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Note 1

George Fowler,

Q. Do you know anything of a Mutiny on Board

A. I know nothing about the Plott. I heard them talk about it before we left Boston but not since.

John Brown

Q. What do you know respecting a Mutiny

A. I know nothing of the Conspiracy, I never was in Sargeant Murray's birth with George Fowler in my life

—

The Court met again Wednesday P.M. Feby 3, 1779

Thomas Felds being sworn deposeth

That he was upon the fore Castle the day before yesterday afternoon John Forest called me aside and told me to lean down upon the Gun with him, and told me that the people were going to ride and take the Ship, I said no, and left him, afterwards I spoke to him about it, he said most of the Ships Company had determin'd to rise and take this Ship. I ask'd him where they were going to carry her, he said some part of Engd or Ireland he said he that had the Key of the Arm Chest would stand true I ask'd him who was going to take Command of her, he told me that I was to Navigate her in. I comply'd with him, and said I could carry her into any Port, he ask'd me if I would stand true. I told him I would, he told me it would be when we struck soundings this conversation happen'd at 7 OClock A.M. and I told Mr. FitzGerald mate of the Ship about 2 OClock the next morning, which was the first good Opportunity I had —

John FitzGerrald, Marine being Swon deposeth that he had often heard Savage Murray and Brown speak of the People's rising and taking this Ship, within this fortnight, but did not believe them in earnest — and also One Cummins with them, but Monday morning last I saw the three first talking and very

the plan was laid and they would give the Frenchmen the Boat and the Captⁿ and Marquis were to be kept Prisoners, Forest said if the Officers made any resistance they would kill One or two for an Example, this was said on the fore-castle yesterday afternoon, it was propos'd to me by Geo: Fowler and John Brown seriously the night after I was hurt, Savage was equally concerned with me, I went to call up Forest to consult about the Matter, this afternoon was not propos'd to put the Conspiracy into execution not till we got into Soundings. we were afraid the Officers suspected it: and were about to execute our design last night we were to secure the Officers upon the Quarter deck, break open the Arm chests and confine all the Officers onboard in the Wardroom under Guard this was propos'd by Brown, Fowler, and Forest and I assented to it, they intended to attack in the Middle watch between twelve and four in the Morning they intended to force the Command of the Ship upon Mr Dege for they look'd upon him as an Old Countryman, they determin'd to send One up to cry out ad sail, and when all hands were call'd to Quarters and the Arms in their possession they were to make the attack, this was in case they made land in the day time, If we had to fight before we had possession of the Vessel we determin'd to stand to our Quarters and not flinch, I heard a paper was sign'd forward but I never saw it, I received the cartridges found in my Chest of Saint Ellwood before we came out, the two how Guns were to be pointed 'aft and Annington was to command them. Forest, Kelly & Malbone told me this

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very busy together. I ask'd Brown what they were so busy about, he said all the old Countrymen had agreed to rise and take the Ship that night; I acquainted an Officer with it the same morning – I never heard of any papers being sign'd by any nor ever heard of any Petty Officers being concern'd in this. the night before last Murray and Savage came down between decks enquiring for Brown, they did not find him, Savage said to Derby Cane he believed they were disappointed for they saw the Officers Arm'd upon the Quarter Deck—

James Mann being sworn deposeth,

That John Brown came to Me Monday morning last and said James Mann do you know the News, what News says I? We, all the old Countrymen are going to take the Ship into Cork he said he had seventy odd Men forth of them from the Main hatchway aft thirty men from the Main hatch way forward he said Murray had the roll of their Names, and the Watch Word was “look out sharp” he said my name was down and all the seamen were also. I ask'd him how he dare put down my name without my knowing it? he said damn you never mind it, we will sacrifice the French Bougres, they have got two trunks of Gold with Iron chains round them, by the father of the Merciful God we are determin'd every one that is aft; Savage comes down and calls Jno Forest after with McKensie, Cummins, Brown, Murray and Shrimpton they were away abaft, yesterday at Dinner time Savage comes down and says to Forest we are going about this affair, yes, by God, we are all ready forward says Forest, if you are ready aft, Shrimpton was by and said never mind it boys till 4 OClock and we'll send Wm Thomas up aloft and he shall cry out a Sail, a Sail, and at the same time we'll Massacre every one abaft as they come up, will point the two bow Guns aft load them with grape Shott and put five Men at each and fire them, I can all ways be meddling about and the Officers will

the plan was laid and they would give the Frenchmen the Boat and the Captⁿ and Marquis were to be kept Prisoners, Forest said if the Officers made any resistance they would kill One or two for an Example, this was said on the fore-castle yesterday afternoon, it was propos'd to me by Geo: Fowler and John Brown seriously the night after I was hurt, Savage was equally concerned with me, I went to call up Forest to consult about the Matter, this afternoon was not propos'd to put the Conspiracy into execution not till we got into Soundings. we were afraid the Officers suspected it: and were about to execute our design last night we were to secure the Officers upon the Quarter deck, break open the Arm chests and confine all the Officers onboard in the Wardroom under Guard this was propos'd by Brown, Fowler, and Forest and I assented to it, they intended to attack in the Middle watch between twelve and four in the Morning they intended to force the Command of the Ship upon Mr Dege for they look'd upon him as an Old Countryman, they determin'd to send One up to cry out ad sail, and when all hands were call'd to Quarters and the Arms in their possession they were to make the attack, this was in case they made land in the day time, If we had to fight before we had possession of the Vessel we determin'd to stand to our Quarters and not flinch, I heard a paper was sign'd forward but I never saw it, I received the cartridges found in my Chest of Saint Ellwood before we came out, the two how Guns were to be pointed 'aft and Annington was to command them. Forest, Kelly & Malbone told me this

