
**ODYSSEY OF A
GREAT LAKES SAILOR**



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RANGA IYER

**The Untold Story Of Canada Steamship Lines
Paul Martins Shipping Empire Years 1973-1994**

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DEDICATION

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO MY DEAR WIFE MYTHILI WHO SPENT MANY A SLEEPLESS NIGHT SHARING THE TRAUMATIC TIMES THAT WE AS A YOUNG COUPLE SHARED TRYING TO FIND A NEW LIFE IN CANADA. IT WAS A TRYING TIME FOR BOTH OF US IN A NEW COUNTRY THAT PROMISED MUCH HOPE BUT THE HOPE WAS FOR WHITE PEOPLE AND NOT FOR MINORITIES SEEKING LIFE LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS IN A LAND OF OPPORTUNITY.

THERE WAS PLENTY OF LAND BUT WITH LITTLE OR NO OPPORTUNITIES. THIS MY DEAR CANADIAN FRIENDS AND FRIENDS ALL OVER THIS PLANET EARTH IS A STORY OF ONE MANS PURSUIT FOR JUSTICE AND TRUTH IN SPITE OF GREAT ODDS AND A DETERMINATION TO PURSUE HIS GOALS AND DREAMS WITH ALL THE COURAGE OF HIS CONVICTIONS AND LEAVE THIS A BETTER PLACE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.





**TO MYTHILI,
WITH LOVE:**

“Sunrise, Sunset . . . Sunrise, Sunset . . . Quickly go the years.
One Season following another, Laden with happiness and tears.”

Fiddler on the Roof.

How true those words are—

We wake each morning to Sunlight peeking through the blinds in our
bedroom, only to realize its another morning and Mythili is gone from us.
Such a beautiful life—gone prematurely from the Earth.

God, how we wish she was still here.

We wish to dedicate this to a beautiful Spirit who once live amongst us—A woman
with a beautiful smile that lit up the room; Loud laughter that made you smile; Long
arms that wrapped around you in a big hug; Long hair that flowed in the
wind; Perfume that surrounded her and let you know she was near or passing by.

These are few of our favorite memories of the love we shared as a family, and the
ache within our hearts from wanting her back.

“If tears could build a stairway
And memories a lane
We’d walk right up to heaven
And bring you home again”.

**To our dearest Mythili:
This one is for you.**

Love and Kisses
In Fond Remembrance of
a loving Mother and wife.

Raj, Nandini, Bhavani.
29th February, 2000.





INTRODUCTION

“You shall judge a man by his foes as well as by his friends. When there is no enemy within, the enemies outside cannot hurt you.”

I WOULD LIKE to start this odyssey by introducing a letter, which I wrote to Mr Martin, when he was a rookie member of the Canadian Parliament, and for which he did not have the decency to respond. His legacy is not what is written about him by others. If future generations of Canadians are to believe history of what makes a great nation, it is by examples set by others who provide a great moral and ethical leadership.

I am not a journalist. All that I had learnt has been self taught. I had learnt in my early years as a young man growing up in British India that through non violence many things can be achieved and that all things in life are negotiable and I truly believe that the “pen is mightier than the sword.”

This is not the Canada I once knew. I am a first generation Canadian who immigrated to this country seeking to make a better life for my family and I, and I am sure like most other immigrants and a lot of people in this country believed that this great country had much to offer. I was truly disappointed, shocked and dismayed utterly that such things could happen to one man seeking to make use of opportunities that were available to others but denied to him.

Yet today he is the Prime Minister of Canada and on his path of self destruction, caused by his own folly. Canada deserves better and this man is an insult to this great

office. Read on then my dear friends—such is life, for what its worth—it is like Shakespeare’s Macbeth—

“Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.”.

As Prime Minister, Pierre Elliot Trudeau espoused participatory democracy as a means of making Canada a “Just Society.” His desire for greater citizen involvement in government appears to have been frustrated by lack of support within his party, and he later opposed greater involvement for citizens in representative democracy.

Trudeau’s most enduring legacy is the 1982 Canadian constitution. Some hail his creation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the 1982 constitution as having had a profoundly positive effect on the nation. It is seen as advancing civil rights and liberties and, notwithstanding clause aside, has become for many Canadians a deeply respected institution.

But in spite of all this we were still considered second class citizens in this so called number one country and as such had to put up with all the hardships that go towards making this an unjust society.

The following letter was written to the newly elected Member of Parliament from Quebec, Mr Paul Martin, whom I had known since I joined his Shipping company since 1973, and soon after my wrongful dismissal from this Company where I had given my life blood, sweat and tears.

Mr Paul E. Martin.
Member of Parliament Room 481,
Confederation Building OTTAWA, Ontario, K1A 0A6
Feb 3. 1993.
“FOR YOUR EYES ONLY”

Dear Sir:

After twenty years of dedicated service with your company and carrying forty million tons of cargo on your ships, top management has finally seen fit to terminate my service—,with your company. It seems very obvious as per the

attached letter that the company is downsizing but it fails to mention as to what they are down sizing. Let me tell you what it is. It is downsizing, "Canadians of Indian origin and make C.S.L. "Corporate White."

