

## MORNING STORIES TRANSCRIPT

*Father's Day: Jake Warga, Cyndy McCollough, and Tony Kahn hear back from their dads.*

**Tony Kahn:**

Hi, everybody, this is Tony Kahn, the producer and director of *Morning Stories* from WGBH in Boston.

If there's one thing I wish I had, it's a tape recording of my father. I would gladly trade a hundred pictures of him for just ten seconds of his voice. I was reminded of that the other day when, while surfing the web, I heard this piece from a young producer named Jake Warga.

**Jake Warga:**

I drove to LA where I grew up to clear out my parent's stuff I had in storage. Overwhelmed at the time, I put a lot of things away, things I thought I might want someday.

[Voices in recording]

**Jake's Father:**

Why don't you say something easy, like "Daddy..."

**Jake Warga:**

Da...

**Jake's Father:**

Dad-dy...

**Jake Warga:**

Dah-y...

**Jake's Father:**

Dad-y... [chuckles]... right. Is that a cookie?

**Jake Warga:**

Cook-y

**Jake's Father:**

Cook-y! Can't talk with your mouth full, can you?

**Jake Warga:**

[Adult voice] I was an overly documented, only child. But photos are essentially useless, unless they're labeled. They're not saying anything. But listening to these tapes, it's like I'm my Dad, interviewing myself.

**Jake's Father:**

[In recording] How old are you?

**Jake Warga:**

[In recorded child's voice] Four

**Jake's Father:**

What are you going to be next?

**Jake Warga:**

Five.

**Jake's Father:**

Right!

**Jake Warga:**

I'll tell you about school, OK?

**Jake's Father:**

OK, tell me about school.

**Jake Warga:**

I just play...

**Jake's Father:**

You just play?

**Jake Warga:**

[In adult voice] I used to ask my parents why they were saving all this stuff: my baby teeth, my macaroni art, stuffed animals, photo after photo. I realize now that they weren't saving these things for me, but for them. I was their son, they were proud of me. But they knew something I didn't: I was not always going to be a child, and someday I'd take over the role of preserving my past, choosing what I'll keep.

**Jake's Father:**

[In recording] It's February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1979, and Jake is going to be seven years old. We're reading a book...

**Jake Warga:**

[In child's voice] We will sing to Flip... now children, read... what's that say?

**Jake's Father:**

"Ready"

**Jake Warga:**

Ready? Singing...

**Jake's Father:**

OK. Now let's shut the book and talk for a minute. What'd you do today?

**Jake Warga:**

Me?

**Jake's Father:**

You.

**Jake Warga:**

Me? I went... [embarrassed chuckle]

**Jake Warga:**

[In adult voice] The man on the tape died ten years ago, but the child is also gone. I don't miss the child too much, but [slow finger-picked classical guitar sounds in background] seeing Father's Day ads for tools, flashlight radios and ties, wish I could say to him what I saw today on the inside of a greeting card for kids who live too far from their parents: "Dad, Happy Father's Day. Wish you were here."

**Jake's Father:**

[In recording] "It's bed time. [inaudible]... come on, let's go to bed."

**Jake Warga:**

[In sleepy child's voice] hmmm? Dad-y

**Jake's Father:**

Daddy. Right!

**Jake Warga:**

Happy!

**Jake's Father:**

Happy!

**Jake Warga:**

Happy!

[Soft guitar interlude]

**Tony Kahn:**

That was Jake Warga. Here in the States, millions of families are going to be celebrating Father's Day this weekend, and, for those of us without Fathers, it's going to be a full day too. In the decades that he's been gone, my own father, I've learned, still has a lot of things to tell me, if I listen.

The same is true for Cyndy McCollough, whose father died in a car crash when she was in her early twenties, and their relationship had pretty much come apart. She told us her story, if you recall, in a podcast a few years back, [sound of phone ringing in background] and I decided to call her to find out how things stand, these days, with her Dad.

