

## MORNING STORIES TRANSCRIPTS

**Honest:** Reverend Anita Farber-Robertson was pretty sure that she could tell right from wrong until she went shopping for a pair of gloves and ended up alone in a parking lot with a bottle of cheap champagne.

### Tony Kahn:

Hi everybody! This is Tony Kahn, the producer and director of *Morning Stories*, from WGBH, in Boston. We're once again in Studio "O" for "outside,"— "Quadrant B," I'd call it, by the Harvard Business School. Some friends of mine and I used to play a game, we called it "mental strip poker." What it was, was a way of getting people to tell stories about themselves based around the idea of a game of poker. Instead of betting money we'd bet some topic that you'd have to tell a story about if you lost a hand like, let's say your closest brush with death or something embarrassing that happened to you in a classroom, hmm? Or heaven forbid, a deep family secret.

Well, one night someone suggested the topic "something you stole." We all looked at each other with innocence still twinkling in our eyes, then when we lost, we paid off with stories, you-would-not-believe! From stolen comic books when someone was a kid to a grand larceny spree that someone had gone on during the honeymoon of her first marriage. I understood why the marriage didn't work out!

Well, today's Morning Story is kind of in the spirit of mental strip poker, it's the true story of something that happened to a woman who visited us the other day, who confessed to something that I'm guessing, most of the people who know her have never heard about. Uh, by the way, did I mention she's a minister? She's Anita Farber-Robertson and we call her story: *Honest*.

### Anita Farber-Robertson:

[Sounds of items being scanned through a cash register]

The lines at the discount store are incredible. What are so many people doing here at 10:30 in the morning? I will be late for my appointment at work. Frustrated, I put down the shopping basket, leave the store and fight my way, [sound of wind] through the icy wind to the car.

At least my hands are warm, protected by a cheap pair of polarfleece gloves, no price tag visible, that I grabbed with frost-numbed hands from an open bin, put on in the store [sound of seat belt reminder] and forgot to pay for. [sound of car repeatedly trying to start] Buying gloves was what I had gone into the store for in the first place. [car finally starts and drives away]

I know that every day when I drive by that store, I will not feel good. I know that each time I reach into the pocket of that coat and touch those gloves, I will not feel good. I'm a minister, for God's sake! [chuckles] But I'm late to work and I need to keep on going. [Short beep sound from car]

Over the next two days my mind explores the options: I could walk back into the store and return the gloves; I could put the gloves in the big collection box out in the supermarket parking lot; I

could keep the gloves and get over it; I could even go back and pay for them.

[Sound of car repeatedly trying to start] But when? I'm always running late. After a week of agonizing, I decide to bite the bullet. [sounds of people shopping in store] I drive to the discount store and go straight to the customer service desk. Once again, I am in a long, long line.

The woman behind the counter is multitasking, finding out what each one in line is there for. She looks at the gloves in my hand, "Are you returning those?" "No. I want to pay for them." "Cash register's over there," she says, pointing to the door. "Well, there's a problem," I reply. She looks at me quizzically. "I was in here a few days ago shopping and when I got home I realized I had these gloves but had not paid for them. So, I want to pay for them now."

The people around me in line had been politely looking elsewhere. All eyes turned to me. "You really are..." She searches for the word, "...honest!" Honest? I took the gloves without paying. I'm a shoplifter! "The gloves are \$5.99," the salesperson says. I nod and reach for my wallet. "Wait!" she says. "I have to call my manager to know how to ring this up." That sounds fishy to me but I wait ... and wait.

Finally her manager returns her call. "That will be \$5.99," she says. And as I reach for my purse she steps to the back and pulls out a bottle of the discount store's house brand champagne. "Here," she says, "this is for you, for being so honest." Everyone on line smiles and nods in approval. Not only did I shoplift, I got rewarded for it. And there's no way to refuse or give it back. They are all feeling so fine.

[Sound of applause from shoppers in store] I thank the lady and take the bottle wondering what to do with it. Putting it in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters collection bin is definitely out. [Car door slams shut] In the car I look down at the label. It reads: "nonalcoholic." For a facsimile of honesty, [sound of shopping bag rustling] I have received a facsimile of champagne.

