The Post 911 Witch Hunt

“We’re going to find out who did this and we’re going after those bastards!” Senator Orrin Hatch was very clear when stating this quote that whoever demolished the twin towers and killed thousands of Americans was going to pay. Al Qaeda was the master mind of this horrendous attack on September 11th, but many Muslims around the nation took the fall. Just as individuals were accused of being witches in Salem, many Muslims were treated as if they were terrorists. The post 911 attitudes of many towards Muslims progressed in the same ways as the 17th century Salem Witch Trials, with some differences; both situations were solely based on assumption, hate crimes took place to those suspected, and many people realized the stupidity of the situation and stood up for their friends and family.

In both Historical events, many people made the assumptions on which individuals were involved in the crimes. “200 people had been accused of practicing the devil’s work,” during the Salem Witch Trial Era (Blumberg). One of the most respected women of Puritan community in Salem, Rebecca Nurse, was accused of sending many teenage girls into “grievous fits” and executed at the Gallows Hill. Goody Nurse was nothing but a good, pure person but that didn’t stop Abigail Williams from accusing her, which lead many people believing that Goody Nurse performed witch craft even though they had no evidence to prove that Goody Nurse was anything but an honest Christian for her entire being (Madden). Similar to accusations of the witch trials, after 911 many Americans blamed Muslims for the terrorist attacks. Balbir Singh Sodhi was shot and killed on September 15th, 2001 at his grocery store in Mesa, Arizona. Balbir was known for his generosity and kind deeds such as providing free gas for customers who were going through hard times (Momaya). Just as Rebecca was known as a kind-hearted sole, so was Balbir, yet both individuals were accused and then executed for a crime they didn’t commit. The accusations during both of these historical events were based on blind assumptions and had no real evidence to back up them up. Although the events have the similarity of blind assumption, the man that murdered Balbir, Frank Roque, wanted to “kill a Muslim” in retaliation for the attacks on September, 11 ("The First 9/11 Backlash Fatality: The Murder of Balbir Singh Sodhi.") Frank killed Balbir because he believed that all people of the Muslim race were at fault for the attacks instead of just certain people like the Salem witch trials. Certain people were accused of being a witch by the girls who hid behind the lies of Abigail Williams, who influenced them to make accusations without thinking about who they were accusing. After 911, some Caucasians made accusations based just on race and only targeted that race rather than targeting random people.clincher

These assumptions lead to many horrendous hate crimes towards both parties. After 9/11 crimes towards Muslims and other Arab descent increased by 1,600 percent! (Rahsid) Just days after the attacks on the towers, crimes took place all across the nation such as Oregon, New York, Utah, Illinois, Indiana, Texas, and California ("Anti-Muslim Incidents Since Sept. 11, 2001."). One man in Reedley, California was shot to death outside a store. A note on his windshield of his car read “We’re going to kill all Arabs,” just two days earlier ("9/11 Anniversary Sparks Hate Crimes Against Muslim"). The hate crimes during the Salem Witch Trials took place in a different matter, but they still implied the same message; death was the only answer. As many people who were accused of witch craft were hung at Gallows Hill, Giles Corey was different. He refused to stand for trial so he was stripped naked, a board was placed on his chest, and heavy rocks and stones were piled one by one on top of him. Giles Corey died around noon due to the weight of the stones (Linder). The crime against Giles was different from the hate crimes towards Arabs because he was targeted for staying silent. The Muslims lived normal lives and were killed in random acts. Of course they feared being accused by white Americans, however they didn’t know when or where they were going to die. The people from the witch trials faced a trial and knew they were going to be hung at Gallows hill in front of the town. Another difference is that crimes towards the Arab race are still taking place ten years after the attack on the twin towers. August 5th, 2012 a man opened fire in a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin reportedly due to hatred towards Muslims (Fleet). It’s disgusting to think that these crimes towards such innocent individuals are still taking place and so close to home.

John Proctor knew from the beginning that these girl’s fits were all a big lie. He stood for the rights of the accused and did all he could to make sure his own wife, Elizabeth, who was accused of witch craft, was not to be hung as long as he could do something to stop it. He pleaded her innocence but ended up being the first male accused of being a witch (Linder). John along with others stood up for their friends, family, and community members who were claimed to be witches. They did everything possible to make sure that the whole town knew that their friends were innocent. A senior in high from Bel Air of the Muslim race wrote an article saying that she is sick of Americans showing hatred towards her religion after the attack and even years after the attack. Intresting enough, she said, “I have never burned a Bible or an American flag. Why should I? I respect and love them. I am a Muslim, and I respect the Bible, I respect and love the people who follow this book, I love this country, and I love the people who live here.” (Jamil). She is taking action just as John Proctor did. She is trying to change something which she holds dear to her heart, the way her family and her religion are being treated. John and this young girl are protecting and standing up for what they believe is right. Both of the individuals also belonged to the same religion of the people who were accused but the difference is the people who were accusing John belonged to the same religion as him while the people accusing Muslims are a different race. John is standing up for rights in his own religion, while this girl is standing up for her rights to the whole entire population of the U.S.A. clincher

The Salem Witch Trials were put to a stop back in the 1600’s but that doesn’t stop history from repeating itself today. 9/11 left many people in fear of Muslims, but it also left many people accusing Muslims based on their race and performing harmful acts towards these people. Although the crimes were horrible, this didn’t stop some individuals from standing up for their rights in the U.S just like those of Salem in the 1600’s, who had gotten sick of seeing innocent people die due to hate crimes against them because they were falsely accused of being a witch. The main difference between these two events in ten years after the disaster in New York, people still are on the hunt for innocent Muslims and that must be put to a stop.

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