

1999 09 29 Wednesday Gordon Lightfoot Music

AB: "Gordon Lightfoot, as you know I have played a lot of Gordon Lightfoot's music. And I mean, a lot of his music. It is absolutely beautiful! You will recognize it immediately.

He's recorded nineteen (19) albums now. Nineteen (19) albums! Has five (5) Grammy nominations.

I ... see, I can't interrupt this – *If You Could Read My Mind* – so I'm going to have to do this later. It's too good! You don't talk over that.

(AB laughs) Five (5) Grammy nominations, seventeen (17) Juno awards in his native Canada. 1970 – in recognition of his contributions in furthering Canadian culture, he received the prestigious Order of Canada citation.

In November of 1997 presented the Governor General's Award – the highest official Canadian honor, which is conferred on very few (Joni Mitchell is another) – for their international efforts in spreading Canadian culture. Well, he certainly has done that!

Most recently, ah, Gordon Lightfoot was honored as a charter member of Canada's Walk of Fame – and I assume that's, ah, probably much like our, ah ... ah, sidewalk in Hollywood with footprints of the famous.

Ah, there are so many things you would recognize that he has done – some not, perhaps – *Early Morning Rain*, *Canadian Railroad Trilogy*, *Cotton Jennie*, *Sundown*.

*Sundown* was ... was some ... really fooled me. We're gonna ask about that. *Shadows*, *If You Could Read My Mind*, of course – my favorite, *Carefree Highway*, *The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald* ... so many asking about that. *Beautiful*, *Alberta Bound*, and *Ribbon of Darkness*.

He has, I'll tell you, he has, ah, interacted, ah, and ... and recorded, ah, had recorded, ah, his songs by people like Bob Dylan; Peter, Paul and Mary; Ian & Sylvia; Ritchie Havens; Glen Campbell, Anne Murray, Harry Belafonte, Elvis Presley! ... ELVIS PRESLEY !!! Barbra Streisand and George Hamilton IV.

And here is Gordon Lightfoot: Gordon, welcome to the program!"

### GORDON LIGHTFOOT

GL: "Thank you, Art. I'm very pleased to be with you this evening."

AB: "It's ... it's ... it's the greatest honor for me!

You just ... you have no idea. I've been playing your music for a long time now, and I guess somebody recently told 'chu that I've been playing your music – is that how it went?"

GL: "Yeah. I, ah, one of the guys down at the gym was ... was tuning into the program, told me about it."

AB: "You come from ..."

GL: "And I would whip off a fax."

AB: (laughs).

GL: "It's what I did."

AB: "Yeah, and I really ..."

GL: "Appreciate it very much. Appreciate the play."

AB: "I was so honored to get the fax! I held it up to my camera here so everybody could see it."

GL: (laughs).

AB: "Ah, Gordon, you come from ... you were in choir when you were young, weren't 'chu?"

GL: "Oh, yeah!"

AB: "So many really good singers come from that kinda background.

Ah ... ah, pop singers and, ah, folk alike. I mean, Neil Diamond, ah, early on.

Boy, a heavy religious influence."

GL: "And get a little religion thrown in."

AB: "Pointer Sisters."

GL: "Yeah."

AB: "Ah, all ... all of them, ah, *Son ... Son of a Preacher Man*. (AB laughs).

Ya know, did a lot of Gospel singing.

And so that's your ... that's ... that's where you began singing, huh?"

GL: "Yeah, I got started real ... real early on." (AB and GL both laugh).

AB: "Ah ..."

GL: "My mother ... my mother was, ah ... ah, into havin' me take, ah, piano lessons as well, you know, at that time, so ... singing and the piano lessons – I got right into it real young."

AB: "So music just grabbed you? And never, I guess never let go?"

GL: "No, I ... I really ... I was ... I was ... I was wantin' to make my living at it I think by the time I was about ten (10). I'm sure of that."

AB: "Um, your music to me – and I guess everybody judges it their own way – but has a definite, ah, sort of spiritual or mystical leaning, ah, to it and that must ... obvious- ... obviously that has to come from your life."

GL: "Well, (GL laughs), tho- ... those are pretty powerful words now there. (GL laughs again). Ah, I don't ... I don't know how mystical it is. It's just, ah, the ... the way I do it, and, ah ..."

AB: "Spiritual."

