

John Plotz: From Brandeis University, welcome to Recall This Book where we assemble scholars and writers from different disciplines to make sense of contemporary issues, problems, and events. So I'm your usual host John Plotz, and sitting across from me today in our cozy little coffin is the celebrated writer and scholar Sharon Marcus, who is Professor of English at Columbia and founding editor of Public Books. She's got wonderful earlier books of cultural history, which include *Apartment Stories* and *Between Women*, and now she's written a book that, among other things, uncovers the 19th century roots of a very 21st century concept, celebrity. So Sharon, hi.

Sharon Marcus: Hi.

John Plotz: It's great to have you here. As our conversation evolves, we are going to follow the Recall This Book tradition of resurrecting an older work that has something to say about how our topic, celebrity, operates, and I see that older work sitting in Sharon's lap right now. But we're going to begin by talking about Sharon's wonderful new book from Princeton University Press, which is called *The Drama of Celebrity*. So Sharon, welcome. Just can you start by telling us a little bit about the book?

Sharon Marcus: Absolutely. *The Drama of Celebrity* provides a new history and a new theory of celebrity culture and the history takes us back to the 19th century. One of the claims I'm making is that modern celebrity begins not with Hollywood, certainly not with the internet, but with 19th century theater and the ways that live theatrical performances and stars mingled with new technologies of that time, which are still with us. The mass press, which has now migrated to inside our phones, the photograph, which migrated to inside our phones.

John Plotz: Inside our phones, yes.

Sharon Marcus: The telegraph, which arguably has migrated inside our phones, although technically not. And also-

John Plotz: That would be a great app, actually, the Send A Telegraph app.

Sharon Marcus: Send a Telegram, right.

John Plotz: With like a little Western Union guy, could just show up. Yeah.

Sharon Marcus: Yeah, exactly. And also the new ability in the 19th century of people to literally travel around the world via steamship and railway, so steamships would carry them across the ocean and railways would take them into the nooks and crannies of the countries they visited. There have been famous people since time began. There've been famous people since somebody in one village said, "Hey, did you hear what the guy in the other village did at the latest stone-throwing festival?" But the way that modern celebrity takes form with ordinary people making ordinary people famous, rather than people like Julius Caesar putting statues of himself everywhere, is really a 19th-century phenomenon.

Sharon Marcus: It starts earlier with print culture, but it's really only in the 19th century that you have hundreds of thousands of people buying morning and evening editions of newspapers daily, that you have the ability to look at photographs when you walk down a street and see photographs of famous people in almost every store window. Photographs of famous people used to be sold in tobacconist shops, at newsvendors, at pretty much any store that wanted to make a quick penny.

John Plotz: Can I just ask you more, Sharon, about the word famous and the word celebrity?

Sharon Marcus: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

John Plotz: It sounds like celebrity has a different, it casts it into a different level than just fame.

Sharon Marcus: So traditionally in the last century, fame is a more positive term. Celebrity is a more negative term. *Fame* connotes something lasting that you earn through worthy deeds, *celebrity*, something more ephemeral that may be based on nothing.

John Plotz: I see.

Sharon Marcus: It's ironic because at its origins, the word fame comes from *fama* or rumor, so originally fame referred to the ephemeral, cheap, tawdry celebrity that we now contrast to fame today.

John Plotz: Interesting. Yeah, that's great. Yeah.

Sharon Marcus: I would also say that fame refers to lasting renown, renown that survives the death of the person. So celebrity often is what you have while you're alive and evokes a real interest in the private life of the public person. Fame also can include that, but fame tends to have a more respectable patina around it, so this is someone who, over the centuries we've continued to be interested in and therefore they are famous. But I think in the present, living people can be called famous. It really is a term that's reserved more for those who people think deserve to be talked about and admired. So Einstein is famous, Kim Kardashian is a celebrity.

John Plotz: So I think what I was thinking of, but this had really helps me, I was thinking that you were making a distinction where celebrity was the famous for being famous category, but it's not.