**Cyndy McCollough:**

Now, when I think back, I think of the sweet times. He drank a lot toward the end of his life, and that changes people. I mean, people get edgy, they get bitter, they get mean.

**Tony Kahn:**

[Murmurs agreement]

**Cyndy McCollough:**

hhmmm, and I remember what he was like before he was a big drinker, and I... those are the things I focus on. I think that he was self-medicating because he had his own pain, you know, I mean, things that he never talked about... that men in that generation don't talk about. Hhmm, it's like I'm soothing him and going "It's OK, Dad, it's OK". Because when I dream about him, he's crying.

**Tony Kahn:**

[Murmurs]

**Cyndy McCollough:**

I'm forty-six this year, and my dad was fifty-seven when he was in the car accident, and I'm like "Oh, my God! I'm...ten years, and I'm at the age my Dad was when he was killed!

**Tony Kahn:**

[Murmurs]

**Cyndy McCollough:**

I'm still an idiot. I mean, seriously, I'm still the same goober that I was at twenty. I'm realizing that he didn't have it all figured out!

**Tony Kahn:**

If you could pick up the conversation with your father that you're ready to have now, what do you think would be one of the first things you'd want to say to him?

**Cyndy McCollough:**

[Deep sigh] hhmm, I wish you could have trusted me more.

**Tony Kahn:**

[Interested murmur]

**Cyndy McCollough:**

You know? I wish we could have had a conversation as adults.

**Tony Kahn:**

Uh-huh

**Cyndy McCollough:**

I would say "Dad, talk to me like someone who's not your daughter. I think that would have helped us both... I could have maybe eased up and let go of some of my stupid, childish "waahhh!" You know?

**Tony Kahn:**

And what do you think he would want to say to you?

**Cyndy McCollough:**

God, that's a good question. I've thought about that. I think what he would have said was "Babe, I'm old school. I'm old school, I'm too old to change, I shouldn't have cut you out of the family; I'll work on it, see if we can't just agree to disagree.

**Tony Kahn:**

You know what I'm guessing?

**Cyndy McCollough:**

Huh?

**Tony Kahn:**

That ten years from now, if I were to ask you that question again, he actually would have more to say that would be even gentler.

**Cyndy McCollough:**

Really?

**Tony Kahn:**

Yeah.

**Cyndy McCollough:**

That's a lovely thought.

**Tony Kahn:**

I know that I've heard my Father's voice change and say things I never could have imagined he would say to me. I've had some dreams in which I've heard him say some things that were almost like what a child would say to a parent. Which was...

**Cyndy McCollough:**

Wow.

**Tony Kahn:**

Can you please help me? I hurt...

**Cyndy McCollough:**

...exactly it... That's exactly it...

**Tony Kahn:**

And that relationship continues to grow.

**Cyndy McCollough:**

You know, that's really true, Tony. Our fathers are supposed to be the kings, supposed to be everything, and they carry that, right? I think a big gift would be to just let'em put that load down, and just say, you know, "What can I do to help you?" Here's to your Dad, Tony.

**Tony Kahn:**

I'm sorry?

**Cyndy McCollough:**

Here's to your Dad.

**Tony Kahn:**

Here's... and here's to your Dad, too, Cyndy. Ah, Happy Father's Day, to the both of you. [laughs]

**Cyndy McCollough:**

Ahh, same to you guys.

**Tony Kahn:**

Take care.

**Cyndy McCollough:**

Bye-bye.

**Tony Kahn:**

Bye.

[Sound of phone hanging up.]

Our old pal, Cyndy McCollough. And I'm here in the studio with an even older pal, Gary Mott. How're you doing, Gary?

**Gary Mott:**

An older pal? Hi. I have aged considerably... working here...

**Tony Kahn:**

...gracefully...

**Gary Mott:**

... gracefully...

**Tony Kahn:**

but considerably. There was such a smile across your face.

