

When Civility was in Bloom

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‘When Civility was in Bloom’ is a three part period drama, from 1960 through 1964, in the life of Brian O’Connell, a high school student.

Part I: My Mother was a Democrat. My Father was a Republican.

Brian reports on the 1960 Kennedy/Nixon Presidential Election and how it affected his Irish/Italian family and Philadelphia neighborhood.

Part II: Unintended Consequences, I’m Hiding Under My Desk.

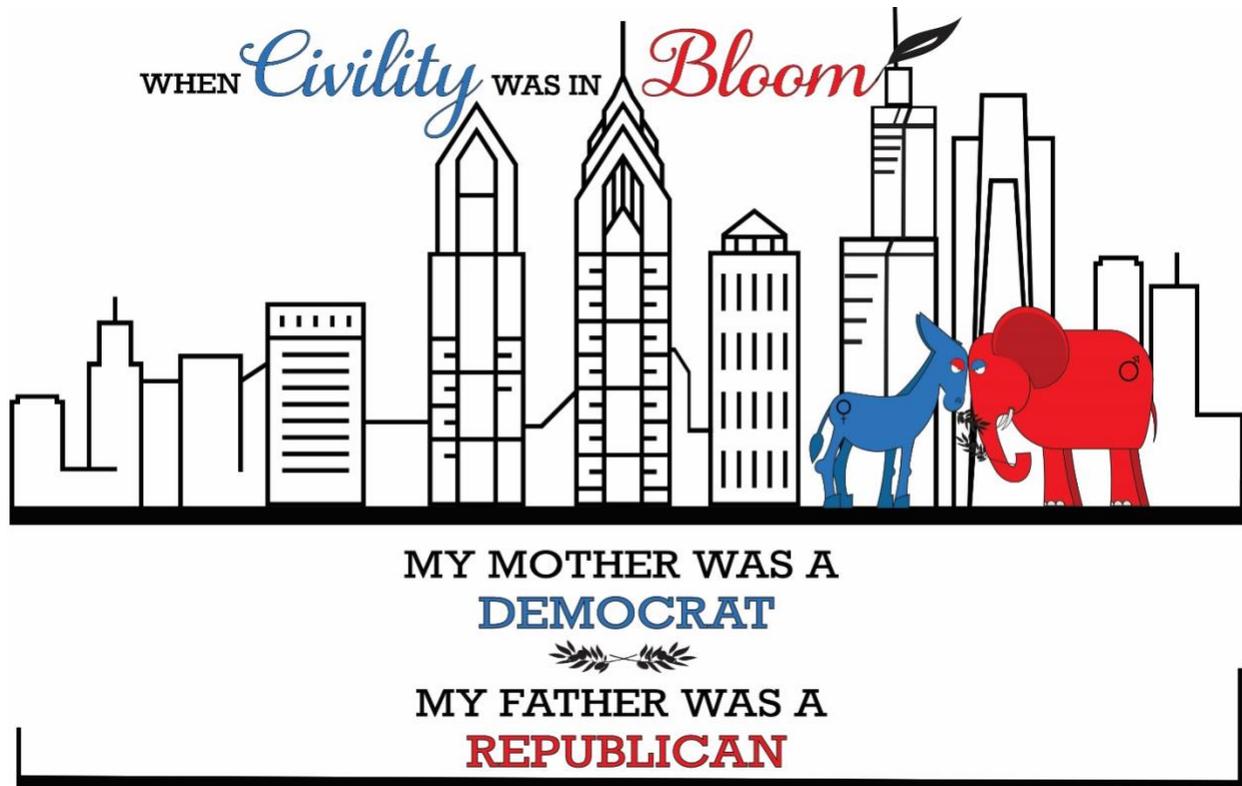
Brian researches why the United States of America is invading Cuba and why the Soviet Union may attack us with nuclear weapons.

Part III: Someone has killed my President. Who would do such a thing?

Brian wants to know why assassinations happen and who is to blame? How have assassinations in the past changed the future?