Sharon Marcus: No, I completely disagree with that whole idea. And I actually don't truck with a distinction between celebrity and fame. So that distinction I've just been describing, I think is, am I allowed to say bullshit on your podcast?

John Plotz: Yeah, you are. You're allowed to say a lot of things on our podcast.

Sharon Marcus: I think it's bullshit. I think it's basically a kind of sociological way of assigning status and distinction. So men are famous, women are celebrities.

John Plotz: Well, that was going to be my second question, was whether it was gendered all the way.

Sharon Marcus: Scientists are famous, even athletes can be famous-

John Plotz: Athletes, oh.

Sharon Marcus: ... but except maybe A-Rod because he's gone out with too many female performers, but performers are celebrities so we don't take performance that seriously. And also I think-

John Plotz: Athletics is an interesting one because it has record books, and you could say, "Oh, the enduring..." Like I was just watching the World Series and they always trot out the great names and they do say, "The famous pitchers of the past." That's really interesting, yeah.

Sharon Marcus: Yeah. Fame is just a way of conferring higher status, and so any group that enjoys higher status in our society, men for example, will be more likely to be called famous.

John Plotz: End up famous.

Sharon Marcus: And I would also say activities that are engaged in primarily by dominant groups, activities that are followed in large part by dominant groups. Those tend to get called famous. And anything that involves, young girls and teenage girls admiring slightly older women in their twenties, that's going to be dismissed as *famous only for being famous*. I mean, what has Kim Kardashian done? She just managed to have a TV show that ran for 14 seasons, found a clothing line, basically invent the contemporary use of social media, but she must just be an idiot.

John Plotz: So it's actually not a distinction without a difference, it's a distinction that has an invidious difference in it that you're trying to call out.

Sharon Marcus: Yes, exactly.

John Plotz: Makes perfect sense. Okay, cool. So, that's the history.

Sharon Marcus: The theory, so you know I'm an academic, so my job is to say how what I'm saying is different from what other people have said. And I'll be honest, for a while I didn't know that I had anything radically different to say about how celebrity worked. But when I had been researching for a very long time, about eight years, and I sat back and I thought that the time has really come to ask myself what of all this history and the commonalities I found between the 19th century and the present, what does that say about how celebrity works? And do I view that differently from others? So I went back, yet again, and looked at the key texts and I thought, "Well, here's the thing. All of these studies tend to argue that only one group is really responsible for making someone into a celebrity and defining what their celebrity means."

Sharon Marcus: In many cases, especially in academic studies, that group is some version of the media. That might be the press, it might be the publicity machine, it might be what Adorno called the "culture industry." And the key text here, actually, is the source of that famous only for being famous quote that you brought out before, and that's Daniel Boorstin's *The Image* from the 1950s. And what he argued there is that celebrity is just a creation of the media. He's really looking at a conglomeration of press agents, publicists, cheap journalists, investigative reporters, but cheap journalists, gossip columnists, and people who work in Hollywood, and the record industry. And he says, there's nothing to any of these celebrities. They're just illusions created by this media machine and we, the American public, have lost the ability to pierce the illusion. Okay, that was one theory. The media is creating these puppets, the media are the puppeteers-

John Plotz: Right, so it's the puppet master argument. Yeah.

Sharon Marcus: ... the celebrities are the puppets, right. And we, the public, are a bunch of idiotic pawns who just believe everything that's foisted on us, that was one theory. And I'm really only slightly caricaturing that theory, that really is, I think, what people thought and it was the 1940s and '50s, they were worried about fascism, the rise of the cult of personality, the way that all of these technologies like radio and film had helped to promote fascism, and they had plenty of reason, as we continue to have, to worry that people were not sufficiently critical of celebrities.

John Plotz: Yeah, totally. And just can I say also that I study science fiction, and the anti-communism of that period is often really kind of an anti-culture industry--

Sharon Marcus: Oh, interesting.

