

Family Legacy of Investigation

She Spies Private Eye Cultivates Generations of Sleuths



Anji Maddox and Bettye Pribyl



When the television series "Roots" aired in 1977, audiences across the United States were captivated by the sweeping story that followed one man from an African village through the horrors of slavery and the generations that followed. The portrayal of cultural identity and family legacy—inspired by author Alex Haley's journey tracing his own ancestry—emboldened millions of viewers to begin exploring their own family histories.

Bettye Pribyl (below) was one of them. "Back then, we didn't have computers, so we had to go out and do our own research," Bettye says. "I would take my three girls with me to the library and to relatives' houses to do genealogy interviews." What began as a hobby soon became a way of life. Armed with cassette recorders, notebooks, and endless curiosity, Bettye spent decades piecing together family histories through courthouse documents, cemetery records, and conversations with relatives. Trailing behind her through libraries and graveyards were her three daughters (above, right), including Anji Maddox, who grew up fascinated by the process of uncovering hidden stories.



That instinct for investigation would eventually lead Anji to open her own Georgetown-Austin based private investigation business, **She Spies Private Eye**. While Bettye searched for ancestors, Anji built a career locating missing people and conducting undercover operations. "She says I look for dead people while she looks for living people," Bettye laughs.

The same sleuthing curiosity that began with Bettye continues to live on in Anji and, in different ways, through her own children.

NEXT GENERATION OF INVESTIGATORS

Just as Bettye once hauled her daughters to genealogy research locations, Anji found herself bringing her own three children along on surveillance jobs and stakeouts while building her business as a single mother. Over time, they became fascinated by the stories behind the cases and the people their mother was helping. "I would explain to them that we were helping someone—a missing child or a wife or husband in a child custody case. I always wanted them to understand why I loved my job."

That fascination with investigative work stuck with them. One son became a police officer. The other briefly worked alongside Anji doing fugitive recovery until she decided—after a harrowing foot chase that made the Austin news—the



danger was too great. "That's why he's in oil and gas now." Her daughter, Breann Griggs, now runs a childcare center while continuing to help part-time with investigative work. "I remember going on stakeouts with her where she looked like a soccer mom sitting in the car, but we were actually doing spy work," Breann says.

As an adult, she began stepping into undercover work herself, helping with custody cases, runaway recovery, and online scams—cases that often placed her inside the story she was trying to unravel. In one case, Breann—who has long been a fan of Johnny Cash and even named her daughter Cash—became involved in an investigation targeting an online scammer falsely claiming that he was Johnny's

friend, Bill Miller. What started as an attempt to trace a fraudster eventually led her to the real individual being impersonated. Grateful for the family's persistence in uncovering the truth, he later thanked the family with memorabilia and tickets to the Johnny Cash Museum in Nashville.



Despite the unusual childhoods filled with stakeouts, courthouse records, and undercover work, both women say the experience shaped their families in unexpected ways.

"I feel like my kids grew up loving to help people," Anji says. "They became very compassionate adults."

MOTHER-DAUGHTER TEAMWORK

Anji's family legacy may have expanded to new generations and different forms of investigative work, but at its center remains the mother-daughter duo that started it all. Today, Bettye and Anji continue working together on heirship and probate cases, combining Bettye's decades of genealogy research with Anji's investigative databases and fieldwork. Some nights, Bettye stays up late digging through records before calling her daughter with a new lead and putting their resources together to figure out a case.

For Breann, the work has strengthened not only her investigative instincts, but also her relationship with her mother. "We're really close," she says. "She's my best friend. When we're talking in the office together laughing, it doesn't even feel like work."



For more information about She Spies Private Eye, and to schedule a free 30-minute phone consultation, call 512-246-9889 or visit SheSpiesPI.com.

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