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INTERESTING TRIAL

OF

RENWICK WILLIAMS,

ENTITLED

THE MONSTER,

FOR ASSAULTING

MISS ANN PORTER,

AND

CUTTING HER GARMENTS:

TRIED BEFORE

MR. JUSTICE BULLER,

At the Sessions House in the Old Bailey.

TAKEN DOWN IN SHORT HAND,

By a GENTLEMAN of the Inner-Temple.

Printed for C. STALKER, Stationers - Court,
Ludgate-Street, 1790.

By C. W.

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THE
INTERESTING TRIAL
OF
LEWIS WICKHAM
ENTITLED
THE MONSTER
FOR ASSAULTING
MISS ANN PORTER
AND
CUTTING HER CLOTHES
TRIED REPORT
MR. JUSTICE BULLER
At the Sessions House in the Old Bailey

By a Gentleman of the Inner Temple
TOWN DOWN IN SHORT HAND

Printed for C. STALKER, Stationer, &c.
Lodge-gate, 1792

**T H E
T R I A L**

**OF
RENWICK WILLIAMS,**

**FOR ASSAULTING, WOUNDING, and
CUTTING the CLOATHS of Miss
ANN PORTER.**

Thursday, July 8th, 1790.

HALF past nine o'clock this day, the
Prisoner was arraigned upon **SEVEN**
Indictments, according to the Act of 6 G. I.
for assaulting, wounding, and cutting the
cloaths of several ladies.

The first Indictment (Ann Porter's) con-
tained two distinct Counts.

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First,

First, " That he, R. Williams, on the 18th of January, 1790, did assault Ann Porter, with an intent to cut her cloaths."

Secondly, " That he, R. Williams, did then and there (in St. James's Street) assault and feloniously wound the said Ann Porter, and cut her cloaths."

The Prosecution was opened by Mr. Pigott, who addressed the Jury in a most elegant and feeling manner, wherein he expressed his detestation of a crime, till now, unheard of, and recapitulating the heads of that evidence he was about to bring forth, introduced such reasonable remarks as did honor both to his head and heart.

" No man, said he, among this respectable Jury—no man, who listens to my words—no man, inhabitant of London, but is already apprized of the various inhuman attacks which have been lately made upon several unguarded ladies. The men had been hither-

to

to remarkable for protecting the women from *designing* offenders; but now a MAN was before us a sad example indeed of depravity and vice, guilty of an offence without any plausible *design*.—The Prisoner's intention (he understood) was to set up in his defence, or endeavour so to do, an *alibi*: but he hoped the Jury would consider, that it was either the best or worst of all defences the Prisoner could possibly make against this charge: the *best*, if the absence of the Prisoner at the time he is said to commit the crime be indisputably proved, but the *worst*, if this assertion be weakly defended, as then the Prisoner's guilt must be the more apparent. The Prisoner therefore by this defence must be either honorably acquitted, or fully convicted." He then proceeded to detail the evidence he was about to adduce in support of the charge exhibited.

Miss *Ann Porter* was the first witness called to the support of the prosecution; she is the daughter of a Mr. Porter, who keeps a Cof-

fee-house and Cold Baths in St. James's Street.

Miss A. Porter deposed, that on Jan. the 18th, 1790, as she was going in the evening with her sister Sarah, and another lady to the gallery of the Ball room, St. James's Street, it being the Queen's birth night, that her father, according to promise, and another gentleman, were to meet her at 12 o'clock—that on that night, her Majesty having left the Ball room before the usual time, she was of course obliged either to wait for her father and friend, or else return home unprotected with her sister and another companion; that at last being determined on returning home, particularly as her residence was so near; she, her sister, and friend, accordingly proceeded homewards: that on her way through St. James's Street, she perceived her sister in apparent agitation, and was requested by her to make as much haste as she could to her father's house. What her sister added, being through her fright unintelligibly delivered, she did not comprehend, but acquiesced

quiesced with her desire, and they all made as much haste as possible; her sister was the first who had reached the hall door; she rung the bell with great violence; the other young lady was the next who advanced, but she, being somewhat fatigued with the haste, and her spirits very much exhausted while turning the corner of the rails, received a most violent blow on the right hip; immediately upon this, she turned round, and saw the Prisoner, who then stooped down, but notwithstanding all his endeavours to conceal his face, she recollected the man, having seen him before several times, which times he had pursued her, and while following her close, insulted her with language the most infamous and obscene.

The court was sufficiently satisfied with Miss Porter's declaration, that the language was *obscene*; and did not insist upon any farther explanation.

