

I was a junior in college and it was my spring break. I was supposed to go to Florida with my cousin. Then it turned out that, um, the airline I bought my ticket from -- Eastern Airlines-- was on strike that week. And so I couldn't go on my trip. I had to go home. To my house. But, you know, I had my friends from Jackson so they were around. We decided to go out to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day on Belmar Beach. And that's where I met my husband. Isn't that funny?

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*When I first met your grandpa, Aunt Laurie and I were both workin' at an advertising agency in uh, in New York City. A big advertising agency. B, B, D and O. It's like a major one, yep. And um, we were gonna go out with some friends she knew. Kinda like a double-date. Back then, you know, you would go to a bar where there was dancing and drinking. Usually they had a band. And that's where we met, there. Inwood Lounge.*

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I think he was talking to maybe one of my other friends. And I came up. I think that's how it went down. He was there with a group of his friends and I was there with some of mine. We just all were hanging out together and then, you know, I got to talking to dad. On my own. We stayed in touch after spring break and I saw him a couple times before the semester ended. And then I guess we really started dating that summer. Dad had graduated from Rutgers, had a real job. I was impressed by that.

“What else did you like about him?”

I liked his voice. And he was very nice. Yeah. He was a nice guy, asked you questions about yourself, things like that you know?

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*We were in the heart of the Upper East Side. On Madison Avenue. When you graduated high school everybody went there. I think I was 18 and Aunt Laurie was probably 19. Grandpa was 20. He kind of pursued me for a while after we met. And at first I wasn't all that interested, but then I went out with him. I thought he was handsome. He had a lot of friends in the tip of Manhattan, a fun place called Inwood. You know I lived in more of a poorer neighborhood, the Bronx, that was kind of the city's hood in 1962. His friends were so different from me and Aunt Laurie, but you graduated into it. Into them. Most of the time grandpa and I would go dancing in bars: Rainbow Lounge, Pig N Whistle. The drinking age was 18 back then and you would drink and dance and drink and dance. That's just what you did.*

“You met him at eighteen?”

*Right.*

“I just turned eighteen!”

*I know!*

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So we got married on September twenty-six of 1992.

“How did you get engaged? Did he propose, or did you suggest it?”

Dad’s job was moving to Florida and so he wanted me to come with him. And that might have caused us to get married sooner than maybe we would have. It had something to do with it I guess. It’s odd. I met him because I couldn’t go to Florida and then I ended up marrying him because, because I was moving to Florida!

“Did you think it was a big deal? Moving down there?”

Yes. Mhm.

“What did you have to give up?”

Oh um, family. For sure, you know? I think having that constant support around really matters when you start having children. And I gave up a lot of good friends too. I don’t think I quite realized how much I had before I left Jersey. I just thought it was—I just liked the idea of being independent and doing our own thing and maybe not having family interference as well. But at the same time I gave it up.

“Did you not realize you were sacrificing these things?”

Um. Yeah, probably not because I didn’t have any kids yet. I was young. In the back of my head, I didn’t know (or didn’t think) Florida was definitely going to be a permanent thing. I thought maybe it was gonna be just something we did for a little while.

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*I got married at 21. We dated two, three years.*

“Twenty-one! Why did you marry so young?”

*It was probably sexual. You know? Most people back then tried to be a little chaste so you didn’t have any kind of relationship until after you were married. There’s a lot of religious undertones to it. We were all Catholic. So for the most part, you were expected to be a virgin when you got married. That’s just what you did. You got married and you had babies and that’s how life was. So when he proposed, I kind of knew it was coming.*

“Were you excited?”

*I don’t even remember it, to tell the truth.*

