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Capturing the Friedmans

By Unknown

Hi. It's me.
Oh, we're not ready yet?
Hi.
It's me, Jesse.
Are we there?
Good. We're there.
Well, this afternoon,
after a very lousy sketch
about yo-yoing,
I figure we'll, for lack of
anything better to do,
we'll take it towards a more
serious side right about now.
And we're going to conduct
an interview with
Arnold Friedman, my father.
I still feel like I knew
my father very well.
I don't think that just because
there were things in his life
that were private and
secret and shameful
that that means that
the father who I knew
and the things I knew about him
were in any way not real.
They're gonna put me
in the movies
They're gonna make
a big star out of me
We'll make a film about a man
that's sad and lonely
And all I got to do
is act naturally
Well, I'll bet you I'm
a-gonna be a big star
Might win an Oscar,
you can't never tell
The movies gonna
make me a big star
'Cause I can play
the part so well
Well, I hope you come
to see me in the movies

Then I know that you
will plainly see
The biggest fool that's
ever hit the big time
And all I got to do
is act naturally
Arnold liked pictures.
I mean, that's, let's face it.
He liked pictures.
Well, we're here.
This is it, the whole
family assembled.
Everybody in
Great Neck, New York.
We had three sons.
David, being the oldest
had a lot of responsibility
when he was young.
Seth was an outright rebel.
And somehow, Jesse
was just like the
the one that keeps
trying to catch up
and doesn't quite make it.
I have very good memories
of the, of my, well,
I have very good memories
of my childhood.
I had a great time growing up.
I had a great time
because of my friends.
And my father was great.
I mean, he may not have
been the best father,
but he went to
Columbia University.
And then when he graduated,
he went to the Catskills
to play in his band.
The Jazzbo Mambo
With a boogie beat
Is the newest dance
on 52nd Street
The band was called Arnito Rey

and his Orchestra.
My father's name
was Arnold Friedman.
This was in the late
40's and early '50s.
So he played Latin music.
It was very big at the time,
and so he changed
his name to Arnito Rey.
We'll do a Jazzbo Mambo
8 to the bar
I don't know.
My dad was a cool guy, you know?
He was a schoolteacher.
And I think that the other kids
liked him, and he liked kids.
But he didn't like spending
a lot of time with his wife,
so he would teach high
school during the day
and then after school, he would
come home and teach
piano lessons and later computer
lessons in the house.
And that was, of course, more
time he didn't have to spend
with his wife.
I'm not that anxious to talk
about his father,
because, you know,
we were divorced, and
But his father, he would,
I don't really want
to talk about it.
In case anybody didn't know,
I'm the father of this family.
I'm never in the movies.
Never see me in any
of the pictures,
but I really am the father.
And we're all gathered together
while David is messing up
the camera here.
Now he's taking a good movie

and zooming in and out.
When you see me on this,
you're gonna say
Okay, shut it.
He died of a surprise heart
attack about 5 years ago.
And it was very, very sad.
He was, you know,
selfless, altruistic.
But in the end, he wasn't
together with your mom?
He wasn't together
with my mother at the end.
And when did they make
the decision not to be together?
Long before he died?
Couple years before his death.
There's a lot I,
well, whatever.
There's some things I don't
want to talk about.
Well, this is private,
so if you don't,
if you're not me,
then you really shouldn't
be watching this,
because this is supposed to be
a private situation
between me and me.
This is between me now
and me in the future.
So turn it off.
Don't watch this.
This is private.
If you're the fucking,
oh, God, the cops.
And if you're the fucking cops,
go fuck yourselves,
because you're full of shit.
Back in 1984, US Customs had
seized some child pornography,
addressed from the Netherlands,
in the mail to Arnold Friedman.
Now, he never got that

piece of mail,
but his name was
forwarded on to us.
So what we would do then
would be to initiate
a correspondence with
Arnold in the hopes
that we can determine if he is
in fact willing to violate
the statute again about mailing
or receiving child pornography.
"Dear Stan, the book is
Joe, 14, and his uncle."
I think I'd like you to send me
something, sort of good faith,
and I will forward this rather
precious book to you.
"Thanks, Arnie."
See, it's very hard
to believe that
this so-called "good
marriage" was so disturbed.
He sent him these pictures,
and he sent him a note
that I remember, because
the lawyer got the note.
And then he wrote, "Enjoy."
Since he had sent the magazine,
he was always asking
for it back.
So I asked the prosecutors,
"Let's grant him his wish.
He wants his magazine back."
I dressed up as a mail carrier,
knocked on his door,
asked him if he was
Arnold Friedman.
He replied he was.
And I said, "I have
a package for you."
Sign right here."
He did.
About an hour later,
we went back.

We would give him some
time with the magazine.
I'm dressed now.
I just put a blue suit jacket
over the carrier's uniform.
And I told him, "I have a search
warrant for child pornography."
He says, "There's nothin'
like that here."
And I said,
"You don't recognize me?"
I'd just been at
his door an hour ago.
He goes, "No."
And I took off my jacket, and I
said, "Now do you recognize me?"
"Oh, yeah. Oh, okay.
The magazine is upstairs."
So we went up to his bedroom.
In the top dresser door
was the open magazine.
Well, he thought we would take
the magazine and leave,
and I said, "No, we have
a search warrant."
We're gonna search the whole
house for child pornography."
And around that time
his wife showed up.
I thought they were
searching, like, for
marijuana or something.
I didn't know what they
were searching for,
to tell you the truth.
And I thought
it was a big mistake.
One of the first things
we went to was his office.
And I remember just as I was
about to pull out a drawer,
Mr. Friedman came
rushing in and said,
"Wait. I'll get that for you."

And said, "Here."
This is all that's there."
And it was one piece of mail
from the Netherlands,
but it was child pornography.
And he said, "That's it."
That's all there is."
And I said, "Well, that's
great, Mr. Friedman",
but we're still gonna search."
And he goes, "I don't
understand why you don't go"
when I tell you
that's all there is?"
And I said, "Well,
we don't believe you."
Well, it's not something he
sort of left lying around
on the kitchen table.
He wasn't proud of it,
and he kept it hidden.
He had his office downstairs.
It wasn't, like, right there.
You had to go downstairs
and around the corner
to get to his office.
We used to have
someone that cleaned.
He says, "Don't let
her clean in here."
It's okay. I don't want
my things disturbed."
So all right.
I never went in there.
Then one of our inspectors
moved the piano
that was in that office.
And that's where his stash
of magazines were held,
behind the piano.
And this was Arnold's secret.
He liked to look
at pictures of boys.
And it's not that he

acted on these things.
He just wanted to look at these
pictures and meditate or
And these are listings
of the magazines
that were found
behind the piano.
"Young Boys & Sodomy."
"Incest Case Histories."
something called
"Chicken Pickin's Magazine."
And in addition to that,
we found evidence
of a computer class being
taught there by Mr. Friedman.
And we did seize
some list of names
that we thought
could be students.
I remember walking
in there saying,
"Goddamn. We could
have a problem here."
Just when you think everything
is going to be dull,
something gets dropped
on your lap, you know,
and it turns out to be something
bigger than you ever thought.
What happened was one
of the detectives
from the vice squad
came in to see me.
And he had a list.
And it was at that point that
we were able to learn
that these were computer
classes that went on
literally every day of
the week and Saturday.
And we drew a big map of the
whole village of Great Neck
sectioned it off, and started
sending detectives out

to do interviews.
She set us up in teams,
male/female teams.
And we got a list
of alleged victims.
Soon as we went into the house,
we were usually approached
by the mothers.
And we explained why we're
there, what we're doing there,
and we'd really like to
talk to their children,
preferably alone.
The parents were
becoming impatient.
They wanted something
done immediately.
But you always want to be very
careful about how you proceed,
because the one thing
that you worry about
I know I worried about
it all the time, is
just charging somebody
with this kind of a crime
is enough to ruin their lives.
So you want to make sure that
you have enough evidence
and that you're convinced that
you're making a good charge.
And how much time was
there between the time
the postal inspector
searched the house
and the time that you went
in for the second search?
Well, it would have been
less than a month,
because we did that the day
before Thanksgiving.
A prominent middle-aged teacher
in a prosperous Long Island town
is charged with sodomizing young
boys who were his students.

