“Warren recalled, “He [Dr. Bob] said there were two ways to break the anonymity Tradition: (1) by giving your name at the public level of press or radio; (2) by being so anonymous that you can’t be reached by other drunks.”

In an article in the February 1969 Grapevine, D. S. of San Mateo, California, wrote that Dr. Bob commented on the Eleventh Tradition as follows:

“Since our Tradition on anonymity designates the exact level where the line should be held, it must be obvious to everyone who can read and understand the English language that to maintain anonymity at any other level is definitely a violation of this Tradition.

“The A.A. who hides his identity from his fellow A.A. by using only a given name violates the Tradition just as much as the A.A. who permits his name to appear in the press in connection with matters pertaining to A.A.

“The former is maintaining his anonymity above the level of press, radio, and films, and the latter is maintaining his anonymity below the level of press, radio, and films—whereas the Tradition states that we should maintain our anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.”

Ernie G. of Toledo, commenting on what he saw to be an increase of anonymity within A.A. today as compared with the old days, said, “I made a lead over to Jackson [Michigan] one night, and everybody’s coming up to me and saying, ‘I’m Joe,’ ‘I’m Pete.’ Then one of the guys said, ‘Safe journey home. If you get into any trouble, give me a buzz.’ Later, I said to the fellow who was with me, ‘You know, suppose we did get into trouble on the way home. How would we tell anyone in A.A.? We don’t know anyone’s last name.’ They get so doggone carried away with this anonymity that it gets to be a joke.”

Excerpt From
Dr. Bob and the Good Old Timers
AA World Services, Inc.