

## **Sasha & Jesse**

Wedding Ceremony • August 11, 2007

*[BEN stands at front]*

*[Cue music, SHY and AARON enter together]*

*[Same music, JESSE enters with ALALIA and FRED]*

*[New song, SASHA enters with ANIA and COSME]*

### **BEN:**

Welcome, family and friends, to the great state of California. We have gathered here to enjoy the view of the Russian River Valley, to see old friends and to make new ones, to drink wine and toast our good fortunes, to eat great food – but save room for dessert – and to dance until our feet are sore or they kick us out (whichever comes first). And we have gathered here to celebrate the marriage of Sasha and Jesse, two fine young individuals who make up one fine young couple.

**BEN (cont'd):** Until recently, I, Bennett Cohen, had no particular expertise in conducting marriage ceremonies. But with the help of the Alameda County Recorder's Office, I have become a One-Time Deputy Marriage Commissioner, Without Compensation pursuant to California Family Code, Section 401 on this day, August 11, 2007. And that means I've got some marrying to do. Unfortunately, this job doesn't come with much of an instruction manual, so you'll have to forgive me if I borrow lines from my previous gig as Chairman of Ben & Jerry's.

Luckily, I don't have to do this alone. Up here, I am joined by maid-of-honor Shy and best man Aaron, who promise to help keep this thing moving along. And there in the first row are Sasha and Jesse's parental units, Ania, Cosme, Alalia and Fred. Sasha and Jesse are grateful to you for having walked them down the aisle today, and for always having been loving, caring, supportive... you know, good parents! And along with them, I'm counting on all of you who have come out here to California to help me get these kids hitched.

**BEN (cont'd):** So, let's get down to business. May I have a motion to get this wedding started?

**AARON:** Mr. One-Time Deputy Marriage Commissioner, let's get this show on the road.

**BEN:** Is there a second?

**SHY:** *[sung]* I second that emotion!

**BEN:** All those in favor say "aye."

**GUESTS:** Aye!

**BEN:** The motion is carried. On to the nuptials!

**BEN (cont'd):** Now, Sasha and Jesse, you guys have known each other for quite a while, and I'm sure you've thought long and hard about your decision to get married today, but as your One-Time Deputy Marriage Commissioner, it is my duty to make you aware of the legal repercussions of what you are about to get yourselves into. So I would now like to open the floor to two great legal scholars. Holly Lincoln and Christophe Courchesne, both Massachusetts-educated attorneys, have a message for you from that state's highest legal authority.

*[Christophe & Holly move to front]*

**CHRISTOPHE:**

In the landmark 2003 case of *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*, Chief Justice Margaret Marshall, writing for the majority, held that the Massachusetts constitution forbids the denial of the protections and benefits of civil marriage to couples on the basis of sexual orientation. In describing marriage, Marshall wrote:

**HOLLY:**

Marriage is a vital social institution. The exclusive commitment of two individuals to each other nurtures love and mutual support. For those who choose to marry, marriage provides an abundance of legal, financial, and social benefits. It is for these reasons that civil marriage has long been termed a civil right.

**CHRISTOPHE:**

Civil marriage is at once a deeply personal commitment to another human being and a highly public celebration of the ideals of mutuality, companionship, intimacy, fidelity, and family.

**HOLLY:**

Because it fulfills yearnings for security, safe haven, and connection that express our common humanity, civil marriage is an esteemed institution, and the decision whether and whom to marry is among life's momentous acts of self-definition.

**BEN:**

Thank you Holly, thank you Christophe. You know, Sasha & Jesse, that's some heavy stuff we just heard. But I think you're ready to make that leap from self-definition to couple-definition. From your first intellectual volleys in high school Zen Buddhism class, to your ongoing debate about vocal versus instrumental jazz, from your early escapades in Europe, to your latest adventures in Yosemite, you've shown each other to be perfect lifelong companions.

So if you've got the rings, let's get on to the vows!

*[rings presented]*

**BEN (cont'd):** Sasha, here's what you've got to say.

**SASHA** *[lines fed by BEN]:*

Jesse, I marry you today  
Because you think creatively, speak thoughtfully, and act boldly;  
Because you can make me laugh before breakfast;  
And because you love me as I am.

I promise to share in your failures and your successes,  
To cherish simple pleasures and take on big adventures,  
To let you grow out your beard at least once a year  
    *[but not your hair; that ship has sailed],*  
And to love you with all my heart for all my life.

*[put on ring]*

**BEN:** Jesse, here's what you've got to say.

**JESSE** [*lines fed by BEN*]:

Sasha, I marry you today  
Because you think critically, speak confidently, and act justly;  
Because you show me the profound and the whimsical;  
And because you love me as I am.

I promise to share in your failures and your successes,  
To cherish simple pleasures and take on big adventures,  
To take you dancing, even though I have two left feet  
    [two right feet; I mean left feet, left feet!],  
And to love you with all my heart for all my life.

*[put on ring]*



**BEN:** Even an irreverent wedding ceremony should find a way to honor tradition. In a Russian Orthodox wedding, the couple drinks from the same cup of wine as a symbol that they will now share all their joys and sorrows in their long life together. Shy, you may be living in Ireland now, but you're still a Russian at heart. May I have the glass?

*[SHY gives half-full wine glass to BEN]*

May this be the first of many glasses of wine shared in wedded bliss.

*[SASHA & JESSE drink]*

Now, in the Jewish tradition, when you're done with the wine, you get to break the glass. This reminds you that by getting married you are committing a brave and irrevocable act. It's also just kind of fun. Hey Aaron, you played the Rabbi in *Fiddler on the Roof*. Can you prepare the vessel?

*[AARON puts wine glass in "sock"]*

**BEN (cont'd):** But before you do any glass smashing, there's some advice I'd like to impart to you. First, though marriage is all about working together, don't lose your individuality. You'll be a happier couple if you each find your own spaces and pursue your own hobbies.

Second, though marriage is also about creating a new family, stay in touch with the folks in the front row. Don't give your mothers a reason to complain that "you nevah write, you nevah call..."

And finally, remember that music is good for your body and good for your soul. Keep music in your lives and you'll stay young for a long time to come.

So that's it! There's just one more thing I have to say to make this official: *[pause]*

**BEN (cont'd):** By the power vested in me by the state of California, I now pronounce you wife and husband. You can break the glass and smooch it up!

*[JESSE and SASHA stomp and kiss]*

Well, that completes the formal business of this gathering, but not the best business, which will take us through the rest of the night. Don't wander off right away, because we're going to take a group photo at the bottom of the stairs.

All right, may I have a motion to adjourn the formal gathering?

**SHY:** Mr. One-Time Deputy Marriage Commissioner, let's wrap it up.

**BEN:** Is there a second?

**AARON:** *[sung]* I second that emotion!

**BEN:** All those in favor say "aye."

**GUESTS:** Aye!

**BEN:** The motion is carried and the formal gathering is adjourned!

*[Cue the music; SASHA & JESSE recess.]*