Police are charging that
sexual abuse went on
behind the doors of
17 Picadilly Road in Great Neck.
We rang the doorbell.
As soon as he realized who it
was, he wasn't gonna let us in.
So one of the detectives
broke the door down.
And we went into
the premises at that point.
Arnold was by himself.
His wife was out shopping.
I was out to the store to
buy a Thanksgiving turkey.
And I go up the front
walk to the house,
and there're people
all over the house.
And my husband is sitting,
looking very sheepishly
in the dining room, handcuffed.
By this time, just about
every news organization
you could name had
arrived on the scene.
I went home for Thanksgiving.
Got to the house, and there's
cops and news trucks
all over the place.
And
I got worried, of course.
When David came to the house,
we were able to
ascertain eventually
the type of business he was in.
And we heard that he was
involved in children's
entertainment in the form of
some sort of clown activities.
I was there when
the clown came in.
He was ranting and raving.
We had words.

And I was going
through the folders.
We told him to take a hike.
And he kept trying
to come into the house,
and I kept telling him
that he couldn't,
that he had to leave.
He wasn't allowed
while we were searching.
And finally, he came in
for the last time.
He bent down.
I really thought he had
a weapon in that duffle bag.
Everybody kind of, you know,
reached for a gun at one point.
What he came out with
was a pair of Fruit
of the Loom underwear.
And he started prancing around,
flailing his arms in the air,
saying, "Look at me.
I'm an asshole."
They're harassing my father
for no reason at all.
If I had had some kind of
Arabian sand scarf
I would have wrapped
that around my face
and been Lawrence of Arabia.
Maybe that
would have been better.
But I took out underwear,
and I put it on my head
because I didn't want
to be on camera.
The first arrested
was Arnold Friedman,
a retired schoolteacher who was
charged with sodomizing boys
aged 8 to 11.
The charges are that, while
running a computer school,

Arnold Friedman and his son
engaged in various forms
of sexual abuse
against minor children.
Jesse pulls up coming
home from school.
His friends dump him
out of the car.
David sort of grabbed me,
and we were sitting
a couple of houses down,
sort of on the sidewalk.
And he was saying
something to me.
And then one of the TV
cameras came over,
so we kind of ran
to the backyard.
And we went behind the house.
And we were in the backyard
of our house.
And the cops came back, and they
said, "What's going on here?"
And I said, "Don't worry about
it. It's just me and Jesse."
And they said,
"Well, we want Jesse.
We need Jesse in the house now."
Of course, we thought, you know,
we didn't know why that was.
As we conducted more interviews
of the children,
Jesse's name started to pop up.
And Jesse was there.
What did Jesse do?
And then eventually we were
able to ascertain
that Jesse's role was not one
of, you know, helping his dad
conduct the computer class,
but basically abusing
the children himself.
We didn't have children
telling us

that Arnold had
slapped them around.
But quite a number of the kids
reported incidents
of being slapped and having
their hair pulled
or their arms twisted by Jesse.
He was, by far,
the more violent one.
All these policemen
said that Jesse
was some kind of aggressor.
That even his father
was cowering,
and Jesse was this sexual,
molesting tyrant.
I challenge anyone
to find anyone
who Jesse had even teased
as a child or called a name.
Jesse was not an angry person.
He was not an upset person.
So we ended up spending
a lot of time together.
I was over his house 3 days
a week, 4 days a week.
And as far as I know him,
none of this ever happened,
not on my watch.
Eighteen-year-old Jesse Friedman
also stands accused
of sex abuse and using a child
in a sexual performance.
The only thought that I just
kept having the whole night
was, "We're gonna get bailed out
and then we'll go home"
and we'll figure out
what's going on,
and the lawyers will
take care of this,
"and they'll straighten
this out."
Because it was still

just a matter of,
"This is a big
misunderstanding."
But when the bail was set
at a million dollars,
instead of going out
with Mom and David
like we were supposed to,
we went back the other way.
And that was the moment when
there was this whole new sense
that the problem was
much worse than I
originally thought.
The investigation didn't
end at that point.
That really was the arrest
and the search of the house.
And then we went on, because we
had literally, at that point
dozens more interviews to do.
Somewhere along the way, I think
it was the Nassau County cops,
they showed me this magazine,
and they said,
"You see?
Look at this magazine."
And they showed me the magazine.
They were embarrassed
to show it to me
because of what
the pictures were.
And you know, I didn't see it.
My eyes were in
the right direction,
but my brain saw nothing.
Because when it was all over,
the lawyer showed me
the magazine, and then I saw it.
For the first time,
I really saw it.
I couldn't believe what I saw.
I mean, I had no concept
that this

thing even exists in the world,
that this magazine would
even be in the world.

I mean, we had
a middle-class home, educated.

I had a good family, right?

Where did this come from?

Mr. and Mrs. Friedman's house
on this most beautiful
Thanksgiving dinner.

For my daughter,
for my son-in-law,
and for my 3 grandsons.

I'm thankful that both my
brothers are home, and

I'm most thankful
to my husband, to Arnie.

Anything you want
to say, Mr. Friedman?

Are you guilty?

Did you do all they say you did?

No comment.

I was the first to visit
my brother in prison.

And that was a moment in
my life I'll never forget.

He came into the room.

I was sitting at this
table, a lot of tables,
and they were crowded.

Just awful surroundings.

And he didn't have
his glasses on.

Without his glasses,
he was blind as a bat.

They'd taken them off and
broken them, stepped on them.

He had a smell of urine.

They were throwing urine at him.

They were threatening to
throw him down the stairs.

They knew what

he was in there for.

It was all over the media.

And he was half-blind and
hadn't shaved in two days
and shivering and cold
and scared out of his wits.
The first words out
of his mouth were,
"Howie, they're gonna kill me.
Get me out of here."
The People versus Arnold
Friedman and Jesse Friedman.
Indictment 67430.
Step up, please.
So began the very first time
cameras were permitted
in a Nassau County courtroom.
Fifty-six-year-old
Arnold Friedman
and his 18-year-old son Jesse
heard the court clerk read off
a 91-count indictment
charging them with
sodomy and sexual abuse.
Arnold Friedman, how do you
plead to this indictment?
Guilty or not guilty?
Not guilty.
And Jesse Friedman, how do you
plead to this indictment?
Not guilty.
My brother and Jesse kept
saying they're innocent.
"This is trumped up charges."
And they got
a McMartin's, you know?
They somehow got one kid to,
they got the police to be
able to convince the kids,
"Well, all of your friends
said something happened."
Didn't something happen?
Something must have happened,"
et cetera, et cetera.
And they were convinced.
They kept saying

they were innocent.
And I just kept thinking,
"I have to believe them."
It's very hard for people to
accept him as a pedophile.
Arnold Friedman was
an award-winning teacher.
All over the house were plaques
and newspaper articles
written about him.
He had been given an award,
"Computer Teacher of the Year."
He also taught piano.
David plays beautifully.
And his father taught him
how to play the piano.
It was when he died
that I realized
how much of an impact
he had on my life.
Take a bow.
He was very supportive of my
magic when I was a kid.
When I was about 6, my father
took me to a magic show.
And it's probably
my earliest memory.
You know when your son goes
to college and you say,
"Go to college," and
"What are you going to be?"
"Be a doctor. Be a lawyer."
I tried to make him into
a doctor or a lawyer.
You know, my mom would
always say, you know,
"Get a job. Get a job."
But my dad would say to me,
"You know, David,"
I can't tell you what to do,
because you know what I did
"when I got out of college."
He blew off his chemical
engineering degree,