GL: "... try ta make it *flow!*"

AB: "Spiritual then. In other words, there's gotta be something in Gordon Lightfoot's life that allows these kind of spiritual lyrics.

Ah, like *If You Could Read My Mind*. I mean, what inspired that? Can you tell me?"

GL: "Well, ah, probably, ah ... ah, life's changes at the time. I just know I was workin' on a whole bunch'a stuff all at the same time. 'N', ah, workin' in, ah, an empty house ..."

AB: "Ha!"

GL: "... at that time.

And, ah, it was just one of the songs that popped out. 'N' believe you me, the album was out for about eight (8) months before ... before anyone noticed, ah, *If You Could Read My Mind* at all."

AB: “Whoosh! Ah, it hit me right between the eyes. And I can only imagine, ah, it had to come from something in your life.

I mean, these things don't come from ... actually that's a good question: Where do these things come from?

In other words, when you come up with some kind of a *fabulous song* like this, that to so many it means so much and is so spiritual, ah, does it come from something that happened in your life, or is it just sort of a creative, spiritual moment for you?”

GL: “Well, it happened right around the end of my first marriage, which ... which lasted for seven (7) years, and ... and ...”

AB: “Ah!”

GL: “... ah, I'm sure it was reflected in that song.”

AB: “It was! ... it really was.

Ah, you must've ... is it fair to say, Gordon, that some of the best out of mus- ... musicians and artists, and all kinds of creative people, ah, comes at some of the worst times?”

GL: “Yeah, you ... you, ah, the ... the ... you just seem to get into it. It takes your mind off of it ... you know what I mean?”

AB: “*I know exactly what 'chu mean.* (GL laughs hoarsely). In fact, it's impossible really for a while to get your mind off it.

Maybe ... maybe writing a song about it provides some kind of closure for you?”

GL: “Yeah, but usually ... usually I'm workin' on more than one (1) song at a time, so I'm into ... into a flow. Like I'm ... I guess ... I guess on a binge.

I used to write songs like on ... on binges. (AB laughs). And ... I sometimes come up with ... with quite a large number of songs over a ... a period of weeks.”

AB: “So it's ... it's like a creative ebb and flow?

In other words, when it's there it's ... it's almost unstoppable?”

GL: “You take advantage and ... and go for it.”

AB: “Exactly!

Ah ...”

GL: “And if it keeps ya up all night and all day, or whatever ... whatever it takes, and, ah ...”

AB: “It may well be that staying up all night and all day, and really being in a ‘creative binge’ as you call it, um, it ... is in fact the way it happens. You almost, ah, you sat up all night and all day, you’re almost in an altered state of some kind, aren’t ‘chu?”

GL: “Yeah. That was such a long time ago – it’s not like that now. I have to be much more disciplined about it now (GL laughs) than I was then.”

AB: (laughs, GL joins in).

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AB: “Um, you wrote a song which I don’t have right now called *The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald*. And knowing that you were going to be on the program I got a million faxes from people ...”

GL: “Aw!”

AB: “... who asked me to ask you – they really, really are into that song – and they asked me to ask you the story behind *The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald*. And why you ... you wrote a song about it?”

GL: “Well, you know, we ... we made lots ‘a new friends in the Great Lakes area as a result of that song. ‘N’ ... ‘n’ I do keep myself open to conversation with the ... with the people, you know, when they come to see us in concert.”

AB: “Sure!”

GL: “And one of the very first questions that I was asked was: ‘What happened?’

Ah, it was like: ‘Do ... do you know what might have taken place?’

Um, it, ah, I ... I had, ah, seen it on ... on the ... on the television. I’d ... I’d seen it on TV. The, ah, the night of the tenth (10th) was, ah, God, I believe it was, ah, perhaps a Monday ... a Monday evening. And it was just on the TV and it had just sunk, just three (3) hours earlier.

I didn't give it another thought ... for really, ah, for another twelve (12) days! Then I saw an article in *Newsweek* magazine. And then I went back and got the, ah, the newspaper articles in the Toronto Telegram and the Toronto Star and read up on the ... on the chronology ... chronological order of this thing. And ... and already had previously stumbled on a chord progression for a musical idea that I ... that seemed compatible with the, ah, the story. And, ah, but still no lyrics.

So I took that melody, and I'd been saving it, and I ... I built a story around that ..."

AB: "So the ..."

GL: "... melody."

