

As might be expected, this tragedy wrought the whole people of Massachusetts, and above all, the inhabitants of Boston, to the highest pitch of rage and indignation. The populace breathed only vengeance. Even minds better instructed and of higher principles than the multitude, in the excitement of the moment could not endure the doctrine that it was possible for an armed soldiery to fire upon and kill unarmed citizens and commit a crime less than murder. Political animosity and natural antipathy to troops stationed in the metropolis sharpened this vindictive spirit. The friends of the government were either silent or only expressed regret and lamentation at the event. The friends of freedom were loud in their indignation and clamorous for that justice which declares that blood shall be the penalty of blood.

Meanwhile there had been several meetings of the people and a committee was appointed which proceeded to the examination of witnesses "in order to show to the world and especially to the friends of the colonies in England that there were just grounds for insisting upon the removal of the troops." A narrative was also given of the transaction which was adopted by the town and was widely distributed, differing materially from the facts as subsequently proved and calculated to increase the excitement. Under such circumstances the British soldiers were to be tried for their lives and serious fears were entertained, not only by their friends but by the candid and moderate of all parties, that they would not be dealt with by even-handed justice.

But among the friends of freedom there were men who viewed this matter in the calm and rational light of truth and justice. Anxious for the honor of the