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PLEA IN MITIGATION

Mr. President and Members of the Court. A Courtroom is not usually the place for a story other than that told by the witnesses. However I would ask you to bear with me for a few minutes this morning as I feel that the one I wish to tell appropriately illustrates a point I wish to make.

A millionaire was crossing the Atlantic and on the last night out met a very beautiful girl. As the evening went on they found themselves on deck watching the moon on the water. Finally he said to her, "Would you spend the night with me for ten thousand dollars?" Without much hesitation she answered "Yes."

A few minutes passed and again he asked a question. "Would you sleep with me for two dollars?"

Her eyes blazed as she turned on him in fury. "What do you think I am?"

The reply came calmly. "We have already decided that. It is now just a question of price."

It is the importance of the principle which has been broken that is the criterion of a wrong, not the price which is received for the breaking. There are some people who in the event of great temptation and for great gain, will commit an offence whereas in small things they are models of propriety. Others may steal, lie, or commit small wrongs, thinking they are not important enough to matter, while if a large amount were involved they would not so act. Yet either, I submit is equally wrong.

The number of cigarettes involved is not the criterion by which you should assess the punishment to be awarded. That should only be determined on the basis of the seriousness of the nature of the offence itself. How serious is the offence which has been committed?

Mr. Mycock has told you very frankly and I submit truthfully, everything concerning these transactions. He has admitted that he has done wrong. But Gentlemen, how many soldiers could truthfully say they have not been guilty of the same offences.

How many officers or men could honestly answer "No" to these questions?

Have you ever received free of charge from a G.M. stores clothing or equipment to which you were entitled only on repayment?