

Speech at the Arraignment of Robert Crichton, Lord Sanquhar (27 June 1612)

Francis Bacon

Transcript

British Library, Sloane MS 3522, ff. 34v–37v

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The Coppie of the speech deliuered by S[i]r Frances Bacon att the Arraignem[en]t of the Lord Sanquer in the kings Bench att W[est]m[inste]r for procuringe the Murther f̄or of Iohn Turner a M[aster]r of defence, the xxvijth of Iune 1612./.

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In this Cause if life, and death, the Iuries parte is in effect discharged: For after a Francke, and Formall Confession, their labor is att an End, soe that what hath bin sayed by Mr Attornye generall, or shalbe sayd by my self, is Rather Conuenient, then ~~neecessitie~~^{necessary}./

My Lord Sanquer yo[u]r faulte is great it cannot be Extenuated, and it neede not be aggrauated, and If needed you haue had made soe full an Anatomy of it out of yo[u]r owne feelinge, as it cannot be matched by my self, or anie man Ells out of my conceipt./.

This Christian, and Penitent Course of yo[u]rs drawes me thus farre, that I agree, that as euen in Extreame Euills, there are degrees, soe this instance of yo[u]r offence is not of the highest straine, For If you had sought to take away a mans life, For his vneyard as Ahab did or for Enuye as Cayne did or to possesse his bedd, as Dauid did suerly the offence had bin more odious/.

Your temptac[i]on was Reuenge, w[hi]ch the more naturall it is to Man, the more haue lawes both diuine and humane sought to repress

it (mihi

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mihi vindicta but in one thinge you and I shall neuer agree, that generous spiritts (you say) are hard to forgiue, noe Contrariwise generous, and in magnanimous mindes are readiest to forgiue, and it is a weakenes and Impotencie of minde to be vnable to forgiue./

But to the purpose howsoeuer Murther may arise from seuerall motiues lesse, or more odious, yet the lawe both of god, and man; Inuolues them in one degree and therefore you may reade that in Ioabs Case w[hi]ch was a Murther upon reuenge, and matched with your Case hee for a deare Brother, and you For a deare parte of yo[u]r owne Bloud, yet there was a seuer charge giuen, it shall not passe vnpunished./

And Certainly the Circumstance of tyme is heauie vnto you it is now Fiue yeares since, this vnfortunate Man Turner be it upon Accident, or upon despight, gaue the Prouocations, w[hi]ch was the seede of yo[u]r Malice, All Passions are Asswaged with tyme, loue, hatred, greife; All fyre burnes out with tyme If noe new fewell be putt to it; for yow

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to haue bin the gall of bitternes soe longe, and to haue bin in a Restles Case of his blood; is a straunge Example, And I must tell you plainelie that I conceaue you haue suckt those Affecc[i]ons of dwellinge in malice rather out of Italye, and Outlandish manners where you haue Conu[er]sed, then out of anie parte of this Island; England, or Scotland./.

But now further my Lord, I would haue you looke a little upon this offence, in the glasse of godes Iudgement, that god maye haue the glorye you haue Frenches, and Entertaynementt in Forragine parts it had bin an Easie thinge for you to haue sett Carlile, or some other Bloodhound, on worke when yo[u]r person had bin beyond the Seas and soe this newes might haue Come to you in a Parquett; And you might haue looked on; how the storme would passe But god bereaueed you of this Prouidence, and Bound you heere, vnder the hand of a kinge that though Abundant in Clemencye, yet is noe lesse zealous of Iustice./.

Againe when you came in att

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Lambeth, you might haue persisted in the denyall of the Procurement of the Facte, Carlyle, a Resolute Man, might haue cleared you, for they that are resolute in Mischeife are Co[m]monly obstinate in Concealinge their procurors; And soe noethinge should haue bin against you but Presumpc[i]on; But then God to take awaie all obstruction of Iustice, gaue you the grace (w[hi]ch ought indeed to be more true comfort vnto you then any Euasion, or deuise whreby you mought haue escaped to make a cleare Confession./.

Other Impediments there were not a few which mought haue bin an Interrupc[i]on to this dayes Iustice had not god in his Prouidence remoued them./.

But now that I haue giuen God the honnor lett me giue it where it is next due that is to the kinge o[u]r soueraigne./.

This Murther was noe sooner Committed, and brought to his Ma[jes]t[ie]s Eares, but his Iust Indignation wherewith att the first he was moued Cast it self presentlie into a great deale of Care, and prouidence to haue Iustice done First came forth his proclamac[i]on somewhat of

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a rare Forme, and deuise, and in Effect directed by his Ma[jes]tie himself, and by that he did prosecute the offenders as it were with breath and blastes of his Mouth; Then did his Ma[jes]tie stretch forth his longe Armes (for kinges you knowe haue longe Armes) one of them to the Sea where he tooke hold of Gray shipped for Sweden; who gaue the first light of Testimonie, The other Arme to Scotland and there tooke hold of Carlisle ere he was warme in his house, and brought him the length of this kingdome vnder such safe watchm and Custody as he could haue noe meanes to escape; or to mischeefe himself nor learne noe lessons to stand mute; In w[hi]ch Cases perhaps theis dayes Iustice might haue receaueed a stopp, soe that I may conclude his Ma[jes]tie hath shewed himselfe gods true liefte[na]nt and that he is noe respecter of persons; But Englishe, Scottish, Nobleman, fencer (w[hi]ch is but an Ignoble Trade) are to him alike in respect of Iustice./.

[Right margin: Nay I must say further that his Ma[jes]tie hath had in this a kind of propheticall sper{it} for that tyme Carli{sle} and Gray & you my lord yo[u]r self were se{tled} noe man knew wheth{er} to the fower wynds The kinge euer spa{ke} in a Confident

and vndertakinge mann{er} that where soeuer th{e} offenders were in Europe, he would
{produce} them forth to Iustice]

Lastlie to retourne to you my lord, though your offence hath bin greate, yo[u]r Confession
hath

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bin free, And yo[u]r behaiour and speech full of discretion, And this sheweth that Although
you could not resist the temptation yet you beare a generous, and a Christian minde
Answerable to the noble Family of w[hi]ch you are descended, This I Commend in you, and
take it to be an assured Testimonye to be of gods mercye and Fauor in respect whereof all
worldly thinges are but trashe; and soe it is fitt for you as yo[u]r state now is to Accompt
them./.

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Other manuscript witnesses

- Alnwick Castle, MS 526, ff. 13r–16v
- British Library, Additional MS 22591, ff. 258r–v
- British Library, Harley MS 39, ff. 287x–288v
- British Library, Lansdowne MS 612, ff. 36r–40r
- Beinecke Library, Osborn Shelves Gordounstoun Box 5, ff. 68r–70v
- Beinecke Library, Osborn fb59
- Folger Shakespeare Library, MS G.b.9, ff. 151r–153v
- Northamptonshire Record Office, FH83, ff. 1r–3v
- Senate House, University of London, MS 300, ff. 65x–79x

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<https://mpese.ac.uk/t/BaconSpeechSanquhar1612.html>