John Plotz: ... also the fear of like the Invasion of the Body Snatchers version-

Sharon Marcus: Right, of course.

John Plotz: ... is that that actually is one way, it's located, transparently as an allegory about communism, but it has a flavor of the same thing.

Sharon Marcus: Yes, and that is interesting because there's also this implication, and Adorno says this explicitly in one of his writings on the culture industry, that celebrities are all homogenized, that they're just all cut from the same cloth and they're all iterations of the same type. When in fact, there's so much emphasis placed both in celebrity persona and in fandom on the distinctions between celebrities and so many celebrities present themselves as defiant and non-conformist.

John Plotz: Right.

Sharon Marcus: The kind of in reaction to that theory, scholars like Jackie Stacey and Henry Jenkins said, "Well, let's look at this public that's supposedly so stupid and see what they actually are doing when they engage in fandom." And what they both found, and scholars since have found this, that fans, in fact, can be very critical. They engage in lots of acts of evaluation, they form communities, they create their own art, they're quite active. And so that really laid to rest the notion of the passive fan and the passive public, but had as its blind spot, the sense that it's only fans who create celebrity. So we have one theory that says, "It's just the media creating celebrity." And of course media is a very complex entity, we had another that said, "It's just the public that's creating the celebrities."

John Plotz: And, Sharon, period wise, when would you place that? Because I feel like-

Sharon Marcus: '80s.

John Plotz: Okay.

Sharon Marcus: '80s and '90s.

John Plotz: And do you have a thought about the '80s and '90s as an interesting time when that would arise, or? Reagan era, I guess.

Sharon Marcus: It seems like an odd kind of wishful theory for the Reagan era, if you ask me. But it could have been an attempt to inject into-

John Plotz: We seem to be narcotized, we're just sitting at the sofa, but we're *really* doing something.

Sharon Marcus: But we did, in fact, just elect a celebrity president. Although Reagan had, compared to our current president, Reagan had a lot of political experience that Trump completely lacked, but I think there was a need to-

John Plotz: Busting unions since 1947, yes.

Sharon Marcus: Right, and leading the charge against communists.

John Plotz: Yes, definitely.

Sharon Marcus: But he had been governor of California.

John Plotz: Sure. Yeah.

Sharon Marcus: I think there might've been a wish to bring into being, through the active intellection, an active kind of anarchic public. And of course in response to... alongside Reagan, we have punk, we have all these forms of subculture that do place a lot of emphasis on the fan, and even break down some of the fan-- rockstar distinction.

John Plotz: Yeah, totally. Yeah, and if you think of the '80s, you think of the Birmingham School, and you think about people like Dick Hebdige talking about subculture as style.

Sharon Marcus: Absolutely, this is coming out of Stuart Hall and the Birmingham School without any... I mean, that's a clear line. And so they're rethinking the Adorno question. They're rethinking Adorno in light of wanting to have a more invigorated sense of the public and of community.

John Plotz: Okay.

Sharon Marcus: And then I would say alongside all of these, there's always been a folk theory of celebrity which says it's stars who make themselves, and no one in academia ever gives that any credence, but it is an important vernacular theory of celebrity. So when I-

John Plotz: And arguably you wouldn't like stars if you didn't think they made themselves, right? I mean, people have to believe that at some level. Right?

Sharon Marcus: Depends on the kind of fan you are.

John Plotz: Interesting. Yeah.

Sharon Marcus: So what I realized about these theories is that all of them are right, which is why all of them are wrong. Yes, there is an active culture industry that's working very hard to create stars. And yes, fans are deciding whether or not they're going to take up those invitations, and build them, and turn would-be stars into actual stars. And I believe that most stars actually have a lot of qualities that help to make them stars, in both talent and whatever it is they do, whether that's hitting a ball or singing a song. But also usually the biggest stars have a really canny grasp of how celebrity itself works and an ability to manage themselves, and the public, and the media, but that none of these groups has the sole power to create a star, and it's actually their interactions that can constitute celebrity culture.

