
Assassins

Stephen Sondheim (music & lyrics)
and John Weidman (book)

Scene 6. A public park in America. 1975.

Lynette 'Squeaky' Fromme (27) is a disciple of Charles Manson. She has had an average middle-class childhood in the suburbs of Los Angeles. She took ballet lessons as a child and was a cheerleader in high school. In 1967, when she was nineteen, she met Charles Manson on the beach in Venice, California. She became one of his disciples and a member of the infamous Manson Family, which committed the brutal Tate-LoBianca murders for which Manson was tried and imprisoned. Fromme believes that Manson is the Messiah and that the world can only be saved if his teachings are heeded. To this end, she decides to commit a crime for which she will be arrested and at her trial she will then call Manson as a witness so that he can use it as a forum to address the world. In this scene, while high on marijuana, she describes how she met Charlie.

FROMME. I was like you once. Lost. Confused. A piece of shit. (MOORE *nods philosophically.*) Then I met Charlie . . . I was sitting on the beach in Venice. I'd just had a big fight with my daddy about, I don't know, my eye make-up or the bombing of Cambodia. He said I was a drug addict and a whore and I should get out of his house forever—
[MOORE. I think there's a new perfume called Charlie.]
I went down to the beach and sat down on the sand and cried. I felt like I was disappearing. Like the whole world was dividing into two parts. Me, and everybody else. And then this guy came down the beach, this dirty-looking little elf. He stopped in front of me and smiled this twinkly devil smile and said, 'Your daddy kicked you out.' He knew!

'Your daddy kicked you out!' How could he know? My daddy didn't tell him, so who could've? *God.* God sent this dirty-looking little elf to save a little girl lost on a beach. He smiled again and touched my hair and off he went. And for a minute I just watched him go. Then I ran and caught his hand, and till they arrested him for stabbing Sharon Tate, I never let it go.

COMMENTARY: Lynette sounds like a lost child with a high pitched voice which is probably why she has the nickname 'Squeaky'. The story has a wonderful simplicity, like one of those parables in the New Testament where Christ the Messiah meets a beggar along the side of the road. Someone awe-inspiring has entered Squeaky's life and now, though many years later, the moment is still strongly felt. On 5 September 1975 she aimed a loaded gun at President Gerald Ford as he left the Senator Hotel in Sacramento, California. As planned, she was arrested and tried, but Manson was not allowed to testify.