

**Burr, George Lincoln, 1857-1938. Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648-1706**  
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## **II. The Tryal of Bridget Bishop,<sup>127</sup> alias Oliver, At the Court of Oyer and Terminer Held at Salem, June, 2, 1692.**

I. She was Indicted for Bewitching of several persons in the Neighbourhood, the Indictment being drawn up, according to the Form in such Cases usual. And pleading, Not Guilty, there were brought in several persons, who had long undergone many kinds of Miseries, which were preternaturally Inflicted, and generally ascribed unto an horrible Witchcraft. There was little Occasion to prove the Witchcraft, it being Evident and Notorious to all Beholders. Now to fix the Witchcraft on the Prisoner at the Bar, the first thing used, was the Testimony of the Bewitched; whereof several Testify'd, That the Shape of the Prisoner did oftentimes very grievously pinch them, choak them, Bite them, and Afflict them; urging them to write their Names in a Book, which the said Spectre called, Ours. One of them did further Testify, that it was the Shape of this Prisoner, with another, which one Day took her from her Wheel, and carrying her to the River side, threatned there to Drown her, if she did not Sign to the Book mentioned: which yet she refused. Others of them did also Testify, that the said Shape did in her Threats brag to them that she had been the Death of sundry persons, then by her Named; that she had Ridden a man then likewise Named. Another Testify'd the Apparition of Ghosts unto the Spectre of Bishop, crying out, You Murdered us! About the Truth whereof, there was in the matter of Fact but too much Suspicion.

II. It was Testify'd, That at the Examination of the Prisoner before the Magistrates, the Bewitched were extreamly Tortured. If she did but cast her Eyes on them, they were presently struck down; and this in such a manner as there could be no Collusion in the Business. But upon the Touch of her Hand upon them, when they lay in their Swoons, they would immediately Revive; and not upon the Touch of any ones else. Moreover, upon some Special Actions of her Body,

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as the shaking of her Head, or the Turning of her Eyes, they presently and painfully fell into the like postures. And many of the like Accidents now fell out, while she was at the Bar. One at the same time testifying, That she said, She could not be Troubled to see the Afflicted thus Tormented.

III. There was Testimony likewise brought in, that a man striking once at the place, where a Bewitched

person said, the Shape of this Bishop stood, the Bewitched cried out, that he had Tore her Coat, in the place then particularly specify'd; and the Womans Coat was found to be Torn in that very place.

IV. One Deliverance Hobbs, who had Confessed her being a Witch, was now Tormented by the Spectres, for her Confession. And she now Testify'd, That this Bishop tempted her to Sign the Book again, and to Deny what she had Confess'd. She affirmed, that it was the Shape of this Prisoner, which whipped her with Iron Rods, to compel her thereunto. And she affirmed, that this Bishop was at a General Meeting of the Witches, in a Field at Salem-Village, and there partook of a Diabolical Sacrament in Bread and Wine then Administred!

V. To render it further Unquestionable, that the prisoner at the Bar was the Person truly charged in *this* Witchcraft, there were produced many Evidences of *other* Witchcrafts, by her perpetrated. For Instance, John Cook testify'd, that about five or six years ago, One morning, about Sun-Rise, he was in his Chamber assaulted by the Shape of this prisoner: which Look'd on him, grin'd at him, and very much hurt him with a Blow on the side of the Head: and that on the same day, about Noon, the same Shape walked in the Room where he was, and an Apple strangely flew out of his Hand, into the Lap of his Mother, six or eight foot from him.

VI. Samuel Gray testify'd, That about fourteen years ago, he wak'd on a Night, and saw the Room where he lay full of Light; and that he then saw plainly a Woman between the Cradle and the Bed-side, which look'd upon him. He Rose, and it vanished; tho' he found the Doors all fast. Looking out at the Entry-Door, he saw the same Woman, in the same Garb again; and said, In Gods Name, what do you come for? He went to Bed, and had the same Woman again assaulting him. The Child in the Cradle gave a great schreech, and the Woman Disappeared. It was long before the Child

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could be quieted; and tho' it were a very likely thriving Child, yet from this time it pined away, and after divers months dy'd in a sad Condition. He knew not Bishop, nor her Name; but when he saw her after this, he knew by her Countenance, and Apparrel, and all Circumstances, that it was the Apparition of this Bishop which had thus troubled him.

VII. John Bly and his Wife testify'd, that he bought a sow of Edward Bishop, the Husband of the prisoner; and was to pay the price agreed, unto another person. This Prisoner being Angry that she was thus hindred from fingring the money, Quarrell'd with Bly. Soon after which, the Sow was taken with strange Fits, Jumping, Leaping, and knocking her head against the Fence; she seem'd Blind and Deaf, and would neither eat nor be suck'd. Whereupon a neighbour said, she believed the Creature was Over-Looked; and sundry other circumstances concurred, which made the Deponents Believe that Bishop had Bewitched it.

