

## Never Have Secrets

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

I am going to share with you a story I have been warned I could go to jail for repeating.

More than a decade ago, my ex-wife was working for one of the most powerful men in the [entertainment industry](#) and spent most of her time on his Beverly Hills estate. She worked on the man's property and was in the process of redoing the property's landscape architecture. During the day, she would come and go, walk the property, and sometimes work inside the house. Teams of security guards and other people were on the property at all times and even had a secret "bunker" beneath the house.

I used to love the stories about the sorts of things she would see on the property. For example, one morning she got to the property at 6:30 and saw Tom Cruise all disheveled coming out the front door of the house. Since the Hollywood tycoon her boss worked for was gay—and he was the only other person in the house when she got there—she could only surmise that he had spent the night with Tom Cruise and that Tom Cruise might be gay.

One afternoon, she was on the estate and working inside the house. As far as she knew, the only people on the property that day were her, the security guards in the bunker, and various maids for the home. At some point, she got up from where she was sitting and looked out the window. To her astonishment, she saw the then-president of the United States, Bill Clinton, sitting surrounded by three young women in skimpy dresses.

Clinton had been in town that week for some meetings in Los Angeles. He had been sneaked onto the property at some point during the day when my wife was there. When she looked out the window, she was not more than 15 feet from him and his female friends. The women were doing things like running their fingers through his hair and so forth. They clearly looked like prostitutes and it appeared as if a "threesome" (or perhaps a "foursome"?) was about to occur. This was at a time more than a year or so after the Monica Lewinsky scandal had occurred.

Several minutes after witnessing this, my wife exited the property and immediately called me on her cell phone. She was very excited and repeated the story about the president and the girls. I could not believe what I was hearing. It was positively scandalous. Shortly into our conversation, the line went completely dead. I put down the phone and a few seconds later my work phone started to ring. The number that came up for the caller was something like "111-111-1111." I picked up the phone and heard one of the most menacing voices I have ever heard:

"Do you know you could go to jail if you ever talk about what you just heard?" the voice said. "You will go to jail."

The caller then hung up. It is difficult to describe to this day how frightening the voice sounded. It was somewhat professional but had a "distance" to it that gave it a raw edge. It was as if someone tested thousands of voices and decided on this one as the most frightening. I can still hear the voice in my head. The voice also sounded somewhat like a recording—but not enough that I was sure.

I sat in silence at my desk for a moment or two. During my wife's call, I had been in a good mood about learning such salacious gossip. Within a few moments, though, the call and its tone were such that my heart felt like it had dropped into my stomach. In fact, I was so frightened that I am just writing about this right now.

A few moments after this call ended, my phone rang again. It was the same caller at "111-111-1111."

"You are going to go to jail if you say anything. Do you understand how SERIOUS it will be if you say anything?"

I did not have time to respond before the caller hung up the phone. I can assure you that I was very frightened by the caller. I would not say it was the sort of thing that gave me nightmares, but certainly I never talked about this or called reporters, and this never made it into any sort of gossip column. Shortly thereafter, I simply forgot about it.

I am not sure what sort of technology can interrupt a cell phone call and redial the person who was called. This was also more than ten years ago. What I do know is that whatever was done to make me be quiet back then certainly worked well and it kept me quiet for a long time.

When I thought about this episode years later, what was interesting to me was not so much that I was threatened—or even that this occurred. What was interesting is what must have happened behind the scenes to arrange the tryst between the president and the prostitutes. I suspect that the tycoon would have had to have a conversation with Clinton about this, would have had to be extremely discreet in arranging the girls, would have had to pay the girls, and then would have had to reassure the president that no one would know about whatever actions occurred. Given the fact that all of this also took place in the wake of the Monica Lewinsky scandal, I am sure that the risk for the president was even further heightened.

What the president likely did not know, though, is that this particular tycoon was a security freak. He had microphones, cameras, and all sorts of stuff discretely hidden on every inch of the property. There was literally no conversation on any part of the property (even in the bushes) that would not be picked up. There were also small cameras in every nook and cranny of the property. My ex-wife had worked with the security people on the placement of all of this stuff.

I would suspect that whatever nonsense went on that day was recorded, filmed, and stored somewhere. Who knows if that information was ever used against the president—but it certainly could have been. I have a feeling that a lot of what goes on in politics and the world happens for reasons that we never understand.

What this episode taught me, ultimately, is that it is almost impossible to have secrets. If you live a life where there are secrets involved, then the chances are very good that some sort of need you have in your life is not being met. Perhaps the need is to feel loved, to feel connected with others, to feel attractive, to feel like a big deal—and more. But these things make you vulnerable.

Something about keeping secrets is sad to me. If you have a lot of secrets this usually means something is wrong. If people

are keeping parts of their lives secret, they are not being who they want to be. You only get one chance at this life and you need to be the person you want to be.

In your career, you will never be happy unless you are being the person you want to be. Avoid being in a **job**, or profession, that requires you to have lots of secrets and not disclose who you really are. You need to do work that makes the most of your strengths and your weaknesses. You should never be living a lie because, in the end, the only person it harms is you.

### **THE LESSON**

Do not keep any secrets in your career; people who keep parts of their lives secret usually are not being the people that they want to be; you will never find happiness unless you are the person that you want to be. Avoid jobs and professions that require you to keep a lot of secrets and hide your true identity. When you live a lie, you are the only person who ultimately gets hurt.

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