

## MORNING STORIES TRANSCRIPT

*Can't Let Go: From Boston, recording engineer Sonny Dufault talks about the ups and downs of his relationship with diabetes.*

### **Tony Kahn:**

Hi everybody! This is Tony Kahn, the producer and director of *Morning Stories*, from WGBH FM in Boston. Our storyteller today is a fellow named Sonny Dufault. Sonny is a recording engineer here in Boston; he's also an actor. He's the father of two young sons and the husband of a lovely woman named Gloria.

He is however, also married, in a sense, to another spouse and that's a spouse that he met well into his first marriage. It's his illness, diabetes. Although he was an adult, Sonny got a form of diabetes, that's known as "**Juvenile Diabetes.**" It's a very hard disease to manage, because you really have to know things that are going on inside your body that most of the rest of us are lucky enough not to have to even think about. It's the kind of disease, that if you don't take good care of it, well, it can jump up from behind and do you in, in no time at all.

When I first met Sonny he told me a hair-raising story, about what it was like to spend his first weekend, after knowing he had diabetes, alone in his own home, painting the basement. Well, he almost died, because he forgot to feed himself at the right time. He survived a blackout at the last minute, by crawling upstairs and finding, luckily, a piece of birthday cake in the refrigerator that saved him. Well, life with diabetes is not a piece of cake, but it also has in some strange ways, some hidden benefits.

Sonny tells us about some of those, as well as some of the tough times in today's Morning Story. We call it: *Can't Let Go*.

### **Sonny:**

I had left the house and I was going to meet someone for dinner, ten minutes away. I got in the car and I felt fine. The next thing I know, it was two hours later. I had two police cars following me, 'cause I was just hitting everything, going both sides of the road and I ended up in somebody's front yard.

They pulled me out of the car and I would fall down and they'd pick me up. They tried to give me the sobriety test and finally, one policeman just got so disgusted, he says, "This guy doesn't even know what we're saying." So they handcuffed me and threw me in the cruiser and brought me to jail.

That's when they called the Emergency and the ambulance came over and when they revived me, I just sat right up and the -- and the guy said, "We've got your sugar up to about 90, right now. How do you feel?" And I said, "90? What are ya, WHERE AM I?" And the cop says "He's lyin'." And the guy said, "No, he's a diabetic." And I kept sayin',

"Where's my car?" And finally the guy in the ambulance said, "You don't wanna know. You don't wanna know anything that happened tonight."

At the trial the policeman said, "We're dropping all the charges." Then the DA said, "No, you're not." [Sonny chuckles] And the DA said, "He's been a diabetic for 18 years, he should know better."

I don't know what I -- what I should've done, or what I could've done. I'm living this 24-7 and I'm trying to do the best I can. But everything affects it. You've gotta have your, your kit with you, you know, with your insulin, with your test unit. You go to a restaurant with people, gotta check, ya know, "ok, well I'll need this much insulin and if I order this, I can only have this much." And you've gotta figure out your meal, you've gotta figure out how much insulin's gonna cover that meal and then you've gotta take the injection.

You can never do anything without thinking about that. If I go for a walk and I forget my glucose tabs, I mean I could be a mile from the house and if it hits me, I won't make it back. And you just never know, what's it gonna do next, ya know. It, uh -- What you need to do, what you wanna do, it doesn't care. It doesn't care.

After a while, you burn out. [Long pause with music]

I'm kind of afraid to be around people. I lost a job once, just because I was embarrassed to say that I was a, ya know, "Excuse, me, can we take like twenty minutes out?" "Do you mind if I sit over there and chew down these glucose tablets?" And, I'm . . . "There's something wrong with me, and I need you to understand." And I couldn't do it. Ahhh!

[Large intake of air; then a pause with music]

Sometimes, I just wish this was over. If I have to measure out one more meal, if I have to.... Ya know, I'm just gonna go grab that bag of chips and I don't care. I'm eatin' it! [pause, with music]

Sometimes I hate it so much, that I think well, maybe there's a reason for it, ya know, maybe....maybe I'm supposed to have this for something that I need to learn. And one of the things I needed to learn, was that I can't be totally independent.

I always used to think about, "Boy, it would be great if I ever made a lot of money, I would be, I would get that place in the mountains." And I would just never have to deal with people again, ya know, I would have everything delivered that I wanted and then go away and I don't feel that way anymore. I, I wouldn't like it up there on that mountain. I think I need to be, with people. I guess people -- y'know, you need people.

In that job that I lost, in that client that I lost, because I couldn't tell them.... Um, I keep thinking back that maybe they would've liked to help me, you know: "Well, do you need something?" "Would you like a drink, would you like something to eat?" You know?

Y'know, if . . . A lot of times I'll go through that, where I'll say, "I hate people. Y'know, I just don't, I just wish they would just leave me alone." But, man, if I had to get through life without anybody -- whew! -- that'd be pretty tough.

My third brother just got diagnosed with it last year. Won't ever, like, talk about real feelings and, you know? But, now that he's got this, though, he's a little warmer. He's, he's . . . Since this happened, and this is just recent, whenever we talk on the phone, instead of saying, "Goodbye," he always says, "I love you." You know? [Sonny chuckles] This is like a completely new thing for me, you know. [chuckles, again] I like it! You know? I always say, "I love you," back. You know? It's . . . You know?[chuckles, more]

So, I guess it's true what they say. You do fall in love with your own disease, don't ya?  
[he softly laughs]

[Soft guitar music]

**Tony Kahn:**

That's today's Morning Story from Sonny Dufault: *Can't Let Go*. I'm not exactly a religious person but a story like that definitely brings some, some words to mind for me. "There, but for the grace of God, go you and I."

Anyway, thanks for listening to our podcasts. Podcasts of [Morning Stories](#), from [WGBH-FM](#) are made possible, in part with support from Ipswitch, a leader in file transfer software. Further information, just check out their website, [www.ipswitch.com](http://www.ipswitch.com). That's Ipswitch – I-P-S-W-I-T-C-H dot-com. See ya next week.

[End of recording]

Transcribed by: Lynn Relyea