This is like the phrase from the book "Bury my heart at wounded knee," where it says, "The white man broke every promise except one. He said I will take your land and he took it." My lawyer is looking into the so called downsizing, whether it applies to me alone or a host of others. I was promised a ship at the end of the 1992 navigating season. When it was time to deliver, top management decided to terminate my services.

Attached lawyer's letter is self explanatory.

I thought for a moment in time that Canada was a great country and that such things happened only in South Africa.

Now I tend to believe otherwise. This is definitely not in line with the principles on which this great country was built on. It is people that make the difference. Your company's top management has absolutely no business or work ethics. This definitely is not a way to enter the twenty first century.

I have slaved and slogged for the last twenty years in spite of being harassed in a sick industry. The company's undesirable list speaks for itself. My case is strictly a witch hunt and a case of corporate lynching.

When the new company G.L.B.C. was formed in 1991, a select committee was responsible for pushing most of Canadians of Indian origin out of C.S.L. and hiring in their place, whites. It is a story of ten little Indians repeated.

I thought I was one of the fortunate few left to carry the CSL Flag. But I have been so harassed by Mr. G. Buchanan, the director of Fleet operations, in the last two years that I had to go to a Civil Litigation Lawyer to secure my job with your company. What about minority rights?. There must be laws in the country of Canada against violation of Civil rights, harassment and discrimination. You, as a lawyer, should know this. You should take some responsibility to what happens in your shipping company.

I am next in line to become a Commodore Chief Engineer and my family and I was looking forward to flying the C.S.L. flag high. Now I am about to drag it in the mud. If you want to be Prime Minister of Canada, Sir, you should think again.

RANGA IYER

The news is going to be a “Media Blitz.” I am definitely not part of the “SILENT SUFFERING MINORITY.”

Awaiting your response, I remain,

Yours Sincerely
Roger Ranganathan

Mr. Martin never responded to my letter, as we were only small fishes in a big pond. My prophecy though a little late but not too late, is coming true. I am bound by my code of ethics to see through this unjust ordeal so that I can be free once again. This is my Karma in this life. As you can see the glorious path of self destruction and the path to hell is truly paved with good intentions.

Now they are self destructing before our very eyes as this country is led by a leader who is morally corrupt. You can read about this so called leader who is leading this country to destruction in the following pages of my Odyssey. I know this to be true as I was unfortunate to work for him for over twenty years.

All I was guilty of was trying to make it a better world by being a true professional. This was a huge task and in the end it was worth the effort as people realized that in the end nothing succeeds like success. I was able to survive the great hardships as I had the courage of my convictions.

Even though most of the members of the ethnic minorities were terminated from the so called “great white fleet”, and the fleet became white again, they could not break our spirits

So begins my Odyssey.

“Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high (places)”.



SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE MAIN SOURCE of materials for writing this true story as a Chief Engineer with this once upon a time great company has been drawn from my own personal experiences during the years I was employed with this company.

History has to be rewritten if one needs a true account of what a company does to individuals and who together with others make it or break it. History is not made by one mans account of what is great but by taking together many pieces of the puzzle and putting it together. Some of the pieces of the original puzzle was missing from the book by Edgar Andrew Collard in his “Passage to the Sea” and I am providing the missing pieces.

These documents which are a true account of my personal experiences of twenty one years of my life at sea with this company must belong together with the original documents which were deposited in the library of Queens University at Kingston by Canada Steamship Lines. Since Mr Paul Martin had asked Mr Andrew Collard to write the book “Passage to the Sea”, I wish to state that the book does not give a true account of the history of the company.

I am giving the final touches to a true Sailors story so that people get to know as to what really happens inside a corrupt corporation, how it makes it money and how it functions, a true inside workings of what makes them tick.

This account is from my personal diaries that I had kept all these years and I wish to share this especially with the Shipping World and how sailors are treated even today in the dawn of the twenty first century.



CHAPTER ONE

THE EARLY YEARS

THIS BOOK IS written to expose the inside workings of a Shipping company during the years that I toiled to make a living as a man seeking to make a livelihood in supposedly a great country. It is not the country that is to blame but people like Mr Martin who are so twisted that they lose sight of the common man and use them and abuse them for their personal gain.

People do matter and they are the ones that make a difference. Most of the sailors who sailed the Great lakes during my period in the Great lakes will be in denial as they wish to be known as do-gooders. I do not think there are any books today giving you a full factual history of the inside workings of a shipping industry.

One wonders, in the grand scheme of things, whether we were all pawns in a big chess game of life, whether we mattered at all, if one believes in conspiracy theories and the Illuminati and the Powers that be. This is me against the world, where there are no compromises and it is the fight to the last, good against evil, truth and justice with the winner taking all and the loser falls. If one looks at the clichés at the end of the book, one would understand as to where I come from.

I am a soul searcher and only in search of kindred souls, trust men but I do not trust the devil in them. My philosophy—You know the Greek adage “Those whom the Gods would destroy they first make angry”? It is not good for a person to be as mad underneath as I was. I think if people have unresolved anger it makes them do nonrational, destructive things. We look at reality backward but we live it forward. It is everything against what I stood for all my life and it is self destructing—there is a total disconnect here—people deserve what they get and get what they deserve—my

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