

**MAKING CANADA**

**A Better Place  
In Which to Live and Work**

A Series of Letters From Distinguished Canadians on Vital Problems Affecting the Future Welfare of Canada

Specially written for Canadian Weekly Newspapers Association

Dear Editor:

In response to your letter, I should like to say that the officers of the Canadian National Railways are always conscious of the important part the weekly newspapers play in Canadian affairs and that we fully appreciate the keen interest the members of your association take in the welfare of the National Railways System. We have noticed with satisfaction that you have extended this to Canada's newest enterprise, the Trans-Canada Air Lines.

I hope that the weekly newspapers will continue their valuable work of fostering a spirit of unity throughout the Dominion and encouraging Canadians to work for steady improvement in conditions by avoiding useless controversies which can only tend to retard the nation's progress.

Above all, I hope you will carry on your discouragement of those pessimists who seem to have no other contribution to make than the forecast of disaster. The things to be advocated today, it seems to me, are the avoidance of anything which might cause sectional, racial or any other form of strife, and the positive qualities of sane optimism and hard work. These, I think you will agree, are Canadian characteristics. It is not enough to recognize them and be proud of them; we must maintain and extend them.

With kind regards and all good wishes to your membership and to yourself, I am,

Yours faithfully,  
S. J. HUNGERFORD,  
Chairman and President,  
Canadian National Railways.

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**THE LIBERAL SHORT STORY**

**THE SINGING LESSON**

By Marie Brett-Perrin

By Charles McGuirk

I tell you right off the sleeve it ain't gonna do you no good to bring me down here from the Pen to testify before the Grand Jury. Not even if you knock ten years off my stretch. I'm a five-to-ten loser on a racket rap.

I got a clean record for two years. Maybe, I'll only do the five. Maybe I'll slice off a couple more years for good behaviour. I ain't sayin' there ain't many things I wouldn't do to knock them off. But one of them is singin'.

All right. Sure I'm guilty. A jury said so, didn't it? And sure, I was tied in with the commission racket. The jury believed that, too, because it all came out in the trial. And sure I knew Marty Sharles. 'I was his trusted auditor. I kept his books. I handled the dough that passed through him and the mob. Didn't you know that? Well, get a manuscript of the testimony in my trial. You'll find it all down in black and white.

What's that? You can't promise me anything, if I tell you all I know about Marty Crux? Well, ain't that just too bad! I'm to sing and then I don't get nothin' for singin'. Better call the wagon. I'm ready to go back. No, I won't answer your questions! What do you think I am, a rat?

You're wasting your time. You can get my record from readin' the testimony in the trial. K. O. Shoot. But wait a minute. What's the rap against Marty Crux? Income tax evasion? Puttin' the slug on somebody? What did he do? I mean, what is he supposed to have done?

Oh, murder. Just murder? Why, I thought it'd be something serious. Why, Marty commits murders just like the State's Attorney smokes cigars. One after each meal and eight at nights. Didn't you know that? Marty's Public Enemy No. 1 and all big public enemies have to do four murders a day just to keep up their standin'. But get this, Mr.

State's attorney. I never saw Marty Crux commit any murders. I never heard of him committin' any murders. And I never heard of him plannin' any murders. So what's the use of askin' me?

How many guys did Marty murder this time? Only one! Why, that ain't a crime. It's a misdemeanor. For the six years I was tied in with him, he beat one murder rap a year. In 1935, there was three. He beat them all. He had an iron-clad alibi for each of them.

"Who was the guy this time? Oh, you won't tell me. So you won't talk, eh? Well, then, why the hell should I talk? Sure, I'll answer the routine questions. Let me have them.

My name's Eddie Flack. I'm 28. Single. I was born on the South Side. Twenty-eighth and Prairie. When the neighbourhood was respectable. My old man had a good business when we were kids. We? Oh, my brother and me, my kid brother, Danny. Well, the old man had a good neighbourhood grocery business until the chain stores froze him out. Then my mother died and he lost his guts. He started drinkin' and he died, too, when I was 15 and Danny 11.

Who took care of us then? Well, my Aunt Aggie was supposed to. Aunt Aggie called herself an actress but what she was was a burlesque artist. She did a strip tease until she got a tire around her belt line and then she stepped back down into the chorus. She got the tire from booze. Aggie liked to h'ist them. About the time she got us, booze got her.

Well, me and Danny were a couple of lonesome kids, I guess, and nobody took much care of us so we had to take care of each other. That slapped it all on me because I was the oldest of us two, see, and Danny was just a kid.

Danny wasn't much good at school. He didn't like it. I did. I liked it because it was warm in winter and I liked arithmetic. I was pretty good at it. Danny stayed in one class so long that he had a beard in the sixth grade. He never got past it because he did a house-breakin' job and got picked up for it and went to the reformatory for a couple of years.

I finished grammar school and one night Aunt Aggie rolled a drunk for a couple of C's and I gloomed fifty of it off her while she was drunk and I lammed out of there and took up a business course.

