

## MORNING STORIES TRANSCRIPT

*Private Parts: Anne Bernays reveals all, nearly, in the Harvard Bookstore.*

### **Tony Kahn:**

Hi, Everybody. This is Tony Kahn, the producer and director of *Morning Stories* from WGBH in Boston. Now recently, here in town, I, I came across a picture that I doubt you'll ever see, unless you live here in Boston, or more specifically, Cambridge, Massachusetts. And even then, you might not see it. It's really ... well, let me try to describe it to you. It's a photo from a picture calendar for Cambridge Community Cable-TV. And it's the month of September. In the picture, two distinguished citizens in their 70s, one of them is a Pulitzer Prize winning author and the other is a well-known novelist. They're posing in the Harvard Book Store and they are both ... uh ... well, I'm going to let the lady in the picture, Anne Bernays, tell you all about it. We call her account, *Private Parts*.

[Sound of door being opened and closed, and then footsteps]

### **Ann Bernays:**

Seven o'clock on a Sunday morning. The Harvard Book Store. They opened it early. Nobody would be around to gawk at us. We meet the photographer (we hadn't met him before), he let Justin, my husband of fifty years, keep on his jacket for at least the first half hour because Justin was *so* uncomfortable, and so pained [laughs]. Just to sort of get him into it, you know, and he said "Now, take your clothes off!"

[Sound of camera whirring and shutter clicking]

I'm not an exhibitionist. I'm too old. But I had agreed. I got a call from a woman, the Cambridge Community Access Television. Would we pose for a nude calendar? She said, "I'm trying to get a lot of notable people in Cambridge to pose for this calendar." She wanted me to know that it would be done tastefully, that the background for the picture would be something associated with us, since Justin and I are both writers that's why she picked the Harvard Book Store, that the photographer was well known for his serious work. There was something in her voice, which was very straight, trying extremely hard to do something for her organization, and nobody would say yes. I said, "I'll have to call you back."

So I went and I asked Justin how he felt about it. First of all, we were both amused. Who would want to put us in it? Then we thought about, about ... Cambridge is, in some ways, a , a very uptight community. I mean, somebody on our block painted his house yellow. People would sort of shield their eyes as they went by. Anything that's unconventional, it, it will, it'll make some people absolutely livid.

[Classical music plays under next three paragraphs]

Good! [laughs ... camera whirs and clicks throughout next three paragraphs] We took maybe four or five rolls, I think. All, all in all maybe an hour and a half. I've got my shoes on. I've got one hand on a ladder and one hand across my right thigh. I'm sitting on my jacket and Justin is looking very strained. I think that both of us are gazing off into some wonderful distance where we wish we were instead of right here [laughs]. And that look! I wish -- I were anywhere else but here, you know?

I felt so exposed. My own children and grandchildren really were shocked. Shocked. So it isn't something that you can take lightly.

Mark Twain said, "Naked people have little or no influence in society." Being naked is being without any armor at all. The ultimate in, in helplessness. You are at somebody else's mercy. I still feel -- when I'm talking about it, I still feel a little tingly? I still feel, "Oh my god, why did I do it?" and then the other side of me says, "I'm awfully glad I did." Look at our faces. Half shame and half pride. And they are just equal. Equal. Equally strong.

[Sound of door closing]

Good . . . Good.

[Vocal music, birds singing]

**Tony Kahn:**

That was Anne Bernays with today's Morning Story, *Private Parts*. I'm sitting here in the recording studio, although it kind of looks like a photo booth, actually, after that story, with Gary Mott.

**Gary Mott:**

Tony, you're a prominent former Cambridgian. I mean, if someone approached you, do you think that you would pose for a nude calendar?

**Tony Kahn:**

They'd have to give me dinner first [both laugh]. And then we'd talk.

**Gary Mott:**

Maybe a few drinks.

**Tony Kahn:**

Maybe a few drinks. At one point during the shooting she said she suddenly realized that she was living a nightmare that a lot of people have. You're walking down the street; you're absolutely naked and everybody else is clothed. Have you had that dream? I see you, you nodding.

**Gary Mott:**

I've had that dream. Yeah. You know, I'm floating down the street.

**Tony Kahn:**

Down the street. Are there people on the street?

**Gary Mott:**

Sure.

**Tony Kahn:**

And they're looking at you? Are they noticing that you're naked?

**Gary Mott:**

No. No.

**Tony Kahn:**

Oh, OK!

**Gary Mott:**

I'm sort of like an apparition; I'm not really noticed. I feel OK. It's what it is. There's no judgment. There's no preconceived anything.

