced the whole thing
I mean I have wanted to marry him since like the first month we were dating

you know as soon as we said "I love you"
U:m..I've just felt like he's the person I want to be with my whole life
He always- he has always made me feel ok with who I am
and he's not a particularly ambitious fellow
U:m..you know I think a lot of people would that say he doesn't necessarily

have a lot going on

but..he teaches me a lot about u:h quality of life and style of life, you know
I'm just a very..driven..tough person and I'm very hard on myself
and he..is really nice to me and accepting of me,
he's never hard on me..ever

And when I find that when I'm in a relationship with an ambitious person
all we do is make each other work harder and harder and harder and harder
and it like explodes
so I can find- I can find a lot of peace, peace with him
Yeah

And he's- he's always been a very good lover
which is very important to me
very- very sweet, very generous, very- very loving guy
That's our story!

Speaker P's Narrative

P: Uh... we met... by... coincidence, I guess?

2425

U:Um... there was kind of a social group that I had been a part of for a while

U:Uh... that I went out with every week

for years, and then

one of the other people was uh

this guy named Chris who was engaged to a different Erin

2430

and the two Erins knew each other

So... she was teaching Chris and Erin their wedding dance

and they wanted her to come out with them one night

um 'cause Wednesday nights was the night the-

the group met and also the night she was giving them lessons

2435

I decided after having not been there for like quite a while

I thought I would just like pop in

and see who was there and say hi or whatever

U:Um and she decided to come in and that's how we met

and no one else showed up

2440

except for Chris and Erin

who brought (Speaker E)... and then myself

U:Um... and Chris and Erin brought some other girl... that I don't remember

I don't remember her name at all

U:Uh (laughter)

2445

So yeah I just showed up at the bar and it was like the four of them there

and I sat down and I talked

And I was sitting- I was seated

like everyone was in a booth

and (Speaker E) was in a table like right next to us

2450

and I started talking to her 'cause the other girl seemed kind of angry

U:Uh... and then... it was like- the bar was closing all of a sudden

U:Um... and I just like talked my head off

which is really unusual

U:Um... and then Chris and Erin went home and took the other girl home

2455

and I agreed to give (Speaker E) a ride

not really... realizing how far away she was staying

U:Uh... and then we found a twenty-four-hour diner

and we had coffee and... dinner or breakfast I guess, whatever

and talked some more

2460

Then finally I got her home by... god it was like three or four in the morning

U:Um

and then... (laughter)

I had been planning on asking for her number the whole drive home

U:Uh... and when we started getting close to where I was gonna drop her off

2465

it was a really unfamiliar area and like I didn't have a smart phone or

anything
so I was like...really trying not to get lost 'cause that's super embarrassing
U:h...so finally I get there, I'm like "Oh thank god I made it..."
like "You can go home now, everything's ok"
then she asked me if I was going to ask for her number
I was like "Dammit..I knew I was forgetting something"
Um...so that's how I got her number
we talked a few times
she lived far away at the time
like two-hour drive away
and so...we spoke on the phone a number of times and then kind of set up
like
weekly kind of date nights
Um and that progressed into seeing each other on a daily basis
She actually did a lot of driving
uh out to see me 'cause I was living and working in Los Angeles at the time
U:m..that went on for
oh man...six months or so
and then we moved in together and then we moved out here
So that is a...logical progression of the timeline
U:m..which is interesting
I- I'm- I don't really consider myself a very good storyteller
so I kind of default to the narrative
but...um...it was definitely a very strong, very powerful, and a very sudden
feeling
and I remember...at one point, and we'd only been dating for like
I don't know, we'd been on maybe four dates
uh...and I like- I literally accidentally told her that I loved her
by texting "rawr"
which I had seen like something on the internet that was like a picture of a
dinosaur
and it was like "Rawr means 'I love you' in dinosaur"
"What does that mean?"
like "I love you in dinosaur
"Oh crap! That just happened"
Fortunately she was like really happy about it
and was like "Oh I love you too blah blah blah blah blah"
so...that worked out really well
I totally kind of blew my cover
on accident which is funny
I had never really been like-
I'm usually a very reserved person
so it was funny to like totally screw up in little ways
which I often did
like betray my emotions and kind of give myself away when I was around
her
I couldn't help myself, which was strange
U:m
I think that's pretty much it

