It’s been a long march from Mayagüez to Lares. Not to mention that my hands hurt from cutting caña last week. El señor Gonzales told me that if I gave it my best I was to be a free man and maybe just maybe I could be reunited with my family. It feels so strange, me, un negro walking along side un blanco for a common goal. Is this a taste of what’s to come after we take the town?

We still have about 5 miles to go before we reach the checkpoint and join the others. El señor Gonzales called me “Manuel, go fetch me al Capitan Santiago and tell him that I have received intelligence from a scout that there is word of a surprise ambush”. I went as fast as I could to go find al Capitan Santiago. Finally when I found him he was as drunk as humanly possible, why I did not know we were in the mist of battle and one of our captains was drinking rum like a small child sucking on his mothers breast. I told el señor Gonzales and he replied, “So el capitan Santiago is drunk, in what world does this happen. I need a man of confidence strong agile and who knows the terrain to find out with a search party if this ambush business is true. As he pondered he looked at his worn out saddle that was know turning from a pure brown to a murky fusion of black and dust. El señor Gonzales looked at me with a smirk and said, “Manuel you have been with me for 8 years now, I trust you, you are a strong young man about 21 years of age I shall give you 4 more man with them you should venture and see if there is an ambush waiting for us”. I was in a state of aw. As he said this my neck shackle was coming of, it was like the first step to freedom, I was no longer a slave but a man with a cause and that was to defend my Puerto Rico from despotism of the Spanish crown.

I was assigned four other men; Lazaro, Pablo, Ricardo and Sotomayor. Their was only one problem they were all white or mulato how was a newly free slave to command these men. I had no clue, but the best way to mans heart is through his stomach so with that said our last night before we separated from the group I made some mofongo stuffed with cerdo. Lazaro, Pablo, Ricardo and Sotomayor could no get enough they had loved the meal and went to bed full.

We woke up at the crack of dawn, we were about to head out when Gonzales handed me his favorite knife it was sharper than the blade of the king, and I was going to use it to put an end to this tyranny. We headed out at a formidable pace, I lead the group through the terrain but the tracker was Pablo. We searched a radius of about 10 miles and found nothing but the dead bodies of some runaway slaves.

The search lasted a total of couple of hours we left at dawn and came back around noon. I immediately told Gonzales that the area was safe. Gonzales said “Well boys we got an ayuntamiento to storm”. We made haste left the campsite and reached Lares around 9:45pm. The resistance was little but I have never killed a man before. It was incredible the animal instinct one posses to fight for their own freedom. I murdered a total of 8 men and one young kid around 13 years old. I felt ok not bad but had a feeling of hopelessness.

It was worth it I had earned my freedom and all it took was 9 lives and ultimate loyalty I am a free man.