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The Whistle Blower



The Whistle Blower — Virtually all wars are instigated by a first shot. This fight can be traced to the spring of 1985, May the 6th to be exact. When the mayor of Hudson, Quebec, called the monthly town meeting to order at 7 that evening, lawn care wasn't even on his agenda, but he was about to get an earful anyway. Reading a long letter that drew little more than snickers from six councilors and a handful of audience members, a local dermatologist suggested lawn chemicals were not only bad, they were dangerous.

She grew up on a Harley, wore layers of jewelry and applied more eye makeup in a day than some women put on in a month, so it was common to cast the eccentric physician as a quack. Whatever Dr. June Irwin might have lacked in standard professional appearance, however, she more than made up for it with tenacity and intellect. She would steadfastly attend every single town meeting in Hudson for six consecutive years — each time reading aloud a different letter with new observations and facts.

While many in Hudson, a small town west of Montreal with fewer than 5,000 residents, continued to roll their eyes whenever the doctor spoke, some people did listen. June Irwin's words, ultimately, would change North American landscapes forever.

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