

Chapter Nineteen: Francis Takes the Seattle Detour

Who?—A new name comes into view

WHO?

That comes later.

While none-too-keen on leaving my fiancé, Cheryl Lee Johnson, behind in Moscow, I set out to make the best of opportunities in Seattle. The adventure neither went, nor turned out, as planned. Oh—and Francis will be along shortly.

Soon after arriving in Seattle, I attempted duplicating the Pullman/Moscow trifecta by auditioning at the disco inside *Ray's Boathouse*, a very popular restaurant and night spot on the Shilshole Bay/Puget Sound waterfront on Ballard's far west side. With success, I'd manage the apartments, wait tables at *Hannigan's*, and spin records at night. Alas, my act was insufficiently spectacular (or not subtle enough?) to break into the nightclub DJ/disco scene in Seattle. This was, after all, the Big City and regardless of how spectacular nights at *P. W. Hoseapples* had been (or seemed), that was Moscow, Idaho and my act did not measure up to either Seattle's nightlife or music scenes.

Undaunted, I sought to complete the trifecta via another route: I marched over to the offices of *Evelyn Wood Reading Dynamics (EWRD)*, not more than six blocks from the *Etherington Apartments*, and asked to be placed on the roster of local teachers. This seemingly natural/simple request was actually less than straightforward. In fact, I did not realize, until a few weeks after making the request, how problematic it was. Having been a remote employee, located on the eastern side of the state rather than in-town with the corporate headquarters, I was unaware of the local politics involved in teaching assignments. Most of the teaching staff lived in

the Puget Sound area and *EWRD* offered a limited number of classes locally. Perhaps even more significantly, Richard, the Vice President of the operation, was also the lead trainer of teachers as well as the top-dog course instructor. Because his salary was sky high, the owner/operated wanted Richard to train and teach as much as possible. So he was given as many of the local teaching assignments as possible; no one, other than Richard, got to teach in Seattle-proper. As it turned out, I was allowed to join the staff, but during my year in Seattle, I only taught one iteration of the course—and that was an out-of-town assignment at Everett Community College, some 45 miles to the north.

I audited one class per term at the UW: Stewart's "Communication and European Phenomenology" in the fall and Philipsen's "Communication Ethnography" in the spring. Even without being graded, I completed all of the assignments and exams as I wanted to make the best possible impression on the faculty and graduate students.

These two courses were the highlights of being in Seattle. The classes were small with eight students in each. The professors were illuminating and the students were mostly brilliant. The course material was challenging and exceedingly interesting to me. I treasured every second at the tables. It seemed to me that my participation and writing made clear that I belonged. While I wasn't the smartest or best student in the room—some of the students had been in the Ph.D. program for a number of years before taking the class and others were intellectually gifted—I understood the material and the discussions and held my own in every academic sense. Both teachers wrote excellent letters of recommendation in support of my application for admission.

The *Etherington Apartments* were fewer than five short blocks, less than ten minutes, from my classes on campus. I did not have maintenance responsibilities at the units; my primary

jobs were to collect the rent, show vacant apartments, and pick up litter. I earned extra money (at hourly wages) by painting apartments between changes in tenants. In Pullman, we had painted most of the units in the entire complex over one summer, as the place was largely vacant when regular terms at WSU were not in session. The vacancy rate did not fluctuate at the *Etherington: Apartments*: in the U-district apartments were highly sought-after and never sat empty for more than a week between occupants. I did not always paint between tenants.

My time in Seattle included many visits to the Boyd home on Queen Ann. At the time, their second-story apartment featured incredible views of Mount Rainier, downtown Seattle and Mount St. Helens in the distance. In fact, Cheryl (who was visiting for a weekend), I, and the Boyds had a clear view of the mountain's June 12, 1980 major eruption. During the year in Seattle I frequented the leading pizza parlor of the day, the University District's *Northlake Pizza* (it's still great), enjoyed smoked salmon from carts along the Sound at the foot of the downtown bluff (still great), discovered the joys of fresh crumpets with peanut butter and/or ricotta cheese at *The Crumpet Shop* (still great) and purchased Market Spice and Lapsang Souchong teas in *Pike Place Market* (not to mention all the fresh fish I could afford—also still great). I generally came to love the city and its many advantages after four years of small town life in Pullman/Moscow. I was, after all, a Big City boy at heart.