Sharon Marcus: So that's the theory. The theory is that if we want to picture how celebrity culture works, it's not one point that's this monolithic planet, like celebrity megatrons are making everything happen. It's a triangle, a kind of constellation with media at one point, publics at another, and celebrities at another, and it's their attempts to work with each other, their attempts to control each other, their conflicts with each other. All of those complicated and very unpredictable interactions are what create celebrity culture.

John Plotz: So Sharon, one of the things I most loved about your book was although you pointedly distanced yourself from the Jenkins model of fandom as creating celebrity, you're really interested in fans. And some of the words and some of the words you used that I really liked, you talked about *celebration*, and *admiration*, and *appreciation*. Can you talk a little bit about that actual scrapbook research you did? It's totally fascinating.

Sharon Marcus: Sure. Sure. So I would say the book is not a defense of celebrity and fandom, but it is, wherever possible, I think it's good to push back against received wisdom. And both in reading the scholarship and talking to people about the

book, it was really clear to me that people tend to think celebrities don't do anything to deserve their fame and that fans are dumb and don't think very carefully about the people that they are fans of. And if I were focusing on the present I would have done more sociological research, but I was really interested in the 19th century. Also, I think people tend to think that the crazy things fans do today, like stalk people, or, write effusive fan mail or stand around and try to get someone to sign their theater program is all very new and recent, so in order to write the book, I felt it was really important to try to understand the fans of the past, and short of holding a seance, I wasn't going to be able to interview them. So I kept thinking, "Well, what would be some source that would help me understand them?" And I, in one of those sort of research moments of serendipity, I was just looking up Sarah Bernhardt in an Ohio State University catalog, and it said-

John Plotz: As one does, yes.

Sharon Marcus: ... that there was a theatrical album about her, so I contacted the librarian and I said... And she said, "Oh, well, you know, it's not an album only about Sarah Bernhardt. There are actually other actresses in it." I said, "Well, that's even more interesting because then I can see how people depicted Sarah Bernhardt in the scrapbook relative to these other actresses."

John Plotz: Yeah.

Sharon Marcus: And I said, "Do you have more of those albums?" And the librarian said, "Oh, we have about a hundred of them that we've never cataloged." I said, "Well, I could help you with cataloging them. I'd love to look at them." So I spent a month in Columbus, Ohio at the Jerome Lee... the Lee and Lawrence Theater Institute Library. Looking at scrapbooks from the, mostly from the 1880s through the 1910s, it was a real craze. Mark Twain, in fact, patented a blank scrapbook because he recognized, of course-

John Plotz: Of course, what didn't Mark Twain [patent]? Yeah.

Sharon Marcus: ... and of course as a celebrity, he understood that people were collecting all these clippings and photographs and around the 1890s new technologies enabled periodicals to incorporate much higher quality photographs. And it's so interesting to look at those theater magazines from the 1890s because they actually adopt layouts that look like scrapbook pages, so theater magazines looked like scrapbooks, the scrapbooks looked like theater magazines.

John Plotz: That's amazing. Are they meant to lend themselves to scrapbooking? Like do they-

Sharon Marcus: I think so, yes.

John Plotz: ... are they inviting....

Sharon Marcus: I mean, they show-

John Plotz: Is that like a centerfold or something?

Sharon Marcus: No, what they would tend to do was, two things really stood out to me. One was that they would reproduce stills of people, you know, head shots in frames, in these very... So the frames are clearly graphic ornaments, they're not meant to look like real frames. They're meant to look like something we put in the magazine, but they instruct you to cut the picture out and put it in your scrapbook. And they also really start trying to reproduce photographs that capture the liveliness of performers, so they're moving beyond the early stages of photography where people had to stand still for many seconds, or even minutes, for the exposure to happen. And now there's more of an ability to capture people holding emotion.

