

# **SANCTIMONIOUS BOND**

Victor Speer



# Table of Contents

SANCTIMONIOUS BOND.....1  
Victor Speer.....2

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ONE of Murray's first acts after becoming identified with the Department of Justice at Toronto, was to turn back to the case of John C. Bond, of the Owen Sound gang, who disappeared the year before when Murray, at Sir Oliver Mowat's request, broke up the gang, and sent all but Bond to prison. Bond had sold a \$1,500 forged mortgage in Toronto, and vanished. Murray saw at the outset it was important he should impress upon the mind of all the criminal classes in Canada that, once he set out after them, he would land them, no matter where they went or how snugly they hid. So he undertook to find Bond. The man had over a year's start of Murray. He had gone, no one knew where. He had money to aid him, and friends to protect him. He might be in China or Labrador, in Australia or Russia. He might be dead.

"The first thing I did was to bill him," says Murray. "I prepared bills or hand posters giving his description, his habits, his crime, and any other information of use in identifying him. I sent these all over the world — to Scotland Yard, to Paris, to Berlin, to Rome, to New York, to Chicago, and all the chief police departments in the United States, and elsewhere. This is called billing a man. Sometimes I do not bill them, for I prefer a still hunt, and I conduct it through personal letters to my personal friends in all these police departments. In the course of my life I have had occasion to make friends with able men in practically all the detective bureaus of all the great police departments. But I desired to take no advantage of Bond. It was to be a fair chase, with fair warning, his wits against mine. No tidings came from billing him. So I took the next step in hunting a man. I located his nearest kin.

"Bond had a brother, who was chief clerk in the post office in Lindsay, Ontario. That year a new postmaster was appointed. I went to Lindsay with a letter of introduction to the postmaster. I had obtained specimens of Bond's handwriting for purposes of comparison, and the next day, after my arrival, there was a new assistant clerk in the Lindsay post office, who opened the bags of incoming mails, and ran over the letters. Soon two letters came. I got a glimpse of one, but not sufficient for my purposes. The brother was quick and wary, and scooped the letters over. The second letter I saw, for the simple reason that some candy I offered to the brother caused him to rush out very frequently. He looked for a letter every other Thursday, and it was on a Thursday I gave him the candy, and he was called out about the time the mail arrived. The letter was postmarked Evanston, Ill. The handwriting was unlike that of Bond, except for a kink in the B. I remembered his skill as a forger, and did not worry. When the brother re-entered the office his letters lay in the bunch, without a sign of having been touched.

"I quietly got my warrant for Bond's arrest, and slipped away to Chicago. Bill McGrogle was chief in Chicago in those days. Later, he foolishly hurried over into Canada for a sojourn when, as I understand, there was no necessity for it. From Bill I received a letter of introduction to the chief of police in Evanston, Ill., whose name was Carney, and who was a deputy sheriff, and several other officials, as well as chief of police. Carney was away when I first arrived.

"I had a good description of Bond, although I never had seen him, as he skipped out of Owen Sound the year before, when I went there to break up the gang. I also had a blurred photograph, but as I have said before, a good description is worth more than a dozen photographs. It gives you an accuracy in idea of how your man looks and acts, that no photograph can do. I began to walk the streets of Evanston, not much of a town in those days, on the look-out for a man answering the description of Bond. I was smoking a big, black cigar, and was blowing the smoke skyward with great gusto. In fact, I stopped at a street corner and became away, expanding and fading as they went. Suddenly I heard a voice beside me, one of those smooth, flat, oily voices, that causes you to think its owner soaks it every night in a vat of tincture of hypocrisy.

"My friend,' the voice was saying, 'are you not aware that smoking is a filthy and wasteful habit?'

"It depends on the point of view,' I remarked mildly, for I was a stranger in a strange land, and desired to make friends not foes just then, to aid me in my hunt for Bond.

## SANCTIMONIOUS BOND

"As I spoke I eyed him, and, while his hair decorations were different, he answered to a dot my description of Bond. If I could see him walk I would be sure. Bond had no limp, but my description was particularly good as to his general appearance and manner when walking. He was revelling in a tirade against smoking, and finally took up the theme of the evil of intemperance. I said just enough to keep him going, and when he began to pace to and fro I stepped back about fifteen feet and watched him. I saw him clasp his hands behind his back. Bond did the same thing, according to my description. I saw him clasp his hands in front of him. Bond did the same. Bond also interlaced his fingers, and I vowed that if this sanctimonious, hypocritical haranguer interlaced his fingers, I would seize him on the spot. Lo and behold! he did so. I stepped forward, seized his right hand, and shook it heartily.