Many of the Pullman/Moscow/WSU/KUGR/KWSU folks migrated west of the mountains after their exile on the Palouse. While in Seattle, I spent time with former roommate Frank Shiers (yes, Frank eventually forgave me for throwing him out of his own apartment in favor of Bill Boyd) as well as fellow DJ and friend Carlos DelValle and his girlfriend Kathi Goertzen. All three worked in radio/television in the Seattle/Tacoma area. Frank broke into west-side radio,

first at *KPUG-AM* in Bellingham and then (by the time I arrived in Seattle) *KNBQ* in Tacoma. Kathi began and spent her career in television news at *KOMO* in Seattle and Charlie/Carlos landed a part-time sports gig with a brand-new television station in Tacoma.

Charlie once invited me to a Seattle Mariners' game in the Kingdom. I enjoyed sitting in the press box but not as much as the thrill of heading into the home team manager's office after the game to witness former Dodger shortstop Maury Wills go ballistic during the post-game press conference. Wills lasted barely longer than one season in a job for which, by his own later admission, he was ill-prepared. The backstage visit to the press box and manager's office caused me to pine for my sports journalism days, but not enough to change my career direction.

While most of the day-to-day details distinguished the Seattle adventure as one of my life's best years to date, the situation at UW was not equally robust. Simply put, The Speech Department chairman would not budge from his abhorrence of WSU graduates. Although I distinguished myself in the classes and both faculty members wrote very strong letters of recommendation, the department chairman made clear, from beginning to end, that I would not be accepted into the Speech Communication Ph.D. program at UW. His position angered and confused me. We held more than one discussion over the matter. He was polite but firm and I held my temper in check and presented the best arguments I could muster—but to no avail. The chairman never specified a reason for his decision. Instead, he made general statements such as “I just don’t think it would be for the best, no.” I’d have to look elsewhere and my year in Seattle was, more or less, time wasted (although I learned a lot from both classes).

Just after the turn of the year, I applied to additional schools in case the UW situation didn’t work out. Given the chairman’s intransigence, applying elsewhere turned out to be the

right plan. I focused on two Ph.D. programs: The Department of Rhetoric and Communication at the University of Oregon and the Department of Communication at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Turns out that I wasn't such a bad candidate after all: After I retook the GRE for a fresh score and combined it with my recently earned Master's degree, I was accepted into both programs as a Ph.D. student with full financial support as a graduate teaching assistant. My wife-to-be and I had to decide where we'd spend the first four years of our marriage (or longer); that decision would determine my choice of Ph.D. programs.

Cheryl and I discussed the situation during my monthly visits. In addition to getting a "fiancé fix," those trips were necessitated by our plans to be married in the Catholic Church. We were forced into a course of pre-marital education irrespective of the fact that I lived over 5-½ hours away. The long drive was tedious and as a barely lukewarm, soon-to-be-fallen-away Catholic, I had little enthusiasm for the instruction. Further Cheryl was a non-church-going Protestant with no plans, at that point, to convert to Catholicism. However, Roger and Evangeline would have been *very* unhappy with anything other than a Catholic wedding and I still, formally, qualified, so it was off to instructions we went. By spring, the visits provided us with time and opportunities to discuss our next move. And later interactions with the Catholic bureaucracy paid unexpected dividends.

Our trip to San Francisco was Cheryl's only experience in California. Our drives through Oregon, to and from the Bay Area, followed Oregon's eastern border. Although we had both visited Portland, neither of us had set foot in Eugene. At the beginning of the decision process I was strongly in favor of accepting the offer at Santa Barbara; sometimes one *can* go home again. There were, however, a number of mitigating factors.

First, although Cheryl had learned to drive as a teenager and earned a now-expired driver's license, she no longer drove cars. This would be a disadvantage in Southern California. Second, Cheryl's rural history was not a strong motivator toward the California lifestyle. Third, although her family was very small in number, consisting of her mother Shirley, her mother's cousin Stan, her elderly Aunt Jean (in Spokane), and two sisters, eldest sister Patty and younger sister Margaret, everyone lived in eastern Washington. Moving to California would take Cheryl a very long way away from her family. Finally, and not insignificantly, life in Santa Barbara was *VERY* expensive. Although we suspected that Cheryl might be able to get retail work similar to her sales gig at *Dodson's Jewelers*, we weren't sure if we could live on a graduate student stipend and her retail salary.

