[**Daniel**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/352-daniel/)

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[Posted February 18, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=findComment&comment=379941) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=reportComment&comment=379941)

In *Billy Budd*, when the order comes down at dawn to lay topside to witness punishment, some of the crew expect to see a flogging. But the old Dansker memorably mutters, "They flog men at noon. The early morning is for a hanging."

I've seen no reference to this practice in any other source. Is it genuine, or a literary invention? And if it was the practice to flog at noon and to hang in the morning, when did it arise? Would it have been a naval practice only, or would the same custom obtain in the merchant service?

The only other reference I've found about the timing of punishment is from a book called *Sea Slang*, which defines "Black Monday" as the day when the ship's boys received their accumulated week's whipping.

[**capn'rob**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10470-capnrob/)

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[Posted February 18, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=findComment&comment=379943) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=reportComment&comment=379943)

Here's my "Tuppence". In 1979 I had delivered a boat to Hawaii from Panama via French Polynesia. While living in Hawaii a South American Training Vessel called at Honolulu. A Beautiful Ship, I don't remember her name or hailing port. While in Hawaii the sailors were so well behaved that it was quite noticable. I mentioned this to a friend of mine who had been living in Hawaii many years and he explaned. It seems some years before on their last visit the Honolulu Poliice arrested a sailor and charged him with rape. The Captain asked that this sailor be turned over to him as he was responsible for the Ship and her Crew. The Police did. The Captain let loose, steamed a few miles offshore and Hung This Man From The Yard Arm!!! I started to behave just because the Ship was there!

The other "Penny" regards Flogging and should be a half pence each. I'm trying to remember the source but "Flogging Around the Fleet" it seems I saw in a movie or read it but certainly recall mid-day. I also think no one survives that punishment. My other pearl is about Flogging in the U.S.Navy. Commodore Uriah P Levy fought many courts martial, antisemitism and slander yet managed to rise above and make it that as free men we are not put to the lash. He bought Jefferson's Monticello and saved it from ruin then donated it to the Citizens of the USA.

That's what I got on Flogging and the quick drop with the sudden stop!

[**Liam McMac**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10782-liam-mcmac/)

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[Posted February 18, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=findComment&comment=379964) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=reportComment&comment=379964)

I like to be flogged any time....

day or night

[**Capt Thighbiter**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2303-capt-thighbiter/)

* Plunderer
* 
* 
* Member
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* Gender:Male
* Location:Brentwood, NY

[Posted February 19, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=findComment&comment=379999) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=reportComment&comment=379999)

I believe the day that defaulters were punished ( including those to be flogged) was at the discretion of each Captain, at least in the RN.

Flogging round the fleet, meant that the man was literally taken from ship to ship in port and given his 'just' rewards. Depending on the amount of lashes, they might well not survive it. There was a British Admiral, name escapes me, who supposedly rose thru the ranks ( came in thru the scuppers) and at some point early in his carreer suffered this punishment.

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[Posted February 20, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=findComment&comment=380037) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=reportComment&comment=380037)

 On 2/19/2010 at 11:45 AM, Capt Thighbiter said:

There was a British Admiral, name escapes me, who supposedly rose thru the ranks ( came in thru the scuppers) and at some point early in his carreer suffered this punishment.

"Came in through the scuppers" is an interesting variant. In *Sea Slang* it's called coming in "through the hawse-hole." As opposed to those who purchased their rank or were born to it, who were said to "come in through the stern cabin windows."

[**Davey Dog Crusher**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6212-davey-dog-crusher/)

* Deck Hand
* 
* 
* Member
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* Gender:Male
* Location:Norfolk, Virginia
* Interests:Rogue Pirate...been on my own for quite a few months now. Not looking to sign articles (yet), but more than willing to come aboard for an event.

[Posted March 8, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=findComment&comment=380983) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=reportComment&comment=380983)

A pretty good reference to flogging in the U.S Navy (yeah, a bit late for our period) can be found at;

<http://www.history.navy.mil/library/online/flogging.htm#brief>

A few of the passages presented in the "A Plea in Favor of Maintaining Flogging in the Navy" [Essay by an anonymous US Navy officer on the benefits of flogging for maintaining discipline, probably written in the 1840s.] section, are very descriptive in regard to the make-up of the crews of those sailing ships.

Nowhere in the article does it give a set or scheduled time for the flogging, but it does state that; " Secretary of the Navy James K. Paulding issued an order to commanding officers that flogging was to be administered in accordance with the law and always in the presence of the captain."

Anyway, it's an interesting read.

Davey

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Here are some exerpts from "The Narrative of Joshua Davis" (AN AMERICAN CITIZEN, WHO WAS PRESSED AND SERVED ON BOARD SIX SHIPS OF THE BRITISH NAVY) 1811. Also from www.history.navy.mil, also a bit later than GAoP.

HANGING AT THE YARD-ARM.

If you prefer being hung, a day is appointed for your execution--the master at arms comes down and knocks off your irons, and takes you up on the quarter deck, and from thence to the forecastle, where you stand until the captain of the forecastle goes on the end of the fore yard, and reves a rope through the block prepared for the purpose. One end of the rope is sent down, in order to put round your neck; the other end is run in under the fore yard, and reved through a block under the fore-top, and let down by the fore mast to the forecastle, and from thence to the ship's waist. The boatswain calls all hands on deck. The master at arms says to you, "go up on the cat-head," and ties the end of the rope fast round your neck, and says to the people, "set tort, men," when every man and boy on board, takes hold of the fall. The chaplain then comes up to the forecastle, and makes a short prayer--after which the master at arms turns to you, and says, "You are to be hung by the neck under the yard, until you are dead, dead, dead; and may the Lord have mercy on your soul;" then orders the people to run you up, and you are run up until your head touches the yard, when he takes the rope, and belays it, and thus you hang about half an hour. The boats are all hoisted out, in order to take you to the grave. The long boat is brought along side, with your coffin in it; when the master at arms takes off the lid, and you are lowered down into it; he then cuts the rope, leaving the knot on your neck; your clothes are all kept on, and your hat put on your face, when the lid is nailed down. The boats are all made fast to each other, in a range, the captain's barge ahead, then the lieutenant's pinnace, the black cutter, the blue cutter, the yellow cutter, and the red cutter follow, which are made fast to the long boat, which has your body: these all go to low water mark, when four men jump out into the mud, and dig a hole three feet deep, in which you are deposited, for the next tide to roll over you.

