

FACT PATTERN
Collaborative Grand Rounds 5/20/2022

“Brenda and Eddie were the popular steadies and the king and the queen of the prom.
Riding around with the car top down and the radio on.
Nobody looked any finer
Or were more of a hit at the parkway diner.
And nobody thought we could want more than that out of life.
Oh, but there we were waving Brenda and Eddie goodbye.

Brenda and Eddie were still going steady in the summer of 75
When they decided the marriage would be at the end of July.
Everyone said they were crazy
Brenda you know that you’re much too lazy
And Eddie could never afford to live that kind of life.
Oh, but there we were waving Brenda and Eddie goodbye.

Well, they lived for awhile in a very nice style, but it’s always the same in the end.
They got a divorce as a matter of course and they parted the closest of friends.”

What you may not know about Brenda and Eddie’s story is that they were married for many years and had two children. Brenda did not work much during the marriage. Eddie got his real estate license and ultimately became a real estate developer, doing very well for himself and his family. Their two children, a daughter, Billie and a son, Joel, are a sophomore in college and a junior in high school.

As the story goes, the time came when they decided to get a divorce and they chose the collaborative process. Eddie’s business partner had been through a very bad divorce and recommended that Brenda and Eddie not proceed with litigation if they wanted to remain “the closest of friends.” Of course, Brenda never worried about the finances, knew nothing about them, and lived a comfortable life.

Eddie hired a lawyer, who suggested three “friendly” collaborative colleagues and Brenda selected one of them, hoping to avoid any conflict, despite her fear that she wouldn’t have someone to “fight” for her.

The collaborative attorneys selected the remaining team members. During the second full meeting, the Collaborative Financial Professional was distracted, on his phone, and obviously not engaged in the process. He also did not want to prepare the financial affidavit because it was not specifically requested of him. Later in the case, when Eddie got the CFP’s bill, he called his attorney angry about the amount due. After some discussion, he said he would pay, but before he did, the CFP threatened to sue him. Ultimately, the financial professional became “disinterested,” and didn’t want to make the time for the debrief, leaving the other professionals feeling as if their professional relationship with him was unimportant.