AB: "... the melody came first? The inspiration for the melody first and then ... then later the words?"

GL: "Usually, you know, usually it's ... it's that way."

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AB: "Um, spiritual again. Here's ... here's a fax I wanta read from somebody that I think, um, you may understand. It says:

'I too am an avid fan of Gordon Lightfoot, Art, and I've been for many years. His appearance on your show next week will be very special for, ah, my wife and myself. Not only because we love his music, but also because of the following reason:

My wife's brother was struck with multiple sclerosis in 1971. By '75 the disease had progressed to the point of total confinement to bed. He loved music, so I introduced him to the music of Gordon Lightfoot.

**He loved all of it!** From the first time he heard it.

But there was one song that he especially loved. That song was "*The Watchman's Out.*"

Art, I swear to you the following is true – Jimmy ended up in the hospital with complications. Was in very bad shape. Went into a coma. Hung on for a few days.

While we were there, I walked out of his room and into a lounge area just for a moment to have a cup of coffee. It was about three in the morning [3:00 am].

The lounge was empty. There was soft music being played. As I sat there, amazingly Gordon Lightfoot's *The Watchman's Out* came on. After listening to it, [I] went back to Jimmy's room to give someone else a break and found that Jimmy had just passed on."

GL: "Oh my goodness!"

AB: "Yah."

GL: "Oh! Oh, dear!"

AB: "During that song, and that was the song that he, ah, had fallen in love with."

GL: "That, ah, that particular song is ... is one that we ... we enjoy playing very much on stage, ah, too. It's stood the test of time.

Um, they ... I ... I know that, ah, music is ... is good for people who are having distress. It, ah, is very helpful. I've heard about ..."

AB: "*Oh, it's therapeutic!*

When I'm havin' a really tough time, ah, my Song CD [compact disc] Walkman and I get together and I'll just sit down for an hour, and I'll listen to all my favorite music. And it completely puts me in a new place!"

GL: "Oh, that's good! ... (whispers) That's good."

AB: "And your music really, really does that!"

GL: "Well, thank you very much, but ... but I ... I gotta say I'm recognizing too there's ... there's a lotta great artists out there and, ah, you know, you gotta appreciate the, ah, the quality of, ah, some of the work that's been done over the last, ah, twenty (20) years, just let's say."

AB: "And you've written for a lot of them, haven't 'chu?"

GL: "Well ... I ... (laughs) ... I did. I ... I got quite a bit of stuff recorded. I ... I got some ... some management happening.

Ah, Stateside, back in about 1965 I got into a good publishing situation too for myself and I had a lot of stuff, and it got ... it got around!

Ah, the one that ... that Elvis did was, ah, *Early Morning Rain*, and he did ... he did a wonderful job on that."

AB: "Oh, I love that song!

*Early Morning Rain* – no kidding!"

GL: "Yeah. Oh yeah."

AB: "Hah! (laughs). Now that's a great song. Ah ..."

GL: "Yeah, I was really proud of that one.

I didn't realize it at the time, but I sure do now."

AB: (laughs).

GL: (grins).

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AB: "Does that happen to you, ah, in other words, later on ... even years later you suddenly recognize, ah ..."

GL: "Yeah ..."

AB: "... wha'cha did?"

GL: "... I was real happy that, ah, he [Elvis] did that. I've ... it really ... it ... *it made me feel secure on the totem pole (!)*" (laughs).

AB: (laughs too). "What ... did you ... did you get to talk to him ... meet him?"

GL: "No I did not. But I did see him perform.

Ah, I had an opportunity to meet him, but there was ... there was too much goin' on. I'm kind of a quiet fellow. I'm not, you know, the party at the end of the rainbow."

AB: (sighs) "Yeah."

GL: "It's passed by for me many years ago."

AB: "Ah, me too. (GL laughs).

Ah, act- ... you know, actually Gordon, I'm ... I'm kind of a recluse, to be frank with you, and ..."

GL: "Yeah, yeah, so am I."



AB: "I really ... (laughs) ... I love what I do when I'm on the air! Probably like you love what 'chu do when you're on stage or when you're cutting a new album ..."

GL: "Absolutely!"

AB: "... and you know you gotta piece 'a gold in your hands!"

GL: "Yeah. I got ... I gotta family too on the other side and I balance ... I try to balance the two of them."

AB: "How do ya do that?"

