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Edward L. Esposito

I Heart Terry Gross

I love radio.

It can be somewhat passive like television, something to be enjoyed while stretched out on the couch. One doesn't need to be in the Met to enjoy an opera, or standing shoulder-to-shoulder in a cow pasture to revisit Woodstock.

It paints wonderful pictures in the mind like a book, but instead of using the highway of the eyes it uses the back roads of the ear to spark the mind into taking up pigments and brush to make me see without even opening an eyelid.

It can push us into action, drawing even the most hard-core wallflower to dance with abandon in private or in the company of family and friends. Books don't make my toes tap; television doesn't let me see *my* world as I choose to view it. This is a medium where the announcer can be the author, producer and creator with a direct route into my soul. It has always been, at least in my view, the most intimate of media.

Terry Gross of WHYY-FM in Philadelphia takes it to a new level, and tonight's *Fresh Air* on NPR (3:00 p.m. on 89.7 WKSU, 7:00 p.m. on WCPN) was one of those landmark moments where she literally turned dung into gold.



It isn't often you can't turn away from something profiling the dung beetle but [Terry's interview](#) with University of Montana professor of biology Dr. Douglas Emlen is simply one of the most enjoyable, compelling, amusing and fascinating interviews I've heard from *Fresh Air*, and Terry Gross has done thousands.

His take on the advanced weapons systems nature creates from these waste-eating bugs made them appear smarter than anyone at the Pentagon; Mother Nature as the mother of all military-industrial complexes. Relaying the story of thousands upon thousands of beetles descending upon him as he observed a pile of elephant dung collected just to attract them made my skin crawl, just as the scenes from every Egyptian-locale

Mummy monster flick does -- but I couldn't turn it off. The story of how Australia had to work so hard to find just the right species of dung beetles to clean up acres and acres of cow flop covered grazing land put picture and scent right between the eyes.

Even his observations on how sleek and slender suitors try to get past the heavily-armored male guards for the sweet reward of waiting beetle babes in the tunnels below the piles of...OK, you get the idea.

Terry Gross is the textbook example of how a radio interview can sound so simple, so natural, and so wonderful. When checking out the link above, make sure you check out the slide show of beetles -- they look more like sculpture than creatures doing dirty work. See the battle of the beetles caught on video -- Fight Club for real. But by all means don't neglect to [listen to 38 minutes](#) of a true interview artist.

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Esposito is the Editor of AkronNewsNow and also oversees news and information media for WAKR-WONE-WQMX radio in Akron, OH.

He is chairman of the Radio Television News Directors Foundation (RTNDA), a past chair of RTNDA, former President of the Ohio Associated Press Broadcasters Association (OAPB), a former member of the Akron Press Club Board of Directors and a former member of the Kent State University Journalism and Mass Communications student media advisory board.

He presently serves as a Trustee of the Ohio Coalition for Open Government (affiliated with the Ohio Newspapers Foundation.)

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