In my work I'm asked to look at life and respond with a sermon. [clicks her tongue] In this case all I can manage is a toast. [sound of champagne bottle "pop"] Ladies and gentlemen: "To acceptance of a most imperfect world."

[Sound of seat belt warning and car repeatedly trying to start] Oop! Late again. [car won't start, sound of champagne being pored into a glass (glug, glug, glug) car tries to start again and fails]

**Tony Kahn:**

Cheers to you, too, Anita Farber-Robertson, a Unitarian minister from Swampscott, Massachusetts. Speaking about begging forgiveness, Gary, I noticed that you were listening to that story with a certain something in your eye and it wasn't your thumb.

**Gary Mott:**

Well I took a pack of, I believe it was Juicy Fruit.

**Tony Kahn:**

Ohhh.

**Gary Mott:**

From the Seven-Eleven back home in Texas. That was when I was a teenager and you know, it is, it continues to haunt me, you know, it's, it's a stain on my soul.

**Tony Kahn:**

Your teeth.

**Gary Mott:**

And my teeth.

**Tony Kahn:**

I assume you chewed this.

**Gary Mott:**

Of course I chewed it.

**Tony Kahn:**

You chewed it and now you can't return chewed gum, can you?

**Gary Mott:**

And certainly not to that Seven-Eleven because...

**Tony Kahn:**

How come?

**Gary Mott:**

Well, now it's a massage parlor.

[Tony and Gary laugh]

**Tony Kahn:**

Listen! Go back to the massage parlor, beg forgiveness from them for having chewed their gum and see what happens! You may have a great *Morning Story*, there. [laughs]

**Gary Mott:**

[Laughs] Reverend Anita, we need you!

[Tony and Gary laugh heartily]

**Tony Kahn:**

I had this car where I needed to put oil in before the gas. It was one of these old Saabs; it had an engine like a lawn mower. So, I would always buy the oil by the six-pack from the dealer. One day I, I was in a big hurry, I needed oil, the guy wasn't there. So I looked both ways and I- took- the- six pack of oil.

I drove away and I immediately started feeling guilty! So I stopped and I went back into the place, looked both ways to make sure no one saw me returning the stolen oil and then I realized I

had a problem; I still needed oil. So I went across the street and there was a salesman there and I said, "I need some oil for my car." He said, "It's over across the street." I said, "I know. There's nobody there." So the guy looks at me, and he says, "So why don't you steal some?" [Tony laughs heartily] And I said, "Trust me. I can't do that." So he said, "How much is it?" I said, "It's \$4.95." He says, "Give me the money." He goes over, he brings me back the oil; he pocketed the money! What is the moral of that? "Acceptance!" It's an imperfect world.

[Tony and Gary laugh heartily]

**Gary Mott:**

The level of depravity here.

**Tony Kahn:**

Why couldn't I have just chewed gum! Oh, well. Listen, while on the subject of money, let's talk about some not ill-gotten gains but some well-gotten gains. We want to thank our funders for the WGBH's *Morning Stories* podcast. They've been with us from the start, they're still with us as we go into yet another season. Thank you guys so much for helping us. That's Ipswitch, of course <ipswitch.com>. If you want to know more about them and what makes them a leader in file transfer software check out their website I-P-S-W-I-T-C-H dot com.

**Gary Mott:**

The *Morning Stories* website <wgbh.org/morningstories> and please send us an email, we love hearing from you.

**Tony Kahn:**

As we have heard from Scott Jurian in Oklahoma City who wrote to tell us that he loves the show and plans to send us some stories of his own. We'd love to hear from you, he's the news director at the Public Radio Station, there. And...

**Gary Mott:**

We heard from Duane, he lives in Cold Spring, Minnesota, beautiful country up there. He's been a photographer for thirty years and *Morning Stories* podcasts have inspired him to create a vlog called "My Stories of Life."

**Tony Kahn:**

And, you know, Duane, if you stole something and you're about ready to come clean, you know where you can come.

**Gary Mott:**

<wgbh.org/morningstories > and send us an email while you're there at <morningstories@wgbh.org >

**Tony Kahn:**

And be sure to join us for our podcast. We'll be here every single Friday, we promise, as long as you keep asking for 'em. Since I come from a Jewish family, even three times after you say you don't want any, we'll still give you some! See you next Friday.

[End of recording]

Transcribed by: Lynn Relyea