GL: "It's a balancing act. I ... I ... I can assure you as people can well understand show business and family, and yet ... yet it works. And we're well-organized.

Our band takes it seriously. And ... and its fun to do when you do it that way. We're like a team! We're ... we're almost like a sports team. When we go out, we're ready ta ... ta go out there and really do it well."

AB: "How much of the year do you spend away from home?"

GL: "Well, I mean I only play say up to fifty (50) times a year."

AB: "Hmm."

GL: "And, ah, it's done in, ah, sort of in sections, so we're not like constantly on the road or anything like that.

We're really happy to be able to have it organized in such a manner."

AB: "You were not that long ago in Las Vegas, weren't 'chu?"

GL: "We did. We ... we played at the House of Blues in Las Vegas. We had a great time, and everything went really well there."

AB: "Las Vegas is just over the hill from me. If I go outside right now, I can see the lights of Las Vegas."

GL: "Ahh!"

AB: "Lighting up the night sky. I'm about sixty-five (65) miles away, and that's how much light there comes from Las Vegas.

Is that not an amazing place now?"

GL: "Yes it is!

You're ... you're located outside 'a Las Vegas?"

AB: "That's right. Out here in the middle of the very serious desert ..."

GL: "Ahh!"

AB: "... ah, not all that far from Death Valley."

GL: "Ah."

AB: "Closer to Death Valley than Las Vegas."

GL: "Ah, man!"

AB: "It's a very serious remote place to live ... and I love it!"

GL: "Aw, that is good. It sounds wonderful."

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AB: "So ... anyway, *If You Could Read My Mind* came a- ... at a moment when, ah ..."

GL: "That ... that was the ... at the end of a marriage."

AB: "Heart broken?"

GL: "Well I felt pretty bad about it. I ... I did. I thought ... it ... it really ... it tore me up as I'm sure it does anyone else. But it happens too there was a couple of children involved in it there."

AB: "That's what it does, it ..."

GL: "But it came and it went, and I kept writing, and, ah, that seemed to me at the time to be the most important thing, so I put all my effort into that.

And started back on the single life again."

AB: "All right, well hold it right there.

Gordon Lightfoot is here.

Listen to the words now that you know what he was singing about.

I'm Art Bell."

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### IF YOU COULD READ MY MIND

If you could read my mind, love  
What a tale my thoughts could tell  
Just like an old time movie  
'Bout a ghost from a wishin' well  
In a castle dark or a fortress strong  
With chains upon my feet  
You know that ghost is me  
And I will never be set free  
As long as I'm a ghost, you can't see

If I could read your mind, love  
What a tale your thoughts could tell  
Just like a paperback novel  
The kind the drugstores sell  
When you reach the part where the heartaches come  
The hero would be me  
But heroes often fail  
And you won't read that book again  
Because the ending's just too hard to take

I'd walk away like a movie star  
Who gets burned in a three way script  
Enter number two, a movie queen to play the scene  
Of bringing all the good things out in me  
But for now love, let's be real

I never thought I could act this way  
And I've got to say that I just don't get it  
I don't know where we went wrong  
But the feelings gone and I just can't get it back

If you could read my mind, love  
What a tale my thoughts could tell  
Just like an old time movie  
'Bout a ghost from a wishin' well  
In a castle dark or a fortress strong  
With chains upon my feet  
But stories always end  
And if you read between the lines  
You'll know that I'm just tryin' to understand  
The feelings that you [we] lack

I never thought I could feel this way  
And I've got to say that I just don't get it  
I don't know where we went wrong  
But the feelings gone  
And I just can't get it back

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AB: "Now I get it. If you listen to the words after hearing what was going on, now you get it too.

Good morning, everybody! I'm Art Bell. Gordon Lightfoot is here and he'll be right back!"

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AB: "All right. Once again from Canada here is Gordon Lightfoot.

And Gordon (AB laughs), you know, now that you've told me what you told me about that song, listening to the words, it goes click, click, click for me. But I've gotta tell you that you told me what that was about, my interpretation and that of my wife – we are oh so close, Gordon ... we're really soulmates – and we have talked about what would happen if the other ... if one of us, you know, were to ... to leave the Earth, ah, before the other. And that song kind of resonated with me that way that, ah, you know, I'll ... I'll never ... I'll never be gone. Um, I'll never be free as long as your ghost is there. As long ...