John Plotz: Yeah.

Sharon Marcus: And so there's pictures of people ice-skating, and in the middle of executing a dance, and you start to really feel how

vibrant these stage performances were. In some ways, possibly even more vibrant than certainly early cinema. And to understand why people would feel so passionately enthusiastic about these theatrical performers, who otherwise I think we tend to picture as wooden, and exaggerated, and stiff. They weren't like that at all, these were intensely physical performers. I don't think these scrapbooks were particularly private. Some of them seemed to be sort of collaborative, like two sisters might make a scrapbook together. There was nothing in... some of them, a couple of them, had an aura of illicitness about them, or just mania, that seemed a little private. But most of them seemed like something that you would show to a friend. And in fact, they come out of the keepsake books of the 1840s and '50s, which were social. You would put poems-

John Plotz: Yeah, I was thinking about those. Yeah.

Sharon Marcus: ... and pictures in your keepsake album and put it on the table in the drawing room and then show to guests to talk about.

John Plotz: I remember them from Jane Austen novels, yes.

Sharon Marcus: Yes, but what's different today is that by putting something online, you make it potentially available to anyone in the world.

John Plotz: Anybody, yeah.

Sharon Marcus: Of course, as we know, the more people did that, the more things, I mean, many things in the web are now hiding in plain sight because there's so much up there that how would we find it unless we looked for it. But the ability to... so I would say the scrapbooks were not private, but you would only share them with people you knew. Once you put things up online, you're sharing them with strangers. That's truly public.

John Plotz: Okay. So Sharon, so we've now covered... We've done an amazing job talking about the 19th century and connected it to the present, but the book you brought in is actually in between. It's from the Hollywood era of celebrity, so do you want to tell us about this 1977 memoir that you have?

Sharon Marcus: The book that I brought is *Haywire* by Brooke Hayward, published in 1977, which-

John Plotz: And there's no copy in the Brandeis library, but I bet there are-

Sharon Marcus: What? What?

John Plotz: ... I bet there are millions of copies elsewhere, but yeah.

Sharon Marcus: It actually was a bestseller for 16 weeks when it was published in 1977 but then went out of print and had to be reissued in 2011, which doesn't surprise me because this is a memoir written by Brooke Hayward, who was the daughter of Leland Hayward, who basically invented the idea of the movie agent and had an amazing business with all the top stars in his portfolio and then sold that business to MCA. So when Jules Stein created MCA, he didn't create it out of nothing, he bought out Leland Hayward's agency.

John Plotz: Fascinating.

Sharon Marcus: And like Howard Hughes, Leland Hayward was very interested in aviation. So if you think back to the 1920s and the opening up of the talkies, and the opening up of aviation as well, it's a moment like the 1990s where there's a whole bunch of new technologies and there are some people who are very quick to monetize them and realize there are new markets here, and Leland Hayward was-

John Plotz: Poor Buster Keaton, yes.

Sharon Marcus: Yes. And Leland Hayward was one of these. And so what he did, as soon as the talkies started, he had started out as a

theatrical press agent. And what he did was he realized that Hollywood was going to need scripts and actors who could speak, and so he was one of the key people shuttling people from Broadway, where he was already working, to Hollywood. He eventually married one of his clients, Margaret Sullivan, who started out in the theater and then made some movies in the 1930s and '40s but when she married Leland Hayward, they had in quick succession, three children. And Margaret Sullivan was always torn, not only between the theater, which she found more authentic, and of course once Hollywood came into play, the theater could start seem more authentic-

John Plotz: Then becomes, retrospectively becomes authentic.