Please visit: www.leahyswritings.com

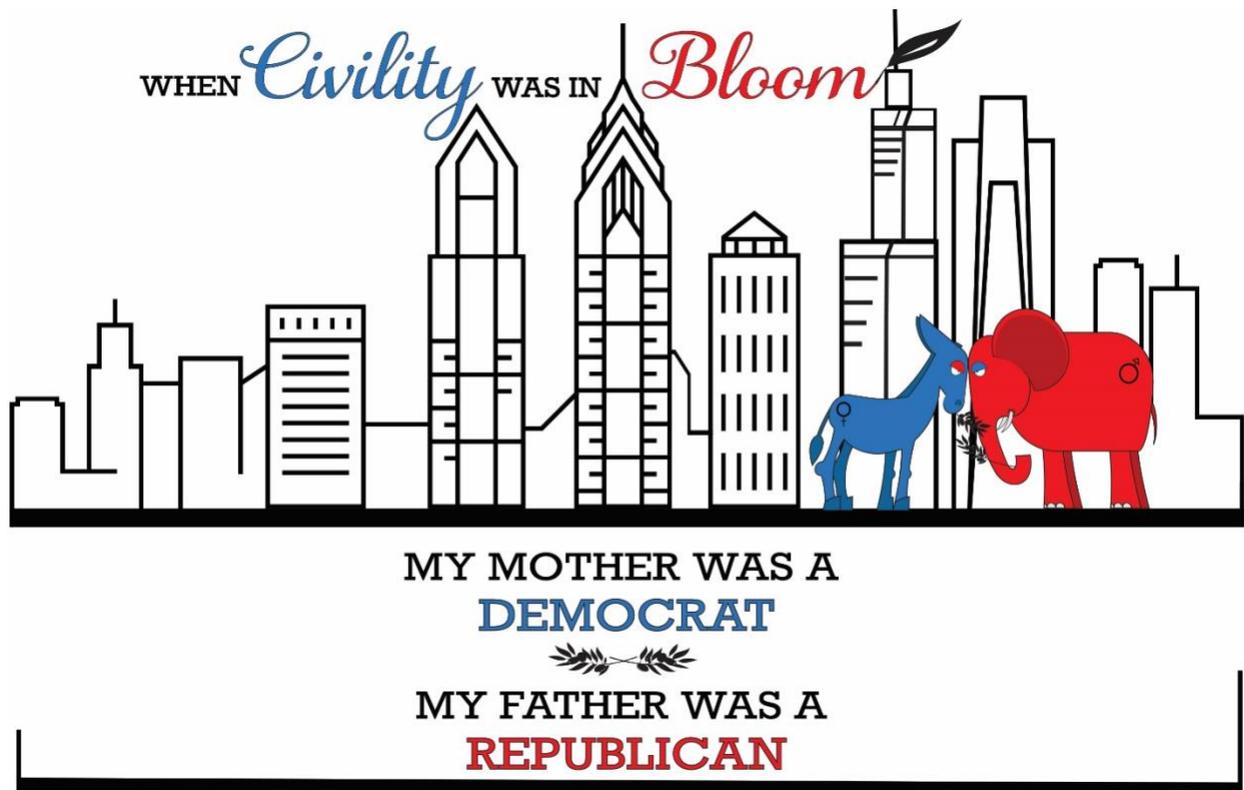
Part One



Brian O'Connell has taken upon himself the task of helping his Dad decide which candidate to vote for in the upcoming 1960 Kennedy/Nixon presidential election. This fourteen-year-old high school freshman and Philadelphia Bulletin paperboy will use all the tools at his disposal to gather the pertinent information he feels his father will need in making this important decision. Brian must weigh the internal family and external neighborhood conflicts and influences before making his final recommendation.



MDFR story and script written by Art Leahy, Member of the Dramatist Guild of America.

