

and immediately he marched with twelve men to the relief of the centry, and I remained before the guard.

JAMES BASSET,  
Lieutenant 29th regiment.

Suffolk, ff. Boston, March 13th, 1770.

Sworn before me, JAMES MURRAY, J. P.

(No. 114.)

S I R,

AT your request I now sit down to give you the particulars of Monday evening, the 5th instant. I shall endeavour to divest myself of prejudice, and relate that unhappy affair with the utmost impartiality. I have already given in to several juries of inquest two depositions, not altogether alike in words, but the same in substance, and this is similar to them both, and is as follows. I being in King-street that evening, between the hours of nine and ten o'clock, saw a centry that was placed at the custom-house loading his musket, and swore, to a number of persons that were passing from Royal-Exchange-lane to Quaker-lane, "if they molested him he would fire among them," which occasioned numbers to gather round him, some of whom huzz'd, and told him "to fire and be damn'd." Immediately on this I saw Capt. Preston with a number of soldiers coming from the guard-house to the custom-house with their bayonets charged, who soon formed into half a circle, and began without any provocation to push their bayonets at the people, one of which went through my coat, for which Capt. Preston reprimanded him, and then told Capt. Preston it would be prudent for him to retire and take his men with him; for in case they molested the people I feared the consequences would be bad. He reply'd, "he would do the best he could," or words to that effect.

At this time I heard a person ask Capt. Preston "whether they were loaded;" he reply'd, "they were;" he then asked "whether he intended they should fire?" he answered, "by no means." Also I saw some of the soldiers to appearance load their muskets, which induced me to say to Capt. Preston, "For God's sake, don't let your men fire." He reply'd, "They shall not." At this instant I saw a cake of ice, or snow-ball, strike a grenadier upon the right of the detachment; upon which he levelled his piece and fired; Capt. Preston left me directly, and I heard the word "Fire" several times; which I supposed was uttered by the soldiers, upon which all or most of them fired and loaded. I then retired down Royal-Exchange-lane, and returned in about three or four minutes; I saw the body of a person, called Michael Johnson, lying dead on the ground, which I supposed to be in consequence of their firing; I now told Capt. Preston the fatal effects of their firing, and begged he would retire, as his life was in danger; on