Sharon Marcus: ... before that it had seemed like trash, and she was torn both between Hollywood and theater, but more importantly, she was torn between devoting herself to family life and having a career as an actor. She was, what I would call, a reluctant celebrity. So she, Brooke Hayward in writing about her... so Brooke Hayward writes, in 1977, a memoir about her family, her mother, her father, and her siblings called *Haywire*. But then she moves back in time and she recreates the idyllic years of their early family life. And those idyllic years, on a personal level, also coincide with her father and mother at the height of their careers and being part of this Hollywood world. But her mother was really committed to not being a big star. One of the stories that she tells early on about her mother is of her mother being asked for an autograph and her mother pretending she's not even Margaret Sullivan. And her daughters are fascinated like, "You just lied. You said you aren't who you were and you tell us not to lie."

Sharon Marcus: And she says, "Well, I want to explain something to you. There are people who think that if they... that movie stars are special and that if they get me to sign my name on a piece of paper, it makes them special. But movie stars aren't special." In fact, Margaret Sullivan, this is when Margaret

Sullivan says, and Margaret Sullivan seems in some ways to subscribe to the Adorno/Boorstin school of thought. She's like, "Hollywood is an illusion. The life of a-

John Plotz: They made us, they can unmake us.

Sharon Marcus: No, not make or unmake. But, "Hollywood is an illusion, it's fake, it's phony-

John Plotz: I see.

Sharon Marcus: ... and the life of a celebrity isn't real. And I want to be a real mother to your children and I want you to have a real life."

John Plotz: I see.

Sharon Marcus: And so she actually moves them out of Hollywood to Connecticut, to a farm. And that's when the marriage starts to fall apart because her husband has absolutely no desire to not be in the midst-

Sharon Marcus: ... he doesn't like Los Angeles that much, but he has to be in the midst of all the... where the action is.

John Plotz: Well. Anyway, Sharon, you've totally persuaded me the book sounds amazing. And Actually, that probably makes this a good time to pivot to the section that we call Recallable Books where we talk about other books that we're not really going to go into in the show, but that relate, if you liked what we've been discussing today, you will also like.... So you've got a contemporaneous recommendation.

Sharon Marcus: Well, I have two.

John Plotz: Oh, okay. Great.

Sharon Marcus: I have two recommendations that are connected. So if we're thinking about the 1970s and early 1980s as a moment where people start thinking about celebrity differently, I would say that with the demise of the Hollywood system, which really started to-

John Plotz: The studio system.

Sharon Marcus: Right, with the demise of the Hollywood studio system, which started to crumble in the '50s and really collapsed in the '60s, and Brooke Hayward is looking back elegiacally at a moment that is long gone by the time she's writing in 1977, what also starts to become, I think quite popular, is the expose of the celebrity. And so my first recommendation is another book published around the same time as *Haywire*, *Mommie Dearest* by Christina Crawford-

John Plotz: Oh my god, yes, which I've never read, I'm ashamed to say. Yeah.

Sharon Marcus: Christina Crawford is almost exactly the same age as Brooke Hayward. Brooke Hayward mentions Christina Crawford's birthday parties as being the most elaborate and extravagant of any of those she attended in Hollywood. And Brooke Hayward has some critical things to say about her parents, but basically they were good parents and she adores them. And though she says, the book has a kind of F. Scott Fitzgerald cast at the end. She says, "Well, we were just very careless with all their riches bestowed on us, not just with other people but with ourselves." There's no sense in which she's denouncing her parents as bad parents. Whereas Christina Crawford was, and her brother were just woefully abused by Joan Crawford, it was an open secret in Hollywood for a long time, and Christina Crawford writes a book exposing that. But what both books share is they frequently refer to this idea of celebrity as an illusion and a fantasy that fans buy into. And so they really are echoing some of the ideas that were quite common in academia as well, in this more popular idiom.

John Plotz: Yeah, that's so interesting. Yeah.