I got a job and then another one and then another one. You know how tough it is for a kid to place himself. I wouldn't want to live that part of my life over again. It was tough. I was so damn lonesome. I didn't have nobody but Danny and Danny was in stir. I used to go out and see him every week and help him count the days until he'd be sprung. I had a calendar in my room and I used to cross each date off with a lead pencil.

When Danny came out, he knew a lot more than he did when he went in. He knew how to pick any lock they ever invented. He knew how to cut out a pane of glass so you couldn't hear him if you were in the next room. I missed him like hell when he got picked up again to do a three-year bit for burglary. That was about two years after he got sprung from the reformatory.

Danny's one swell kid. He never failed to get up every visitin' day to see me since I've been in stir up to this week. I'm kind of worried about the guy. I'm afraid he's either sick or in the can because nothing else would keep him away from me on visitin' day. Do you know whether he's in the can, Mr. State Attorney? He ain't? Well, then he must be sick. Is he sick? He ain't? Then what the hell's the matter with the little — the little punk? If I had him here now, I'd punch him in the mouth.

Well, when Danny finished his stretch and came out, he told me he was through house-breakin'. The percentage was against him, see. He had a record and he'd met a guy in stir that knew Marty Crux. The guy was goin' to speak to Marty about him. I told him to lay off Marty because he was one tough baby. The newspapers said he was pretty handy with a gat and I didn't want any murder raps in our family. Danny just laughed at me. He told me you could work for a guy without committin' murder. What the gee in stir was figurin' for him was drivin' Marty's own personal car. He needed guys around him he could trust absolutely.

Well, I didn't see nothin' wrong with that. I knew that Danny would carry a gat, but I knew that if he used it it would be to defend himself and Marty. So I felt pretty good when Danny got the job as

Marty's bodyguard.

So everything worked out swell, see. Because when Danny had been workin' for Marty about a year, he came to me and told me Marty wanted to see me. So I went and Marty offered me the job as his auditor. Certainly I took it. It paid a C a week. And whoever heard of a bookkeeper getting a hundred a week?

Now, listen, Mr. State's Attorney. I ain't spillin' any of the business Marty Crux did. That's confidential. That's as sacred to me as a client's confession would be to a mouth-piece. You do understand it? And you don't want me to? Well what do you want?

You want Marty Crux for the killing of Tony Barradino and Mike Scuffo? Listen, I don't know anything about them bump-offs. Listen, I was just a bookkeeper. All I know is that Danny had nothin' to do with either of them. How? Why, because Danny told me himself. He told me who really did those jobs. And it wasn't him. He told me when he was drunk. That was Danny's only trouble. When he got a little lit, his tongue wagged. That's why he hardly ever took a drink.

I don't know who killed Barradino and Scuffo. But whoever killed them did a good job because they were a couple of rats, see. They were Marty Crux's own men and they got playin' with Al Sponzi and his mob and Al and Marty were deadly enemies. The way I get it, Marty checked up on them and found out they were crossin' him. That's the way I get it.

You say the way you get it is that Danny knocked off Barradino and Marty did the job on Scuffo himself? Listen, that ain't so. Danny told me different. What makes me believe that? Why, because Danny told me and Danny never told me a lie in his life. I don't know anything about Marty doin' the job, but I don't believe it. Marty didn't have to do his own killin's. That's what he paid his bodyguard for. And I don't know anything about Marty because he ratted in me when I was picked up on this racket rap. He got me a bad mouth-piece. The way I figure it, he wanted me out because he thought maybe I knew too much.

Look, Mr. States Attorney. Tell that guy to quit takin' those notes because I want to ask you something. Thanks. Look, that kid brother of mine is all right, see. He's tryin' to go straight.

What? Get my coat and hat on? Why? Where are we goin'? Back to the can? Oh, just up the street a little ways. O.K.! It'll be nice to get out in the street again. Stir's pretty confinin'. O.K., Copper. Snap on the bracelets and let's go.

Boy! Is this good to be riding in a high-powered car again! The citizens certainly give you coppers a break. If you had to make it yourself, you couldn't thumb a ride in one of these jobs. What's this place? The morgue? What the hell do you want to stop at the morgue for? Sure I'm comin'. What else can I do? But I don't like it. I don't like morgues. And I don't like dead people. Maybe that's why I never fooled with a gun.

Say! It's cold in here. Hey, do we have to go through the whole damn building? What's those things? Listen, I want out of here! I don't want any part of this? Sure I'll come over and look at a guy. But I tell you right now I won't identify him. Why should I? Even if I know him. Listen, Mr. State's Attorney. I told you I was no rat.

Danny! It's Danny! My kid brother! Oh—sweet—God! what'd I do, faint? Where—Danny. And Marty Crux killed him! Talk? Sure I'll talk. Marty Crux killed Tony Barradino. And he killed Al Sponzi. And he killed Jack Spinster and Mike Larredo and Moss Peters and Charlie Jinns. He killed them himself, see. Because he is a killer. A louse. I see it all now. He bumped Danny because Danny talked. And now I'll talk. I'll talk Marty Crux into the hot seat. I can do it because I got dates and the way he did it. I can hang it all over him like a tent. I'll send him to hell! Oh, Danny! Kid!

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