

## M.T.A. – Steiner and Hawes 1949

Let me tell you a story 'bout a man named Charlie on a tragic and fateful day. He put ten cents in his pocket, kissed his wife and family, went to ride on the M.T.A.

CHORUS: Did he ever return, no he never returned, and his fate is still unlearned.

He may ride forever 'neath the streets of Boston. He's the man who never returned.

Charlie handed in his dime at the Kendall Square Station, and he knew he had to change at Main. When he got there the conductor told him "One more nickel." Charlie couldn't get off of that train.

CHORUS:

Now all night long Charlie rides thru the station crying "What will become of me? How can I afford to see my sister in Chelsea, or my cousin in Roxbury?"

CHORUS:

Charlie's wife goes down to the Scully Square Station every day at quarter past two. And thru the open window she hands Charlie a sandwich as the train comes rumblin' thru.

CHORUS:

Now you citizens of Boston, don't you think it's a scandal, how the people have to pay and pay. Fight the fare increases. Vote for George O'Brien. Get poor Charlie off the M.T.A.

CHORUS:

He's the man who never returned.

He's the man who never returned.

Written by Jacqueline Steiner and Bess Lomax Hawes in 1949, this song was originally recorded as a mayoral campaign song for Progressive Party candidate Walter A. O'Brien. A version of the song with the candidate's name changed became a 1959 hit when recorded and released by The Kingston Trio. Boston's subway system, until 1964, was known as the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA). The song has become so entrenched in Boston lore that the Boston-area transit authority named its electronic card-based fare collection system the "CharlieCard." The transit organization, now called the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), held a dedication ceremony for the card system in 2004 which featured a performance of the song by the Kingston Trio, attended by then-governor Mitt Romney.