"That the violence of the blow was so great, she was immediately stunned, during which

which the prisoner stood, and then stared her in the face. Having now recovered herself a little, she took this opportunity of examining his face; she then recollected him, (his former attacks being made in the day time) and had not the least doubt of his person, especially as she was then close to him, and he staring her in the face. She supposed, as she was wounded through her cloaths, that the instruments were sharp and dangerous. That on the 13th of June last, she, her mother, two of her sisters, and a gentleman, (Mr. Colman) were taking a walk in St. James's Park, she happened to meet the prisoner, who carelessly passed her; she was immediately struck with his appearance, and, turning round to examine him better, (the Prisoner also turning round to look after her) she recollected his face, and was fully convinced that he was the man who had insulted her. Accordingly her fears returned; and her friends, who were walking with her, perceiving this very uncommon agitation, begged to know the reason, (particularly Mr. Colman, the gentleman who was walking

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ing with her) to whom she pointed him out. That she saw him again at her father's house that evening, but her agitation was so great, she recollected nothing that then passed; she knew him perfectly well, when she saw him at Bow-street, and pointed him out even among the crowd.

Cross examined by Mr. Knowles.

Q. Did you hear what your sister said to you in St. James's-street, upon being, as you say, so alarmed?

A. No. She was much agitated, and I could only understand that she wanted to hasten home as soon as possible.

Q. Was the hall door opened when you received this wound?

A. No.

Q. What time did you see the Prisoner?

A. After I had received the blow, he then
stood

flood close to me near the rails, staring me in the face, had on a great coat, and I believe, one under it.

Now the gown of pink silk, the shift, and petticoats, which Miss Porter had on that night, were produced in Court; when it appeared, that they were cut on the right side in a most terrible manner.

Miss Sarah Porter was the next witness called in.

Miss Sarah was sister to the Prosecutrix. She deposed, that she had seen the Prisoner before the 18th of June last; that he had followed her there repeatedly, accosting her in language shamefully scurrilous: that she had seen him four different times, each time taking particular notice of him, and therefore able to identify his person; especially as the Prisoner, in pursuing her very often, put his head over her shoulders. That on that night she perceived him at the bottom of St. James's-street, standing with his back towards

towards her; some chairmen then passing by, cried out, *By your leave*. Whereupon the Prisoner turned round, and, upon seeing her, cried, "Oh! ho! are you there?" and gave her a most dreadful blow on the back part of her head. She was very much hurt and terrified, and as well as she could, turned round to her sister, and begged her, for Heaven's sake, to make as much haste home as possible; adding, (but in a faint voice) "Don't you see the wretch behind us." That as soon as they advanced to the hall door, the Prisoner abruptly came between them; and, while ascending the steps of the street door, she turned about and saw him give her sister a most violent blow, with the force of which, she heard her Lutestring rend. That as soon as the street door was opened, she ran in, and turning round, there saw the Prisoner standing before her. That she was perfectly assured of his person, having then seen him more plainly by the light that was in the hall. She was also conscious by the lights in the streets, especially when the Prisoner stood against the wall, while
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the chairman was passing; that the Prisoner was the same whom she had seen before, and who assaulted her sister. That previous to his being apprehended, (about a week) she was at work at the window in the street-parlour; and seeing him in the street, the opposite side of the way, she immediately screamed out; two servants came up stairs, and, being told the cause of this alarm, they endeavoured to take the Prisoner, but could not: he then made his escape. That the next time she saw him was at Bow-street, when he was apprehended. She then immediately recollected him, and even distinguished him among a croud. That she had not the least doubt but that the Prisoner at the bar was the atrocious offender, if she had, she would not so solemnly swear to him.

Being cross examined by Mr. Knowles, she was asked the same questions that her sister was; all which she answered in the same manner.

Miss

Miss Rebecca Porter, (being the next witness called in) deposed that she was not with her sisters at the ball room on the queens birth day, but that she knew the Prisoner by being with her sister (Ann Porter) when she was insulted by him before—That he then followed them and talked to them, in a manner very indecent—She was confident as to the person of the prisoner, having likewise distinguished him in a croud at Bow Street; that she had seen and recollected him on Sunday evening, when he crossed the way in St. James's-Street.

Miss Martha Porter, another younger sister, deposed that she knew the prisoner, and that he had several times insulted her, while she was walking with her other sisters, she was well assured that the Prisoner at the bar was the offender, and that she also recollected his person at Bow-street.