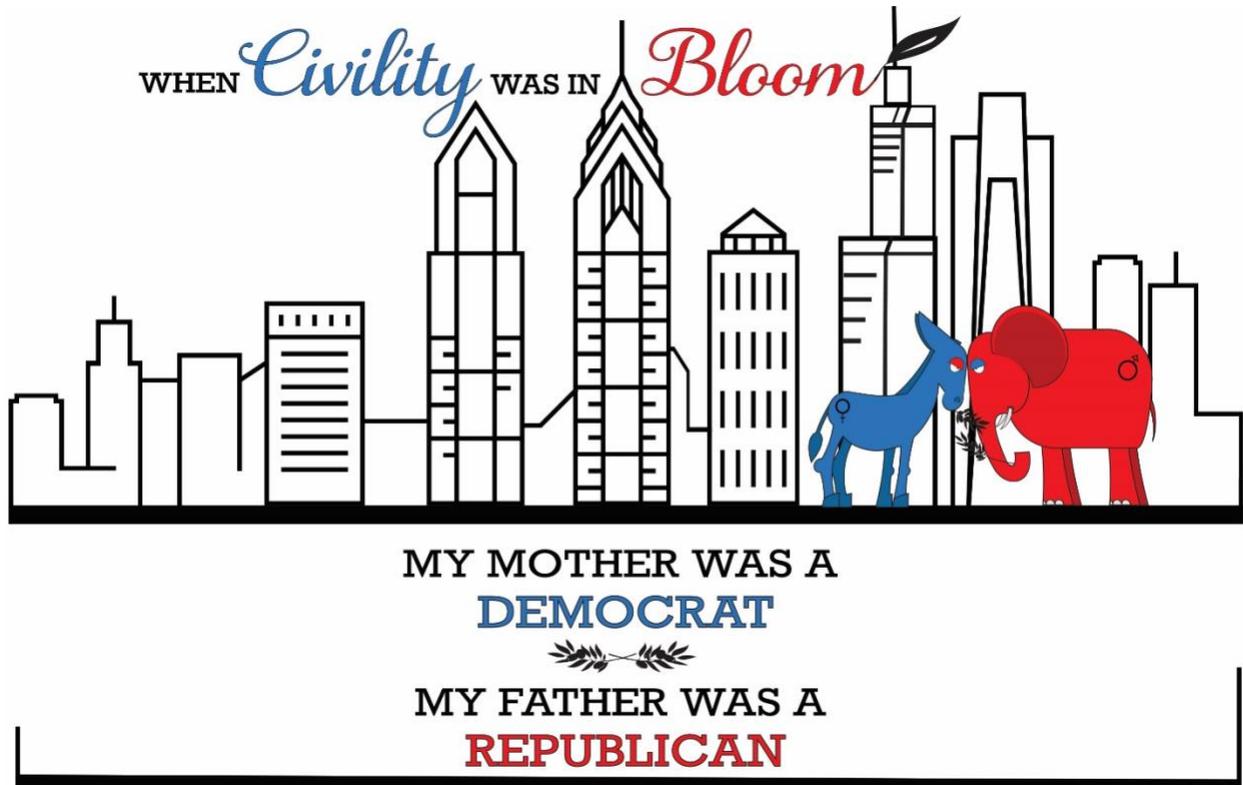


Graphic artist Ally L. created this logo, October 2018.

When Civility was in Bloom

The saying, 'When Knighthood was in Flower', inspired this tag line and title created by Arthur R. Leahy, September 2018.

Philadelphia



Script by Arthur R. Leahy, Dramatist Guild of America Member

My Mother was a Democrat.

My Father was a Republican.

Script by Arthur R. Leahy

Prologue

Brian O'Connell (nickname B.O.)

Brian

Welcome to my porch and my neighborhood, Philadelphia. The year is 1960. I'm a freshman at a Catholic High School. I'm a Bulletin Boy, that is to say I have my own newspaper route. I play neighborhood sports. I don't have a girlfriend, and pay little attention to anything outside of my little world.

My nickname is B.O. I know it stinks. Our pastor, Father Finnegan, gave this name to me. He had three altar boys named Brian, so he called each by the first initial of their first name and first initial of their last name. Now four years later, everyone calls me B.O. I've gotten used to it. I'm glad my last name is O'Connell, not Sullivan or Mahoney.

Until recently, I wasn't familiar with politics. I knew there was a cop on the beat, Officer Truman, our committeeman, Mr. Cavallo, who kept track of everything locally, and an air raid warden, Mr. Hogan, who walked around the neighborhood late at night. His wife, Mrs. Hogan, is the head of the local chapter of the Red Cross.

Politics entered my life late one Friday afternoon as I was sitting on the porch in my grandmother's rocking chair. Anthony, Mr. Cavallo's young assistant, interrupted my reading of Quo Vadis.