I somehow took it that way and I think everybody does that with music. They ... they put their own little, ah, mental print on it and it means something, you know, very special to them."

GL: "That, ah, that sounds like ... like a very acceptable interpretation to me."

AB: (laughs) "Well, it was ... it sure was mine at first, and my wife's as well.

And then another surprise came along, and here's where I'm gonna pin ya down a little bit. Um, one of my favorite songs of all time ... ALL TIME ... is this one. It's, ah, it's *Sundown*.

Let me just play a little bit of it, all right?

Because I really, really want to know what some of this song means! This ... and I never even knew it was Gordon ... boy, was that a surprise!"

## SUNDOWN

I can see her lyin' back in a satin dress  
In a room where you can do what you don't confess

Sundown, you better take care  
If I find you been creepin' 'round my back stairs  
Sundown, you better take care  
If I find you been creepin' 'round my back stairs

She's been lookin' like a queen in a sailor's dream  
And she don't always say what she really means

Sometimes I think it's a shame  
When I get feelin' better, when I'm feelin' no pain  
Sometimes I think it's a shame  
When I get feelin' better, when I'm feelin' no pain

I can picture every move that a man could make  
Gettin' lost in her lovin' is your first mistake

Sundown, you better take care  
If I find you been creepin' 'round my back stairs  
Sometimes I think it's a sin  
When I feel like I'm winnin', when I'm losin' again

I can see her lookin' fast in her faded jeans  
She's a hard-lovin' woman, got me feelin' mean

Sometimes I think it's a shame  
When I get feelin' better, when I'm feelin' no pain  
Sundown, you better take care  
If I find you been creepin' 'round my back stairs

Sundown, you better take care  
If I find you been creepin' 'round my back stairs  
Sometimes I think it's a sin  
When I feel like I'm winnin', when I'm losin' again

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AB: "That'll about do it right there.

Ahh, Gordon, I listened to that song and loved it as one of my favorites for years, and somehow, no one ever told me it was Gordon Lightfoot the ... .

About two (2) weeks ago somebody said:

'That's Gordon Lightfoot.' And I said: 'What!'"

GL: "Oh, no kiddin'" (AB laughs) No kiddin'."

AB: "No kidding.

So, I wanta know a little bit about this song.

Now, 'Sundown, you better not come creepin' around' (GL laughs) – what does that mean? Please!" (AB chuckles).

GL: "You know, I ... I lived through a, ah, a time when ... when ... when ... in- ... infidelity was ... was a problem ..."

AB: "Um-hmm."

GL: "... in my life. And ... and it was just there and it was just that period of time. Ah, the marriage had ended and I was on my own, and, ah, I was finding out what it was like to ... to see ... see how the shoe fits on the other foot! And ... and finding out that, ah, it could be reciprocal ..."

AB: "Heh, heh."

GL: "... on the part of the woman ..."

AB: "Yeah."

GL: "... as well."

AB: "Ah, 'She looked like a queen in a sailor's dream ...'" (AB breaks off).

GL: "And, ah, it's about, ah, you know, there's some infidelity going on, and you don't want it to ... to happen because it's making you feel bad.

And, ah, you know that it's going on and you're ... you're ... I guess, ah, issuing a ... a, you know, a warrant to ... to stay out of my territory ... to some- ... to someone."

AB: "Oh that's ... that's very clear."

GL: "Without actually picking up a ... a, you know, ah ..."

AB: "Without pickin' up a gun and going and shooting somebody down? (!)"

GL: (laughs) "Without pickin' up the gun and goin' after 'em, you know?"

AB: (laughs) "Oh, I do know. Believe me, I do know.

And then, ah, and then the reference to, ah, 'feelin' better.' Ah, that ... that, ah, people have interpreted ... I think I did as, ah, maybe you were goin' through this, went back ... knocked back a fifth of gin or ... ?"

GL: "It's booze."

AB: "Booze, yeah?"

GL: "Yeah, I had a tussle with that too, but I got that one covered by ... by 1982.

But it was startin' ta catch up with me I think at that point."

AB: "But you were like mixin' it up with – in *Sundown* – with the rest of it. And so it's kinda like you could see how that would be connected in ... in your head?"

GL: "Yeah."

AB: "Is that right?"

GL: "Oh yeah."

AB: "Oh, then I get it."

GL: "I was living on a farm as well at the time, and ... and every ... every night there was a glorious sunset to the west of the farm. That entered into the picture too."

