

Confession of Mewa Singh.

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"First put down about my property, and whatever the money is, and Mr. Woods will get that money from me. I have some lots, and I wish them to be given to my brother. I do not wish to employ any barrister to defend me in this case that is going on, that is my whole wish. Will it do me any good to have a lawyer? If it will, then I will have Mr. Woods defend me in this case, and do your best for me.

"My name is Mewa Singh. Up until to-day I have always been a man that has always had my prayers, a God-fearing man. There are no words in my language to express the sorrow and troubles and worries I have had to put up with in Vancouver.

"All of us living Sikhs when we go to the Sikh temple it is with the object of saying our prayers, but these others have gone to ruin altogether, and others going into the temple and firing there, destroyed the goodness of the temple, spoilt it by having them shooting and the men being killed there.

"In the temple that day that the shooting was done by Bela Singh, that day the police caught hold of me and tightened me up and said, 'Did you do the shooting, too?' And when they caught hold of Bela Singh, he said, 'Why, I have done the shooting in this temple . . . and Mr. Hopkinson are well aware of it. They know why I have done this shooting.' At the time that Bela Singh did that shooting we were saying prayers that anybody hearing them would have warmed their hearts together and come to God with hearing those words, and Bela Singh first of all shot Bhag Singh, and he had two little children. Seeing that badness done there, the killing of the innocent people had burned into my heart.

"We, as soldier men, have to swear on the Sikh Bible, which is held in great respect, and the Granth Sahib is wrapped up in valuable silks to keep it sacred. It is precious and of great value and we treat it in that respectful way. Before Bela Singh did the shooting in the temple two or three hundred of our Sikhs would go to that temple. Since then they have fallen off and they have no respect for it, and ten men do not go there now.

"All that trouble and all this shooting . . . and Mr. Hopkinson are responsible for, and I shot Mr. Hopkinson out of honor and principle to my fellow-men and for my religion. I could not bear to see those troubles going on any longer.

"You, as Christians, would you think there was any more good left in your church, if you saw people shot down in it, and you could not put up with it because it would be bringing yourselves to a nation which is dead, to tolerate such conduct, it is better for a Sikh to die than to bring disgrace and ill-treatment in the temple. It is far better to die than to live. I, for my own self, I have always said that I did not want a barrister, and I do not expect any justice. I know I have

shot Mr. Hopkinson, and I will have to die, but it is for the others that the case will be properly represented, and to help all the others, and show this treatment to the public, and bring it in front of them. There is no justice issued out to you by the judges, nor the police, nor any of them, and that is why I am giving my life to show this matter up. I understand God's ways and am a God-fearing man. I say my prayers for an hour in the morning and half an hour at night. When I know that this wrong has been done I cannot expect God to bless me if my prayers were not accepted. I know my prayers have been accepted and God knows between the right and the wrong. In our prayers it says that we must see the right done. We cannot shut our eyes and see wrong done.

"Let our best judges and barristers fathom this out, why Mr. Hopkinson has been shot, and get at the end of this trouble. They are always doing evil before us. The other men may go and drink and do whatever they like and go to the immigration and are accepted as right. We that are God-fearing and say our prayers are crushed and dragged down. I cannot, as a God-fearing man, look on that any longer.

"In Sumas I had a case against me and I got a pistol and the immigration men caught me and I was taken in front of the judge and was fined \$58. After that case was dismissed they brought another case against me, saying that I had brought the firearms from one country to the other and that time Bela Singh, Hopkinson and . . . were there.

"When I was locked up at Sumas they took me out of the gaol and Hopkinson, . . . and Bela Singh said: 'You have got to say that these pistols are for Bhag Singh, Balwant Singh and Harnan.' When they took me out of gaol . . . , Mr. Hopkinson and Bela Singh said to me, 'I will get you off free if you say that Bhag Singh, Balwant Singh and Harnan have given you these pistols to give to Mr. Rahim.' I turned around and told them, 'You can cut me into little bits and I will not tell that lie for you.' Bela Singh said this to me, but the others, . . . and Hopkinson told Bela to say it to me. First of all, the three said it and then Bela Singh kept saying it to me. First of all, the three kept following me around for days, and afterwards only Bela Singh.

"Mr. Hopkinson said to me again, 'I am all powerful here. I can get you right off if you make that statement.' I told Mr. Hopkinson, 'I cannot. I am a God-fearing man. I may be cut into little pieces, but I cannot say that.' Then Bela Singh said to me, 'Give Mr. Hopkinson some dollars and get it settled.' I said, 'I will give you the dollars, but a lie I will not tell.' The case where I was charged they had it put aside and dismissed. I paid \$40 to Bela Singh. Mr. Hopkinson was present.

