

## MORNING STORIES TRANSCRIPT

*Radio Days: Writer Anne Bernays' loneliness is a lot more bearable in the 1940's when the radio's on at night. Also, a conversation with Patrick McLean of the Seanachai podcast.*

### **Tony Kahn:**

Hi, everybody! This is Tony Kahn, the producer and director of WGBH's *Morning Stories*. There's something very old fashioned about podcasting, I was thinking the other day. Among everything else that it is, it's also a child of radio, the one medium that in close to a century has remained pretty much the same. Keeping us company, drawing us closer together as a community. Radio, the constant reminder that the way to a person's heart is through his ears. And today's story celebrates that. It's from our old friend, Anne Bernays, who gets younger at heart every day. We call her story: *Radio Days*.

[Sound of trumpets announcing the beginning of an old-time radio show]

### **Anne Bernays:**

There's this little girl, she doesn't have many friends, but she doesn't want you to feel sorry for her. Her older sister is very nice to her and this little girl has found a way to feel what it's like to have friends, thanks to the Philco radio on her bedside table. She listens to it when she should be doing her homework and late at night. She has two favorite weekly programs...

[Sound of telephone ringing on radio show and then dialog from *Duffy's Tavern*]

"Hello, Duffy's Tavern where the elite meet to eat. Archie, the manager speakin'. Duffy ain't here... Oh, hello, Duffy..."

[Dialog continues from show underneath the narrator]

### **Anne Bernays:**

The elite doesn't eat here. The working class does. Duffy, the tavern's Irish owner is constantly on the phone with his bartender, who tells his boss who's come in and who hasn't.

[More dialog from the show]

"He says the hash inflamed his ulcers." (audience laughter) "A guy with ulcers shouldn't eat hash? [sotto voce] Duffy, he didn't have 'em when he came in..." (audience laughter)

[Dialog from show continues under narrative]

### **Anne Bernays:**

The girl can see the bar, a long, polished mahogany affair with bottles arrayed on glass shelves behind it. And the bartender? He's wearing a soiled apron and he needs a shave.

[Dialog continues from show]

"Either I collect all the dough that's owed to us or I'm fired? OK, Duffy. I the little clay; you the big potter. (audience laughter) Okay. Eddie, Eddie look! Uh, how many payin' customers has there been in this place today?"... [dialog continues under narrative and then fades]

**Anne Bernays:**

The tavern's regulars, mostly men, wear work shirts and caps, not ties and suit jackets. Everything that goes on in Duffy's is of interest to her, mainly because it has to do with people rubbing up against each other, making sparks.

**Radio Announcer:**

"And here at 79 Wistful Vista, the postman has just left a stack of stuff and it's all for Fibber McGee and Molly..." (audience applause)

[ Radio broadcast continues under narrative]

**Anne Bernays:**

*Fibber McGee and Molly*, another radio show, is also about Irish people.

[Dialog from *Fibber McGee* show]

"...McGee, look at these bills." "You look at 'em..."

[dialog fades and continues under narrative]

**Anne Bernays:**

Can it be that she finds Fibber and Molly as exotic as they are warm and lovable? Fibber and his wife, both middle-aged and long married live in an unnamed city (or maybe it's a town).

[Continued dialog, Molly speaking]

"Ya know, I remember Uncle Dennis got a letter from the tax collector once..."

**Anne Bernays:**

They have a hall closet crammed with junk. Once every week on the show, in spite of a warning yelp from his wife, Fibber forgets and opens the closet.

[Molly from radio show] "Ahh, no, don't open that door, McGee..."

[Dialog continues under narrative; sound effects as described by Anne below]

**Anne Bernays:**

Its contents come cascading out with thumps, thwacks and tinkles. The girl can see everything: old lamps, rolling pins, flower pots, towel racks, license plates. Everything.

[Fibber McGee from radio show exclaims]: "Gotta straighten out that closet one of these days..." [Theme song of show plays - announcing its end]

**Anne Bernays:**

Sometimes the girl falls asleep with the radio on. No one she knows listens to *Duffy's Tavern* and *Fibber McGee and Molly*. She feels about these radio characters the same way she feels about the characters in some of the books she likes best. They belong to her and no one else. She wishes her mother had a closet like Molly's, a glorious mess! [Theme music plays again with Fibber McGee exclaiming: "...gotta straighten out that closet one of these days."]

**Tony Kahn:**

That was Anne Bernays with today's *Morning Story: Radio Days*. And here we are with *Morning Stories'* right-hand man, Gary Mott. I have lovely memories of radio keeping me company and...

**Gary Mott:**

I'll bet you do, because you're pushing – what? now, Tony?

**Tony Kahn:**

I, I'm pushing a very small ham sandwich across the table. [Gary chuckles] That's about all I'm pushing. [laughs] [Sound of wax paper crumpling, exposing ham sandwich] You remember when the Walkman certainly came on the scene.