AB: "Ha."

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AB: "Do you, ah, do you ever wonder, Gordon ... where it comes from?"

GL: "It ... you know, I ... I ... all I know is I ... I wrote the first one at seventeen (17) in grade twelve (12) in high school and I kept writing them, um, from that point on.

I was a singer. I ... I was ... I was wise enough to realize that if I wrote my own songs I'd be in ... in much better shape all around. And I seemed to have the capability of doing it, so I ..."

AB: “You do! But I mean ...”

GL: “... proceeded ...”

AB: “But again ...”

GL: “... diligently for about ten (10) years, (GL laughs), before anything really took place.”

AB: “Still, in all though, ah, here you are today – top of the heap – and so when I say: “You ever wonder where it comes from? I mean, the talent, the, ah, inherent ability, the God’s gift ... whatever it is you call it.

Ah, you ever ...”

GL: “It was the parental ... it really was the parental support with- ... without a doubt ... in my case.

Finding out that I was able to carry a tune when I was very, very small, and it was all it took to get my mother motivated ...”

AB: “But Gordon, there’s a lot of people that can carry a tune.”

GL: “And she did it in a gentle way too. That’s, ah ... that’s, ah, you know, the nice part about it.”

AB: “But there ... it’s like, ah, another genius, ah, was in my opinion, John Lennon, who wrote and wrote and wrote.

And I mean, there are only a few people like you Gordon. *There aren’t many!* And that ... maybe you don’t see it that way, but there aren’t many of you out there.

And so where does this come from?”

GL: “Ah, it ... maybe ... maybe it’s just, ah ... *it helps to pay the bills.*”

AB: (laughs).

GL: “Maybe it was, ah, maybe it was the recording contracts, because when I started to get recording contracts ...”

AB: “Yes?”



GL: "... I said: 'Now I have a contract. Now I must ... now I must produce. And ... and I would just knuckle down and just get to it.

Ah, the method was, ah, was fairly straight ahead, ya know? Just ... just basic, ah ... ah, musical theory and, ah, the melody and the chords and the lyrics – and it's just that simple."

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AB: "What, ah, where ... you can't even really classify yourself, can you?

In other words, you're not exactly folk. You're not exactly adult contemporary – what we call that down here. Ah, you're sort of all over the place."

GL: "Yeah, singer-songwriter. Ah, adult contemporary u- ... usually is the, ah ... is what the ... the agency would refer to it as."

AB: "Well ..."

GL: "I ... I think Willie Nelson is ... is, ah, adult contemporary too. More than he is country."

AB: "Just spent five (5) hours interviewing Willie. He's, ah, *he's really somethin' else!*

**That guy is somethin' else!**

Do you know, Willie?"

GL: "I ... I've never met him, but I ... I know some of the ... we have some mutual friends. Like I ... I know Kris [Kristofferson] quite well."

AB: "You have some mutual experiences as well ... incidentally."

GL: "Yeah ..."

AB: (laughs) "Did he ever tell ya the story about, ah ... ah, the time that, ah, he was in ... in ... in the bus and, ah, you know he travels in a bus everywhere I think – 'n', ah, a lady friend of his caught him, ah, doin' somethin' you shouldn't be doin'. Tied him ... tied him to the bed and beat him with a broom." (AB laughs).

GL: "No ... no!"

AB: "Yeah, he was ... he was fast asleep and, ah, she come in, tied him to the bed, and beat the hell out of him with a broom." (AB laughs).

GL: "Ohh, no! Oh, that is ... that is some wonderful story." (AB laughs more).

AB: "A ... a lot of artists, ah, go through some, ah, some pretty tough times!

Ah, and it ... it ... it just seems like that makes ... that brings out the best in them.

Why is it that we have to, you know, have these tough times to have the inspiration for the ... the greatness?

Why would that be?"

GL: "I don't know. And I sometimes wonder about the people that get hurt along the way too."

AB: "Yeah!"

GL: "That bothers me, because I have a cons- ... conscience about that."

AB: "I know. Well, ..."

GL: "Yes."

AB: "... I guess ya have to remember that, ah, none of us, ah, here are perfect."

GL: "That ..."

AB: "I've been far less than perfect myself. I had a lot of, ah, a lot of stuff I could think over the years about that I could sure be guilty about."

GL: "Yeah ... yeah."

