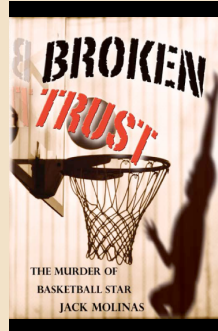


A CONVERSATION WITH JERRY MARCUS ABOUT BASKETBALL, RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY AND...

BROKEN TRUST

The Murder of Basketball Star Jack Molinas

A Novel by Jerry Marcus



Read an excerpt from **BROKEN TRUST at www.brittanypublications.com**

You started writing **BROKEN TRUST years before the current gambling scandal hit the NBA. What made you choose Jack Molinas as the model for your lead character?** I first thought about writing **BROKEN TRUST** around 1985. I started doing some research, including contacting Columbia University, but soon realized there was no way I could answer the question that haunted me the most: *Why would Jack Molinas, with all his talent and such a bright athletic future, risk it all?* I began thinking about all the reasons anyone could become so disillusioned with society, they might be capable of doing almost anything to regain some control of their lives. It seems there are a number of circumstances that might drive people to the edge.

But in the case of Jack Molinas, don't you think it was just his love of gambling and easy money that got him into trouble?

It's too easy to say that about an athlete, any athlete. Look, I'm not sure what really turned Molinas into someone who wanted to beat the system. But it's more than the popular theories of easy money or genetics— *something or somebody has to push you over the edge, make it worth the risk.*

What do you mean? It's not only gamblers who want to control the odds by fixing games, and cheating the innocent. Who knows what makes a person turn to crime? Maybe it's a corporate CEO, or a Chairman of the Board, who cheats the stockholders as well as his employees. In **BROKEN TRUST**, I created a scenario in which Jack Molinas turns to fixing games to take back control after a rabbi steals from his father.

In your earlier novels, you also show a close association between religion and hypocrisy. It's fair to say that's an underlying theme in all my novels. Religious hypocrisy is out there for all of us to see. The motives of many members of the clergy are transparent. There are probably thousands of clergy out there — priests, rabbis, ministers, and especially television evangelists — who try to take advantage of the system.

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Over...

In what way? Instead of fixing basketball games, they're using their positions of power — their cloaks of respectability — to cheat people out of their money with phony schemes under the guise of “charity.” Even worse, are the ones who actually abuse children and others, not for money, but for more evil purposes.

Hypocrisy seems to bother you a lot. Yes, it does — and not just where religion is concerned. On a less complex level, think about the salesman whose company cheats him out of commissions. Or the office manager who gets fired just short of being completely vested in the company's pension plan. Some people are able to just move on. But many aren't able to do that....

But what made you think about Jack's relationship with the Jewish community and Rabbi Sid? Jack Molinas was a Sephardic Jew. I just thought it would be interesting to create a scenario in which it was a rabbi that pushed Jack over his edge.

Yet in **BROKEN TRUST, you also write about a rabbi who helps Jack.** I want readers to understand that for every character like Rabbi Sid in my novel, there are others, like Lubavitch Rabbi Baruch Pincus, who dedicate their lives to helping people.

You don't seem to like lawyers very much, either. I don't think all lawyers are the bad guys in society. Jack's best friend in the book, Larry Bernardi — whose father was cheated in a business deal — fights back by becoming a lawyer dedicated to helping others. It's not that I don't like lawyers. I just think we have created a society in which too much power has been given to lawyers, without regard for the needs of the individual. In Plato's Republic, he writes that *knowledge is virtue and virtue is knowledge*. But Plato's Republic failed. Unfortunately, and too often in our *modern society*, those who are well versed in the law are also the most devious — some are outright corrupt.



JERRY MARCUS

Speaking of corruption and “modern society,” do you see any similarities between Jack Molinas and the current scandal about referee game-fixing and gambling in the NBA? ABSOLUTELY! In Molinas' time the NBA was still a young commodity. Commissioner Maurice Podoloff, and the team owners, were eager to put all the blame on Jack Molinas — to make sure that their commodity remained pure. Podoloff knew that a gambling scandal could wipe out the young league. In fact, gambling by an athlete was looked at more seriously than I think the Commissioner and owners would have looked at an athlete being charged with rape or murder. Any *Broken Trust* between basketball fans and the athletes could lead to the destruction of the NBA.

So you think that David Stern is facing the same situation as Podoloff? Depending on how the fans look at it, it could be worse. Just think about it. A betting scandal could wipe out advertiser support, which would lead to canceled television contracts. To someone who is objective, it might seem like sports needs gambling as much as gamblers need sports.

What advice do you have for David Stern? First, don't act like a lawyer, even though you are one. Second, be honest with the public. And, third, use all your influence to get the point spreads out of the newspapers.

What do you think Jack Molinas would say about the character you created? I think he would like “my” Jack and thank me for believing in him, and not blaming him for all the ills in society. The more important question is: *what will my readers think!*

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