



Tom Hughes

www.hireathief.com

Speaker on Professional Responsibility, Ministry and Financial Crime

My name is Tom Hughes, and I began my business career many years ago as a lender for a top-ten bank. After that I was an accountant and tax professional in private practice, usually with some connection to the music business. For a time I managed the business affairs of touring musicians while they were on the road, and for awhile I ran the back office of an independent record label. Today, I'm none of those things: after multiple convictions for stealing money from people who liked and trusted me, I'm just a disgraced *former* accountant who's been to prison and back...twice.

I like to think I'm an ex-accountant with a story to tell, however. I have worked with the Vermont State Auditor's Office on reducing fraud and embezzlement in municipal environments. I've talked about fraud and embezzlement on television and radio. And I've been talking to people about the thought processes of people who steal:

- *"I know I'm underpaid, they know I'm underpaid, what do they expect?"*
- *"Our rent is due, the car's broken down, there's no other way out."*
- *"I'll pay this back right away, and then I'll never do this again."*

But I talk about other things, too:

- What's it like when the FBI comes to your door?
- What's it like to look a loved one in the eyes and say, "I'm going to prison"?
- What's your first night in prison like? Your first week? Your first month?
- And most of all... was it worth it?

I've spoken to small business owners about creating a culture of accountability in their organizations and maintaining an open, honest environment where embezzlement will be less likely to occur. And I've spoken to auditors, accountants and law enforcement about detecting and preventing financial crimes.

In the event someone you know has a place for a speaker to talk about the motivations and psychology of fraud, I hope you'll call me. I keep my fee low, I don't require any technology backup, and I'm used to traveling. It'd be an honor to talk with your staff, your church, your students or your organization about the choices we make every day, and the long term effects – for everyone – that those choices have.