"They told me the whole case is settled. There will be nothing more about it. I do not know if they had really settled this case or not, but I got a letter from the Ottawa Government. After my case was all dismissed from there,

one day Bela Singh took me down to the immigration office. He took me inside and Mr. Hopkinson was present. Mr. Hopkinson started writing a letter, and he turned around and asked me to tell him where I came from, my father's name, my village, and everything. Mr. Hopkinson and Bela Singh were present in the office. I told them all this and they wrote it down. Mr. Hopkinson said, 'Do you not remember I got you off five years' gaol the other day? Now, you tell me the names of the men I want to know.' They then asked me to give the names of the men that are against the Government. They said, 'You know them; give out their names and tell us. I told them I did not know who is with the Government or against the Government. I can give you no information.'

"Then again they said to me in that office, Mr. Hopkinson and Bela Singh, to say that those pistols that I had at Sumas were given to me by Bhag Singh, Balwant Singh and Harnan Singh, to give to Mr. Rahim, and then we will be your friends. 'No,' I said, 'I have given you the dollars before and now again you tighten me up and want me to tell lies. I cannot give innocent men away and get them punished by making false statements.' Then they said to me, 'If you will not make this statement then you are no friend of ours. We cannot make any friendship with you.' Then Mr. Hopkinson went and brought another man, who was a white man. I cannot say if he was a barrister or what he was, but Mr. Hopkinson brought him there.

"Mr. Hopkinson took the letter that had been written first, the truthful letter, and tore it up; before he went out to call this strange man in he destroyed the proper letter with the truth in it. And then when he brought the other man he started to write down another statement. I do not know who he was, whether he was an immigration barrister or who he was. Mr. Hopkinson and Bela Singh kept on saying, 'We got you off five years, cannot you make this statement for us?' And I still refused and said, 'No.' But I told him exactly how I went to Sumas and what happened at Sumas, and I made no wrong statements. For some lot that we had in Seattle that is what we went for and I told the truth in that statement. I cannot tell you any more why we went there, only for this lot.

"Then they kept talking in English, which I do not understand. I neither read nor write it. Mr. Hopkinson said to me, 'Cannot you give us some of the names? Do not be afraid. Put down Rahim's name, or anyone. Do not be afraid I will help you through.'

"Mr. Hopkinson said, 'When you went to Sumas was Rahim at the Sikh temple or not? Cannot you tell us that?' I said, 'I do not know.' Mr. Hopkinson again reminded me by saying, 'I have got you off five years about those pistols and you cannot do this little thing for me. Come along and make this false statement. Do not be afraid.' Then Bela Singh turned to Mr. Hopkinson and said, 'Mr. Hopkinson, this is a God-fearing man who says his prayers. Do not make him tell any lies.' After they wrote this letter I would not

sign it or have anything to do with it, and Bela Singh and I went out to my home. This is the whole story; it stops here.

"Then the letter came to me from Ottawa. I went to the post office and they told me. 'Go and get Mr. Hopkinson and you can get this letter. If Mr. Hopkinson signs for this letter you will get it; otherwise you cannot.' And I went off to get Mr. Hopkinson to the immigration. When I met Mr. Hopkinson we talked and Mr. Hopkinson said, 'You are a witness of Bela Singh,' when we were going along to the post office. Mr. Hopkinson said to me on the way from there, 'Now, you are going to give evidence about Bela Singh. You turn around and give evidence on this side in favor of Bela Singh, otherwise it will be bad for you. You will go the same road that Bhag Singh and Badden Singh have gone,' and threatened me.

"On the way from the post office he said this to me. I said, 'Mr. Hopkinson, after taking money from me and threatening me and getting me to write all these things, why do you tell me that I will be killed like Bhag Singh and Badden Singh? What are things coming to, and then you write that letter which you knew was not true and you take dollars from me and then you want me to give evidence now in favor of Bela Singh and threaten my life.' Mr. Hopkinson said to me, 'I am all powerful in this Vancouver.' Then he said at the post office after the letter was opened it was about the pistols, etc., and it was handed to me, and they opened the letter and read it was about the pistols, and in that letter I was exonerated, there was no more case against me. Mr. Hopkinson went to the immigration office and I went home.

"All night long it haunted me that here I am a man that says my prayers and these men harrass me like this with these wrong statements and are trying to disgrace me and bring me into trouble. I kept this in my heart all that night, and could not sleep with thinking that this disgrace should follow me about. Why should Mr. Hopkinson bring me down to this disgrace? Then two or three days after I was going along Hastings Street there I met Baboo Singh. I said, 'Good morning!' to him and asked him how he was. Baboo Singh said to me, 'Which side are you going to give evidence, our side or their side?' I said to him, 'I do not know just now, I will see at the time.' Then from the other side of the street Gurdit Singh was coming. Gurdit Singh's village is Bilga.

"When Gurdit Singh was coming Baboo Singh used bad language to Gurdit Singh and said, 'I am going to ask Mewa Singh in front of Gurdit Singh and see if he will say on which side he is going to give evidence,' to get me to say in Gurdit Singh's presence. Then again, when Gurdit Singh was there he asked me which side I was going to speak for. I turned round and said, 'I will tell the truth I saw in the temple, and nothing else.' Gurdit Singh told me to tell the truth and say whatever I saw in the temple. Do not go behind the truth. Baboo Singh turned round and said to

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Gurdit Singh, 'You go to the court and tell the truth. Mewa Singh will say whatever we want him to, because we have the power over him.' Then Baboo Singh started using abusive language to Bhag Singh, the man who was dead. He said, 'We have killed him,' and he abused his little girl. Then Gurdit Singh told Baboo Singh, 'Do not abuse Bhag Singh. Do not abuse the dead man.' Baboo Singh said, 'Yes, I will.'