**Gary Mott:**

I, I certainly remember making home recordings with my little brother. We would, we would do little spoofs and record them on a cassette and then I would listen to them very intently underneath my covers at night, you know, with my headphones on.

**Tony Kahn:**

The radio as our companion under the covers. Now there...

**Gary Mott:**

Mmm, hmm! [laughs]

**Tony Kahn:**

...there's a relationship that people have – because when I was in high school, I loved rock and roll and I wasn't supposed to like rock and roll. I was supposed to be doing my homework and loving Latin, so where would I listen to the Top 40 every Saturday morning on the radio? Under the covers, with the volume waaay down low. You know, if I had to choose a horrible choice between losing my sight or losing my hearing, I would...

**Gary Mott:**

Mmm, hm.

**Tony Kahn:**

...I guess I'd want to hold onto my hearing because that's the way that I can really still get stories from people. In podcasting, people are trying the story form in new ways too, just as they did in the early days of radio. There's a guy named Patrick McLean whose podcast, called *The Seanachai* (I've been listening to recently) he does, I think, about a story a week. They're, they're a great listen, so I called him up the other day.

**Tony Kahn:**

Describe yourself.

**Patrick McLean:**

I don't know? I'm a thirty-three year old single guy. I work in advertising. I read a lot. I write a lot. Dark hair. Not much of a dancer but quick with a joke.

**Tony Kahn:**

And do you drink as much as your characters do?

**Patrick McLean:**

No. Not that much. [laughs]

**Tony Kahn:**

[Laughs] I was hoping you didn't.

Recording from Patrick's podcast:

**DRUNK MAN:** Is everybody enjoying their evening tonight? Can I get anyone a fre-ssh drink?

**SECOND MAN:** We don't drink.

**DRUNK MAN:** You don't drink? How do you expect to be preserved for posterity? Heh-heh-heh-heh-heh-heh-oh.

**PIRATE:** It was fireless, screamin' in agony... [dialog continues under narrative]

**Patrick McLean:**

The pirate is telling the story of a horrible death of a hard drive.

**PIRATE:** For ye, yerself, did hear the full fathom death rattle of a 60 gig drive... [dialog continues under narrative]

**Patrick McLean:**

'Cause I was just really kind of having fun with the pirate voice.

**PIRATE:** Ye fergot, yer man said. Gather ye rosebuds while ye may...[dialog continues under narrative]

**Patrick McLean:**

If I could pick one lesson that I've learned in the experience of doing The Seanachai about writing, if I'm not having fun, nobody else is gonna like it. Pirates, zombies, monkeys. Those are always good for a laugh. I don't know why, but

From Patrick's Podcast:

Arrrgggh!

**PATRICK:** My guest today is the zombie formerly known as Bob.

**BOB:** Arrrgggh.

**PATRICK:** Good morning to you, too, Bob. During the break you were talking about your favorite....

[Sound trails off and interview with Tony continues]

**Patrick McLean:**

You sort of set up the situation with, with characters and, and, and you sort of see what they do. It can be funny, it can be sad, it can be moving, but you know, it has, has to, I think, to engage you on, on a whole bunch of levels.

**PODCAST**

**Patrick:**

Somewhere, out there in the world, is a Gulfstream 5 jet, the kind the CEOs and rock stars fly around in. It's white and changes FAA numbers about once a month. The Joint Special Operations Command uses it for practice officially known as "rendering." It's all a very fancy way of saying "torture."

**Patrick McLean:**

There have definitely been some episodes that have dealt with some very political topics.

**PODCAST**

**Character-Leonard T. Baird:** [speaks with a "Southern Colonel" accent]  
Name's Baird. Leonard T. Baird. Actually don't bother to remember me at all. Can't possibly do you any good. You see, I don't exist.

[Dialog continues under narrative]

**Patrick McLean:**

The story was broken by a reporter from Chicago, I guess the *Chicago Tribune*? They had found this jet that, that keeps landing in military airports and flying around, you know, the Middle East and various places and the owner of the jet is this company and the company is owned by this man named Leonard T. Baird. And they tried to track down Leonard T. Baird and found that, in fact, he doesn't exist.

**PODCAST**

**Baird:** Bravo, Sleuth. You've caught me. Just ask. I'll tell you any little thing you care to know.

**Patrick McLean:**

Sometimes it's "catch as catch can" with the, with the sound design. You know, if I could spend an entire day on one sound effect I could make it sound beautiful, but that's not gonna happen.

**Tony Kahn:**

Would you want to, though?

