

MORNING STORIES TRANSCRIPT

One More to Go: Tony and Gary open the Morning Stories mailbag one last time.

Tony Kahn:

Hi, everybody. This is Tony Kahn, the producer and director of *Morning Stories* from WGBH in Boston.

[Contemplative guitar music starts]

This is the next to the last in our current series of *Morning Stories* podcasts. We've been at this almost four years now, and from the start all of you out there have been the best part of this experience, responding to our stories with stories of your own and, with your support, turning this program into what I think is one of the friendliest spots on the internet, a place that, even for a lifelong outsider like me, feels like home.

As you may know, we're looking for a place to keep the conversation we've had with you - and our stories - going online. Keep an eye on our website for the latest and please consider making a donation. The more you contribute, the more we'll be able to do. In the meantime, I'd like to spend the rest of this podcast doing one of the things I enjoy the most, and I know Gary Mott does, too - hearing a bit more from you.

Gary Mott:

Got a letter from Naomi: "I'm a 23-year-old half-Japanese, half-American, and I grew up in Kenya and Japan, [music stops] and have more recently lived in Boston, London, France, and Finland. My life is full of cultural contradictions, and my memories of my childhood are often blurred together in several countries. There are a few memories that are clear, though. Every summer I traveled to Washington State to visit my grandparents. I remember how the late-afternoon sun always showed through the blinds onto the thick, caramel carpet. Those moments when NPR hummed in the background, shadows danced on the carpet, and the smell of dinner being prepared have been something I have wanted to recreate so often since then. I feel that I have found that feeling in your podcasts. The tone of both your voices, the narrators, the humor, the sincerity of these stories - somehow it brings those childhood moments back."

[Music resumes (this time more cheerful). These two musical moods flow throughout the rest of the podcast with intermittent pauses]

Tony Kahn:

From Graham in California: "Tony, I invented podcasting..."

Gary Mott:
[Chuckles]

Tony Kahn:

...About 34 years ago, when I was 16. Thousands or millions of people also had the same idea. What I did was go out with a tape recorder, and recorded sounds and voices, and I narrated stories about my life and sent them to my second cousin, a girl about my own age in Australia. She said she listened to them and enjoyed them, and they were my podcasts. After listening to some of your stories, I think I should start over with some voices of my kids, and other sounds from my life, and then (instead of riding my bicycle to the post office and insisting on the book rate) I'll email her the mp3 file."

Gary Mott:

I'm looking at another letter here; a listener writes in: "Dear Tony, You are too humble not to include your guacamole recipe in your *Morning Stories* feature on Chicken a la Padulese."

Tony Kahn:

Oh, when we spoke to Chef Franco.

Gary Mott:

I didn't know you made guacamole.

Tony Kahn:

It comes pouring out of me.

Gary Mott:

"Please release your recipe," says Michael.

Tony Kahn:

Leave it to our listeners to turn this into a cooking show at the last minute. [Chuckles] Michael, it's this simple: Fresh avocados, a few lemons, an onion, a little bit of mayonnaise, salt and pepper. You take the avocado, mash it up, put a little mayonnaise in, mostly for the color. Squeeze the lemons into it, dice the onion, mix them in, salt and pepper to taste, and then the secret: Don't eat it. Put it in the refrigerator for about three hours. The onion will begin to fraternize with the lemon juice. The flavors begin to blend. The guacamole comes to life. So that's it! Easy as pie - only, it's guacamole.

Gary Mott:

[Chuckles]

Tony Kahn:

You're gonna get some guacamole -

Gary Mott:

And I've never brought you my famous Swedish pancakes.

Tony Kahn:

And I've been grateful.

[Both laugh]

Gary Mott:

Lunch! Lunch today!

Tony Kahn:

One last letter there, right?

Gary Mott:

"My cousin John never really fit in the present. Eighteen years ago, he stopped answering the telephone because he never knew what to say. We were looking for him when the hospital called and said he was there, and he wanted me to come. He gave me his burial plans, and asked that I honor his wishes. He died the next day before I could see him again. There was no one else to come to the funeral, no friends, no old acquaintances. Even the people from the street he had lived on for 67 years were busy. When we arrived at the family plot, I looked around and caught my breath. There was a herd of 50 deer nestled down, not twenty yards away from John's open grave. Five yards away were three does and their five fawns, sleeping in the grass. They sat and watched as my husband and I each said a few words of goodbye to this beloved and lonely man. After the burial, I asked the cemetery director why the deer lived there. 'For consolation,' she said. I really didn't need to ask. I had already felt it." [Tony murmurs appreciatively.] This from Sandra of Park Ridge, Illinois.

Tony Kahn:

I had completely forgotten - a fellow that I knew, recluse, when I was growing up in New Hampshire. He was my, my mother's second cousin, I think, and he had come to the United States from Russia after having undergone some horrendous, traumatic experiences. He found it very difficult to talk to anybody. He would spend all of his time in the library (very bright man, I was told) and people knew him well enough to know that conversation was the last thing that he wanted.

My mother would have him over for dinner every Sunday. She wanted to make sure that felt he had a family. He hardly said a word to my mother, and she just sat there with him, occasionally say something, but mostly just keep him

company. He seemed so uncomfortable and yet he kept on coming. After he died, it turned out that this man, who had nothing, had a small savings account that he had kept in a local bank, and he left it for my mother, and that was the money that paid for my college education. Aaron, his name was – Cousin Aaron.

Gary Mott:

Tony, just in the last few days, you know, as *Morning Stories* comes to an end, as we all face this transition, I'm thinking I am going to be a more interested person, a more passionate person, in everything that I do – Mexican food, I'm going to eat it like there's no tomorrow. I am going to suck the marrow out of life...

[Tony chuckles.] ...and be all that I can be. And I'm going to encourage others. Life is too short. What do you think, Tony?

[There is a long pause, after which Gary chuckles somewhat anxiously.]

Tony Kahn:

Here, here's my suggestion to you. Take several *Morning Stories* every morning and every evening and listen to yourself, and I think you'll discover that all of the things that you, you think you ought to be, you have been for all these four years. You're on a roll, there, kid. Just remain even more so.

Gary Mott:

Our website, < [wgbh.org/morning stories](http://wgbh.org/morning-stories) > and we still love hearing from you. < morningstories@wgbh.org >.

Tony Kahn:

One more podcast to go. We'll see you then. Take care.

[Music comes to an end]

[End of recording]

Transcribed by: Rebekah Sprecher

Notes from transcriber:

Nothing, just thanks for another great podcast.

Notes from Liz:

I wish all those reading this could hear the upbeat tone in Tony's voice, and the more "keep-the-chin-up" tone in Gary's. And I wish everyone could hear the wonderful interplay of the music styles, from upbeat through contemplative, which weaves throughout the podcast.

And that is how I've been feeling about the coming end of this part of *Morning Stories'* life – contemplative and serious about the end of the joyful and rapidly paced interactions among the members of the Transcribers Club and Tony and Gary. There was always joy in the anticipation of the next podcast with its surprise for all of us who listen (along with the steady and comfortable discussion between you two).

But I'm going to go on with great fondness for you two and for all the members of the Transcribers Club, hoping that many of us can stay in touch and develop our friendships even more, even meeting in person someday. And I'll always, always feel that every minute I've spent in this project has been such a gift to me – I've reveled in everything about it!