Sharon Marcus: And then the other book I would recommend is one that I think borrowed a lot from some of the techniques Brooke Hayward uses in *Haywire*, and that's *Edie, an American biography*, I think is the subtitle, by Jean Stein and George

Plimpton, which was constructed out of interviews. Now Brooke Hayward doesn't rely entirely on interviews, she has a very strong narrative voice, but she did interview Fondas, and Mankowitzes, and other friends of her parents, and Jimmy Stewart, and she intersperses her prose with snippets of these famous people, so this sense in which books that are exposing the underbelly of celebrity are also trafficking in our interest in hearing the authentic words of the celebrities. It's a fine line to walk and all of these three books are walking it.

John Plotz: Yeah. I'm so glad you brought that up because when I was a freshman I had a friend who was obsessed with Edie, and I actually participated in an art project of his, where we did a fake Edie. We invented a character and then we all were like... I think my role, I think I played his father and his chauffeur, and we had to give interviews about, like in a faux Edie style. So that book made a very strong 18 year old impression on me. That's great. So I'm actually going to plug, for my Recallable Book, I'm actually going to plug Margaret Talbot's book, *The Entertainer*. Do you know that?

Sharon Marcus: Everyone has been telling me to read it.

John Plotz: I love it.

Sharon Marcus: I'll go out today and find a bookstore and buy it.

John Plotz: It is super charming because he was a B actor, his whole life.

Sharon Marcus: So tell us more who he was.

John Plotz: So it's about her father who was Lyle Talbot, born in 1902, and he kind of came up hardscrabble way through vaudeville and made his way onto the stage and made his way out to Hollywood. I can't even remember the improbable set of things that take him, I think from Kansas to Hollywood, but he never quite has the breakout. He probably was featured in some film magazines and yet his career never took off. And yet, they kind of had, what do

they say in those English movies? It's a *second class citizen, first-class life*. They actually, the Talbots, kind of did all right.

Sharon Marcus: That's so British.

John Plotz: Yeah, it's very British. The Talbots actually did all right in that in the second, yeah, in the second string of celebrities. So in a way, I was going to say it was different from the books you recommended because it's not pointing the finger at the fakery of Hollywood, but it actually, the logic I think is the same, which is Margaret is saying (I happen to know her, she's wonderful). But I think Margaret is saying that they were kind of lucky to be out of the limelight, you know, had they gone a little bit further, their wings would have melted and they would've crashed. But instead they managed to just kind of flap along in the voiceover level of Hollywood society.

Sharon Marcus: Right. I mean, I think it's a little, who knows how true any of these beliefs are. I think it might be a little bit like, well, it's not so much that happy families are-

John Plotz: Yeah, yeah, "I'm glad I'm a Beta. I'm not." Yeah.

Sharon Marcus: Right, it's not so much happy families are all alike, and each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way. But unhappy families write memoirs and happy families don't bother.

John Plotz: Right. So Margaret is unusual in that she's writing a memoir out of what went right, and it's interesting. And that is actually a hard thing to do, right? Because the blowups show up better than the successes, but-

Sharon Marcus: Well, they make the better stories.

John Plotz: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. But it's an utterly charming book. Well, speaking of utterly charming, Sharon, thank you so much. Totally charming. Great to have you here.

Sharon Marcus: Right back at you.

John Plotz:

And so, thanks a lot. I will just heartily recommend *The Drama of Celebrity*, and I will quickly read our credits. And I will say that *Recall This Book* is hosted regularly by John Plotz and Elizabeth Ferry, music comes from a song by Eric Chasalow and Barbara Cassidy. Sound editing is by Claire Ogden, website design and social media by Matthew Schratz. And we always want to hear from you with your comments, criticisms, or suggestions for future episodes. And finally, if you enjoyed today's show (and who would not enjoy talking to Sharon Marcus?) please be sure to write a review or rate us on iTunes, Stitcher, or wherever you get your podcasts. You may be interested in checking out past episodes, including topics like new and old media with Lisa Gitelman, opiate addiction with Gina Turrigiano, post-industrial America with Chris Walley, and recent interviews with Cixin Liu, Zadie Smith, Samuel Delaney, and most recently with Mike Leigh. So from all of us here, thanks for listening.