Nevertheless, I was eager to return home and thought that being within a couple short hours from Long Beach (not to mention three hours from Anaheim Stadium and my beloved Angels) was a clear winner. Due to the conflicting issues, I traveled home to visit Dad and Mom and interview at the Santa Barbara campus. Cheryl could not make the trip due to work and school (she was just completing the last course for her degree).

As I planned, I leveraged my experience by applying for an apartment manager's job in the UCSB student housing system. Given my recent, multiple, apartment managing gigs and advanced degree, I got the job and thereby solved two problems. One, we had a place to live, free. Two, the apartment managing also paid a



Evangeline poses with M.A. regalia ceremony six months past. Back yard on Driscoll in Long Beach. No graduation pix were taken in Pullman, so I brought my outfit south. Rog is the photographer. Before long I regretted him not being in the image

small stipend so we'd have income in addition to the GTA stipend and Cheryl's retail earnings. However, my trip led us in an unexpected direction.

I've never visited a better on-campus location than UCSB. The Department of Communication was in a building that ran the length of a spit/peninsula overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The setting was stunning. I had solid interviews with the faculty and staff and I met with a couple of graduate students. I visited the apartment complex where we would live and that I would manage: it was within 2 blocks of the beach and included a relatively unblocked ocean view. I saw many jewelry stores where Cheryl could work. Roger and Evangeline were thrilled by the prospect of bringing Cheryl and I home with them (or at least, with us in a moving truck not far behind them) after our, upcoming, July wedding. It looked, for all intents and purposes, as though UCSB was the clear winner. There was, however, a programmatic fly in the ointment.

The Department of Communication at UCSB offered neither its own doctoral program nor degree. The Ph.D. was in cooperation with the Department of Sociology. This was a *perfect* arrangement for my studies: I was a conversation analyst with recent additional coursework (albeit as an audit) in ethnography of communication and field research. The UCSB Sociology Department was incredibly strong in these areas at the time. Donald H. Zimmerman led a group that was doing exactly the kind of ethnographic research of communication phenomena that I wanted to learn about and do. I was thrilled by the chance to study there.

On the other side of the consideration, the Department of Communication had an empirical bent that was not a good match with my research methods and/or objectives, not to mention my exceedingly poor quantitative analysis skills. The COM curricula and research programs were based on quantitative approaches to social scientific research of communication

phenomena. In other words, I would find little, if any, support for my work in my “home” (degree granting) department and I could not fall back on their coursework if things went amuck with my studies in Sociology. There was also a nasty rumor among the graduate students that while a large number of students had entered the joint program only a small number of students were finishing. Perhaps the thing was a sort of trap just waiting for me with open California-tanned arms.

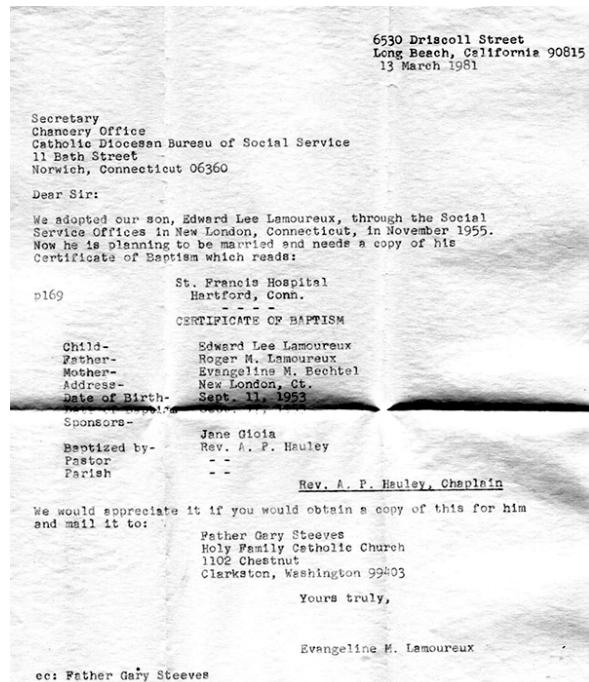
I stopped at the University of Oregon in Eugene on the way back to Seattle. I found the campus green, lush, and inviting. The people I met on campus were friendly and assured me that faculty members there, especially an up-and-coming interpersonal communication scholar, would be very happy to work with me and would fully appreciate my qualitative approaches to social science. By the time I parked at the *Etherington Apartments*, I was pretty sure that we should make the University of Oregon our choice. When I called to discuss the matter with Cheryl, she was thrilled over not having to move to California. It looked, from that vantage point, that we’d made the best possible decision. Later, in hindsight, the tough call was not so clearly correct.