**Speaker E and P's Co-Told Narrative**

2515   E  A:h you go first
       P  (laughter) U:h we met through mutual friends in a bar by happenstance?
       E  Mh:m
       P  I don’t know how this- am I supposed to tell the whole story and then you
tell the whole story
       2520   E  or are we going to go [[back and forth
       P  [[No we’ll tell it together]] but I’m..going to cue off
       [[of you
       P  [[Just going to let me]] dangle for a
       bit before you hop in there
       2525   All right u:m
       Uh yeah so we met through mutual friends
       u:m..just by random coincidence
       U:h
       This is so- [[this is suddenly so difficult!
       2530   E  [[You’re terrible at this!
       It was magical happenstance
       U:h I had never been to the bar
       He hadn’t been to the bar in six months even though it was a drinking club
he used to go out to every single night
       2535   He was closely associated with this club
       u:h through his..girlfriend at the time who had then become his ex
       So he had been making himself a little more scarce,
right? And hadn’t felt..[[super comfortable there
       P  [[Yeah no I mean it was]] once a week it wasn’t
       2540   every night
       E  Did I say every night? I’m sorry I meant
       P  I wasn’t going out getting wasted every night
       E  I meant once a week
       P  That’d be pretty intense
       2545   U:h yeah it was like Wednesday nights I think was the agreed-upon night
       um
       The girl who was my ex at the time hadn’t been going in a long time
Totally forgot about her
I had moved on and she had moved on as well
       2550   But uh yeah I just kind of decided at random to go back in..one time to see
how many
old friends were there and see how many new people were there
‘Cause it was kind of an open..revolving door or whatever
       E  Mhm
       2555   And I was going out with the sole purpose of meeting a guy
and hopefully hooking up with somebody
‘cause I was on the u:h dating warpath

P YEAH you were

E And uh..I- I think I told you in my version of the story that I was like the only one there but there was one other single girl..there u:m that had met us so myself and this couple..friend u:h took me out and then they met their friend, I don’t even remember her name, Sarah, I think it was? She was kind of a..curvy redhead

P She- I thought she was Mexican?

E No! She just had a lot of makeup on

P Really?

E Yeah

P I totally remember her being dark-skinned Well yeah but you say “redhead” like she was like dyed though

E Yes no she wasn’t a natural red head

P She wasn’t like- she wasn’t a GINGER

E This is so awkward ANYWAY

P Moving on

E I- I liked that (Speaker P) actually..noticed me and talked to me instead of the other..more dramatic looking girl..and

P She was super bitchy I’m sure she was very nice but she looked like she was into guys with money and not a lot of common sense

E And so

P If I’m just gonna judge people at a glance

E (laughter) And u:h..and you bought me a shot of whisky

P Yeah..

E [[And we drank

P [[I didn’t know you didn’t drink

E Yeah..I wasn’t going to tell you I didn’t drink

P Really

E And we drank slowly and we just talked A LOT and I- I think the whole- like we didn’t talk to ANYbody else [[for like three hours

P [[Yeah I remember getting a sideways glance]] from other Erin=

E =Yea:h=

P =That was like “You should probably participate in the group

E At some point”