AB: "If I could review my life ... I don't think I'd like it."

GL: "Well I try to keep up my ... like I keep up my ... my family responsibilities, ah, to ... to the letter, you know, I really do."

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AB: "Do, ah, another great Canadian singer that I play a lot of here is, ah, Lorena McKennit."

GL: "Yeah?"

AB: "Any comments on her work?"

GL: "I ... I've heard them, but they were ... they were sort of ... they ... they ... they kinda came and went.

I saw them, ah ... I know who you mean ... I've seen 'em perform too."

AB: "Lorena's, ah, really an awesome artist. She has, ah, great range of voice, and I got to see her in concert actually, ah, up in western Canada."

GL: "Yeah?"

AB: "Really somethin' else."

\* \* \*

AB: "Ah, so you spend a lot of time with your family?"

GL: "Yeah, I'm ... I mean it's like I ... I ... I take the family life seriously. And I take all my kids seriously, and, ah, I ... I'm in my second marriage now. And, ah, you know I ... I take it very seriously."

AB: "Are you straight with your children?"

GL: "Oh ... oh yeah, I'm straight all around, and ... and I ... I get a chance to play.

I can play ... the very last thing I do every night when I'm on the road is like I call Liz on the telephone.

AB: "That's great."

GL: "And you know, it just ... you know, things like that you know.

She knows ... you know, the ... the ... they worry ... they worry about us when we're out there and ... and they were ... a long time ago they had every right to or every reason to, I guess.

But it ... it's different now. It's ... it's ... it's the work and it's the concentration, and ... and, ah, the results are ... are what really fascinates me."

AB: "There, ah ..."

GL: "We're really getting good results and ... and ... and I love to play live anyway, and it is my forte after all. And, ah ... ah ..."

AB: "All right, now there's ... there's ..."

GL: "... I feel good about doin' it."

AB: "... a question I wanna ask.

You play live both in Canada and the U.S., right?"

GL: "Yes we do."

AB: "Well, there seems ... there's a pretty big difference between the demeanor of Canadians and the demeanor of Americans.

Canadians are so ever well-behaved at a concert. I mean, they just are so well-behaved. And, ah ... ah, that in comparison to – and respectful. I mean, they will clap but, ah, there are so ... the audiences in Canada are so respectful, and down here in the U.S. they tend to be a lot more boisterous, don't they?"

GL: "Well, in ... in, ah, in some places. But ... but we're always able to quiet them down somehow."

AB: (laughs).

GL: "I don't know what ... what causes this, but ..."

AB: "Well, when you start singing, they'll ..."

GL: "Moreover to that too, I ... I think that they're ... that the response is the same. I ... I feel the same kind of response in Canada as I do down in the States."

AB: "I ..."

GL: "When I'm up there."

AB: "There ya are."

GL: "It's the same."

AB: "Well, it's just that, ah ... ah, Canadian audiences tend to be sorta more laid back. I mean, Canadians, in general – do you think this is true? – are kind of more laid back in their attitude."

GL: "Oh, I don't know. I don't think about it much."

You know, (AB laughs) or we're all, ah, sort of in this together. That's the way I look at it, 'cha know? (!)"

AB: "We absolutely are!"

GL: "We're like the ... the Upper North American continent here."

AB: "Yeah, do you worry ... while we're on that subject, we are all in this together and I have a lot of concerns about the environment, ah, Gordon. This is like we're really screwin' things up."

GL: "I ... I had, ah, had some involvement, ah, with, ah, with David Suzuki for a while."

AB: "Um-hmm."

GL: "So ... I was kinda afraid, and then I started thinkin' about the meat 'n' potatoes aspect of this thing. And ... and if ... if we don't ... if we don't work 'n' do things and ... and cause waste, *how are we gonna put the meat 'n' potatoes on the table?*"

AB: "**We can't!**"

GL: "Ta feed ... **ya can't!**"

AB: "But then again on the other side of the coin, I'm sure ... because what 'chu do, you've done a lot of travel – you've probably been all over the world. And ..."

GL: "Well, not quite, but I've been ..."

AB: "A lot of parts of it, right?"

GL: "Yeah."

AB: "And, ah, you know, in ... in Third World countries – *they want what we have!* And nobody in the world could blame them for that.

They want what we've got.

They want a couple of cars. They want a nice house. They want, ah, to be comfortable and all the rest of it.