(3)

Act One: Scene One

September 23, 1960

Brian on the front porch sitting in Grandma's rocking chair.

Anthony (nickname Tony)

Hey B.O., is your Dad home yet?

Brian (B.O.)

No Anthony, not yet.

Tony

Don't call me Anthony. My name is Tony.

Brian

My mother calls you Anthony.

Tony

Well, you ain't your Mother. Here, give this flyer to your dad when he gets home. It is a personal invite from Mr. Cavallo.

Brian

Sure, Anthony.

Tony

Knock off the Anthony crap or I'll put one upside your head. (Making a fist)

Brian

I'm sure my brother wouldn't like that. He saw you talking to his girlfriend. I think he wants to talk to you. Were you hitting on her?

Tony

Naaa. She's not my type. I don't like catholic school girls, too homely. Theresa was asking for directions. That's all. Now take this.

Brian

Surprising! (Pause) Thank you. You know, this invite smells like peperoni.

(4)

Tony (makes a move towards Brian as Brian jumps back)

Be sure he gets it!

Brian

(As Tony is out of hearing range) My pleasure, Anthony. (Sticking out his tongue)

(Elizabeth O'Connell arrives.)

Brian

Hi, Mom. Anthony dropped off this invite for Dad.

Elizabeth

Hi, Dear. Well, thank you. Did you have a good day? How is high school now that you're a freshman?

Brian

It's okay. I go to a different classroom for every subject. I move around a lot. Freshmen don't get lockers, only upper classmen. I lug all my books around.

Elizabeth

Won't your brother let you use his locker? I'll talk to him.

Brian

NO! No don't do that. I'm building muscles. See? (Brian shows his arm muscles)

Elizabeth

Okay, if you say so. Dinner will be ready in an hour. Your father should be home soon.

Brian

I'll be reading my book, right here.

(Enters Theresa, Brian's brother Patrick's girlfriend with her cousin, Mary.)

Theresa

Hi, Brian. Is Patrick home?

Brian

No, he's at the Police Athletic League, you know the PAL, playing basketball.

(5)

Theresa

Oh, I forgot. Brian, this is my cousin, Mary. She's from Boston and a freshman, like you.

Mary

Why does everyone call you B.O.? That stinks as a nickname.

Brian

Ha, Ha, very funny. Theresa, I'll tell Pat that you stopped by. Goodbye, ladies.

Theresa

Brian, would you remind your brother to pick me up tomorrow at seven? The movie starts at eight. I want to get a gelato at Serano's before the show.

Brian

Sure, sure no problem. Pick you up by seven. Serano's. Gelato. Got it.

Theresa

Would you like to join us? We're going to see Ocean's 11 with Frank Sinatra and Peter Lawford. You could be Mary's date.

Mary

Mr. Lawford is Senator Kennedy's brother in law. He's dreamy. (Pause) You should go B.O. you might learn something. Manners...maybe.

Brian

NO, No thank you, I have a lot of reading to do. Again, goodbye ladies.

(Mary sticks out her tongue as she leaves)

(Brian returns to his reading as his father, Thomas O' Connell, arrives.)

Brian

Hi Dad! Can we watch boxing tonight? Patrick will be home too. He doesn't have a date until tomorrow night.

Thomas

Sure, sure. How's my boy? Is your homework done?

(6)

Brian

Yeah, all the written stuff. I'm reading Quo Vadis, it means 'Where are you going?' I need to finish it by next Friday. I'll have it done by Monday or Tuesday at the latest.

Thomas

Good, good. How's the paper route? Everybody paying their bills? You've had your own route for....?

Brian

It was two years last month, and everyone pays their bills. I have great customers. If a carrier has a problem with a customer, you just tell the branch manager and he takes care of it.

Thomas

Sounds good, but if you have a problem, any problem, you be sure and come to me first. And if possible don't tell your mother. We men can take care of it.

Brian

Sure, Dad. You know, the Phillies won.

Thomas

Yes, I heard. The bus driver had his radio on real loud. Everyone on board heard it. The driver said he hoped the Phillies wouldn't lose 100 games. It would be really embarrassing.

