

Encl: to  
31 March  
1813

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## EXTRACT

From "*The History of the Political Life of the Right Hon. W. Pitt.*"

By J. Gifford, Esq. (Vol. IV. 8vo. Edit. p. 398,) and a Note by  
Mr. Bedingfeld.

IT was during this ferment, that the Minister deemed it expedient to assemble the Parliament at a much earlier period than usual. The 29th of 1795. October was the day fixed for its meeting; a day destined for the practical illustration of those vile principles which had been diffused with so much industry, and with such fatal success, during the summer. An immense concourse of people, much greater than had ever been witnessed on a similar occasion, had assembled in the Park, through which the King was to pass, on his way to the House of Lords. As the Royal carriage moved slowly on, the mob pressed close upon it, vociferating, "Peace!—No War! No King!" thus, unwarily, betraying not only the ostensible object, but the end, of these violent proceedings.

The King reached the Horse-Guards, amidst the hisses, groans, and abuse of a rabble, who had been regularly trained to sedition and treason. The gates were then closed, so as to prevent numbers of the mob from following the Royal carriage to Whitehall. But as it was passing through Palace-Yard, the coach-window was struck with violence by something which perforated the glass, and passed, with great velocity, very near to the Earl of Westmoreland, who was with His Majesty.—From the shape and size of the hole made in the glass, as well as from the great thickness of the glass itself, it was pretty evident that what had passed through it was a *bullet*; and that, as no explosion had been heard, it had been fired from an air-gun; for nothing less powerful than some such instrument could have produced the effect.—Whatever it was, there cannot exist a doubt, in the mind of any rational being, that it was intended for the purpose of assassination, and that the King was its object.—It is equally certain, that it was a premeditated crime; and when considered in connexion with the insults which the King experienced in the Park, and with the attack made on him, on his return, there is every reason for believing, that they all sprang from the same source, that they were all equally the result of a settled plan, and that they all had the same object in view—the murder of the King, as a preparatory step to a Revolution in the country. His Majesty pointed out a quarter whence the bullet proceeded; and where stood a dray, before a house in which no

person appeared; which was the more singular, as the windows of every other house on the road were filled with spectators who went to see the King pass.

As soon as the King had opened the Parliament, he returned by the same way to the Palace.—He there dismissed his State-Coach, and went, as usual, in his chariot, to *Buckingham-House*. The Park was, by this time, pretty well cleared; and the Royal guards, having been dismissed, were on their way to *Whitehall*.—A small party of the mob, having watched for the opportunity, now darted on the King's chariot, and, while some of them climbed on the wheels, so as to stop its progress, others flew to the doors. At this critical conjuncture, a *Gentleman of the Navy Board*, who happened to be near the spot, witnessed the daring attempt. His indignant loyalty prompted him to fly to the assistance of his Sovereign; but, recollecting the probable inefficacy of his unassisted exertions, he prudently ran after the guards, who were yet within sight, and providentially brought them back just in time to prevent the ferocious rebels from dragging the King from his carriage, and from completing their diabolical purpose. Thus, to the activity and presence of mind of this loyal Gentleman (his name was *Bedingfield*) was the country, in all probability, indebted for having rescued her character from the foulest stain which the hand of a regicide could inflict, and which no expiation, no atonement, could ever have effaced.

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THE Undersigned thinks it incumbent upon him to correct the errors in this statement.

He should have sunk for ever in his own estimation, and have disgraced all those who have gone before him, if, in a moment pregnant with so much danger to His Majesty, he had left the carriage for one moment, for any purpose whatsoever. Apprehensive that the door might be forced open, he remained near it, till the Life-Guards, who had advanced in a contrary direction, came up.

In the declaration of a General Officer, transmitted to the Secretary of State, it is stated, that, by some mistake, the detachment under the command of Captain Lees was marched towards the Horse-Guards; but that, that Officer, hearing a great noise, ordered the Troop to wheel round; that he galloped up with several Men, and found the Undersigned close to the Carriage, with a pistol in his hand.

He never was a Member of the Navy-Board. Seven years before this event, by the kindness of the late Lord Melville (a quality inherent in his nature, and upon whom he had no claim), he was placed at the Head of a Department in this Office, and is now in the same situation.

The name of Capt. Lees having been mentioned, and he being dead, it is proper to add, that no blame whatsoever attached to him, on account of the unprotected state in which the King was left.

J. BEDINGFIELD.

*Navy Pay-Office, March 25, 1813.*