

## I Think My Cat Is a Thief

**CatChannel humorist Peter Gerstenzang questions the pilfering tendencies of his cat Gracie.**

*By Peter Gerstenzang*

Posted: October 2, 2009, 3 a.m. EDT

Lately, things have been disappearing from my room. Items like a rubber eraser, a velvet scrunchy, a thimble. At first, I was going to report it. But there are strict cross-dressing laws in my town and a guy can be put on probation simply for being in possession of a scrunchy. I then thought of asking Happy if he stole this stuff. Except he's so naturally guilt-ridden, he'll confess to any crime. You should see his face if you even mention the Lindbergh kidnapping. Finally, my investigation centered around Gracie. With good cause. Oh, the pain of having a thief in the family! Now I know how Bonnie Parker's father felt.

It started innocently enough. I'd put down a tiny pencil and five minutes later it would be gone. I'd look for the thing and not find it. Years ago I'd have found this amusing. However, I'm getting to the age where forgetfulness loses its zesty comic zing. And you start paying closer attention to those Aricept commercials. I suppose I should have heard Gracie snickering when I looked for the missing pencil. But I think my hearing is going, too.

Not long after the pencil disappearance, I saw my cat lingering around my eraser. Gracie acted nonchalant to throw me off and I bought it. Looking back, her nervous whistling should have been a dead giveaway. I left the room and when I returned, my eraser was gone, too. Add this to the pencil disappearance and one conclusion was inescapable. Gracie was a thief. Either that or she was taking drawing lessons by mail.

Now, in America, our criminal system is based on the presumption of innocence until proven guilty. So I tried to believe the missing items were due to my encroaching senility. Not Happy, though. One day, he pointed with his muzzle to the back of the sofa. I looked. And saw enough stuff stashed to outfit a discount store. The pencil, the eraser, the scrunchy and several other items Gracie had pilfered.

As I stood there, Gracie came over to me, as if getting ready for punishment. What was I suppose to do, put her under house arrest? She's agoraphobic, so that would be a reward. I bent down. I petted my cat and told her everything was OK. Besides, it's not like she stole this stuff and tried to fence it. I did suggest to Gracie that she stop her career as a criminal, before she started doing really bad stuff. Like selling fake Kibbles 'n' Bits on the black market. Then, I did the right thing. I sent Happy to his room and told him to reflect on what he'd done. A little theft is nothing, I told him. But nobody likes a snitch!