FLOGGING THROUGH THE FLEET.

If you choose to be flogged through the fleet, the day is appointed, when you go into the long boat with the master at arms, where you are tied up by your hands to a machine made for the purpose. The boatswain's mate comes down and gives you fifty lashes with a cat-o'-nine-tails. The lieutenant orders all the boats belonging to your ship to be ranged as before, to tow you to the next ship, the boatswain's mate of which comes down and gives you fifty lashes more. In this manner you are carried from ship to ship, until you get the number of lashes imposed upon you--(during this, the drummer beats the dead march, and the bell strikes half-minute strokes.) If you live through it, you are taken to your ship, your back washed with brine, and cured as soon as possible--but if you die before you receive the complement, you are taken to every ship, and get every lash the Court Marshall ordered. Finally, you are put into your coffin, carried to low water mark, and there deposited.

On the 28th Dec. 1784, while we were laying in Plymouth sound, with a number of other ships, waiting orders, a man belonging to the Queen, of 98 guns, struck his first lieutenant, on the nose with his fist, which occasioned two black eyes. The man was tried by a court martial, and sentenced to receive 800 lashes. The day he was punished, after he had been flogged along side 13 ships, he was bro't to ours. The blanket was taken off his shoulders by our master at arms, when I observed his head hung back. Our captain ordered the doctor to feel his pulse, and found that the man was dead. Our boatswain's mate was then told to give him fifty lashes; "but," says the Captain, "lay them lightly on his back." He might as well have said put them lightly on his bones, for I could not see any flesh on him, from his neck to his waist. After this he was carried to two other ships, and received fifty lashes at each, and then carried to low water mark, and there buried in the mud.

RUNNING THE GAUNTLET.

IF you are caught in the act of stealing, you are put into irons, and there kept, to wait the pleasure of your officers. They generally sentence you to run the gauntlet, which is done as follows: you are brought upon deck the boatswain pipes all hands, and orders his yeoman to bring up a quantity of tarred rope yarns, of which every man is ordered to make a nettle by twisting three yarns together and making three knots at one end. The men are then ordered to stand in two ranks round the deck, at five feet distance, and face each other. You are told to strip to your trowsers and get in between the ranks. The master at arms walks before you, with a sword under his arms, the point towards you, to prevent your running forward--and two corporals walk behind, with swords in their hands, to keep you from running back. The boatswain starts you by a stroke on the back with the cat-o'-nine-tails--every man then strikes you as hard and fast as he can. You have to go round the deck three times in this manner, in common time. When you reach the break of the forecastle the boatswain's first mate gives you a cut with his cat-o'-nine-tails; the second another, and the third another, when you get round to the boatswain again, he gives you another, and so on, until you have been round the deck three times. It is in vain for you to cry, scream, jump, roll, for you must grin and bear it, as none will pity you. Finally, you look like a piece of raw beef from your neck to the waist of your trowsers. You are taken down to the cockpit, and there have salt brine rubbed on your back, by the doctor's mate. If you should be so fortunate as to get over this, you must go to work again.

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[Posted March 22, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=findComment&comment=381648) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=reportComment&comment=381648)

I found a lead. When Capt. Mackenzie of the U.S. brig *Somers* hanged three young men for plotting mutiny in 1842 (they had apparently intended to turn pirate!), it was late in the morning, no earlier than 10am. Immediately after the execution, the hands were piped to dinner (i.e. lunch), which suggests it may have been very close to midday. [*Inquiry into the Somers Mutiny*](http://books.google.com/books?id=7Bpz2YewuW0C&printsec=frontcover&dq=Somers+inquiry&source=bl&ots=fc_fMY8QW1&sig=L2PKuiqnpVvZiUaGyglRjIWfQbs&hl=en&ei=PZanS-TlEY-8Nou4xNsC&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CAgQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=&f=false), p. 23 and 26.

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[Posted March 22, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=findComment&comment=381651) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=reportComment&comment=381651)

And another hint: four of the Nore mutineers were hanged at 9 in the morning aboard HMS *Monmouth*, at the signal of a gun firing. William Johnson Neale, *Narrative of the Mutiny at the Nore*, Tegg 1861, p. 398-99.

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[Posted March 22, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=findComment&comment=381669) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=reportComment&comment=381669)

Another reference, this time to flogging. in *Two Years Before the Mast*, the American merchant captain Frank Thompson flogs two sailors at a little after ten in the morning, immediately after one sailor says something to him that the captain took a dislike to, and the other sailor asks why the first was to be flogged.

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[Posted March 22, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=findComment&comment=381671) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16543-did-they-flog-men-at-noon-but-hang-them-in-the-morning/&do=reportComment&comment=381671)

In 1813, a boy in the Royal Navy was ordered to receive 60 lashes on the buttocks for stabbing a shipmate. He received 36 lashes at 11:15 in the morning, then ten days later was given the other 24 lashes at 10 in the morning. See <http://www.corpun.com/ukrnr1.htm>

I'm definitely beginning to think that the hanging in the early morning vs. flogging at noon thing is a myth, or at least highly flexible.