VIII. Richard Coman testify'd, that eight years ago, as he lay Awake in his Bed, with a Light Burning in the Room, he was annoy'd with the Apparition of this Bishop, and of two more that were strangers to him, who came and oppressed him so, that he could neither stir himself, nor wake any one else, and that he was the night after molested again in the like manner; the said Bishop taking him by the Throat, and pulling him almost out of the Bed. His kinsman offered for this cause to lodge with him; and that Night, as they were Awake, Discoursing together, this Coman was once more visited by the Guests which had formerly been so troublesome; his kinsman being at the same time strook speechless and unable to move Hand or Foot. He had laid his sword by him, which these unhappy spectres did strive much to wrest from him; only he held too fast for them. He then grew able to call the People of his house; but altho' they heard him, yet they had not power to speak or stir; until at last, one of the people crying out, what's the matter? the spectres all vanished.

IX. Samuel Shattock testify'd, That in the Year 1680, this Bridget Bishop often came to his house upon such frivolous and foolish errands, that they suspected she came indeed with a purpose of mischief. Presently whereupon his eldest child, which was of as promising Health and Sense as any

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child of its Age, began to droop exceedingly; and the oftener that Bishop came to the House, the worse grew the Child. As the Child would be standing at the Door, he would be thrown and bruised against the Stones, by an Invisible Hand, and in like sort knock his Face against the sides of the House, and bruise it after a miserable manner. Afterwards this Bishop would bring him things to Dy, whereof he could not Imagine any use; and when she paid him a piece of Money, the Purse and Money were unaccountably conveyed out of a Lock'd box, and never seen more. The Child was immediately hereupon taken with terrible fits, whereof his Friends thought he would have dyed: indeed he did almost nothing but cry and Sleep for several Months together; and at length his understanding was utterly taken away. Among other Symptoms of an Inchantment upon him, one was, that there was a Board in the Garden, whereon he would walk; and all the invitations in the world could never fetch him off. About Seventeen or Eighteen years after, there came a Stranger to Shattocks House, who seeing the Child, said, "This poor Child is Bewitched; and you have a Neighbour living not far off, who is a Witch." He added, "Your Neighbour has had a falling out with your Wife; and she said in her Heart, your Wife is a proud Woman, and she would bring down her Pride in this Child." He then Remembred, that Bishop had parted from his Wife in muttering and menacing Terms, a little before the Child was taken Ill. The abovesaid Stranger would needs carry the Bewitched Boy with him to Bishops House, on pretence of buying a pot of Cyder. The Woman Entertained him in furious manner; and flew also upon the Boy, scratching his Face till the Blood came; and saying, "Thou Rogue, what, dost thou bring this Fellow here to plague me?" Now it seems the Man had said, before he went, that he would fetch Blood of *her*. Ever after the Boy was follow'd with grievous Fits, which the Doctors themselves generally ascribed unto Witchcraft; and wherein he would be thrown still into the Fire or the Water, if he were not constantly look'd after; and it

was verily believed that Bishop was the cause of it.

X. John Louder testify'd, that upon some little controversy with Bishop about her fowles, going well to Bed, he did awake in the Night by moonlight, and did see clearly the likeness

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of thisoman grievously oppressing him; in which miserable condition she held him, unable to help him self, till near Day. He told Bishop of this; but she deny'd it, and threatned him very much. Quickly after this, being at home on a Lords day, with the doors shutt about him, he saw a Black Pig approach him; at which he going to kick, it vanished away. Immediately after, sitting down, he saw a Black thing Jump in at the Window, and come and stand before him. The Body was like that of a Monkey, the Feet like a Cocks, but the Face much like a mans. He being so extreemly affrighted, that he could not speak, this Monster spoke to him, and said, "I am a Messenger sent unto you, for I understand that you are in some Trouble of Mind, and if you will be ruled by me, you shall want for nothing in this world." Whereupon he endeavoured to clap his hands upon it; but he could feel no substance, and it jumped out of the window again; but immediately came in by the Porch, though the Doors were shut, and said, "You had better take my Counsel!" He then struck at it with a stick, but struck only the Groundsel, and broke the Stick. The Arm with which he struck was presently Disenabled, and it vanished away. He presently went out at the Back-Door, and spyed this Bishop, in her Orchard, going toward her House; but he had not power to set one foot forward unto her. Whereupon returning into the House, he was immediately accosted by the Monster he had seen before; which Goblin was now going to Fly at him; whereat he cry'd out, "The whole Armour of God be between me and you!" So it sprang back, and flew over the Apple Tree, shaking many Apples off the Tree, in its flying over. At its Leap, it flung Dirt with its Feet against the Stomach of the Man; whereon he was then struck Dumb, and so continued for three Days together. Upon the producing of this Testimony, Bishop deny'd that she knew this Deponent: yet their two Orchards joined, and they had often had their Little Quarrels for some years together.