**Patrick McLean:**

No. They're not the actual sound of what happened, but it, it serves as sort of these, these symbols. I just want to have it be this pure little, little story with as, as little as you need to get it across. Someone emailed me and said, "I'm doing a podcast and I've just put up my first episode." So I, I looked up this gentleman's podcast and it turned out to be all about a breakup, that he was going through, this very difficult breakup with a girl and in the middle of it he's talking about their first date and this magical moment where they kissed and as he's telling the story... he burps.

**Tony Kahn:**

[Chuckles]

**Patrick McLean:**

Just- buuurrrr-p!

**Tony Kahn:**

[Laughs]

**Patrick McLean:**

And I, I fell out of my chair; it was so funny! At the same time, it was also so, so honest and human.

**Tony Kahn:**

Yeah. For whatever reason, it wasn't edited out. It's...

**Patrick McLean:**

It's real, real emotion, you know.

**Tony Kahn:**

Yeah!

**Patrick McLean:**

And there's a lot of, you know there's a lot of anxiety with a new technology. Do I do

this? Do I do that? I gotta -- Should I be over here? Should I be calling this person? Am I falling behind the curve? It really takes quite a lot of time to, to do the story and I figure if they're good, if, if the content's good it will, it will find a way.

**Tony Kahn:**

Maybe you can make a living.

**Patrick McLean:**

[Laughs] That's great!

**Tony Kahn:**

This is still playtime.

**Patrick McLean:**

Yes. And even if things get difficult, that's no reason not to do them. You know, if you enjoy what you're doing, and you're having fun at it, it's, it's a successful podcast. Next week, next story. Next week, next story.

**Tony Kahn:**

Patrick, thank you so much.

**Patrick McLean:**

Well, thank you, Tony. I've, I've enjoyed our conversation.

**Tony Kahn:**

Same here.

**Patrick McLean:**

Okay!

**Tony Kahn:**

Bye.

**PODCAST**

**Patrick:**

Well, that will do it for today's interview with a zombie. Until next time, this is Patrick and Bob saying

**Bob:**

Grrbbraains!

**Patrick:**

I couldn't have put it better myself.

**Tony Kahn:**

Patrick McLean's web site for The Seanachai, his podcast, is at

<[www.goodwordwrightorder.com](http://www.goodwordwrightorder.com)> [TRANSCRIPTIONIST NOTE: I checked the link and apparently the new link is <http://www.theseanachai.com>] There's a writer for you!  
<[www.goodwordwrightorder.com](http://www.goodwordwrightorder.com)> And we've just had some, some breaking news which Gary wants you to tell folks. What is, what's going on?

**Gary Mott:**

Well, I came into the office this morning and I jumped on iTunes. I saw what I was promised – a WGBH "splash."

**Tony Kahn:**

A splash.

**Gary Mott:**

A, a splash is not a swoosh...

**Tony Kahn:**

Not a swoosh.

**Gary Mott:**

...it's not a brick.

**Tony Kahn:**

These are brand-new terms, folks, that are being used in one area of podcasting. A "splash" is what?

**Gary Mott:**

A splash is the large image at the top of the iTunes front display that dissolves in and out.

**Tony Kahn:**

That big windshield. There are like three of them.

**Gary Mott:**

Exactly.

**Tony Kahn:**

And they, they, they change.

**Gary Mott:**

Bricks are tiles that are in the middle of the page.

**Tony Kahn:**

And they're like what? – six of those or?



**Gary Mott:**

Six of those, I believe.

**Tony Kahn:**

Three splash screens and then lower down, six bricks?

**Gary Mott:**

Yep.

**Tony Kahn:**

And what about those little logos that you can click on for different categories?

**Gary Mott:**

They're called swooshes. New and notable comedy, etc. When you click on the arrow they swoosh on by. So...

**Tony Kahn:**

So, folks, we have been a swoosh.

**Gary Mott:**

Mmm, hmm.

**Tony Kahn:**

We were never a brick.

**Gary Mott:**

Not yet, no.

**Tony Kahn:**

But we are, today, a splash.

**Gary Mott:**

We are indeed. WGBH, the Mother Ship...

**Tony Kahn:**

Mmm, hmm.

**Gary Mott:**

...is right up there, front and center.

**Tony Kahn:**

And how long we stay a splash...

**Gary Mott:**

Mmmm!

**Tony Kahn:**

...will really depend on – you. Go to the splash. And, as always, we hope that we will be accompanied, wherever we go, by our sponsors, Ipswitch, a leader in file transfer software I-P-S-W-I-T-C-H dot C-O-M<ipswitch.com >.

**Gary Mott:**

Our web site <wgbh.org/morningstories > and send us an email, why don't you? <morningstories@wgbh.org >

**Tony Kahn:**

And after you've finished splashing, come back and join us next Friday and we'll give you a free towel, okay? [laughs] See you then. Bye.

[End of recording]

Transcribed by: Bev Sykes and Lynn Relyea