P That’s right

E But we were just totally- I- I had not been that comfortable talking to
anybody in a REALLY long time and it was just-
It felt like catching up with a best friend
2605
an OLD best friend
U:m
And he was kind of very- very confident at that point in his life
He- he was in a good spot
And he had uh just come back from your martial arts class and
2610
he felt strong and full of vigor,
right?
P U:h..sort of
I certainly enjoyed it
I was pretty beat actually
2615
That was- that was like a tough class
And that was like
Part of the reason why I even stopped in was like “Jesus I need a beer”
like “I just got my ass kicked”
E And I [[kept him out until four in the morning
2620
[[But that’s good I enjoyed
that kind of thing so
E [[Yeah]]
P [[Yeah]]..SUPER late
I- when did you get home?
2625
I mean when did you get to Erin’s place?
That was like
E [[Yeah you dropped me off at like four-thirty
P [[four-thirty or five like it was fucking]] morning
E U:m..well..let’s back up just a little bit
2630
‘cause we got done at the first bar and then I think it was about midnight
and we all went out and I remember
we stood on the street corner and my friend Erin
was obviously like
“So..aren’t you coming home with us?
2635
We drove you out here and it’s time- time to go home and go to bed?”
I was like “I’m going to stay out
I- I want something to eat
Who wants to go eat with me?”
I- I feel like I gave you a very meaningful look and you were like “YEAH!”
2640
“Yeah! I wanna- I wanna go out to eat!”
P Yeah I mean you kind of directed the whole evening..[[more or less
E Yeah I was]] super aggressive
P We got to that diner and that whisky started catching up with you
Phew
2645
My little face was burning
E I was- I was pretending to be a lot more affected by the alcohol than I was
I was definitely=
P =Heh!=
=Taking- having never been a drinker at all a:h I feel like
having one shot of whisky gave me license to be as forward as I wanted to be
And- and forward in a- in a forthcoming kind of way not a..slutty kind of way

Thanks though for the implication

It was like four hours of conversation
I mean all of our childhood, our history, our interests our thoughts and feelings, our hopes and dreams

Yeah pretty much

Our parents, our political views, our religious views

I don’t think we talked about like..any of our exes or any of our friends or other relationships
We just talked about growing up and going to school and who we were and where we wanted to go

It was very- very interesting

There was a lot of ss- u:m like unexpected similarities

[[mhm]] being more and more surprised the more I learned about how kind of alien you were being from Michigan and like ha- you know growing up in circumstances that were very different from my own and you know and going to university and basically leading like a- almost completely different life from me but still ss- turning out to be someone who’s very like simpatico

[[‘Cause I remember]]

So that was..really u:h..attractive and interesting

Yeah I mean (Speaker P) and I are two EXTREMELY different people like we've- we’ve come from very different places in our lives but I’ve always felt that if my person had been born a boy in (Speaker P)’s circumstances that I would have turned out just like (Speaker P) And I feel the same way about (Speaker P) being born..in my shoes

So there’s something, you know, in our cores that we- we really- really deep down are very very very similar even though we express ourselves very differently and nobody would ever say we were similar at anything (laughter)
It’s kind of something that just WE know
U:m..so..yeah..and I- I was very forward that night and I- I wasn’t thinking-
I wasn’t thinking long-term at all
I wasn’t supposed to be dating any- I mean I wasn’t supposed to be
u:m..monogamous with anybody I was just playing the field at the
time in my life because I had had kind of disastrous long-term relationships
So..uh I was actually already dating two guys when I met- THREE guys
when I met (Speaker P)
P JESUS
E (laughter) And u:h..we went out
and I was still dating those guys and by (Speaker P)-
and by our second date I had pretty much made the decision to just stick
with you
P That’s right
U:h..so that’s the story!
E Do you have anything else you’d like to [[contribute
P [[U:h
I dunno, it was interesting, I wasn’t looking for anyone
I think a lot of the uh- you know, it’s funny how it works
because I think a lot of what made ME so attractive was the fact that I pretty
much was not concerned with
dating, like at all
‘Cause usually when you’re really trying to find..a partner in someone
I don't know, there’s an air of desperation there
I guess
E Well I think there’s also a tendency to..want to make yourself into what
someone else is looking for
P Yeah very true
There’s a lot less freedom to like be whoever you want
when you’re trying to appeal to what someone you don’t really know may
or may
not like
E Mhm=
P =I guess would be a way of putting it=
E =Mhm
P U:m..which had been most of my life I actually had- had the whole breakup
with
that other girl was a very like drawn out affair
U:m..and I had been maybe- I dunno, maybe three or four months
of just like being on my own..and like not really caring at all
about..pursuing
relationships or anything like that
U:h..and it was awesome
E Mhm
P And it was a source of a lot of uh..not just confidence but..stress relief?
E You know?
So I didn’t have just a bunch of shit
‘Cause I mean when you’re in a bad relationship like you’re just carrying around a pile of problems all the time
So...it was very fortunate that I met her when I did because I was...lucky enough to be the best person that I could be in that moment