Yet if they get it, I'm not sure the planet can sustain it."

GL: "Yeah ... well ..."

AB: "It's a tough problem."

GL: "It's been ... it's been here for five billion years (5,000,000,000 yrs.), so ... wasn't it four and a half billion years (4,500,000,000 yrs.)?"

AB: "So they say, yes indeed!"

GL: "Yeah."

\* \* \*

AB: "Um, you, ah, you wrote for Barbra Streisand?"

GL: "She did a wonderful job on *If You Could Read My Mind*. Just a real fine job."

AB: "Lot of respect for her. She's, ah, she's an amazing person! She's a Big Perfectionist."

GL: "Well, there again I did not get the opportunity to meet with her!

I got to meet with some of the other artists. I got ... got to meet with Mr. Sinatra at one point. He did ... what happened he ... he did *If You Could Read My Mind* – he threw it on the floor!"

AB: "He threw it ..."

GL: "He threw everything on the floor and said: 'I can't sing this!'"

AB: "Really! (?)"

GL: "Yeah. It was, ah, it was related to me by ... by the engineer the next day.

I was quite amused. I ... I thought it was great.

He also ... (AB laughs). He said: 'I can't do this' and he threw it on the floor."

AB: "He didn't say why?"

GL: "He said ... he said: '**I can't sing this!**'"

AB: "Ha."

GL: "So ..."

AB: "Ha."

GL: "... you know, you have a thirty-five (35) piece orchestra and everything sitting there.

And I was not there for that. I got there the next night, and he was doing, ah, Stevie Wonder's *'You Are The Sunshine Of My Life.'*"

AB: (laughs) "Really?"

GL: "I loved it! I thought he was doing a great job on it, and they finished that one, but then I don't think it appeared on the album. So ... ?"

AB: "Why ... why do you think he couldn't have done, ah, or felt he couldn't do that song?

Why do you think he thought he couldn't do it or said he couldn't do it?"

GL: "Maybe it was the way of it ... the melody moves, you know? Maybe it was the key? I don't know.

May be ... maybe he just didn't feel comfortable with it."

AB: (laughs). "And I always thought he could have done anything."

GL: "Well, he ... he did, ah, he did a lot ... a lotta great work.

You know, being with Reprise [record company], ah, I ... I actually was associated with, ah, with Sinatra, because he was one of the owners of that ... that record company."

AB: "He was an amazing man. I've seen a lot of movies about Frank and the Rat Pack, and all the rest of 'em. 'N' that was quite a thing down here just across the hill from me in Las Vegas."

GL: "Uh-huh."

AB: "They had quite a few goin' [?]"

\* \* \*

AB: "Well, I cannot ... I wish ya had more time.

Ah, is there anything ... you know, they're listening all across Canada now and all across the U.S. as well – is there anything you wanta tell all those folks out there?"

GL: “Well, I just, ah ... ah, um, you know, be well. (AB laughs). Just be well!”

AB: “You’re gonna just keep turnin’ ’em out then, huh?”

GL: “I’m gonna try. Gonna keep on playin’, ah, as long as, you know, it’s humanly possible, because I ... I love to play. I don’t see why I should not!”

AB: “Yeah.

Just one more question:

When you write a song, do you ever know it’s gonna be a hit?

I mean, before it ever gets to the record company, before you ever record it, I mean, you just know?”

GL: “I ... I felt that way, ah, about the song *Sundown*.

I felt that it had the beat and ... and ... and the pulse, you know, that it had a pretty good chance.”

AB: “Yeah, and then it had your life behind it too.”

GL: “Everything else was a ... a surprise.”

AB: “Gordon, thank you. And, ah, good night from the high desert.”

GL: “Thank you, Art. It’s been, ah, ... or shall I say ‘Mr. Bell,’ it has been (whispers) a pleasure.”

AB: “All right, Mister Lightfoot – Good Night.”

[AB plays *Sundown* again].

\* \* \*

**2001 10 31 Wednesday Ghost to Ghost AM Ghost Stories**

AB: “That’s Gordon Lightfoot. I got to interview Gordon, and he’s, ah, he’s a haunting kind of guy ... in real life – he really is!

His music, ah, is absolutely incredible (!) and reflective of the kind of person that he is. When you hear an interview with Gordon Lightfoot, it’s kinda listening to this song [*If You Could Read My Mind*].”

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