About this time, I made my fiancé a “final offer.” I wasn’t sold on the concept of, or pragmatics surrounding, marriage. Though Mom and Dad were thriving toward 30 plus years of happily married life, I was unsure about the commitment. So I made Cheryl an offer: 10 year renewable contracts. In response, Cheryl made clear that she was neither moving out of state with me under a 10-year, renewable, contract nor without a wedding ring and legal ceremony. I exacted one stipulation as part of the decision and agreement: “If we say those vows, it’s a done deal. You won’t be rid of me, short of one of our deaths.” I figured that she’d had her chance to

acquire loopholes and if I was stuck, so was she. Cheryl passed on my offer. The jig was up and the planning began in earnest.

The monthly trips to the Palouse for marriage instruction led to the most significant surprise in my life (I suppose other than the miracle that Cheryl was willing to put up with me). You probably wondered why this chapter follows the adventures of someone named "Francis." Once again, I was about to add a moniker, albeit one that I would seldom use. Throughout my life my parents and I had utilized a copy of the baptismal certificate that was issued to them after they adopted me. The copy listed them as my natural parents; this was of course creative fiction perpetrated as a legal means to protect all parties involved in the adoption. Since I had matriculated thirteen years of Catholic schools, the baptismal certificate copy had always served as acceptable identification. Evangeline held the copy for safe-keeping.

Unexpectedly, the Catholic diocese in Clarkston, Washington insisted on receiving an original baptismal certificate prior to scheduling our wedding. We tried to convince them to accept a copy of the document that Mom held, or for that matter, the document itself (as had all previous Catholic



SAINT FRANCIS HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CENTER
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06105

Child... Francis Wayne Beaulieu
Father...
Mother... Claudette Beaulieu
Address... 113 Francis Avenue, Hartford, CT
Date of Birth... September 11, 1953
Date of Baptism... September 17, 1953
Parish Affiliation...
Sponsors... Jane Gioia, S.N.
Baptized by... Reverend A P Hauley
Issue Date... March 8, 1990

Rev. Julian Mennito, c.m.
Chaplain

institutions), but they were unwilling to accept either: they wanted an original from St. Francis in Hartford. As a result, Evangeline wrote to my birthplace, St. Francis Hospital in Hartford Connecticut, and requested that a certificate be issued to the Church in Clarkston.

I assumed they'd send a document that was identical to the doctored baptismal certificate we had long used. After all, mom had asked that they send a copy. Instead the next time we attended instructions, the parish priest who was going to marry us, then Fr. Gary Steeves, presented us with the material he received from Hartford. The document was from hospital where I was born rather than from the Catholic Chancery office for adoption that Evangeline had written to. On examination, I was surprised to learn my birth name, Francis Wayne Beaulieu, and the name of my birth mother, Claudette Beaulieu: the document was original rather than modified. The document did not list the name of a birth father. I called Long Beach, immediately.

“Evangeline. I need to talk with you for minute. No, I don’t need Dad on the phone. Just you. You know how you always told me that I could go to Connecticut and look up my birth records after I was 21? You always said that you didn’t know much about my birth-parents, other than that my mother was French and my father was short? You said that the records were sealed. I got a look at the document that St. Francis in Hartford sent to Fr. Steeves. It lists my birth mother and my birth name. I mean, I don’t think you lied to me, but what the heck? If this information was so damn easy for me to get, by way of a simple request letter, what was with all that stuff about me having to wait until I was twenty-one and then go there?”

“Oh Edward, they were *never* supposed to release that information this way.

They promised us and promised us. This is terrible. I'm going to write to them as soon as we get off the phone and find out what happened."

Evangeline then penned a penetrating and strident letter inquiring as to why the original document was released rather than the modified version. Eventually we learned that the mistake was attributed to a clerical error. I filed the document among my papers and planned no further action. Although, in my youth, I wanted to travel to Connecticut and learn about my origins, by the time I became an adult I was no longer very interested. At that point, I had no intention of looking for members of my birth family or for additional details. I knew who my parents were and that I am Edward, not Francis. Ignoring all of that would change before long, but that story comes later and in another part of the country.