E  Mhm
P  U:h..which is another sort of fortuitous happenstance

that...not just randomly deciding to be there, and her randomly being there and all that other physical randomness but I also happened to be in like one of the best places in my life at the time
E  Yeah my dad has always said that a successful relationship is like ten percent love and ninety percent timing and...yeah I wholeheartedly believe that and I think that (Speaker P) and I just had perfect timing when we came into each other’s lives

And you know then when you’re going through a relationship you do cycle through periods where your timing isn’t lining up that well And things can feel a little bit strange But um...I feel like...for the most part, he and I have been a lot on the same path Which is nice
And we’ve been through so much
U:m...within a couple of months of us starting to seriously date
U:h...my parents went through a divorce
and I had a very very close friend of mine die u:m from cancer and=
P  =Your brother got diabetes
E  My brother got diagnosed with Type I diabetes

Pretty much within the first six to seven months of our relationship=
P  =Yeah
E  I had a horse that I was competing on regularly when I was a horse trainer that horse DIED and that was enormously game-changing for me

(Speaker P) had...u:h..his grandfather pass away and=
P  =That's right=
E  =YEAH it was- it was intense

You know we really

P  It was very dramatic
E  [[It was really dramatic
[in our personal] lives

U: and it’s interesting 'cause I’ve actually talked a little bit with my EX-boyfriend about his kind of path of relationships since he and I broke up and for HIM it's been very hard for him to be close to anybody and he’s led this very kind of simple fortunate existence, he has hobbies, he has a really good high-paying job and he just doesn't know how to be close to anybody And so I feel like something that went really right for (Speaker P) and I was all the personal drama because it forces you to open up and depend on somebody and ask for help more than a lot of people are comfortable doing and so..you can..much more quickly u:m learn about that tougher stuff=

Sure=

underneath

It’s hard to be pretentious when life humbles you And and I think that's why people feel so much more strongly about their first couple of relationships 'cause you're such a more volatile person when you're younger and you tend to just put all your shit out on the table and then the older you get the better you get about glossing over that and presenting a more normal package

U: so I think- I think (Speaker P) and I were just VERY deconstructed..for our first- for our first eight months together We got broken down a lot And we had some tough times and..u:h.. I just- I learned to feel that I could really I found a lot of peace..with you

You worked very hard for it too=

Mhm=

driving from Corona

Yeah I was living an hour away from where (Speaker P) lived and..u:m..I would work at the barn five days a week and then I got a job in LA at a rock climbing gym to give my horse training boss an excuse..to go to LA that wasn't just "My boyfriend's there"