which he could have worked
for an oil company
and made tons of money.
Instead, he played
in the mountains,
which is a total blow-off,
follow your dream,
artistic thing.
And I totally love him for that.
Trust your children to somebody
who was a schoolteacher
for over 20, 30 years,
a member of your community.
All you heard were accolades
about this person,
and now all of a sudden,
he's a monster.
And things that were being said,
you know, upset the community,
because you don't
expect that here.
Great Neck is a peninsula.
It's a very insulated community.
This was a certain kind of
person that lived in Great Neck.
It's on the North Shore
of Long Island,
which is usually a
predominately wealthy area.
These are wealthy,
professional people
that have garnered a great deal
of income in their lives,
and they live accordingly.
Nice community.
Tight.
Affluent.
Well-kept homes.
They get dressed up
to go shopping.
They want to be sure
they get seen by
the people they want to see,
and cars are important,

clothes are important.
There's a lot of
competition in Great Neck.
Everybody's kid's
a genius and the best,
and everybody's the best
in this and that,
and you just want your
kid to be happy
and to get an array
of experiences.
And this computer class was
one of those experiences.
You thought
you were doing right.
Most of the children
started out explaining
how Mr. Friedman would try
to test them, I think,
in my opinion, as to whether
they'd be receptive
to some of his advances.
There'd be certain showings
on the computer
during computer class
of certain material
that was inappropriate
for children.
If you were going to be
the first one abused
on a particular day,
he would pull up a chair
and sit next to you.
Maybe it would start with his
arm around your shoulder
or on your leg and
gradually move it up,
touching private parts.
And then over the course of time
we developed a situation
where we found out that there
was not only sexual touching
of the genitals, but there
were acts of sodomy,

oral and anal sodomy,
that took place during
the course of the class.
So were the kids abused
in the computer room
in view of everyone else?
From what I saw in my sessions,
none were raped
out on the floor.
The kids were raped in Jesse's
room or the bathroom.
Just to change the subject
for a second,
there were these sexual
computer games
that were discussed during
the course of the case.
We'd basically do
the games where
there would be naked girls
and everything
in the computer class.
But I remember one time I
slipped one of the games out,
and I brought it home
and everything,
and I copied it,
and Arnold found out.
Because of that, I was raped
by him and Jesse at the same
time, as punishment to that.
I never did it again.
He made me format it.
I formatted it.
I had to bring my computer
in and show him
that I hadn't brought it home.
So he was absolutely positive,
100%, that it was not
touched at all in any way,
form, shape whatsoever.
And how did he know that
you brought it home?
He accounted for

all the disks that were there.
And since he flipped
through, he's like,
"Who the fuck took this? Tell me
now, or I'm gonna kill you all!"
And he had a knife, and he
was waving a knife around.
I was like, "I did it!"
My general recollection
of the classes
is basically a positive one,
is a pleasant one.
The types of behaviors
which were described,
which were, well, just
downright satanic in nature.
I mean, they make him sound like
some kind of brutal sadist,
whereas, you know, I had just
always thought of him
as being kind of a nebbish.
I think, as someone
who took the classes,
it was just hard to picture
even that going on,
because I did have
a good experience.
And I didn't, you know,
see anything, you know,
remotely like,
you know, like child molestation
or child abuse or any
child anything going on.
What took place in
Arnold's classes
was pretty much just
straight computer lessons.
I mean, as ordinary
and as boring
as you could
possibly imagine it.
It was just generally
a free-for-all.
Everybody could see

what was going on,
and very often they
would participate
in these sort of mass games
in the classroom.
There was a game there
that was called "Leapfrog."
And this one really got to me.
They would play
leapfrog in the class.
They'd actually have
their clothes off.
And we associate leapfrog like
you do when you were a kid,
one guy jumping over another
guy, but the fact is
it means everybody's butt's
up in the air, so to speak.
The very nature of these
charges is so absurd.
It seems almost like some
kind of grotesque fantasy.
Yeah. Leapfrog.
I remember about that.
It's kind of like Twister,
where we would have to sit down.
Our asses would be in the air.
Arnold and Jesse would leap
from one person to another,
sticking their dick
each in our ass.
But then I was confused,
because you said that
no kids were raped
in the computer room.
The leapfrog game, which
was not molestation,
was a leapfrog game, was not
considered molestation,
was done outside.
But that was a group game.
The actual molestation,
one-on-one contact,
happened in the bathroom.

The game happened
out on the floor.
One of the things,
you sit down there,
and I know I, you know, think
about this, and you know,
"How could this go on
in this home for so long
and not be, you know, come out?"
But, you know,
that wasn't my province.
That wasn't what I had to decide
or the judge had to decide.
You know, that's up to someone
else to decide that.
But if I recall, you know,
the children were
pretty vivid in their
recollections
as to what Arnold
and/or Jesse did to them.
And Judge Boklan,
she's you know,
a pretty strong-willed judge.
And she's pretty unmovable
when she makes her decision.
There was never a doubt in
my mind as to their guilt.
And remember, I'd been
around for a while.
This wasn't, you know, the first
sex case that I had ever seen.
In fact, my previous law
secretary used to tease me
that we were the pervert part.
And having been, you know, head
of the Sex Crimes Unit myself,
where, you know, I had young
boys who were sodomized,
in fact, one who killed himself
you know, after the sentence
of the abuser.
I mean, some horrible
experiences.

So for me to be so outraged,
I mean, this was really
very, very bad
what was going on there.
It was like someone's
worst nightmare.
Who would even think
of doing these things?
And to do them in a group
and with so many witnesses.
The scenario, as posted by
the media and the police
was so incredibly way out,
it was hard for me to
believe that it was true.
We now welcome, also in
Los Angeles, Debbie Nathan.
Debbie is an investigative
freelance journalist,
who has been covering
the McMartin and other
abuse trials around the country.
All these parents
are bizarro, huh?
They're all whacked?
Well, it's not really fair,
I don't think
to deal simply with
these parents
or with this particular case.
You have to understand that
all over the country
there is a hysteria.
And I don't think that
it's a question
with most of these
kids of lying.
I think that they have been
brainwashed, if you will.
I was one of the first writers
for the mass media
to look at those cases
critically and question them.
So as a result of that, having

done a lot of that work,
I got a lot of letters
from people.
And my father wrote to Debbie
and said, I don't know,
said, "Help me."
And she has been the only
person outside the family
that said, "I believe you."
In the Friedman case,
the basic charges were
completely implausible.
First of all, you'd have
to believe that blood
is coming out of these
children's orifices,
that they're screaming,
that they're crying,
that their clothes are soiled
from semen and from blood.
And yet their parents show up.
Sometimes they show up
unannounced.
Everything looks fine.
Was there any physical evidence
in the case that was relevant?
Or it was the case
really strictly based on
the statements of the kids?
It was more testimony.
There was a dearth
of physical evidence.
I don't even recall
whether there was
any physical evidence that
would have indicated
one way or another that
these events took place.
I don't think that they're
sitting around with any kind
of diabolical or
conspiratorial agenda
to go out and falsely
accuse Arnold Friedman

or rail road Jesse Friedman.
But nobody's critiquing them.
Nobody's telling them that
there's a right way
and a wrong way to do this.
Nobody's saying that we've got
a problem in this culture
with hysteria around this issue.
And so they're really free
to let their fantasies fly.
I think the most
overwhelming thing was
the enormous amount
of child pornography.
You would just have to walk
into the living room,
and it'd be piled
around the piano.
There were literally foot-high
stacks of pornography,
in plain view,
all around the house.
But photos taken
during the search
showed nothing of the kind.
But as far as the families were
concerned, I don't want to
use the word that they were
competitive with each other.
I don't know if it's
to that extent.
You know, sometimes it'd be some
idle conversation about,
you know, another boy, you know,
"He was sodomized 5 times,
"but my son was sodomized
6 times," you know,
as if that meant something in
the overall scheme of things.
There's a whole community
atmosphere that gets created
in a mass-abuse case like this,
where the families are
talking to each other,

they're going to
community meetings,
or they're calling on
the phone all the time.
They're seeing each other
in group therapy.
And there is definitely
an element when a community
defines itself as
a victimized community,
that if you're not victimized
you don't fit into
that community.
The families that had
their child molested
or allegedly molested
became very involved
and took a greater part
of their life at that point.
I appreciated their call
in the beginning
telling me what happened.
And then when I told them
that we looked into it
and my wife and I both felt that
nothing happened to our son,
it got to be a little pushy
situation where they told us
that we were in denial, and it
absolutely happened to our son.
You fucking bitch!
I'm gonna kill you!
When Jesse gets out of jail,
he's a dead motherfucker.
When Arnold gets out of jail,
he's a dead motherfucker.
Fuck you! I'll fuck
your whole family!
Is there any one word or
phrase that you could use
to describe that
experience overall?
Chaos. Hysteria.
It was really crazy.