We held the intimate wedding, according to plan, in July 1981. Cheryl has a small family and not many friends were around at the time. Plus, the location was remote and was difficult for my friends and family to reach, so we maintained a low profile and scheduled events that everyone we'd invited could attend without anyone spending a lot of time or money. We invited only five people on my side while Cheryl added a dozen of her friends and family.

Neither of us wanted to force a Catholic mass on attendees as part of the service as most of the guests were not Catholics, so we scheduled a mass for Roger and Evangeline and the two of us early in the morning before the wedding ceremony. Cheryl's mother graciously attended as well. Then we returned to church for a brief Catholic marriage ceremony early in the afternoon. After the brief service, party headed for a nice brunch at *Biscuitroot Park* after the wedding; getting everyone around one long table was wonderful.

We moved Cheryl's things to Seattle in a small *U-Haul* trailer behind the Buick and left the Palouse in our rear-view mirror. Cheryl has since visited the area four times; once before and once after her mother died, once after her oldest sister Patty died and finally for Cheryl's 50th high school reunion gathering. I have not returned to the Palouse since our wedding day.

The week after moving Cheryl to Seattle, we took a fairly spectacular, though relatively inexpensive, four-day honeymoon. I still recommend this itinerary as one of the most wonderful trips available in the continental United States. We took a car ferry from Seattle to Bainbridge Island then drove through portions of the Pacific Rainforest to Port Angeles. There we boarded another car ferry headed for Victoria Island. Note: the trip can now be done via a single car-ferry from Seattle to Victoria. We spent one day driving around the island viewing the architecture and coastal beauty. We spent the second day at Butchart Gardens, perhaps the most magnificent rose gardens in Canada, topped off by an "antique" fireworks display at dusk. After an overnight in Victoria, we ended our stay by taking the Swartz Bay car ferry to Tsawwassen on the mainland just south of Vancouver. After a day touring Vancouver and enjoying dinner in the second-largest Chinese neighborhood on the West Coast we made the return drive to Seattle. Unfortunately, during the drive we learned of the tragic accident that killed Harry Chapin the week before; the news dampened our spirits a bit. But overall the honeymoon trip was a rousing success. It was a really good thing that the honeymoon went well and that we were scheduled to move to Eugene in time to start school in the fall: Cheryl did not very much enjoy our time in Seattle.

Some of Cheryl's concerns were homegrown and personal while others were more based on our new circumstances. Seattle is a much bigger place than anywhere Cheryl had lived. Since she did not drive, was unfamiliar with the bus system, and found herself in the "Big City,"

Cheryl did not venture from the apartment without me. At that point, I was painting in the apartments and waiting tables for extra money to support our move so we neither spent a lot of time together nor were able to enjoy many of the wonders of the greater Seattle area. Also, the manager's apartment was on the ground floor and faced an alley rather than the street. The unit had a sliding glass door and seemed vulnerable to the many people who used the alley, be they *Etherington* residents, passers-by, or homeless folks. The layout left me feeling less than secure; Cheryl was downright uncomfortable in the apartment. Perhaps worst of all, I had not acquired a bed frame or box spring when I moved in; I slept on a mattress directly on the floor. While this had been fine for me, it was not an optimal arrangement for newlyweds. Nevertheless, I did not want to acquire a frame and box spring for the short month-and-a-half that we would be living together in Seattle; the married student housing in Eugene provided a furnished apartment, including bed with frame, box spring, and mattress. There was also a certain amount of anxiety related to our status as newlyweds. We had not lived together before our marriage and so the usual amount of adaptations to co-habitation were required but not easy.

Suffice to say that we were both more than happy when it came time to move to Eugene in order to prepare for the school year. I was due on campus two weeks before the start of school for the new graduate teaching fellow (GTF) orientation and training program. I suppose one could say that I'd headed there with yet another name-change to adjust to: Mr. and Mrs. Edward Lee Lamoureux. The adjustments did not go altogether swimmingly. The choice of Eugene over Santa Barbara had unexpected consequences that would only become clear, first, a week or so after our arrival in Eugene and then four years later after Eugene was far in our rear-view-mirror.

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