So I had to get- so I was like “My part-time job’s in LA I HAVE to go out
to LA”
So I was working..more than a full-time job at the barn and then a part-time
 job in
LA and I was commuting out to LA like probably four days a week?
And I'd spend the night at- [[I'd go to my- I'd go to my job
]]Yeah all the time
P
E I'd spend the night at (Speaker P)'s and at five in the morning I would drive
back to
the barn
It was- it BROKE me, it completely..broke my body physically to drive that
 much
and to..have that kind of a life and
that was part of the..catalyst for us actually leaving Los Angeles and
we didn't necessarily know that we were going to end up in Michigan
together but
we knew that LA was not a healthy place for me anymore
I was just- I had too much bullshit going on with all the horse training
circles
that I was trying to..uh..[[pay my dues to
P
Well
P
E and..
P
[[sort of
E [[my life was moving in a]] two different directions
P
E Yeah my boss went CRAZY
P
E Pissed me off
As soon as I came into her life her boss basically decided that she wasn't
 serious
about her job anymore
E Yeah it was- yeah it was this insane self-fulfilling prophecy where I like
found this guy, fell in love with him
and it was- and I had only been with him for a month
E and Suzie was just like “Oh well
this always happens to me my-
my good girl workers they fall in love and suddenly that's the most
important thing
and you can’t depend on anybody anymore” and I'd be like "No I really
want to be
here I'm still invested" she'd be like "You'll see, you’re not invested
anymore"
and so she just built this house that I didn't want to be in anymore, you
know?
E She completely fabricated a world that was unbearable, and I was like
“You’re right!
Now..this isn't my priority anymore, getting away from you is now my
priority"
It was very

P  [[highly unprofessional
E  [[it was INSANE]]..it was bad
Now we’re getting into our whole relationship as opposed to how we met
P  Right
E  but

2925  P  I mean..AFTER we met for the first time it was pretty normal
like we just dated
E  Our first REAL date after that night was actually REALLY..funny
'cause we kind of spent a weekend together as our first..thing
[[that we jumped into

2930  P  [[Man was that?
E  And we went out to the u:h..the mus- the Getty? Right?
[[That was like our first..real
P  [[We went to the Getty
we went to the Pacific dining car
2935  and we went to the..
E  O:h oh oh oh
P  The ferris- the..pier
E  Those were our first couple dates
So the weekend that we spent together it started with this mus- it was in
2940  Well the weekend that we spent together
I drove to his house and we kind of- I kind of spent the night with him..u:m..
we didn’t sleep together
we just spent the night
And then the next day we were walking around like the gardens at the Getty
2945  and he tells me this STORY
about how if I had slept with him he would have not respected me
and I was like
P  Well it was like the second time I had ever seen her
like we had one night we had hit it off and it was great
2950  and then..a couple of text messages and phone calls over the week
and then the next time I see her she's like staying the night
E  Yeah but the irony of this is the night before he had been asking to sleep
with me
and I had turned him down and the next day he's like "Oh if you had gone
through with it
I wouldn't have thought so highly of you"
So..I gave him an earful for that
and I think that that actually-
that was like the beginning of us being on very very..equal ground
2955  (laughter)
the no- no playing games ground
and then we didn't sleep together that night
P  Yeah
E  it was awesome
I definitely made it a point to um..not necessarily to change my behavior but to not..uh withhold information I guess=

the situation through leaving things out or play games [[like I would just]] of manipulation like he..yeah..u:h yeah I know

we should probably wrap this up soon but my- my favorite thing about (Speaker P) is that he:..doesn’t LIE to me I mean to the point where I cannot believe the things he will be honest about like if I was in his situation..I would not fess up to what he’s fessed up to and it's always been like and he's had some stuff that he's had to fess up to me when I've asked him directly and to me that's been..this thing that completely saves him every time like I have to respect if I ask him a direct question he answers me correctly and honestly=

for better or for worse=

or for worse he absolutely does

Well you gotta be all in Yeah yeah and I mean he's made some stupid mistakes and he's owned up to them and I:

and he's never tried to [[not own up to them]] [[That's mean

You've- ex- you've made some stupid mistakes And to me that’s worthy of a lot of respect You know? beyond making the mistakes and that really helped lead me in the relationship too because I-

I had a past of u:m..a lot of infidelity and I was very much of a sneaker and a manipulator and a make the relationship work according to my own fabricated world, you know?

And..I always feel that (Speaker P) and I have been very grounded in honesty and reality and..that is That’s our success story!

Yeah!
P  Off into the sunset
E  I love you
P  I love you too