Am I dreaming?
Is this a nightmare?
This can't be happening
to my family.
My brother?
And a day doesn't go by
that I don't think of it.
It destroyed my family.
It tore us apart.
I don't know.
I can't say too much about it.
We were a family.
Mommy believes you did it
and she believes you
should go to jail,
and she believes that she
deserves everything
that's left and you shouldn't
have any part of it.
You have to hire another lawyer?
All this woman does
is hire lawyers.
I honestly have to tell you,
anything that she decides
I can't trust.
She runs around, "Arnie,
they don't trust me."
Well, we don't trust her.
We lived with her for 3, for 2
months while you were in jail,
and we learned not to trust her.
David had just gotten a video
camera when this case broke,
and so he just started recording
the family falling apart.
And Mommy believes them,
and I don't.
I tell them to get lost,
and Mommy says, "You're right."
And "I've lived with him
for all my life."
And "Look at all these horrible
things he's done for me"
"over 30 years," which

amounts to nothing,
except this.

At some point, David
making the videotapes
kind of springboarded to my
thoughts about audiotape.
And I began to make
audio recordings
of these family arguments.
Don't scream.

The family was screaming
at each other.

And everyone wanted me
to say, "He didn't do it."
Well, I wouldn't do that.
I said, "I don't know."

They wanted me
just to lie, you know,
and say, "He didn't do it,"
whether I believed it or not.
And I was so angry at Arnold
and what he'd done
that I wouldn't do it, and I
said, "Well, I don't know."
And I wanted just
to tell the truth.
That is the truth.
I didn't know.

My mother abandoned
him, pretty much,
wouldn't talk to him, fought
with him constantly,
made him sleep on the sofa.
And after 33 years of
marriage, when your wife,
when you've been accused of
a crime you didn't commit,
you spend 6 weeks in
jail for it,
you're trying to build
a defense,
and your wife leaves you,
essentially,
my father fell apart.

You yelled and screamed about
what, that you ruined her life.
She's brainwashed you.
You didn't do anything.
The police have done it to you.
It's not your fault.
The police are railroading you.
But it's not your fault.
Mommy doesn't believe you.
The police picked on you,
and that's who
they're going after.
It's not because
you deserved it.
You're taking the blame,
and you don't deserve the blame.
She's brainwashing you into
thinking that it's your fault,
and it's not your fault.
She thinks he did it.
And if he did it,
then she thinks
he's going to be
convicted of it.
And if he's convicted of it,
he's going to go away.
Yeah, but if, let's say he
goes away for 10 years.
He's still gonna come out.
No, I'm talking about 50 years.
I'm talking about 100 years.
She doesn't think
he's getting 50 years.
I don't think she thinks that
he's going to get 50 years.
OK, so what is he gonna get?
Twenty years?
That's 50 years.
What's the difference, well,
If he goes to a state
institution on state charges,
you know he's not coming back.
In this case, there was
consultations

between both sides, the District
Attorney's Office,
the families,
the defense attorneys,
as to what to do with
Arnold Friedman.

We were trying to maintain
a sense of normalcy
in terms of having dinner
and paying the bills,
but it was almost surreal.
I mean, I don't think
any of us had any notion
of what was going on
or what we were doing
or where any of this
was leading.

Sir, would you like to
comment on the situation?

Yes, I think this is a kitchen.

I thought it was only
going to last a year
and that we would look back
and laugh about how
crazy we were and how we didn't
know what we were doing
and just sort of laugh.

What do you want?

My nose? My teeth?

Wait a minute. There it is.

- There's your nose.

- Oh that's great.

I feel like I'm
being dissected here.

And here's Mommy and Daddy
in a rare moment of affection.

What's the matter?

- Why?

- Why?

Why not?

That's not all.

You've gotten other things.

Lately but not all.

You're the one

Who's stolen my heart, dear
I think I was the first woman
that he ever really dated.
And he was very reluctant
to get married.
I sort of said, "We've got
to do this," you know.
I could be very
So he says, "Well, all right."
Big mistake.
We were delighted.
She was effervescent, pretty.
They seemed to be
very much in love.
They seemed to be
very compatible.
It had been a long
time in coming.
My mother, "You're my oldest!"
"Get married! I want
a grandchild," you know.
My mother is sexually ignorant.
As far as I'm concerned, she had
sex, I mean everyone thinks
their parents only
had sex 3 times,
you know for each
of their siblings.
But with my mother,
I think it was true.
And it was like, you know,
you read in a book
how do you have sex,
and you start here,
and then you do step 1,
step 2, step 3.
And that's somewhat like what
sex was like with Arnold,
Because I used to say to him,
"It's called foreplay."
It's supposed to be play.
"It's supposed to be fun."
And he treated it like work.
Like this is what you're

supposed to do when you do it,
like washing the dishes.
If he was so much in the closet
and not living with her
and not attracted,
where was she for 30 years?
Why didn't she say, "Honey,
you're not having sex with me."
I think I want a divorce."
Where was she?
I don't think that's the case.
Either they're both crazy,
which is a possibility,
or
Or he was perfectly normal,
based according to, you
know, by her standards.
You're the one for me
It was a difficult marriage
because of Elaine.
She had her problems, and it
took a monumental amount
of patience and love
and caring to handle it.
It wasn't easy for him.
It wasn't easy for the kids.
But they were able
to live with it.
She was the best mother
she knew how.
She loved her kids,
and she loved her husband.
She wasn't the warmest,
most outgoing human being
in the world.
When I had the first child,
I was just ecstatic,
but I didn't know how to do it.
And I wasn't the most
well-balanced person myself.
You know, we all have
hang-ups, and
that's my hang-up.
Good things can never

happen to me, only bad.
That's all the snapshots.
I know.

This whole thing is
all the snapshots.
Did they go and they
looked through each one?

They must have.
This is ancient film.
Holy shit.

- Dad, what is it?
- Oh, my God, it's amazing.

How did you get this?
This is great.

- This is my Dad's.
- Who took it?

My father.

Dad, what's that a film of?
This is a film of my sister.

I had a sister.

She died a year
before I was born.

My brother knew her when
he was young, of course.
And she died of blood poisoning.

It was a horrible,
terrible, sudden death.
And it destroyed the family.

Arnold's parents divorced.

So Arnold's mother
had these two boys,
and they were really on
welfare. I don't know.

They lived in
a basement apartment.

Evidently, there
was one bedroom,
and the boys slept in
the bedroom with the mother.

We shared, all 3 of us,
not in the same bed,
but we all shared
the same room, big rooms.

