

Examined in the Light of Midday: Paul Revere's Midnight Ride

“THE BRITISH ARE COMING!!!”...The only words that could have been more startling on the fretful night of April 18th, 1775, were if someone had said that the storage of their ever-popular beverage of tea was empty (possibly located at the bottom of a bay in Massachusetts after a particularly rambunctious party). Nonetheless, the ominous declaration that a group of redcoat British soldiers was impending upon the towns of Lexington and Concord was an unsettling one—analogue to if a five-year-old kid at Disneyland saw Darth Vader rapidly approaching him with his red light saber. With contentious feelings of an American Revolution starting to brew—partly engendered by conflicts embedded in such querulous events as the Boston Tea Party—one famous hero would emerge to prepare the rallying call from which the inception of the American Revolutionary War would spring off of: Paul Revere.

The roots of the story derive from Boston, Massachusetts, where a silversmith named Paul Revere received an assignment from a secret spy ring he was a member of, called the Sons of Liberty.¹ His instructions were to embark on a daunting mission where he was to avoid the almost ubiquitous British presence in the region to discreetly arrive at Lexington and alert the principal figures of Samuel Adams and John Hancock that an imminent threat of seven hundred British lobster-backs was rapidly encroaching upon their position with the aims of capturing and imprisoning them.² Revere was also consigned the task of traveling to Concord, where he was to warn the people there that the British were most likely going to raid their town in search of

¹ *Who Was Paul Revere?* Paw Prints, 2011.

² Fischer, David Hackett. *Paul Revere's Ride, and the Battle of Lexington and Concord*. Oxford University Press, 1994.

weapon deposits after they had completed their fiery crusade upon Lexington. Dodging British eyes at every corner, Revere, like a historic James Bond, was able to valiantly save the day by parading across the countryside, decreeing with his mighty bugle call that “the British are coming,” and flaunting that the people could now bestow a laurel wreath upon his head and proclaim him as their savior, for he had delivered them from the clutches of death...at least, this is what the abridged version of the tale pervades.

The true narrative proves that this one character plotline is not exactly accurate. For one, Revere did not “save the day,” for it was under the anonymity of darkness when he covertly set off on his outing. Additionally, there were more actors involved than the sole “James Bond” himself; two men named William Dawes and Dr. Samuel Prescott were also fundamental catalysts to the mission’s success, along with almost *forty* other riders who, albeit marginally, aided in the campaign.³ Nevertheless, it is commonly denoted how Paul Revere is characterized as the champion who dauntlessly risked his life to inform entire populations of the oncoming peril of British muskets. While Paul Revere is undoubtedly an instrumental figure in the course of history, it paradoxically does not do him justice to be the only one in the spotlight, for with a more pristine focus on the entirety of the picture, Revere’s profound contributions during the middle of the night are painted in the more coherent light... of midday.

The probable reason as to why Revere has become commonly acclaimed as being the sole hero in alerting of the British is attributed to a man named Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who created a poem about Revere to “revere” his legacy.⁴ The poem, *solely* mentioning Revere,

³ “Paul Revere - The Midnight Ride.”

⁴ Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, and Charles Santore. *Paul Reveres Ride: the landlords tale*. Applesauce Press, 2014.

became incredibly well known and exalted Revere's actions to becoming a near household competency. The motive, however, as to why Longfellow neglected to acknowledge Dawes and Prescott is likely due to the simple fact that just as the euphonic name of James Bond, or 007, is more iconic than the 005 or 002 that preceded before Bond, the name of Paul Revere was likely the only one in the poem due to Longfellow's *subjective* feelings of its more marketable appeal.⁵ Consequently, when Longfellow's poem became renowned as a quintessence of the historical event, the names of all the other people who contributed to the mission were largely overshadowed, forgotten, and unceremoniously left in the dust.

Additionally, Revere's story is not as romantic as it is commonly denoted. Riddled with plot twists and cliffhangers, the mission stood on a mightily precarious underpinning. For instance, the very horse Revere rode was slapdashedly borrowed in the nature of the frantic rush Dawes, Prescott, and Revere were pressed with.⁶ Moreover, although they were able to complete their sprint to Lexington, in their attempt to complete the second half of their mission, alerting the constituents of Concord, Revere and his two companions were again flustered to say the least. On their route, they were abruptly captured by a group of British soldiers! All hope seemed lost. However, like any good Hollywood movie, rock bottom became a great foundation from which to build off of. Revere and Dawes, in selfless acts of sacrifice, made a feigned attempt to escape in one direction, which drew the attention of their British captors just long enough to craftily open up the opportunity for their companion, Prescott, to dart in the opposite direction, which just so happened to be pointed towards Concord, and continue the mission!⁷ The rest of

⁵ Leehey, Patrick M. "The Real Story of Paul Revere's Ride."

⁶ "Paul Revere - The Midnight Ride."

⁷ Leehey, Patrick M. "The Real Story of Paul Revere's Ride."

the story is literally history. Prescott was able to inform the people of Concord, while Dawes and Revere were able to later obtain liberation from the British without incurring any injuries.

The consequential reality is that Revere cannot necessarily be *applauded* for being the *only* hero in protecting the towns of Lexington and Concord, but nevertheless his importance remains unwavering, and for that he merits a *standing ovation*. While he was not the only one holding the “bugle” and trumpeting the cause of American resistance, the beauty is rather in how he, with Dawes, Prescott, and the some forty other riders, formed an entire orchestra, with the exponential capability to resonate their calls to action as zealous patriarchs of freedom and liberty against such British troops who “crashed their party” and forced them to dump their own tea into the sea in a rebellious “declaration of independence”. Paul Revere, despite the less self-glorified reality his story alludes to, indubitably maintains his sort-of James Bond characterization—not through his bravado or self-actuated heroics—but more so from the way in which his story coalesces a sparkling brilliance of unanimity, of a “United Bond”, which would set the tone for what would surmount to an entire nation: a United States linked together with the foundation he exemplified through his pioneering risks and enterprising spirit. By working as an integrated unit, patriots such as Revere, Dawes, Prescott, and not just the forty, but the hundreds of other Revolutionary leaders who risked their lives for the cause of American Independence, were able to attain the goal of fronting an effective resistance against British infiltrations. Their story can be epitomized as a historic event that rallied American constituents to come together, and correspondingly the significance of Revere’s tale is how his actions would set the future citizens of America on a firm establishment from which even in the bleakest of hours and darkest of nights, they could effectively persevere through the adversity in hopes of a better, brighter tomorrow...of a day, of a midday.

