

A copy of letters that passed between Captain Stanhope of the Mercury British Frigate and the Governor Bowdoin of the Massachusetts Commonwealth

Mercury Boston Harbour Aug. 1 1785

Sir

I am sorry to be obliged to present to your Excellency the continued insults and disgraceful indignities offered by hundreds in this town to me and my officers, which hitherto we have wink'd at as well as the most illiberal and indecent language with which the newspapers have been filled. Nor should I have troubled you now had I not been pursued and my life as well as that of one of my officers been endangered by the violent rage of a mob yesterday evening without provocation of any sort.

I trust it is needless to recommend to your Excellency to adopt such measures as may discover the ringleaders and bring them to public justice as well as to protect us from further insult.

I have the honour to be

Your Excellency's most obedt hble servt

To his Excellency Governor Bowdoin

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Boston, Aug. 1 1785

Sir

Your letter of this date is now before me. It is the great misfortune that the subjects or citizens of different countries, which have been at enmity, cannot easily recover that degree of good humour which should induce them to treat each other with proper decorum, when the governments to which they respectively belong, have entered into a treaty of amity, and sheathed the sword that you must have observed that disturbance arising from this source too frequently happen, especially in populous seaport towns.

If you have been insulted and your life has been endangered in manner as you have represented to me, I must inform you that our laws afford you ample satisfaction. Foreigners are entitled to the protection of the law as well as amenable to it, equally with

any citizen of the United States, while they continue within the jurisdiction of this Commonwealth.

Any learned practitioner in the law if applied to will direct you to the mode of legal process in the obtaining a redress of injury, if you have been injured, and the judiciary court will cause due enquiry to be made touching riotous and unlawful assemblies and their misdemeanours, and inflict legal punishment on such as by verdict of a jury may be found guilty.

I have the honour to be, Sir

Your most obedt hble servt

To Captain Stanhope

Mercury, Boston Harbour, Aug 2nd 1785

Sir,

When I had the honour of applying to your Excellency to discountenance the disgraceful attacks made upon me and the officers of his Britanick Majesty's Ship Mercury, under my command, and to afford us your protection, it was upon your positive assurance to that affect in their presence, I rested my hope. How much your conduct contradicts both that and my expectation is too obvious either to satisfy me or even do credit to yourself, for your Excellency must excuse me when I remark that I never received a letter so insulting to my senses as your answer to my requisition of yesterday. I am however happy in finding a much better disposition in the first class of inhabitants, whose assistance I am glad to acknowledge as the more acceptable after your apparent evasion from the substance of my letter, and however well informed your Excellency may believe yourself upon the laws and customs of nations in similar cases, allow me to assure you, there is not one, no, not even the ally of these States, that would not most severely reprove either the want of energy in government or the disinclination of the governor to correct such notorious insults to public characters in which light only we can desire to be received

I have the honour to be

Your Excellency's most obedt hble servt

To his Excellency Governor Bowdoin

Capt Stanhope

Your letter bearing date the second instant was delivered to me by your lieutenant, Mr Nash, at 4 o'clock this afternoon.

I hereby let you know that as the letter is conceived in terms of insolence and abuse altogether unprovoked, I shall take such measures concerning it as the dignity of my station, and a just regard to the honour of this Commonwealth, connected with the honour of the United States in general, shall require.

Boston, Aug 3 1785

6 o'clock pm

Mercury, Nantasket Road

Aug 4 1785, half past 12 am

Sir,

I am to acknowledge the honour of your Excellency's letter, this moment received, and have to assure you, I shall most cheerfully submit to the worst consequences that can arise from our correspondence which I do not conceive, on my part, to have been corrected, in terms of either insolence or abuse, which is more than I could venture to say of yours. And however exalted your Excellency's station is, I know not of any more respectable than that I have the honour to fill. I have the honour to be

Your Excellency's most obedt hble servt

To his Excellency Governor Bowdoin