"Those two men abused themselves each other. They both used bad language. Then Baboo Singh hit Gurdit Singh in the face. When I saw them fighting I divided them and said, 'Brothers, do not fight,' and I told Gurdit Singh to go home. When Baboo Singh hit Gurdit Singh he hit him with a stick on the head. Then they went away after the fight was over and Baboo Singh came near me and threatened me there and said, 'If you do not give evidence on our side you will have to be fixed.' At that time Seren Singh was there too. Baboo Singh kept on swearing at me and using bad language to me, but I never said anything back to him. Again Baboo Singh said, 'We are all-powerful in Vancouver. We can do what we like with you. I alone have the immigration department behind me. I can fix you. You can do nothing. I am all-powerful. I have you all fixed.'

"After leaving Baboo Singh I began to take all this to heart and began to think it cannot go on. This went deep into my heart. Then when I went to the police court I gave true evidence. Then I walked about Vancouver kind of frightened after giving the evidence. Then again I was alone and met Baboo Singh. He asked me, 'Brother, where are you going?' Baboo Singh said, 'What work do you do?' I said, 'I live away and do some work,' and Baboo Singh said, 'If you walk about Vancouver we will kill you, but I will show you you cannot, we will kill you.' I took all this deeply to heart. I thought I must do something. I then thought it would be better to die. I will die like a man straight. These people have disgraced us. They think we are nothing. Sikhs are nothing. There is nothing of us left. We are walked on. There is no judge listens to us. These four men are all-powerful. No one can do anything here except Bela Singh, Baboo Singh, . . . and Mr. Hopkinson. That is why I have killed Mr. Hopkinson and I have sacrificed my own life.

"Hopkinson was a deceiver, both to the Government on one side and to us Sikhs on the other, and was a blood-sucker. He catches hold of two or three on one side and uses them as the tools in front of the Government. Anyone that could pay Hopkinson properly he would manage to get them off. He would do the Government over, bring new men right in here and say those are old men that have been here before. He used to take \$100 from each of the new men. He used to take from both the Government side and from our side. The Government listened to Hopkinson and never paid any attention to us. We are poor, only coolie men, and whatever Hopkinson said was law. The Government listened to him completely.

"Everyone knows that Hopkinson did these underhand things and it must be brought to light. The European public must be aware of the fact that Hopkinson draws money from us poor native men. In the Vancouver public there are a few that are Christian men who have received us with the proper spirit. The other have treated us like dogs. For two months I have gone with Bela Singh and saw Mr. Hopkinson doing all these underhand things, taking money, etc.

"After going with Bela Singh then my eyes were opened. I could not believe that Hopkinson used to do these things, but now I know it is a fact. I have never, and no one in the world, has known what underhand bad dealings have gone on in Vancouver, and without anyone's help or suggestion from anyone I have killed Mr. Hopkinson.

"Any meetings that we have ever had in the Sikh temple were in the bottom storey, and there where we always talked about not having been allowed to have our wives here, but that was never talked of in the top storey, where the shooting was done. That shooting disgraced the temple. Mr. Hopkinson has brought us all these cases and troubles, and has taken the money to the Government and has left us almost without bread and all this has been through Mr. Hopkinson.

"After seeing all this I shot Mr. Hopkinson. It is to show the Vancouver public the truth of this matter and of our sufferings and . . . Bela Singh, and Baboo Singh.

"There is no use the Vancouver public listening to . . . and Baboo Singh any longer. If they listen to them there can be no justice done to us, and in the cause of justice I wish this exposed and the Sikhs helped. If they listen to Baboo Singh and . . . the trouble will go on. That is why I have taken Mr. Hopkinson's life and am going to give my own, and the trouble will never end while the Government and police listen to those tales from . . . and Baboo Singh. And this is my wish that I, Mewa Singh, wish this thing cleared up.

"I would like four Christian clergymen to talk to me and I will show them from my Holy Book that the action I have taken to right this great wrong is in that book, because I am a God-fearing man, and it is with this view I have taken the right action, and I would like to talk to four Christian clergymen, and I will read to them out of the *Granth. Sahib and show them how it is the wrong has been done. I must get rid of a sinner that does wicked things like that, to save the rest of the community from trouble. That is why the deed has been done.

"I have always read three sentences in the morning from the Granth Sahib and two in the evening, not ever to tell a lie, and it was for the Granth. Sahib I did this. I could not bear to see the wrong done.

"That is why I have lost myself to save this wrong. I am a lonely man; I have no wife. I have not got the immigration department behind me, nor the committee behind me, and I have sacrificed myself for this good cause."

"October, 1914."

*Granth. Sahib (The Sikh Bible).