

CAMERON LETTER 2

Through the Cameron letter the Kelly Gang tell their story in their own words.

The letter was posted from Glenrowan on 14/12/78. ([Argus18/12/78](#))

Dear Sir,

Take no offence if I take the opportunity of writing a few lines to you, wherein I wish to state a few remarks concerning the case of Trooper [Fitzpatrick](#) against [Mrs Kelly](#), [W. Skillion](#), and [W. Williamson](#), and to state the facts of the case to you. It seems to me impossible to get justice without I make a statement to someone that will take notice of it, as it is no use in me complaining about anything that the police may choose to say or swear against me, and the public in their ignorance and blindness will undoubtedly back them up to their utmost. No doubt I am now placed in very peculiar circumstances and you might blame me for it, but if you knew how I have been wronged and persecuted you would say I cannot be blamed. In April last an information was (which must have come under your notice) sworn against me for shooting Trooper Fitzpatrick, which was false, and my Mother with an infant baby and brother-in-law and another neighbour was taken for aiding and abetting and attempting to murder him, a charge of which they are as purely innocent as the child unborn.

During my stay in the [King River](#) I run in a wild bull which I gave to [Lydicker](#) who afterwards sold him to Carr and he killed him for beef. Some time afterwards I was told I was blamed for stealing this Bull from [Whitty](#). I asked Whitty on [Moyhu Racecourse](#) why he blamed me for stealing his bull and he said he had found the bull, and he never blamed me for stealing him. He said it was - who told film that I stole the bull. Some time afterward I heard again I was blamed for stealing a mob of calves from Whitty and [Farrell](#), which I never had anything to do with, and along with this and other talk, I began to think they wanted something to talk about. Whitty and **Burns** not being satisfied with all the picked land on King River and [Boggy Creek](#), and the run of their stock on the Certificate ground free, and no one interfering with them paid heavy rent for all the open ground so as a poor man could not keep any stock and impounded every beast they could catch even off Government roads, if a poor man happened to leave his horse or bit of poddy calf outside his paddock, it would be impounded, I have known over 60 head of horses to be in one day impounded by Whitty and Burns, all belonging to poor men of the district. They would have to leave their harvest or ploughing and go to [Oxley](#) and then perhaps not have money to release them and have to give a bill of sale or borrow the money, which is no easy matter, and along with all this sort of work --- the policeman stole a horse from George King and had him in Whitty and Jeffrey's paddock until he left the Force and this was the cause of me and my stepfather George [King](#) stealing Whitty's horses and selling them to [Baumgarten](#) and those other men, the pick of them was sold at [Howlong](#) and the rest was sold to Baumgarten who was a perfect stranger to me and I believe an honest man.

No man had anything to do with the horses but me and [George King](#). [William Cooke](#) who was convicted for [Whitty's](#) horses had nothing to do with them, nor was he ever in my company at Peterson's the [German](#) at [Howlong](#). The brand was altered by me and George King and the horses sold as strait. Any man requiring horses would have sought them the same as those men and would have been potted the same and I consider Whitty ought to do something towards the release of those innocent men, otherwise there will be a collision between me and him as I can to his satisfaction prove.

I took J. Welsh's black mare and the rest of the horses, which I will prove to him, in next issue, and after those horses had been found and the row being over them, I wrote a letter to Mr [Swannell](#) of [Lake Rowan](#) to advertise my horses for sale, as I was intending to sell out. I sold them afterwards at Benalla and the rest in New South Wales and left Victoria as I wished to see certain parts of the country and very shortly afterwards as there was a warrant for me , and I since hear, the police sergeants [Steele](#), [Straughan](#) and [Fitzpatrick](#) and others searched the

Eleven Mile and every other place in the district for me and a man named Newman, who had escaped from the Wangaratta Police for months before the 15th of April.