Brian

Not a chance Dad, remember we have Johnny Callison. Can we watch the fights?

Thomas

Definitely, the middleweights and heavies are on. And your mother and her sister are going to the movies. It's dish night so you can stay up a little later. I hear your Mother calling. Let's go in.

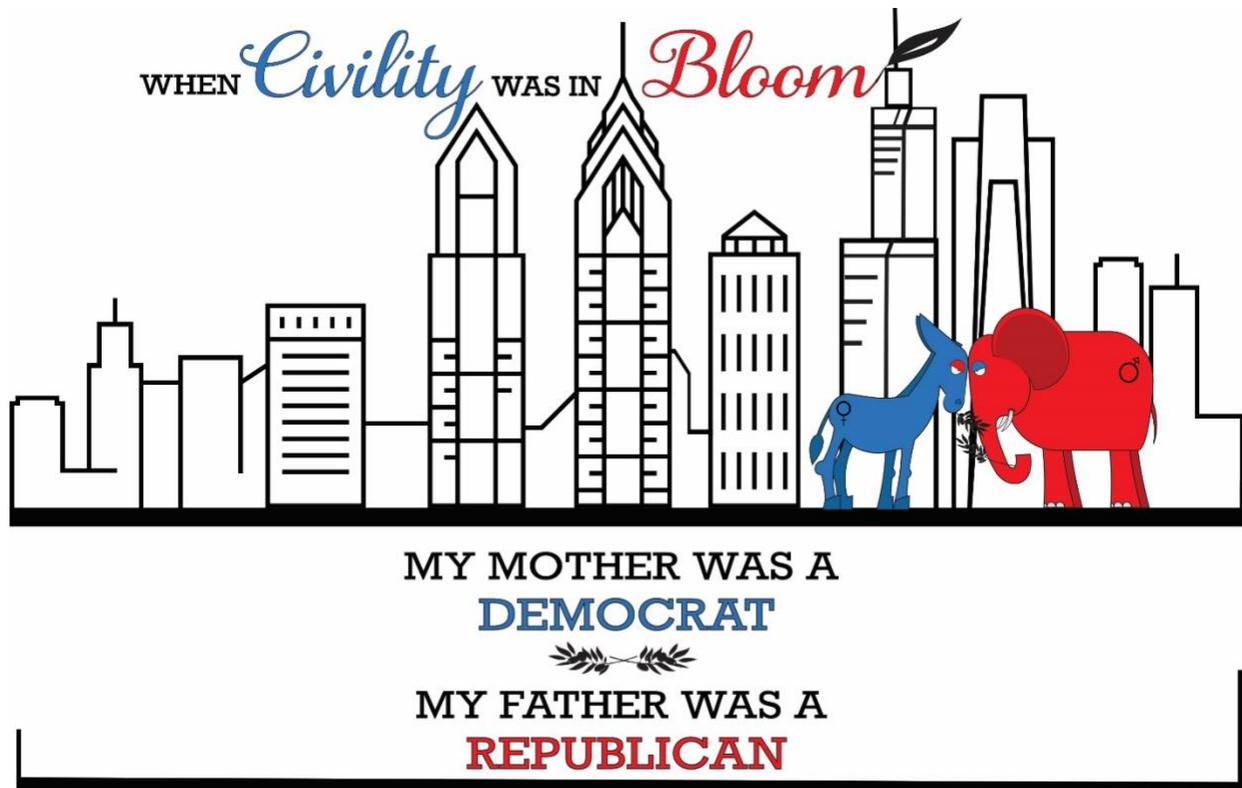
Brian

Great! Here comes Pat now.