And rather than put a,

apparently
the living room
was the living room,
and then there was the kitchen,
so we put all the beds
in the one room.
And that she dated a lot of men
and would bring the men
into the apartment, and they
would have sex in the bed
while Arnold was
there listening.
And Arnold said that,
because he saw his mother
in bed with a man, that
when he was adolescent,
he was experimenting,
as all children do,
and he had sex with his brother
in bed or something like that.
And to me,
that's not what all children do.
Arnold sent me this right around
when he started writing me,
and it's called "My Story,"
and it was written in 1988.
And I think it was his attempt
to talk about the case
but also talk about the case
in the context of his life.
And it starts out, it says,
"This story goes back 50 years
to when I was a child."
He says, "When I
reached adolescence"
I sought out partners for
my emerging sexuality.
My first partner, when I was
13, was my 8-year-old brother.
I had overt sexual
relations with him
"over a period of a few years."
I know that my brother has said
that he messed around with me

when I was a kid.
And I don't remember any of it.
I don't remember anything.
I have nothing up here
that has me yelling or
screaming or crying
or trying to get away
or unhappy or I
there's nothing there that.
Maybe someday a door will open,
but it better hurry up,
because I'm 65.
And at this point in time,
I could care less.
Then he goes on and says,
"My next partners were boys"
my own age, all of which
sexual relations,
probably being within
norms for my age.
However, the emotional
impact of these relations
was very pronounced and
lasted through my adult life.
A more normal situation,
as probably happened
with my partners, would
have been to outgrow
and forget these episodes.
However, I literally fell
in love with these boys,
and the relations were far
more significant to me
"than they were to my partners."
And then he told me that when he
got to be an older teenager,
like maybe in his late teens,
he started worrying
that he was still attracted to
kids that were the same age
as his brother had been
when Arnold was 13,
and that really started
bothering him.

And then after he had his own
children, he was worried.
He started worrying that
maybe he would molest
his own children.
And at that point,
he went to therapy,
and the therapist told him,
"No, don't worry.
You've got everything
under control."
The Jazzbo Mambo
with the boogie beat
is the newest dance
on 52nd Street
All the cats come running
from both near and far
to do the Jazzbo Mambo
8 to the bar
Come on, Light Fingers!
Light Fingers, come on!
Jazzbo Mambo
Jazzbo Mambo
Jazzbo Mambo, 8 to the bar
You could see that
this wasn't exactly
Fred MacMurray and
"My Three Sons," right?
It always struck us as being
a very dysfunctional
family, obviously.
And we'd have to,
you would have to wonder,
wouldn't you,
what kind of a family
situation you would have
that could produce
this kind of crime.
What might it be like to grow up
in a household like this?
I don't know.
I can't even imagine.
Today is September 14, 1975.
We just concluded a tour

of Jungle Safari.
Jungle Habitat.
Jungle Habitat in
West Milford, New Jersey.
Here are my 3 brothers.
Two brothers, you dummy.
All right, there are 3 children.
What happened was the 3
sons were like a gang.
Like, "This is our gang"
and Mom."
"She's not part of our gang."
And we have, of course,
A pterodactyl.
A Jewish pterodactyl.
Shmuck, shmuck, schmuck.
The 4 of us got along so well.
We had a very similar
kind of sense of humor.
You know, one guy would say
something, and then it would,
then the next person
would add to the joke.
And my mother, who has
no sense of humor,
and she just didn't
get that part of us.
And she resented that.
When this whole thing blew
apart, the men got together,
and Arnold confided in them.
And me?
And I was a loyal wife.
People told me, "Oh, why
don't you leave him?"
He's a horrible person.
"Just walk out and leave him."
And I didn't.
I went all over town.
I raised money for bail.
I called every relative I knew.
I begged.
And I did all this
for him, right?

He was my husband. I loved him.
And no one said,
"What do you want?" to me.
OK.
OK, I think we can eat now.
So you're saying what we have is
the people who we thought
would testify
and say that nothing happened.
And we are afraid to put them
on the witness stand,
even though we know
that nothing happened.
We think they will say
something happened.
The Friedmans suggested that
we speak to various people
who may have been present
at the time.
And some of those people weren't
alleged victims at all.
And that the hope was that one
or more of these people
would say,
"This is just not true."
But that just didn't happen.
As far as I'm concerned
he's being, he's
So then nothing happened.
We begged him to tell us
that something happened,
to explain how this whole mess
could have happened.
That's the only way to explain
how it could have happened
other than the fact that the
police are out of their minds.
We begged him.
He told us nothing happened.
That's good enough for me.
Nothing happened.
If my father had the ability
to confess to me,
yeah, he had done

something one time,
and that's how this whole crazy
mess got started,
it would make a lot more sense.
Not that I wanted that
to be the case, but
you have to find a way
to explain the unexplainable.
Oh, my gosh.
Oh, look at that.
Happy Birthday to you
Happy Birthday to you
Is that a real ice cream?
That's what's so odd about it.
They had this idealized image
of this father as being this
saint-like person
this Santa Claus,
Messiah, you know.
And professionals
in the field say that
oh, they have this idea
that children identify
with the abusive parent.
When I was about a year or two,
my parents separated.
And what did I do?
"My father is wonderful.
My mother is terrible."
The truth is my father was a rat
just like David's father.
My father walked out.
This is not wonderful.
This is being a rat.
My mother was a nag.
Well, I mean, this is true
but look, she stayed with me,
she took care of me.
So people's visions
are distorted.
I never felt angry at my dad.
My dad had nothing
to do with this.
Someone knocks on the door

and accuses you for a crime
you didn't commit
you gotta attack
attack your attackers
and do what you can.
And that's all it was.
It had nothing to do with
there was nothing else
that was involved at all.
We were talking about
honoring and respecting.
Yeah, but, yeah,
talk about honor and
do you honor and respect
your husband?
That's why I don't talk to you.
I said I did honor
and respect my husband.
Oh, Okay.
But you don't like that answer.
No I don't.
I don't believe it, no.
Ask your father.
Do I honor and respect you?
Do you object to my handling
do you have any objection
in my relationship with you?
Do you like it
when she calls you slime?
She did.
Did you like it when she did?
OK.
Did you like it when
The other cases that
I've written about
those families
have been much stronger.
First of all,
they've started from
a monolithic feeling
of innocence
which didn't exist
in this family
because of Arnold's pedophilia.

And they just buckled down
and everybody gets behind
the defendant
the accused family member.
People quit their jobs.
And, you know
people were all sitting around
the kitchen table
for the next 3 years with
staplers and Xerox machines
and they're working on
the defense.
And then when the defendant
is convicted
they're working on the appeal
and all family conflict
is submerged.
Why don't you try once
to be supportive of me?
Well, I'll tell you why.
Because we all started at
the beginning of this thing
and I
Well let's start from right now.
OK, let's start from right now.
All right, let's start
from right now.
We'll all start brand new.
We have a decision making
process on the table.
Great.
All the past mistakes,
they were mistakes.
We're not gonna hold them
against anyone.
Great, great.
Now we're starting afresh.
Stop. Lower your voice,
and talk nicely to your sons.
Alright, now we're gonna do it,
starting now.
Seth, why don't you call me?
Do I bawl you out?
Seth is

...against me
and she can't hold it
against me.
Well, now it's time to call it
'cause Mommy's sad and stuff.
I think there was a recognition
that Arnold's case was becoming
increasingly hopeless
because of the child
pornography problem
because of other people
coming out of the woodwork.
So the strategy evolved to
"What can we do to save Jesse?"
Jesse's lawyer
very eloquently said to us
"If there's a rowboat
and it's sinking"
and the rowboat
is tied to a rock
you have to disconnect
the rowboat from the rock
and save the rowboat
"even though the rock is sinking"
Meaning you had to separate
Arnold from Jesse.
And Arnold was going to plead
and Jesse would
in some way benefit.
I was sitting there
potentially going to trial
with no pornographic magazines
admitted into evidence
without an adult pedophile
as a co-defendant
and I understood
that sort of reasoning
but it makes no sense
if my father pleads guilty
and then I go to trial and say,
"I didn't do it"
when all the jurors have already
read in the newspaper
that my father plead guilty.