Therefore it was impossible for me to be in Victoria, as every schoolboy knows me, and on the 15th of April, [Fitzpatrick](#) came to the Eleven Mile and had some conversation with [Williamson](#) who was splitting on the hill, seeing my brother and another man, he rode down and had some conversation with this man whom he swore was William [Skillion](#). This man was not called in Beechworth as he could have proved Fitzpatrick's falsehood as Skillion and another man was away after horses at this time, which can be proved by eight or nine witnesses. The man who the troopers swore was Skillion can prove [Williamson's](#) innocence besides other important evidence, which can be brought on the prisoner's behalf. The trooper after speaking to this man rode to the house and [Dan](#) came out. He asked Dan to go to Greta with him. Dan asked him what for and he said he had a warrant for him for stealing [Whitty's](#) horses. They both went inside, Dan was having something to eat.

The trooper was impatient and [Mrs Kelly](#) asked him what he wanted Dan for, he said he had a Warrant for him. Dan said produce your Warrant and he said he had none, it was only a telegram from [Chiltern](#). Mrs Kelly said he need not go unless he liked without a warrant. She told the trooper he had no business on her premises without some authority besides his own word. He pulled out his revolver, and said he would blow her brains out if she interfered in the arrest. Mrs Kelly said, if Ned was here, he would ram the revolver down his throat. To frighten the trooper Dan said, Ned is coming now. The trooper looked around to see if it was true. Dan dropped the knife and fork which showed he had no murderous intention clapped Heenans Hug on him, took his revolver and threw him and part of the door outside and kept him there until Skillion and Ryan came with horses which Dan sold that night, the trooper left and invented some scheme to say he got shot, which any man can see it was impossible for him to have been shot.

He told Dan to clear out that Sergeant [Steele](#) or Detective [Brown](#) would be there before morning, as [Straughan](#) was over the Murray trying to get up a case against Dan and the Lloyds as the Germans over the Murray would swear to anyone and they will lag you guilty or not. Next day Skillion, Williamson and Mrs Kelly, with an [infant](#) were taken and thrown into prison and were six months awaiting trial and no bail allowed and was convicted on the evidence of the meanest [man](#) that ever the sun shone on. I have been told by Police that he is hardly ever sober, also between him and his father they sold his sister to a Chinaman, but he seems a strapping and genteel looking young man and more fit to be a starcher to Laundry than a trooper, but to a keen observer, he has the wrong appearance to have anything like a clear conscience or a manly heart. The deceit is too plain to be seen in the White Cabbage hearted looking face, I heard nothing of this transaction until very close on the trial I being then over 400 miles from Greta.

I heard that I was outlawed and £100 pound reward for me in Victoria and also hundreds of charges of Horse Stealing was against me, beside shooting a trooper. I came into Victoria and enquired after my brother and found him working with another man at [Bullock](#) Creek. Heard how the police used to be blowing that they would shoot me first and then cry Surrender. How they used to come to the house where there was no one there but women and Superintendent Smith used to say. See all the men I have today, I will have as many more tomorrow and blow him into pieces as small as the paper that is in our guns and they used to repeatedly rush into the house revolver in hand upset milk dishes, empty the flour out on the ground, break tins of eggs, and throw the meat out of the cask on to the floor, and dirty and destroy all the provisions, which can be proved and shove the girls in front of them into the rooms like dogs and abuse and insult them.

Detective [Ward](#) and Constable [Hayes](#) took out their revolvers and threatened to shoot the girls and children, while Mrs Skillion was absent, the oldest being with her, the greatest murderers and ruffians would not be guilty of such an action. This sort of cruelty and disgraceful conduct to my brothers and sisters who had no protection coupled with the conviction of my [Mother](#) and those innocent men certainly made my blood boil as I don't think there is a man born could have the patience to suffer what I did. They were not satisfied with frightening and insulting my sisters night and day and destroying their provisions and lagging my Mother with an infant baby and those innocent men, but should follow me and my brother who was innocent of having anything

to do with any stolen horses, into the wilds, where he had been quietly digging and doing well, neither molesting or interfering with anyone and I was not there long and on the [25th October](#) I came on the tracks of police horses, between Table Top and the Bogs, I crossed there and went to [Emu Swamp](#) and returning home came on more police tracks making for our camp.

