

“The Boston Massacre”

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948 Words

Dear Ma,

I know I have promised you that I would stay safe, but whenever this letter finds you, I am in good health, for the moment; whether or not that will last is not within my knowledge. I am deeply sorry for not writing for some time, my life has become a mess. Many months ago, my company opened fire on a crowd of civilians. It was an accident, rest assured, but the people here in the Colony are likening it to a massacre. Some men are dead, however I would not call that a massacre. Massacre is mass murder, like the stories I used to hear in my adolescence about the Indians killing entire regiments like the one Pa was in. However, I do not wish to make you have to remember when we got that letter so I will go back to the beginning.

My memories of that night are hazy, partly by my own choice. Some guard outside the Customs House called out to my company to help control the crowd. I remember coming over and finding many men, some throwing sticks and balls of snow at the poor lad, taunting him to fire. We had to push our way through the crowd, and a man took Captain Preston by the coat and said “For God’s sake take care of your Men for if they fire your life must be answerable.”, receiving the response

of “I am sensible of it.”^(Fair Account) I doubt I will ever forget those dreadful words, even on my deathbed.

We formed up, forming a semicircle on the steps of the Customs House, and presented our arms to see if we could scare the crowd into going home. A few men scattered, but the drunkards and most of the rest stayed on. Captain Preston also attempted to convince the crowd to go home.^(Trial)

They rang church bells bringing more men out, and they kept taunting us to shoot. It seems odd that they provoked us, but then became enraged when they got what they were asking for. A man threw a stone and it found its target. Private Montgomery was downed, and when he resurfaced, enraged, fired his musket.^(Montgomery) Fire spat out of the barrel, like one of those dragons. He urged us to fire too.

There was a pause, we didn't know what to do. Most of our men, confused, then fired a loose volley of lead. Bostonians dropped. Four? Maybe six? Many more seemed to be wounded. What a horrendous sight to see a good man dragged to his death by his own terrible judgement!

My hand had not been on the trigger, for it had been on the butt of the musket. I never fired a shot. Yet, here I now sit facing trial for the murder of five men! I had been identified as one of the men who fired directly into the crowd. I became fearful for my life, my mind running through the scenarios in which I could get out of Boston. Then, I would have two nations on my tail after being labeled a deserter.

A man came to me, by the name of John Adams who is a relatively prominent revolutionist. He promised every man would get a fair trial, yet I became anxious.^(Adams) Was he only there to promise us a trial free of bias only to turn against us Englishmen for our heads to roll? However, he may have

been my only chance, and here I sit in a colonial court retelling my account to fiery men, ready to watch me hang in the gallows. The odds are against me.

My full trial is tomorrow, but two men before me have been acquitted, so maybe there is hope. The poor Captain's trial went well. He was acquitted a month ago, but he is still taking the brunt of the blame after a metal print surfaced showing him raising his sword, giving the order to fire. It was a complete dramatization of the events! It demonized us, trying to provoke rage! I am sure it will soon be seen back in England.^(Engraving) However, I cannot guarantee my safety, for the colonists are becoming angrier and angrier as the trials don't go their way.

I have heard talk of revolution around town. Revolution? Blasphemy! We gave this new land life, these men are good Englishmen, now questioning our legitimacy: Are they ready to go to war with the most powerful nation in the world? They must be out of their minds! They have better chances taking an undermanned schooner all the way to India than beating us! I think a revolt will make things worse than they are right now, for once the rebellion is suppressed, more troops will be installed. They claim the entire issue is over occupation and taxes. Taxes? Every good man pays his taxes! They claim we are taxing them too much, but we need the money! We protected them against the French savages, and a war costs money. It seems they would have been happier if we left them to feed the French. Maybe we should have, if those ungrateful idiots really wish to live their lives under tyranny.

Things may be heating up over here, but word is going around that we are being taken out of Boston. Maybe I will have the chance to see you again, for Nottingham is calling me home. I hope the future will send me back, but that could all be in jeopardy at the light of a match. Until then, I will stay safe and write as often as army life allows. Much love,

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