And I did not want my father
to plead guilty.
I arranged for Mr. Friedman
and his family
to get a jury room
where they could sit
and they could discuss
these plea options.
And while I didn't go
inside the room
except to knock on the door
and say where we're at
in terms of what Mr. Friedman
wanted to do
there was a lot
of yelling and crying
and screaming going on,
coming out of that room.
God damn it!
When I screamed at Arnold,
I screamed
"You must do it
because it'll help Jesse.
Do it for Jesse."
And my brothers were
just furious at this notion
that my father would go to court
and plead guilty.
And at one point
in all of the chaos
my father
just started screaming.
And there's uncontrollable tears
and he picked up a chair.
I remember he threw a chair.
He was just screaming about how
he wasn't gonna plead guilty.
He didn't do anything,
he's not gonna plead guilty.
And he was furious at my mother
and he was just freaking out.
And I remember very clearly
sitting down with my father
in the corner.

My mother's over there,
brothers are over here.
I'm talking to
my father privately
and he asked me
what he should do.
And I could have said
to my father
"I want you just
to walk out of here
and go to trial
and not plead guilty."
Instead, I remember
very clearly saying to him
I wanted him
to make the decision.
And I remember feeling like
a really young kid.
Kind of looking up
to my Dad and saying
"Dad, I," you know
"I want you to be my Daddy."
And I would have been really,
really proud of him
if he had just stood up and said
"Elaine,
I'm not pleading guilty.
We're going to trial."
But that's not what happened.
Former New York City
schoolteacher Arnold Friedman
had nothing to say when he left
the Nassau County Courthouse
in Mineola
but inside he pleaded guilty to
more than 40 counts of sodomy
sexual abuse, and endangering
the welfare of a child.
Attempted sexual abuse
in the first degree
an "E" felony, two counts
and endangering the welfare
of a child
a class "A" misdemeanor,

one count
in full satisfaction
of this indictment?
Yes.
My mother manipulated him.
My mother is crazy
and my mother has control
over my father.
Some relationships have that
where the woman
controls the man.
It's called being pussy whipped.
My father and my mother
are not the only
two people in the world
who have that relationship.
My father and mother
had that relationship.
My mother and the lawyers said,
"Take the plea."
They took the plea.
I sat there in disbelief.
Is this my brother?
My brother?
This isn't my brother,
he's not a monster.
He's a good loving brother
and husband, and son,
and citizen, and teacher
and this isn't happening.
This is a mistake.
Something as horrendous
as child molestation
you have to live with yourself.
If you didn't do it,
you don't plead guilty.
I never understood it.
We have Elaine.
- Hi.
- We have Teddy, Arnie.
Number 4753206.
Don't. Please don't film me.
David, I told you
I don't want to be on tape.

Why are you so
When we stop talking to her
She doesn't want
She doesn't want any record,
any record at all
As if they were
Can you believe these kids,
that they have to persecute me?
David, if your mother
doesn't want to be filmed
don't film her.

- OK.

- Come on.

When it was all over,
they said it was all my fault
because I wanted them
to take a plea and
it had been arranged before.
Arnold agreed to take a plea
but they were very hurt.
I'm still here.

Yeah.

I may not be here
very much longer
but I'm still here.
That's disturbed.

The sentence:

The crime:

Sodomizing young boys.
Defendant Arnold Friedman
had pleaded guilty
to sexually abusing
more than a dozen youngsters,
but this does not end
the Friedman case.
There are still numerous sodomy
and sex abuse charges
pending against Arnold's son,
Jesse Friedman.
I mean we could try this case
in the media.
Who's gonna, who's gonna buy

that I sodomized boys?
Yeah, I agree with you.
I agree with you.
No, I really
Well, I don't think
we have to try
well, all I want to do
We didn't make a deal
with Arnold Friedman
to spare his son.
So his son is facing
a multiple count indictment
he's facing a considerable
amount of jail time
and now he's confronted
with a situation
where Long Island knows
that his father admitted
his guilt
and there's a reasonable
human expectation
of some people that, you know
where there's smoke,
there's fire.
And if he did it,
maybe his son did it.
We know he was in the same class
and he was helping his father.
So I think that
was a difficult thing
for Jesse to have to overcome.
I always believed Jesse.
How could this possibly
go on for 4 years
children repeatedly sodomized
and sexually abused
with brutality
if you believe the police.
And then their parents come
to pick them up
right after computer class
and not one kid is crying
not one kid tells
his mother or father

what happened in class
not one kid says anything?
I find that so incredible
that Jesse's story
that nothing happened
to me was more believable
than the police version
of these horrific acts.
Jesse and I went
we flew in August of 1988
all the way
to Madison, Wisconsin
where we rented a car
and drove 90 miles
to some town that I couldn't
possibly give you the name of
to a federal prison.
Who knew more about this case
then Arnold Friedman?
He knew more about
it than Jesse.
I had to wait 40 minutes
because Arnie was either
playing tennis or golf
I don't remember what it was.
I was outraged.
It was a visiting room.
Jesse was out in the waiting
room at this point
and this man had this little boy
in there who was his son
or his stepson, I don't know
but the child was about
4 or 5 years old
and they were in the table
right next to us.
And I was interviewing Arnie
and all of a sudden
he leaned over and asked me
if I could ask
the corrections officer
or whoever was in charge
in the room
if we could get another table.

And I asked him why, and he said
"That little boy over there
bouncing on his father's lap
is getting me very excited."
It took me about 15 minutes
to regain my composure.
I remember that
like it was yesterday.
I was shocked
'cause even though I was
involved in the case now
for two months
and even though
I had studied pedophilia
and I knew what these men
did to little boys
I had never heard somebody
actually say it.
And I was absolutely disgusted.
We did change our table
and I spoke to Arnie.
I interviewed him
for a very long time.
He was telling me
that the only reason
he pled guilty and went to jail
was because he wanted
to save his son, Jesse.
He told me that he was
a pedophile.
He told me that he had
had activity with boys
but not in Great Neck.
He told me that he had a house
in Wading River
a beach resort
and that the family
enjoyed vacations there.
And he told me that
there were certain boys
he took liberties with
and I don't want to go into it
while he was in that area.
"In my early 40s,

during the summer"
I did go 'over the line'
and did have sexually arousing
contact with two boys
short of sodomy.
One of the boys was the son
of a close friend
and I feared exposure
and loss of this friendship.
The boy might have
told his parents
but they said nothing
"so I assumed that
he really had not told them."
That's what? It's one sentence.
What does that mean?
Do you fucking know
what that sentence means?
I don't even fucking know
what that sentence means.
I "sexually aroused?"
What the fuck
is he talking about?
Maybe he put his arm
around the kid.
Maybe he took him in a sailboat
and he found that
sexually arousing?
Maybe he was leaning
against a tree.
That's called
sexually arousing contact
if you're sexually aroused
while you lean against a tree.
I don't know what that means.
I don't know
what that sentence means.
When Arnold was first arrested,
he said
"I'm arrested because
of this magazine."
I sent one magazine in the mail
and that's why I'm arrested,
and it's nothing.

It's just nothing.
It doesn't count,
it doesn't matter
"it's nothing."
And you know, you live
as husband and wife
you share certain intimacies.
I said to him,
"Tell me the truth.
What happened?"
He says, "That's it.
That's the truth."
So it came out that he had
in fact molested a young man.
And we were sitting
in the therapist's office
and he said,
"Oh, I just molested two boys."
And I said, "Two? Two?"
I said, "I thought
you told me only one."
"Well," you know, and he
"It didn't matter.
It's nothing," you know.
And then I went berserk.
And I felt betrayed.
Yeah, my father
had the magazines
and yes, my father admitted
that he was a pedophile
and had these fantasies
and yes, my father admitted
that he was no saint
and that there were times
that he slipped
but I was arrested, too
and I'm not a child molester.
And I don't think
it's appropriate
for me to have to answer
for the sins of my father.
This is what I walk around with.
It's just, every day.
It's just ridiculous.

All I think about is the case
and my career
and they're completely,
it's like oil and water.
With the case,
it's a question of research.
My brother's been in
the law library
researching his current plan
and I'm supposed to go out
and make people laugh.
It's unbelievably difficult
to deal with the case
and then go out
and entertain people.