XI. William Stacy Testified, That receiving Money of this Bishop, for work done by him, he was gone but a matter of Three Rods from her, and looking for his money, found it unaccountably gone from him. Some time after, Bishop asked him, whether his Father would grind her grist for her? He

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demanded why? she Reply'd, "Because Folks count me a Witch." He answered, "No Question, but he will grind it for you." Being then gone about six Rods from her, with a small Load in his Cart, suddenly

the Off-wheel slump't and sunk down into an Hole upon plain ground, so that the Deponent was forced to get help for the Recovering of the wheel. But stepping Back to look for the Hole which might give him this disaster, there was none at all to be found. Some time after, he was waked in the Night; but it seem'd as Light as Day, and he perfectly saw the shape of this Bishop in the Room, Troubling of him; but upon her going out, all was Dark again. He charg'd Bishop afterwards with it, and she deny'd it not; but was very angry. Quickly after, this Deponent having been threatned by Bishop, as he was in a dark Night going to the Barn, he was very suddenly taken or lifted from the ground, and thrown against a stone wall; After that, he was again hoisted up and thrown down a Bank, at the end of his House. After this again, passing by this Bishop, his Horse with a small load, striving to Draw, all his Gears flew to pieces, and the Cart fell down; and this deponent going then to lift a Bag of corn, of about two Bushels, could not budge it with all his might.

Many other pranks of this Bishops this Deponent was Ready to testify. He also testify'd, that he verily Believed, the said Bishop was the Instrument of his Daughter Priscilla's Death; of which suspicion, pregnant Reasons were assigned.

XII. To Crown all, John Bly and William Bly Testify'd, That being Employ'd by Bridget Bishop, to help take down the Cellar-wall of the old House, wherein she formerly Lived, they did in Holes of the said old Wall find several Poppets,<sup>128</sup> made up of Rags and Hogs Brussels, with Headless Pins in them, the Points being outward. Whereof she could give no Account unto the Court, that was Reasonable or Tolerable.

XIII. One thing that made against the Prisoner was, her being evidently convicted of Gross Lying in the Court, several Times, while she was making her Plea. But besides this, a

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Jury of Women found a preternatural Teat upon her Body,<sup>129</sup> but upon a second search, within Three or four hours, there was no such thing to be seen. There was also an account of other people whom this woman had afflicted. And there might have been many more, if they had been enquired for. But there was no need of them.

XIV. There was one very strange thing more, with which the Court was newly Entertained. As this Woman was, under a Guard, passing by the Great and Spacious Meeting-House of Salem, she gave a Look towards the House. And immediately a Dæmon Invisibly Entring the Meeting-house, Tore down a part of it; so that tho' there were no person to be seen there, yet the people at the Noise running in, found a Board, which was strongly fastned with several Nails, transported unto another quarter of the House.

## Notes

[127] As to Bridget Bishop see also pp. 249, 356, below. She was of Salem Village, where she kept a sort of wayside tavern, but had long lived in the town, and still held property there. She was the first witch to be tried (June 2) and executed (June 10) -- perhaps because she had so long been under suspicion. The records of her case are printed in *Records of Salem Witchcraft*, I. 135-172.

[128] Supposed, of course, by her accusers to be such "images" as witches were alleged to make of their victims, for the sake of torturing them by proxy. (See above, p. 163, note 1, p. 219, and below, p. 440, note 1.)

[129] See below, p. 436, and note 1.

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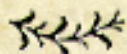


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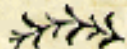
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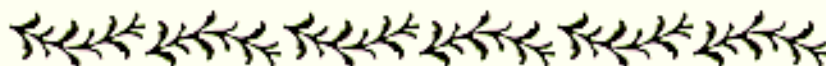
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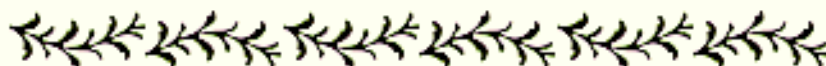


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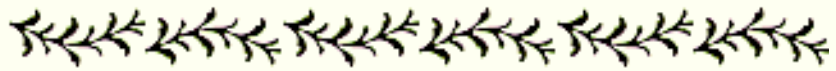
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