I told my mates and me and my brother went out next morning and found police camped at the [Shingle Hut](#) with long fire arms and we came to the conclusion our doom was sealed unless we could take their fire-arms, as we had nothing but a gun and a rifle if they came on us at our work or camp. We had no chance only to die like dogs as we thought the country was woven with police and we might have a chance of fighting them if we had firearms, as it generally takes 40 to one. We approached the Spring as close as we could get to the camp, the intervening space being clear. We saw two men at the Log, they got up and one took a double barrel fowling piece and one drove the horses down and hobbled them against the tent and we thought there was more men in the tent, those being on sentry. We could have shot those two men, without speaking, but not wishing to take life we waited. McIntyre laid the gun against the stump and [Lonigan](#) sat on the log.

I advanced, my brother [Dan](#) keeping [McIntyre](#) covered. I called on them to throw up their hands McIntyre obeyed and never attempted to reach for his gun or revolver, Lonigan ran to a battery of logs and put his head up to take aim at me, when I shot him, or he would have shot me, as I knew well, I asked who was in the tent, McIntyre replied no one. I approached the camp and took possession of their revolvers and fowling piece which I loaded with bullets instead of shot. I told McIntyre I did not want to shoot him or any man that would surrender. I explained [Fitzpatrick's](#) falsehood which no policeman can be ignorant of. He said he knew Fitzpatrick had wronged us but he could not help it. He said he intended to leave the Force on account of his bad health, his life was insured, the other two men who had no firearms came up when they heard the shot fired and went back to our camp for fear the police might call there in our absence and surprise us on our arrival.

My brother went back to the Spring and I stopped at the log with McIntyre. [Kennedy](#) and [Scanlan](#) came up, McIntyre said he would get them to surrender if I spared their lives as well as his. I said I did not know either him Scanlan or Kennedy, and had nothing up against them, and would not shoot any of them, if they gave up their firearms and promised to leave the Force, as it was the meanest billet in the world. They are worse than cold-blooded murderers and hangmen. He said he was sure they would never follow me any more. I gave them my word that I would give them a chance. McIntyre went up to Kennedy, Scanlan behind with a rifle and a revolver. I called on them to throw up their hands. Scanlan slewed his horse around to gallop away, but turned again and as quick as thought fired at me with the rifle and was in the act of firing again, when I shot him.

Kennedy alighted on the off side of his horse and got behind a tree and opened hot fire. McIntyre got on Kennedy's horse and galloped away. I could have shot him if I choose as he was right against me but rather than break my word I let him go. My brother advanced from the Spring, Kennedy fired at him and ran as he found neither of us was dead. I followed him, he got behind another tree and fired at me again. I shot him in the armpit as he was behind the tree, he dropped his revolver and ran again and slewed round and I fired with the gun again and shot him through the right chest as I did not know that he had dropped his revolver and was turning to surrender. He could not live or I would have let him go. Had they been my own brothers, I could not help shooting them or else lie down and let them shoot me, which they would have done had their bullets been directed as they intended them. But as for handcuffing Kennedy to a tree or cutting his car off or brutally treating any of them, is a cruel falsehood.

If Kennedy's ear was cut off, it has been done since I put his cloak over him and left him as honourable as I could and if they were my own brothers I could not be more sorry for them, with the exception of [Lonigan](#) I did not begrudge him what bit of lead he got as he was the beastliest meanest man that I had any account against for him. [Fitzpatrick](#), Sergeant [Whelan](#), Constable [Day](#) and King, the Bootmaker, once tried to hand-cuff me at Benalla and when they could not Fitzpatrick tried to choke me, Lonigan caught me by the privates and would have killed me but was not able. Mr [McInnes](#) came up and I allowed him to put the hand-cuffs on when the police were bested.