"Why, Bond, old fellow, I didn't recognise you at first,' I said, and continued to shake his hand with increased fervour.

"He stopped short in his sermonising on smoking.

"You are mistaken,' he said, endeavouring to draw away his hand which, by that time, I was shaking violently.

"No,' said I, seizing both hands, and shaking them so that his teeth chattered. 'I met you in Hamilton, where you were in the sewing-machine business.'

"Oh, yes,' he chattered, for I had his head bobbing by my hand-shaking. 'What name?'

"MacDonald,' said I, and I shook his hands until warrant his arms almost fell out of their sockets.

"This hand-shaking a man until he almost falls apart is not an accepted form of arresting a man, and I never had done it before, but I actually was glad to see Bond, and also, I was very fond of tobacco then, although I do not use it now, and I resented his interfering with my morning smoke, particularly when the rings were floating so beautifully. Also I hoped to shake an acknowledgment of his identity out of him, if he was Bond. So I simply stood there and shook him. I shook his hands until his hat fell off. I shook his hands until he was red in the face and was gasping for breath. The few people who saw us grinned understandingly, as if witnessing the reunion of two long-lost brothers. I shook his hands relentlessly, furiously for several minutes. Then I stopped and looked at him.

"Bond, I am glad to see you,' I said, and I made as if to shake hands again.

"No, no,' said Bond, hastily clasping his hands behind him.

"Will you have a drink, Bond?' I said.

"The sanctimonious expression settled down over his face again, like a putty mask. I respect a sincere temperate man, but a hypocrite makes me feel as if I had mosquitoes down my back.

"This is a temperance town, and I neither smoke nor drink,' said Bond.

"Well, I tell you, Bond,' said I; 'you may not smoke or drink, but I arrest you just the same. It's not because you neither smoke nor drink, but because you are wanted over in Canada for a little business you did over there.'

"I arrested him then and there. All I had was the Canada warrant, and it alone was not worth the paper it was written on in Illinois. But the chief of police, Carney, had come home, and I handed over my letter of introduction, and after he read it I locked Bond up, and took him to Chicago by the next train. He was in the piano business, and was a temperance lecturer and organiser.

"Where am I wanted?' asked Bond, on his way from Evanston to Chicago.

"I knew Bond relied on his ability to escape conviction in Owen Sound, for in those days it was a mighty difficult task to convict a man in Owen Sound, who had money and friends there. So I answered: 'Owen Sound.' Bond smiled outwardly; so did I smile, inwardly.

"Bond had a brother in Chicago who was a member of the Board of Trade. When we arrived there the brothers talked it over, and were satisfied Bond should return, they thinking it was the aftermath of the troubles of the Owen Sound gang. Bond came with me, and when I arrived in Canada I informed him we were going to Toronto, instead of to Owen Sound. He was one of the maddest hypocrites I ever saw. He was so hot that, despite his not using tobacco, he almost blew rings of smoke. I landed him in Toronto on October 16th, 1875. He was sent to the penitentiary for seven years. I brought him back over a year after he disappeared, and a little over three months after I became a Government official.

"Bond was a hypocrite. He posed as a saint, and in fact he was a crook. A change of countries did not work a change of character. To look at him as he sermonised on the street of Evanston, one might mistake him for a

## SANCTIMONIOUS BOND

minister, but a second glance would tell the difference. However, the countenance does not always betray the crook. I have read often about the most accomplished crooks having the most clerical faces. That does not exist, as a rule, at all. Crime leaves its traces just as consumption leaves its traces. Yet I have known desperate criminals who looked like ignorant bumpkins or scholarly ministers. The eye is the great betrayer. Some crooks have a hard, steady eye; others have a small, restless eye; others a large, placid eye. It is not so much the size or kind of eye, as it is the sudden gleam or flicker, or waver or droop, the barest flash of guilt, oft-times merely fractional or intangible, yet as ample as the flare of a beacon light to locate the danger and reveal the true character. Often you instinctively know your man. It is as if some mysterious transmission of intelligence told you certainly: 'There he is,' or 'He is lying.'

"Bond was one of the immaculate sort, so far as countenance was concerned. But I will venture that never again in all his life has he approached a stranger, who was enjoying tirade against the evils of tobacco. Evanston lost a thrifty piano dealer and loquacious temperance lecturer, but Kingston Penitentiary gained a sanctimonious prisoner."