Hey!

Hi, everyone!

We carefully investigated
this case for trial.
Really get into the case,
examine, investigate
and try to build a defense.
While I was out on bail
I put all the charges
into a database
so that they could be
sorted by complainant
by time period,
by nature of charge.

For example,
there was one complainant
10-year-old boy
says he came to class
in the spring of 1986
and during this 10-week session
where he was only over my house
for an hour and a half
once a week
he says that there were
31 instances of sexual contact.
That's 3 times a week
every single week..
For 10 straight weeks
and then the course ends.

In the fall, he re-enrolled
for the advanced course
and says that he was subjected
to 41 more instances
of anal and oral sodomy
in the next 10-week session
and nobody said anything.
Week after week,
month after month
year after year
until after the police
came knocking on doors
and asking questions.
I went to the doorbell.
There were two
Nassau County detectives
and they said they'd like to
speak to our son
with regard to
the Friedman matter.
They came in and said, "We know
something happened to him."
They didn't say, "We believe."
They said, "We know."
And they wanted to speak to him.
I remember it was actually kind
of a frightening experience
because I remember
they're talking
to my parents about this
within earshot of me.
I remember actually
eavesdropping
on what they said
and what they said
made my heart race
because they were saying
that actually quite
a few horrible things
had happened to
a lot of children
and I was one of them.
And quite honestly,
I didn't believe it

and I was very confused
and very angry about this,
thinking, well,
why are these people
going around telling my parents
that all kinds of
things have happened
when I have simply no
recollection of anything?
Children want
to please very often.
They want to give you
the answers that you want.
Adults do that as well.
So you have to be
very mindful of the fact
that when you're
interviewing a child
if the child starts
to answer questions
your responses should be
somewhat in the framework of
"And then what happened?"
Or, "What happened next?"
Or, "What do you remember then?"
As opposed to
"He did this to you, didn't he?"
or "She did this to you,
didn't she?"
That's a very,
very dangerous type
of interview process to use.
If you talk to a lot of children
you don't give them
an option, really.
You just, you be
pretty honest with them.
You have to tell them
pretty honestly that
"We know you went
to Mr. Friedman's class.
We know how many times
you've been to the class."
You know, we go through

the whole routine.
"We know that there
was a good chance"
that he touched you
or Jesse touched you
or somebody in that family
touched you
"in a very inappropriate way."
And I listened
to them talking to him
and it got to a point
where it wasn't
asking him what happened.
It was more of them
telling him what happened
and that when they didn't
like what he said
they kept repeating to him
that they know what happened
and that he should tell.
I believe that I remember saying
that I saw Jesse, like
chase after a kid or hit a kid
or something like that
and that's what I testified to
to the grand jury.
And I remember saying
that because I felt
and I feel like when I said that
that ended the questioning.
And so that might
have meant that
you could infer maybe
that they were asking me
a lot of questions,
trying to get something
and I just wanted
to give them something.
I mean I don't want to be
say I'm a perjurer or anything
but I did not observe
anything like that happening.
What I do remember is
the detectives putting me under

a lot of pressure to speak up.
And at some point,
I kind of broke down.
I started crying.
And when I started
to tell them things
I was telling myself
that it's not true.
I was telling myself,
"Just say this to them
in order to get them
off your back."
I came across a document
regarding a group of children
from the Friedman case
who were in therapy
and it stated that many of them
had absolutely no recollection
of the abuse
and there was some discussion
about whether hypnosis
would be a good idea now,
exactly what you're not
supposed to do.
It was the kind of therapy
that had a really good chance
of messing up kids' memories
and implanting false memories.
My parents put me
in therapy right away.
They put me in hypnosis
and tried to recall facts
that I had buried.
And that's how I first came out,
started talking about it,
just through being hypnotized
and everything
I recalled things
that I would bury.
I was able to talk about them.
For example, what would be
something that you recall?
The actual first time
I actually recalled

that I was actually molested.
Wow, I was actually molested.
I can deal with it now.
That was the first time.
And you recalled through
hypnosis the first episode?
Yes.
So tell me about that,
if you remember.
I don't remember much about it.
It was so long ago.
I just remember that
I went through hypnosis
came out, and it was in my mind.
19-year-old Jesse Friedman
was arraigned on more than
198 additional counts
of child sexual abuse.
This brings the total number of
sexual abuse charges to 245.
Jesse was grossly overcharged
and you're basically
terrorizing the defendant.
You're telling the defendant
"Look, if you plead guilty"
you know,
we'll give you a good deal
and, on, you know, 2 charges.
But if you insist
on going to trial
we're going to put
1,003 charges on you.
And if you're convicted
of all those charges
"you're gonna rot in jail
the rest of your life."
I was told that
if he went to trial
the judge would give
3 consecutive sentences.
Instead of concurrent
the sentencing
would be consecutive.
I said, "Oh, my god."

She just kept telling me
over and over
"The only thing to do
is to plead guilty"
and to get the
best deal you can.
You can't go to trial.
It doesn't matter
if you're guilty or innocent.
You can't go to trial,
because if you go to trial
"you're gonna go to prison
for the rest of your life."
I said, "But Ma,
I didn't do it."
She said, "That doesn't matter."
You have to plead guilty."
You have to understand,
this is a 19-year-old kid
and he is now facing the most
heinous charge known to man
and everyone in the world
slowly but surely,
was turning against him.
I don't care about my parents.
I wish it was just my brothers.
Oh, fuck.
I don't care about my mother,
that's for sure.
If my brothers were OK
then my mother could go
to fucking hell.
My father is not going
to survive
if my brother gets incarcerated.
So
So when the guilty verdict
comes in on Jesse
my father's gonna kill himself.
Jesse's gonna go to jail
for the rest of his life.
Seth is gonna move west.
Fuck fuck.
I received a telephone call

from Jesse asking to see me
and Jesse told me
that he wanted to plead guilty.
In 1988, there was no way
that a jury in Nassau County
who had been reading
the newspaper headlines
in "Newsday" for over a year
those people were never
going to listen
to anything
the defense had to say
and I was absolutely terrified
of going to prison
for 100 years.
Jesse had always
maintained his innocence.
I don't work out deals
for people who are innocent.
And my first reaction was,
"I'm not gonna do it.
You're not guilty,
you're not pleading guilty."
And at that point,
he told me that
"I have something to tell you."
And with tears rolling down
his eyes, literally
he told me that he was abused by
his father growing up
and that while he never enjoyed
the sexual part of that
he did enjoy the attention
his father gave him
and being with his father
and that not everything
he had said
about nothing happened was true.
Peter Panaro
was personally convinced
that my father
had sexually abused me
and nothing I could say
could dissuade Peter

from this notion.
Jesse felt that
if Judge Boklan knew
that he also was a victim
of his father
that she might consider
the plea negotiations
in a more favorable way.
He came up with this strategy.
It was Peter Panaro's
fictionalized story
that he fed to me
and said, "If you say this,
it's gonna look good for you."
I told him I wouldn't do it.
I told him, "Jesse, when you
plead guilty in open court"
you're gonna have to admit
to this type
of anal sodomy 14 times.
And I'm not gonna
let you do that
"unless you can admit it."
He looked me right in the eye
always liked to call me
by my name
before he made a statement
and said,
"Peter, I can admit it."
The only concern
that Peter Panaro had
was that ethically as a lawyer
he couldn't let
his client go into court
and say something happened
that he knew his client
had told him was a lie.
The private investigator wasn't
coming up with anything helpful.
There was not gonna be
any defense witnesses.
There wasn't any money
to hire experts.
Mom was insistent upon