Mr. John Coleman, a fishmonger in Piccadilly, was next called in, he deposed that he was in company with Miss Ann Porter in St. James's-street, Sunday evening, the 13th

of June, and that Miss Porter being much agitated, did, on his requesting to know the cause, acquaint him “ that the wretch had just pass’d her,” at the same time she pointed to a man whom he knew to be the prisoner; he then pursued him.—Upon leaving the Park, the Prisoner went to Mr. Walters, Bookseller, Charing-cross, from that to the Admiralty, then Admiralty-Lane—he then look’d at a House, and by his behaviour, manifested a suspicion of being *dodg’d* by the Witness—he then return’d, went up Spring Gardens, from that through Cockspur-street, Pall-mall, St. James-street, Piccadilly, till he came into Bolton-street, where he knock’d at a door and got admittance, but staid a few minutes; that he still followed him back again through Piccadilly into St. James’s-street, where he knock’d at another door and stood on the steps along with him; that then he ventured to ask him some questions, which he did not, or would not hear; that upon the door being opened, he ask’d the servant, loud enough for the Prisoner’s apprehension, if he knew the Prisoner, the servant answered no? he then

then pursued him back again up St. James's Street to Bond street, endeavouring as much as possible to quarrel with him, but the Prisoner took no notice of the affronts, at least not to resent them; he then cross'd Oxford-street and went up Vere Street, where he knock'd at another house, but there being several bills on it the witness was very positive it was empty; he also insinuated this in hopes to pick a quarrel, but the prisoner declared he knew the contrary, and said a Mr. Pierce liv'd in it, upon which he gave another and louder knock; being however not admitted the Prisoner then left this place, and went into South Moulton Street, where he entered the house of a Mr. Smith: that he (the witness) also knock'd at the same door and requested Mr. Smith would let him see the Prisoner—that upon being introduced to him in the parlour he spoke to him, and wondered he said that he did not resent the affronts he had offer'd him, at the same time demanding to know the place of his abode. Upon being then interrogated both by the Prisoner and Mr. Smith, why he behaved thus, and
made

made such a curious demand, being rather doubtful whether he should give his reasons or no, he only said that the Prisoner had insulted some Ladies that were in his company, who had pointed him out, and he was therefore resolved to have satisfaction. That the prisoner denied this accusation, declaring he had never insulted any Ladies, but the witness not being content with this evasive assertion, press'd him more strongly, and candles being now placed on the table, at last the Prisoner gave his address, and the witness in return gave him his.

The Prisoners address (which was produced in the Court) was Mr. Williams, No. 52, Jermyn Street. After some mutual sneers and recognizance, the witness departed, leaving the Prisoner in the house; that he then repented his having left him behind, and accordingly turn'd back to look for him, when he met him in the upper end of St. James's Street, where he again accosted him, saying, " he did not believe now he was the
 " man he took him for, and he might as well
 " come

“ come then and let the ladies see him;” but he immediately objected to this, under pretence that it was too late, however, being importuned, he consented. When they came to Mr. Porter’s, the Prisoner made some observations on the House, and upon entering the parlour with the witness, the Ladies (Ann and Sarah) who were there, cried out, “ Oh my God that’s the wretch,” and fainted away; upon this the Prisoner affected sudden astonishment, wondered very much he said at the behaviour of the young Ladies, and hoped they did not suspect him for the *Monster* that was advertised. Upon their positively answering in the affirmative he made no further particular observations; his stay here was nearly an hour.

Cross examined.

Did he give his address at Mr. Smith’s, with readiness when you assign’d a reason for asking it?

A.

A. He did.

Q. Was he at all embarrass'd, when he was at Mr. Porter's, and before the ladies?

A. No, indeed; on the contrary, he behaved somewhat like an innocent man.

Mc. Manus, the officer who took the prisoner into custody, said that he had search'd his lodgings, which were not according to the address that had been given to Mr. Coleman, and which were his mothers and sisters, but at the George, a Public House, in Bury-street, St. James's; there were several beds and other lodgers in this house, he found in them a hat, a pair of boots, and a light colour'd coat, which the Prisoner confess'd were his.

Mr. Tomkins, the Surgeon, who had attended Miss Ann Porter, upon her being so dreadfully wounded deposed, that from the appearance of the wound it must have been made by a very sharp Instrument; that the
cloaths

Cloaths must have been cut through, at the same time the wound which gradually encreased down from her hip was about nine or ten inches long partly skin deep, above three inches deep in the center.

Cross examined.

Q. What sort do you think the Instrument to be ?

A. From the appearance of the wound it must have been a long one ;

Q. Do you think it was a violent blow ?

A. Undoubtedly, and must have pierced the *Abdomen* had it not been prevented by the stays.

(Here the Evidence for the prosecution closed.)

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The Prisoner was now called upon by Judge Buller for whatever he might think proper to offer in his defence. Accordingly by permission of the Court he address'd himself to the following purport out of a written paper,

Such was his unhappy situation at present, that he stood before them an object worthy at least their attention and compassion; he admitted the justice of all those sufferings he had hitherto undergone. But while he revered the laws of his country he could not but reprobate in the highest manner the several public prints, who by their illiberal and cruel exaggerations endeavoured to make him appear already condemned; he trusted however in the mercy of an English Jury, not to suffer his fate to be too wantonly decided by popular prejudice. His hopes of proving, as well as his own assurance of his innocence, sustained him to the lash of the female sex, to whose eyes he was represented as the most abandon'd and obnoxious, was always in his eyes, the most amiable and lovely; he also hoped that as this prosecution was founded

on

on a dreadful mistake, by evidences which he had ready to produce; he should be able to prove his innocence to the satisfaction of all.

