I want to clear up any confusion that has arisen over my views on modern day Wicca and the events of the Salem witch trials of 1692. Any reader of my book, *A Storm of Witchcraft: The Salem Trials and the American Experience* knows that I acknowledge the existence of Wiccans, modern day pagans or witches, and note their substantial presence and many contributions to Salem, Massachusetts today. In the conclusion of the book I do draw parallels between the present day terrorist threat and the fear over malevolent witches who in the seventeenth century were believed to have the power to kill people and destroy property from a great distance. The problem was that anyone could be a witch, so detecting one in 1692 was difficult. Indeed since malevolent witches did not actually exist in Salem we now recognize that it was an impossible task. I compare this situation to today when America faces the very real danger of terrorism, which is so difficult to detect and prevent.

Unfortunately as Salem has shown, our tendency is to give in to our paranoia, falling back on perception and stereotype to scapegoat those who look or act differently. The result then and now is that real and perceived dangers become inextricable and all too often this results in the victimization of the innocent. If there is a key take away from my book, it is a call for toleration. I hope that this call will not be misconstrued as a justification for modern day persecution.

So I do make a comparison between the very real presence of dangerous terrorists today and the supposed existence of witches in the seventeenth century who allegedly could perform harmful satanic magic. But I would never make any suggestion of a link between modern day pagans (and witches) to those accused of witchcraft in 1692, or between modern day witches and terrorists. I am sorry for any confusion that has arisen, and I urge people to read my book to see for themselves.

Emerson W. Baker  
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