This cannot be called wilful murder for I was compelled to shoot them in my own defence or lie down like a cur and die. Certainly their wives and children are to be pitied, but those men came into the bush with the intention of shooting me down like a dog, yet they know and acknowledge I have been wronged. And is my Mother and infant baby and my poor little brothers and sisters not to be pitied more so, who has got no alternative only to put up with brutal and unmanly conduct of the police who have never had any relations or a Mother or must have forgot them. I was never convicted of horse stealing. I was once arrested by Constable Hall and 14 more men in Greta, and there was a subscription raised for Hall, by persons who had too much money about Greta, in honour of Hall arresting Wild Wright and Gunn, Wright and Gunn were potted and Hall could not pot me for horse stealing, but with the subscription money he gave £20 to James Murdoch, who has recently been hung in Wagga Wagga and on Murdoch's evidence, I was found guilty of receiving, knowing to be stolen, which I, Wright, W. Ambrose, J. Ambrose and W. Hatcher and W. Williamson and others can prove I was innocent of knowing the Mare to be stolen, and I was accused of taking a hawker by the name of McCormack's horse to pull another hawker named Ben Could out of a bog.

Mr Could got up in the morning to feed his horses, seen Mr McCormack's horse, and knew he had strayed and sent his man with him about two miles to where McCormack was camped in Greta. Mr and Mrs McCormack came out and seen the waggons bogged and accused him of using the horse. I told Could that was for his good nature. Mrs McCormack turned on me and accused me for catching the horse for Could, as Could knew that he was wicked and could not catch him himself. Me and my uncle was cutting and branding calves and Ben Could wrapped up a pair of testicles, wrote a note and gave it to me to give to Mrs McCormack. McCormack said he would fight me I was then 14 years of age, I was getting off my horse and Mrs McCormack hit the horse, he jumped forward and my fist came in collision with Mr McCormack's nose who swore he was standing 10 yards away from another man and the one hit knocked the two men down. However ridiculous the evidence may seem, I received three months or £10, for hitting him and 3 months for delivering the parcel and bound to the peace for 12 months.

At the time I was taken by Hall and his 14 assistants, therefore I dare not strike any of them as Hall was a great cur. And as for Dan he never was tried for assaulting a woman. Mr Butler, P.M., sentenced him to 3 months without the option of a fine and one month or two pounds fine for wilfully destroying property, a sentence which there is no law to uphold, and yet they had to do their sentence and other prosecutors. Mr D. Goodman since got 4 years for perjury concerning the same property. The Minister of justice should enquire into this respecting their sentence and he will find a wrong jurisdiction given by Butler P.M. on the 19th of October 1877 at Benalla and these are the only charges was ever proved against either of us, therefore we are falsely represented. The reports of bullets having been fired into the bodies of the Troopers after death is false and the Coroner should be consulted. I have no intention of asking mercy for myself or any mortal man or apologising, but wish to give timely warning that if my people do not get justice and those innocents released from prison and the police wear their uniform, I shall be forced to seek revenge of everything of the human race for the future, I will not take innocent life, if justice is given, but as the police are afraid or ashamed to wear their uniforms, therefore every man's life is in danger.

As I was outlawed without any cause and cannot be no worse, and have but once to die, and if the public do not see justice done, I will seek revenge for the name and character which has been given to me and my relations while God gives me strength to pull a trigger. The witness which can prove Fitzpatrick's falsehood can be found by advertisement and if this is not done immediately horrible disasters shall follow, Fitzpatrick shall be the cause of greater slaughter to the rising generation than St Patrick was to the snakes and frogs in Ireland, for had I robbed, plundered, ravished and murdered everything I met, my character could not be painted blacker than it is at present, but thank God my conscience is as clear as the snow in Peru, and as I hear a picked jury amongst which was a discharged Sergeant of Police, was empanelled on the trial and David Lindsay who gave evidence for the Crown is a Shanty Keeper having no licence and is liable to a heavy fine and keeps a book of information for the police and his character needs no comment for he is capable of rendering Fitzpatrick any assistance he required for a conviction as he could be broke any time Fitzpatrick chose to inform on him. I am really astonished to see

Members of the Legislative Assembly led astray by such articles as the Police, for while an outlaw reigns their pocket swells, Tis double pay and country girls -

By concluding, as I have no more paper unless I rob for it, if I get justice I will cry a go. For I need no lead or powder to revenge my cause. and if words be louder, I will oppose your laws. With no offence. (Remember your Railroads), and a sweet good bye from

EDWARD KELLY

A Forced Outlaw