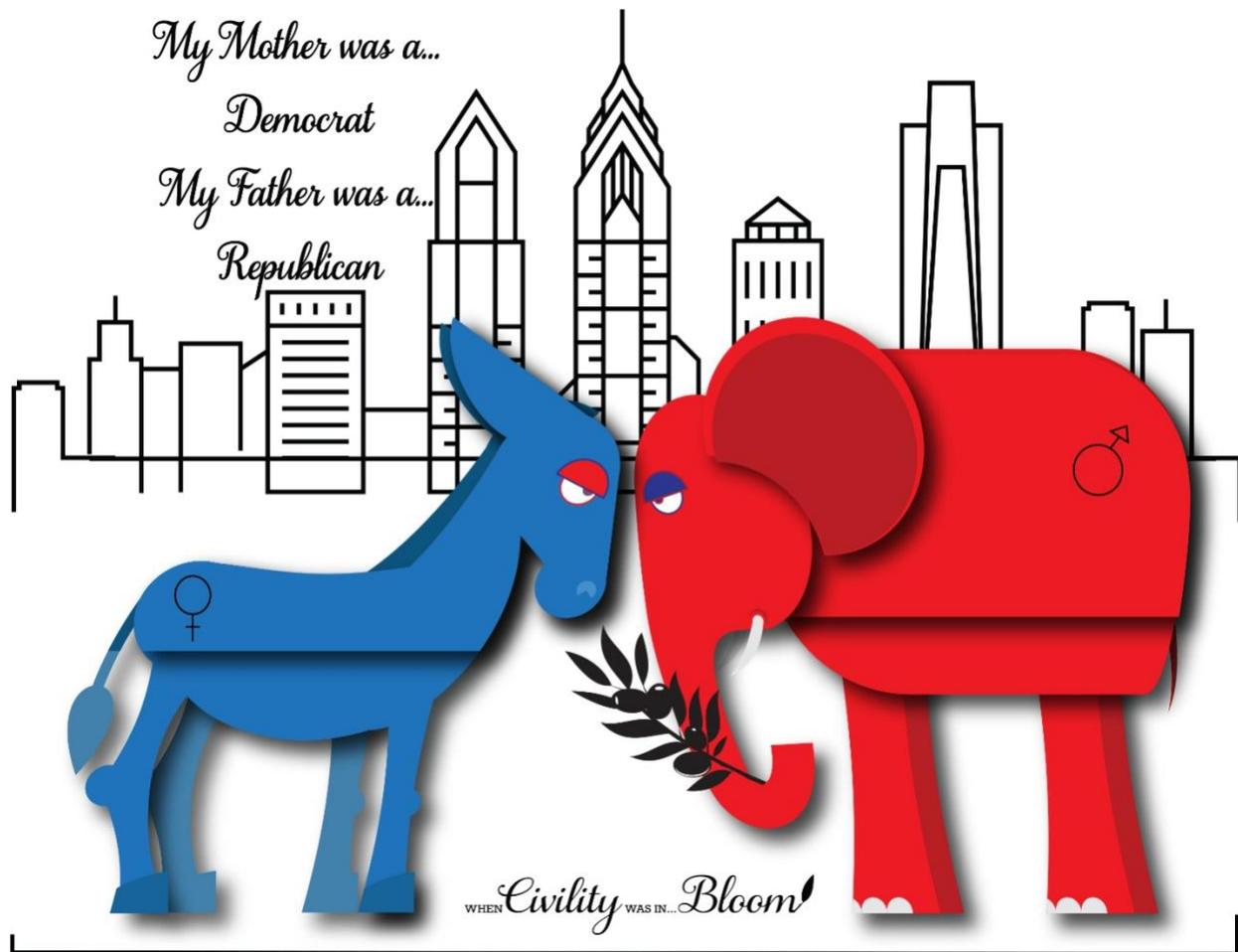
Thomas

Let's go boys, mustn't keep your mother waiting.

End Scene One



The script will be adapted upon request for local presentations.



Issues & Concerns

Then

Now

	Communism	Socialism
	Taxes too high	Tax the Rich
	Jobs for Veterans	Higher Minimum Wages
	Voter Eligibility	Voter Inclusion
	Cold War	Trade War
	Printed Handouts	E-Mails
	Broadcast Television	Social Media
	Fireside Chats	Tweets
	Missile Attacks from the Soviet Union	Cyber Attacks from Russia/China
	Interstate Highway System	Infrastructure Programs



A stage reading of the script was performed at Hedgerow Theatre in Rose Tree, Delaware County.

An adaption of the play to an instrumental musical could be accomplished with Philadelphia artists' selections from 1959-1960.

Examples: Bobby Rydell, Billy Holiday, Frankie Avalon, Fabian, and Chubby Checker.