

Celebrating 20 Years of *Car Talk* on NPR (and Not Getting Towed Outta Boston)

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, American motorists have been involved in an estimated 120 million fender benders since the Tappet brothers first hit the airwaves. [I've been telling Ray to drive less!] While most of the affected bumpers are replaceable, Tom and Ray Magliozzi, hosts of NPR's award-winning program *Car Talk*, certainly are not. [Actually, we just hired a chimp to fill in for us.]

Twenty years and thousands of phone calls later, *Car Talk* is still cruising [sputtering] in the fast lane. WBUR's magazine *Airwaves* recently had a chance to sit down with the irrepressible [reprehensible] duo to discuss their anniversary, their feature on *60 Minutes* and their plans for the future. [Or lack thereof!]

Airwaves: This year marks *Car Talk's* 20th anniversary. How did you celebrate [commiserate]?

Ray: Well, the first thing we did was to hide all the lamp shades. We didn't want my brother repeating his performance from our 10th anniversary.

Tom: Right. At first, we thought about just going out to a nice restaurant to celebrate. But then we remembered that my brother has been banned from all the nice restaurants around here. So we went to Plan B.

Ray: Actually, we decided to celebrate with our listeners. We invited them to a big party at the Charles Hotel courtyard. One of my guys at the garage has a band—The Blue Suede Boppers—so they played swing music and old rock and roll. And WBUR and a bunch of local restaurants put on a great feast for us.

Tom: Just for the record, we've been on WBUR for 30 years, and NPR for 20 years. After we made a mess of things at 'BUR, and finally figured out which end of the microphone was up, NPR started distributing us nationally in '87.

AW: You were recently featured [sandwiched between real news stories] on *60 Minutes*. How does it feel to know that your once small-time radio show has grown into a program worthy of recognition on TV's top-rated newsmagazine?

Ray: Well, some of the top criminals and sleaze balls of our age have been caught by *60 Minutes*, so we felt right at home.

Tom: When they came knocking, we assumed it was a sting operation and they finally caught us impersonating a radio show.

AW: You were the voices of Rusty and Dusty Rust-Eze in the hit movie *Cars*. What was it like being part of an all-star voice cast? [We're still waiting for Paul Newman to send us our case of salad dressing!]

Tom: Well, we never met any of the real stars. We did our part right here at WBUR. The folks from Pixar came out and we spent a few hours in the studio doing our lines and improvising some stuff. They took away the tapes, and next thing we know, two years later, we're in the movie.

Ray: We did a private screening for WBUR listeners at the Brattle Theater when it came out, and my brother almost got a date out of it, so we considered the project a success overall.

AW: Global warming is a hot topic [pun intended?] in the news. Assuming that not all of our readers can spring for a new hybrid, what tips do you have for them to lower their car emissions?

Tom: Drive less. The fewer gallons of gasoline you use, the less carbon dioxide you create. So if you drive a hybrid, or a high mileage car, that's great. But if you walk, take the train, or ride a bike, you're really helping, too.

Ray: For my part, I'm trying to get my brother to shut up more often. He produces more hot air per mile than a Chevy Suburban.

AW: More than anything else, what do you want your audience to drive away with after listening to [grinning and bearing through] your program?

Ray: That it's only a car. Life's short. Don't let something as unimportant as a car ruin your day.

Tom: And don't drive like my brother.

AW: Where do you see *Car Talk* in 5 years? 10 years? How about your own careers outside of the show? [If Shatner isn't doing those commercials anymore, then we hope to take his spot!]

Ray: I see *Car Talk* in syndication. Like *I Love Lucy*.

Tom: While we're sitting on the beach at Wai Ki Ki.

Ray: Of course, we said that at the 10th anniversary.

Car Talk can be heard on KGOU Saturday mornings at 9 a.m. (CST) and rebroadcast Tuesdays at 11 a.m. Podcasts are available for download at cartalk.com. [And to get a date with Tom, email him at sgtpepperslonelysparkplugman@cartalk.com!]

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