The first witness called on behalf of the defence was,

Mr. Mechell. This gentleman was a foreigner, and being incapable of speaking English himself, was obliged to be understood by the means of an interpreter. He was brought to prove an *Alibi*, that the Prisoner was at another place the very time the crime was said to be committed, and therefore innocent of the charge; he knew the Prisoner at the bar, and said he had worked for him nine months, being a maker of artificial flowers. He had worked with him on the 18th of January, being the Queen's birth-day, from nine o'clock in the morning, till one in the forenoon; and from half past two the same day, till twelve at night, he had also supped with him, and went home at half past twelve at night, being obliged to stay so late, having

more work than usual to do, not having worked before longer than nine o'clock. The witness had been out in the evening, till six o'clock, but not after; and was very certain that the Prisoner was not either, or he must have missed him; the witnesses family were at that time, his sister, and two women, his wife being in the country: he gave the Prisoner a most excellent character, and particularized his repeated kindnesses to the women of the family.

Cross Examined.

Q. How long have you lived in the house?

A. Four years; I occupy the ground floors only.

Q. When did the Prisoner come to work with you?

A. In November, or December, not certain; but, at the time alluded to, he was with me eight or nine weeks.

Q.

Q. Was he well recommended to you?

A. Not at all, I took him without a recommendation.

Q. What did your family consist of?

A. My wife, two sisters, one of them since married, a servant, and myself; besides there are three women who work, a man, and the Prisoner.

Q. When did the man go away that night?

A. Eleven o'clock, on account of the great business that we had to do that night, being obliged to work that night till 12.

Q. Is that often the case?

A. It has happened so 7 or 8 times the preceding fortnight.

Q. How often that year?

A.

A. I cannot tell exactly how often; an order had come that evening for a gown for Mrs. Abington, which was to have been finished by next morning, otherwise the Prisoner would not have been detained.

Q. Where is the order?

A. It was not a written one, but verbally delivered by a Mr. Jerfeaux, who lives in King-street, Castle Street, Leicester Fields.

Q. Did the Prisoner ever go out without leave?

A. He never was absent from his work without leave.

Q. How do you know it was half past 12 o'clock when the Prisoner went away that night?

A. Because the maid in letting him out, look'd at the clock, and observed it went well;

well; the watchman also was crying half past twelve at the same time.

Q. When did you make these observations?

A. They occurred to my sister first, three weeks ago.

Q. 'Till when did the Prisoner work with you?

A. 'Till the King's last birth-day.

Miss Michell, sister to this witness, and who lived with him, corroborated her brother's testimony, in respect to the Prisoner's having been there the 18th of January, but declared in contradiction to him that he was at home when the order for Mrs. Abington's gown came; she also contradicted herself in first declaring that the servant looked at the clock, and said it was right, and afterward saying that she only

reminded her of it since the Prisoner's confinement.

Judge Buller very properly remarked, that the reality of the necessity of working that night late, might easily be proved by Mechell's books; but, upon their being produced into court, no corroboration appeared.

Margaret Armond swore, that the Prisoner was at work till twelve o'clock; and that, in letting him out, she remembered her sister seemed apprehensive of his having staid too long.

Mary Armond remembered looking at the clock, when the Prisoner was going,

Frances Beaufin said he went home that night at half past Eleven, and left the Prisoner behind him; but by swearing that Mechell himself was not out from two o'clock, contradicted the former witnesses. She was in the shop all day, and saw no order

order for a gown come; that she and others were at work upon a gown.

Mr. Jerpeux proved by his books, that he had given the order for Mrs. Abington's gown; he brought the pattern about seven in the evening, gave the order about eight, and received it the next day about twelve.

Fourteen witnesses, male and female, appeared to the character of the Prisoner, and all gave him a good one. The Evidence for the defence closed.

Judge Buller then, in a most masterly, and indeed impartial manner, went through the detail of the whole evidence for the prosecution and defence.

The Jury, without any hesitation, found the Prisoner—Guilty.

His lordship then ordered judgment to be respited till December sessions, and the wit-

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nesses

nesses on the other indictments to be bound over on their respective recognizances : his lordship declaring that his intention was to lay the case before the Twelve Judges, it being the first upon the statute, according to which it was laid.

Mr. Pigott and Mr. Shepherd were counsel for the Prosecution.

Mr. Knowles for the Prisoner.

The Trial was from half past nine in the morning, till five in the afternoon : every place was crowded.

F I N I S.