**Tony Kahn:**

Well, that's a terrific dream! That's not an anxiety dream.

**Gary Mott:**

No-no, no. See, I, I sort of have a European attitude towards nudity.

**Tony Kahn:**

My dream is sort of the opposite. I'm terrified that any moment they're going to notice that I'm naked, then everybody is going to disapprove of me. And nakedness is kind of right on the edge between being an embarrassment and being something very human and natural, between feeling humiliated and feeling humble.

I must tell you another interesting thing about Anne Bernays.

**Gary Mott:**

Yeah?

**Tony Kahn:**

She's notable for several reasons. One is that she's a well-known novelist. You know what the other reason is? She's the great niece of Sigmund Freud.

**Gary Mott:**

No kidding!

**Tony Kahn:**

[Laughing] Yes she is! I asked her, I said, "So how would your great uncle have felt about this?" She said, "Well - he did have a sense of humor. [chuckles] I think he would, he would have enjoyed seeing what it led to."

**Gary Mott:**

Justin and Anne were September.

**Tony Kahn:**

September.

**Gary Mott:**

Who filled out the rest of the....

**Tony Kahn:**

Robert Reich, who was the Secretary of Labor under the Clinton Administration.

**Gary Mott:**

Sure, sure.

**Tony Kahn:**

He posed. And he's in a gourmet food market with a basket.

**Gary Mott:**

A well-placed basket.

**Tony Kahn:**

A well, a very well-placed basket.

**Gary Mott:**

I think it's terrific!

**Tony Kahn:**

What else do we have here in the dock? We got some email . . .

**Gary Mott:**

We got a note from Katherine in Vienna, Austria. She says, "About two months ago I discovered your podcasts on iTunes and I've really enjoyed listening to them since. I also just finished making my first-ever donation to public radio for your show."

**Tony Kahn:**

Wow!

**Gary Mott:**

“I was particularly touched by the recent podcast, *Goodbye to the God Show*, wiping away tears as I listened to Marcia Hulley’s declaration of love for your WGBH building, I was struck by how hard moving through change can sometimes be. In three weeks I will also experience a big change. After six years in Austria, I’ll be moving back to my hometown of Atlanta. I’ve had such a hard time saying goodbye to Vienna – My little apartment in the fourth district, and, of course, my husband –

**Tony Kahn:**

Oops! [laughs]

**Gary Mott:**

– who, because of work reasons won’t be able to join me until next summer. Nevertheless, I wanted to write you about a fabulous life-changing film I saw in March, here in Vienna, called *Vienna’s Lost Daughters*.

**Tony Kahn:**

Oh, we’re going to have a link to that film on our, our RSS feed. It sounds like it’s a very interesting film.

**Gary Mott:**

Yeah. “The film’s protagonists are eight Viennese women who escaped on the 1938-39 *kindertransport* and who all eventually settled in New York City. It was a special treat to be there, in Vienna, opening night, when six of the women answered questions after the film.”

**Tony Kahn:**

We’ve now gotten to a point where people are able to look back on the war as something that happened to individuals, to people. It wasn’t just warring sides. It wasn’t just warring ideologies. And when you look at a war on that level, it’s amazing how many similarities you can find among people on opposite sides.

**Gary Mott:**

Mmm-hmm.

**Tony Kahn:**

Some of the stories that we *do* do about World War II are especially surprising for that reason and, and if anyone out there has any stories that they’d like to tell us about their direct or indirect experience with that, we’d love to, to hear from you.

[Classical music plays throughout remainder of show]

**Gary Mott:**

Yeah, please let us know. Our email address is <[morningstories@wgbh.org](mailto:morningstories@wgbh.org)>. Our web presence is <http://www.wgbh.org/morningstories>.

**Tony Kahn:**

And if you are as inspired as our new listener is to contribute, please don't let us stand in your way.

**Gary Mott:**

Hear hear!

**Tony Kahn:**

You can find a link to do that, also, at the website. In the meantime, we'll be back with another Morning Story very soon, so keep tuned. Bye-bye.

**Gary Mott:**

So, Tony - I want to hear a little bit more about this "naked dream" of yours.

**Tony Kahn:**

When you show up in it, then we'll talk. [both laugh heartily] Hey! The Morning Stories calendar!

Gary Mott:

Oh, I can see that! [laughs]

**Tony Kahn:**

Is Flickr ready for this?

**Gary Mott:**

The Public Radio Fund-Raiser Premium!

[End of recording]

Transcribed by: Bev Sykes

In an email to Liz, Bev wrote:

My only comment on the story itself was ....

ROBERT REICH???????