there not being a trial.
Peter Panaro wasn't believing me
no matter how many times
I told him nothing happened.
I just ran out of options.
Jesse was a very good baby.
I remember when we brought him
home from the hospital
and Arnie looked at
that baby and he said
"That child is marvelous.
He's wonderful"
and he was so thrilled.
And David was the big brother
and he used to
take care of Jesse.
We used to let David watch him
and he was very protective
of his baby brother.
It's amazing.
Six months from now
I already don't have
a father or a mother.
Six months from now
I'm not gonna have my brother.
If I ever watch this
I don't know when it's gonna be.
I don't know where I'm gonna be.
I don't know what's
gonna happen to my family.
I'm so scared.
I don't want to have
to spend the next 8 hours
screaming with my sons
and fighting with them.
Then don't.
I want them out of this house
tomorrow morning.
Mom
I don't give a shit.
I want you out of this house
tomorrow morning.
You may not
give a shit about Jesse

but we are here for Jesse.
What are you all
talking about here?
Can't you put your anger aside
for one minute?
I cannot put my anger aside
about you.
You have been nothing but
hateful, hostile, and angry
ever since this began.
OK, Jess, we're on.
Ta da. I feel like shit.
What's today's date?
Today's the day
before I went to jail.
"Went" to jail?
- I'm going to jail.
- Because we're watching it.
We're gonna be watching this
after I'm already out of jail.
After 4, 4 1/2 years
because the case gets reopened.
At this point in time,
my life is as good as over.
It is terminated at this point
only to resume at a later date.
This one'll go,
this one'll shatter.
The night before Jesse's plea
we stayed up all night.
Maybe I shot the videotape
so that I wouldn't
have to remember it myself.
It's a possibility
because I don't really remember
it outside of the tape.
Like when your parents take
pictures of you
do you remember being there
or do you remember
just the photograph
hanging on the wall?
Even if I'm facing the worst
scenario possible tomorrow

and for every day following it
I have to think tonight
that it's not gonna be that bad.
Goodness knows
I don't want to look
like my father.
Goodness knows,
I want to separate myself
from Arnold Friedman
as much as possible
and I'm not throwing
chairs tomorrow.
Good.
And if this trial
were postponed for 3 years
in 3 years, I would win.
But here today, at this point
trying to start a trial
in two weeks
I would lose this trial.
We feel this way
and that is what would happen.
So what are you thinking, Jess?
I'm not.
You're avoiding?
Well, I gotta eat something.
I'm proud to say
I've managed to leave barely
any gas in the car.
See, just our luck
we'll be trapped at the house.
We'll run out of gas
at the house.
- You a child molester, Jess?
- Nope.
Did you ever do it?
Never touched a kid.
Did you do what
they said you did?
I never touched a kid.
I never saw my father
touch a kid.
Good.
Yeah, but still,

you must have done it.
Yeah, but surely
something has happened.
It must, something.
Because the police
say it's true.
OK, you never
touched a kid, right?
Well, if something happened
it didn't happen
while I was there.
And it was a minimal incident
because the kid didn't
say anything about it.
But the police,
how could they be lying?
Shut up, Seth.
The children
the 14 children in this case
are clearly victims.
No one could ever argue that.
The real culprit here
is Arnold Friedman.
The man is a monster.
He abused him
and he molested him.
This can't be overlooked.
I can't believe we live
in such a cold society
that no one could look at this
man and understand that.
My father raised me confused
about what was right
and what was wrong
and I realize now
how terribly wrong it all was.
I wish I could have done
something to stop it sooner.
I wish there was something
I could have done.
I'm very, I'm
I'm just so sorry it happened.
Judge Boklan sternly looked down
and said that she recommended

to the parole board
that he serve the maximum period
of time permitted by law
a statement which I felt
was harsh and unnecessary
to a 19-year-old
under these circumstances.
Jesse was a victim.
There's no question,
Jesse was a victim
but even when he was caught
Jesse never expressed any kind
of sympathy for these kids
and as a matter of fact
on the day that
the plea was taken
Jesse was dancing and singing on
the courthouse steps
while being videotaped by
his two brothers.
My brain hurts!
It'll have to come out.
My brain, but I'm using it!
But I'm using it!
Nurse!
Nurse!
They were taking pictures.
I remember someone
brought that to my attention.
We looked out the window.
Because I'm saying to myself
"This is very bizarre."
I mean he's about to go to jail
for the next 6 to 18 years
and he's out on
the courtroom steps
in some sort of
theatrical performance.
That is so funny,
when they're all
I think it was about
distracting ourselves
not necessarily
distracting Jesse.

Jesse was
I think he was
the most comfortable
about the whole situation.
You know
I don't know how
he has always been
the most comfortable about it,
but he has.
OK, right about now
we've been waiting for
a good two hours or so now
because evidently the parents
stormed Denis Dillon's
office this morning
when they received
the news last night
that I was to plead guilty
and they were not aware
of this fact.
They were not even aware
that negotiations were underway.
They did not want me
to have less than 10 to 30
and there are a lot of people
probably making all sorts of
angry statements
at this point in time.
I can imagine
what they're discussing.
The meeting must have,
just like our family.
Well, there wasn't really
much of them anyway
but that means
the meeting's over.
That means the meeting's over.
Go ask them, Jess.
You hold it. I'm not holding it.
Should I do it, Jess?
Oh, my god.
I can't believe this.
Oh, my god.
He raped my son!

Get them away from me!
They're animals.
Oh, my god, I don't believe it.
Wow.
After Jesse went to jail
I know my friends said to me
"Don't you feel, like,
terrible being alone
in such a big house?"
I said, "No, I feel calm."
That's when I really started
becoming a person
and started to live.
Elaine divorced him
while he was in prison.
He settled into life there
You can't say
it was good in prison
but it was as good
as it could get for him.
But of course,
the torment continued
and got worse because of Jesse.
My brother never
got over the guilt.
He had talked about
taking his life
because he had this insurance
policy he had taken out.
I think it was \$250,000,
1/4 million
and Jesse was the beneficiary.
He said, "This is the only thing
I have left to give Jesse"
So he has money when he gets out
and he can make some kind of
life for himself
"because I've screwed it up
otherwise for him."
By that time, that clause
in the insurance policy
where suicide was payable
had come into effect.
And this is

the coroner's report.
It describes the cause of death
as doxepin intoxication
which basically means
that Arnold took
a massive overdose
of antidepressants.
I took a deep breath and I said
"It's over, David."
He's out of his misery.
"It's over."
I thought it was a blessing
because the guilt
he was carrying
he was so unhappy.
He was out of his misery.
The rest of the family wasn't
but he was.
I found it a blessing.
Let me entertain you
Let me make you smile.
It's unbelievably difficult.
I have to read
these horrible letters
about my brother being
almost killed in prison.
My friends call me, I'm crying.
"Why are you crying?"
I can't tell them.
None of the people
that do what I do
know about this story.
Just the intimation
of something like this
can ruin someone's career.
And I'm always afraid
that's going to happen.
So let me entertain you
And we'll have a real good time
I feel I will never
really know the truth.
But the one truthful thing
or the honest thing we know
Howard loved his brother.

Howard loved his family.
Loves his family.
And I believed him when he said
he didn't do
those terrible things.
I believed him.
Arnold had a need to confess
and he had a need to go to jail.
And the sad thing is
that he took his son with him.
What's the term about families?
Dysfunctional?
Numero uno.
It was not the way
it was supposed to end.
People were supposed to realize
that all of this was nonsense
and we'd try to go back to
living our normal lives.
Hey! Hi, everyone!
I would have to stare at Arnold
across the dinner table
and it was just the two of us.
There was really
nothing between us
except these children
that we yelled at.
We named the cottage
"Peaceful Pond Cottage"
because we were looking for
a place of healing and peace.
Any comment on
your personal life, sir?
It's personal.
Oh, my god.
Hey, how you doing?
Oh, my god.
Oh, my god.
Yes! Finally.
- Is that him?
- That could be he.
Shit.
Oh, my god.
Oh, my god.

Room service.

Oh, god.

You order a son?

You looking for me?

Surprise. Hi. Look at me. Look.