**Gary Mott:**

I sound an awful lot like my Dad. Just the other Day, I was talking to my brother on the phone, and, thinking how the voice inflection and everything – just like my Dad. The best gift that you could possible give your children, or your parents, is some sort of moment in time, via a recording. A few years back, I got a gift from my brother. He produced a little video...

**Tony Kahn:**

[Murmuring agreement]

**Gary Mott:**

...of me. He called it "Gary's Life." And it was me, you know, with my stick, as a, you know, a one-year-old, going out to get the paper...

**Tony Kahn:**

You went to get the paper with a stick? Did you learn you didn't have to beat the newspaper to death before you brought it in? [they laugh]

**Gary Mott:**

...being pushed in a stroller by my incredibly gorgeous twenty-two year old mother, we had a music bed, it was a Morning Story.

**Tony Kahn:**

Just every... day... moments.

**Gary Mott:**

Yeah.

**Tony Kahn:**

Not special occasions.

**Gary Mott:**

Sure

**Tony Kahn:**

Right?

**Gary Mott:**

Yeah

**Tony Kahn:**

Just you being yourself in your life.

**Gary Mott:**

Well, I mean, the best conversations take place when there's not a camera rolling.

**Tony Kahn:**

Isn't that true for this program?

**Gary Mott:**

[They laugh] There you go! So why don't we walk around with a recorder, Tony?

**Tony Kahn:**

Because I can't even remember to get my work I.D. in my pocket, that's why.

**Gary Mott:**

That's what I'm for, that's why I'm here, right?

**Tony Kahn:**

Cyndy is a consultant with Fortune 500 companies, and I was asking her, since she knows a little bit about the problems we're facing financially with this podcast, if there was anything that she could do to help. I can tell you that I was very inspired by what she had to say.

**Cyndy McCollough:**

[On the phone] There's so many people that love your podcast, I thought "Who's not doing their job? You know, who's not contributing?" But, I wanted the list, so I was going to go knock on some doors. It's not that the show has lost anything, I think the show's gotten better, but its because the volume of podcasts out there is growing... people are overwhelmed by choice. If they listen, they get hooked.

**Tony Kahn:**

So, what you're suggesting is that I have to overcome whatever shyness I have about approaching people and asking for help.

**Cyndy McCollough:**

Yes!

**Tony Kahn:**

All right, then: Cyndy?! Help me! I want you to go out there and talk to every single executive that you know...

**Cyndy McCollough:**

As long as I have your blessing to do that, I'd be happy... what's really different about your podcast, it's like you have created a living room, with a fireplace, and some brandy, and big, soft chairs, and you invite people... I don't know another podcast that does what you do, and I think there's something that can be gained from marketing that... hmmm... Let me look into that and get back to you this week?

**Tony Kahn:**

Sure, absolutely! A lot of you have already been contacting us with your suggestions for how we might keep the show going, [guitar returns softly] and contributions! We want to thank you for them. We're going to keep you posted on how that's going. So please, in amounts big and small, give what you can, to keep us coming to your neighborhood, and so that I can haul those big, heavy, comfortable chairs, and put them in your living room too.

**Gary Mott:**

Find out more at our website <[wgbh.org/morningstories](http://wgbh.org/morningstories)> and our email address [morningstories@wgbh.org](mailto:morningstories@wgbh.org). We read everything that comes in.

**Tony Kahn:**

We'll catch you next podcast. Take care, bye-bye.

[Guitar builds, then softens and continues behind the voices.]

**Gary Mott:**

What do you think?

**Tony Kahn:**

I don't know; what do you think?

**Gary Mott:**

I think "fine."

**Tony Kahn:**

OK. Then I repose in your confidence.

**Gary Mott:**

[Chuckles] Is tape still rolling?



[Guitar builds, sustains, then fades]

[End of recording]

Transcribed by: Dan Snyder