

Laura, Getting Married: A Wedding Ceremony

By Geoff Kirsch

1. PROCESSIONAL
2. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Before we begin...

Laura, Craig, I'd just like to offer my sincerest secular blessing on this, your wedding day. May your lives be long, your love be strong, and your children quick to potty train.

3. GEOFF'S WEDDING "SERVICE"

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to join Laura Kirsch and Craig McFarland as husband and wife.

And I've got to say: it's about damn time.

Come on. Were any of you really surprised by the news of their engagement? For me it wasn't so much a question of *if* Laura and Craig would get married, but simply a matter of *when*... and whether or not we could get the bakery from "Ace of Cakes" to do a bust of Sigmund Freud with a butter-cream frosting brain bursting out of his skull.

Alas, we could not.

If you hadn't already guessed, Laura and Craig's wedding ceremony isn't going to be traditional, at least not traditional in the traditional sense. For one, they won't be married by a clergyman or a justice-of-the-peace.

No, I'm conducting this ceremony under what Massachusetts statute calls a 24-hour designation to solemnize a wedding. That's right—I'm the Solemnizer.

In preparing my "service," Laura's exact instructions to me were, and I quote: "you can choose what you want to cover." That's a lot of license for someone like me—you should have seen the first draft. Animal sacrifice was involved.

Thankfully, however, good sense prevailed. As did the couple's insistence that this was to be a wedding ceremony and not a stand-up routine.

With that in mind...

It is said that marriage requires falling in love many times, always with the same person.

During the past five years, Laura and Craig have fallen in love with each other again and again. And again.

They've been through a lot together. First grad school, then more grad school, then still more grad school. They moved in together, raised three cats and two dogs together—only one of which went blind.

As shortstop and second baseman, respectively, not only did Craig and Laura lead their grad school softball team—the aptly named "Psychos"—to the University of Arizona's intramural championships, they actually completed a 6-4-3 double play. Very impressive for co-ed slow pitch.

And then, of course, Laura and Craig endured a whole year of being apart... together. But distance only strengthened their love. Soon enough—though to them it probably felt interminable—they were moving across the country, deep into Red Sox territory, to start a new life.... yet again, together.

By the way, have you ever seen the two of them together? Conspiratorial, is how I'd characterize their rapport, but in a good way. They're wise-asses, and I mean that in the best possible sense. Plus, they're usually wearing complementary Puma apparel.

Bottom line: it's completely obvious the extent to which they enjoy each other's company. And that's a hell of a thing, you know—to find someone you can stand for fifteen minutes, let alone love for the rest of your life.

But Laura and Craig aren't in plain old regular love. No, they're in *marriage* love and there's a difference.

Regular love usually entails loss, at least to some degree. But marriage love.... Not only does marriage love feel like you're winning, but that you keep pulling further and further ahead. Well, at least that's what it feels like to me.

To put it a different way: love is a flower that turns into fruit at marriage. Nice, right? I can't take credit for it, though—that's a Finnish proverb, thus proving, once again, that the best proverbs come from Finland. Also, deceptively good vodka.

Of course, a successful marriage takes more than love; it also takes teamwork. Honestly, Laura and Craig make a great team. And I'm not just saying that because I checked off chicken on my RSVP card and now I feel like I want to switch to the herb-encrusted Chilean sea bass.

Middle-infielding prowess aside, Kirsch-McFarland teamwork is most aptly exemplified by the ceremonial wedding canopy, or *chuppah*, beneath which Laura and Craig come together today. Traditionally, a chuppah consists of four poles spanned by some type of cloth—in this case, the very same bridal veil our mother wore at my parents' wedding.

What makes this chuppah different from all other chuppahs? Laura and Craig designed it as a team, Laura and Craig constructed it as a team—symbolically apt, considering that traditionally, the chuppah represents the home Laura and Craig will build as a team. Though, I'd have to advise making your actual home a little more waterproof. Also, I think mom's going to want her veil back.

Craig and Laura have written their own vows. Craig?

4. CRAIG'S VOWS

(Insert vows here.)

Laura?

5. LAURA'S VOWS

(Insert vows here.)

6. EXPLANATION OF THE CHUPPAH, RING, GLASS BREAKING

In just a moment, Laura and Craig will exchange wedding rings. Historians date this custom back to Ancient Rome, and perhaps earlier.

Interestingly enough, some cultures place the wedding ring on the right hand, others on the left. Traditionally, the right hand is the hand for swearing vows or oaths. However, other cultures believe that the *vena amoris* or “vein of love” is found on the left ring finger.

Among sociologists, however, the most widely accepted explanation is far more utilitarian: since the vast majority of people on earth are right-handed, wearing wedding rings on the left hand drastically decreases the chances of losing or damaging it. Although, you’ll still probably want to take it off when you wash the dishes, especially if you have a garbage disposal.

Also, I'd like to point out that Laura represents the fifth generation of women on our mother's side to be married with this particular ring.

At the very end of the ceremony, the groom, aka Craig, will step on a wineglass with his right foot, another Jewish wedding ritual. This one dates back to the early first millennium.

As with any custom this old, a variety of explanations exist as to its exact origin. To some, it is a reminder that despite joy, there are still things to mourn. To others, the number of shards indicates the length of a marriage. I, myself, am partial to the Kabbalah’s explanation: breaking glass at a wedding reminds us that the nature of our world is broken and fragmentary, and that we all should be contributing to its constant repair.

This is even more fitting for Craig and Laura. As psychologists, that’s what they’ll be doing—helping people. And turning 6-4-3 double plays.

Once the glass is shattered, and the bride and groom are officially married, tradition dictates we all exclaim: “Mazel Tov!” I believe in Hebrew that means “break out the cocktail wieners.”

And now, the home-stretch.

7. THE “QUESTION”

Do you, Craig, take Laura to be your lawfully-wedded wife...

For better or for worse...

For richer for poorer...

In sickness and in health...

In tallness and in shortness...

To love, honor, and cherish for as long as you both shall live?

Laura, same question, names reversed and substituting husband for wife?

8. FINAL DECLARATION OF MARRIAGE

If anyone knows a reason why these two should not be married, too bad, it's already done.

By the power vested in me by the State of Massachusetts—for one day only, so anyone else interested in getting married, I've got like seven more hours—I now pronounce you husband and wife.

You may now kiss the bride.

(Smash.)

Mazel Tov!

(Wieners.)