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will take no Notice of me, Savage said never fear my boys Murray has got the Key of the Arm Chests, we'll place five men at the Magazine, and the Officers on the forecastle are first that go overboard, Davenport says here goes for One by the Holy Father John Cockran (Marine) says here goes for another, I don't mind my life more than I do an apple, Jno Humphries says I'll go for that shall be my station too, after that they all walk'd seperately down towards the Sergeants birth, I went down there and heard Murray say damn your Souls boys we are all transgressors agst the King, and if we fetch in this Ship we shall get our Pardons and we shall get above three hundred Guineas a Man, Savage says, besides that the Officers will be a greater prize than the Vessel, there is two Chests of Gold and we will divide that and all the Officers Cloaths equally between us, they then Scatter'd themselves thro' the Ship, Brown came afterwards to me and said Mann be sure you stand true, and we'll make ourselves forever, and now I am going about to tell every man to be sure to be ready precisely at 4 OClock, We'll put all the Yankies and all the Common Frenchmen in the boat and send them out, I immediately took Mr Hills aside and told him, they threatened every mans life that would not Join them, Burress who was also among them pull'd out a butchers knife and says by the holy Saviour I will put this into the first Bougre's belly I come athwart. Cummins threatened my life last night because I told of this. Danl Lyons says last night I hope to be a Lieut in a few days I die but they would have the Ship – Savage was to have Commanded the Ship he Murray and Brown proposed & determin'd how to dispose of the Officers in my hearing, the Marquis & french Officers were to be carried into England in Irons. Captn Landais to be put in Irons and put on Board the Boat, Mr Hill was to have Quarters, Mr Adams was to be punished, Mr Buckley was

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was to be ty'd up to the Mizen mast and Scarified all over Captn Parke was to be cut up in Quarters and thrown overboard. Doctr Windship the same. Mr Degge was to be punish'd.

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Note 1

At a Court of Enquiry held on Board the Ship Alliance at Sea February 2d, 1779, for the discovery of certain conspirators who had form'd a Plott to rise and take the Ship by force and carry her into England or Ireland.

Present

Peter Landais Esqr. President

Stephen Hills, 1st Lt.

Joseph Adams, 2d Lt

James Degge, 3d Lt

John Buckley Master

Mathew Parke Captn Ma

Thomas Ellwood 2d Lt do.

Amos Windship Surgeon

John Larchar Mastrs mate

Tho FitzGerrald .. do

The Marquis la Fayette

General Luneville

Colo Gimat

Colo Defally

Colo Duplicy

Majr Pont Gimaut

Captn Capitaine

Captn Rigote

Mr Saml Bradford

Nathan Blodget

John Savage Arraign'd

Q. Have you been guilty of any attempt to make yourself Master of this ship

A. Not in the least.

Q. Did you not go forward either last night or the night before and tell the Men that you had thirty Men under your Command

A. I did not nor at any other time.

Q. Did you not ask the Corpl of the Ship whether he had his Irons in good Order as you expected to have Ninety or an hundred Men to put in them in two days time.

A.

the plan was laid and they would give the Frenchmen the Boat and the Captⁿ and Marquis were to be kept Prisoners, Forest said if the Officers made any resistance they would kill One or two for an Example, this was said on the fore-castle yesterday afternoon, it was propos'd to me by Geo: Fowler and John Brown seriously the night after I was hurt, Savage was equally concerned with me, I went to call up Forest to consult about the Matter, this afternoon was not propos'd to put the Conspiracy into execution not till we got into Soundings. we were afraid the Officers suspected it: and were about to execute our design last night we were to secure the Officers upon the Quarter deck, break open the Arm chests and confine all the Officers onboard in the Wardroom under Guard this was propos'd by Brown, Fowler, and Forest and I assented to it, they intended to attack in the Middle watch between twelve and four in the Morning they intended to force the Command of the Ship upon Mr Dege for they look'd upon him as an Old Countryman, they determin'd to send One up to cry out ad sail, and when all hands were call'd to Quarters and the Arms in their possession they were to make the attack, this was in case they made land in the day time, If we had to fight before we had possession of the Vessel we determin'd to stand to our Quarters and not flinch, I heard a paper was sign'd forward but I never saw it, I received the cartridges found in my Chest of Ammunition before we came out, the two how Guns were to be pointed 'aft and Annington was to command them. Forest, Kelly & Malbone told me this

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A. No, at no other time than when we saw a Sail, and I told him to get them in good Order as we expected to make her a Prize; being ask'd to make a full declaration of all he knew concerning the Mutiny said that the night before last, he heard Sergeant Murray say that in two days time the Ship would be taken by the Men in her, some old Countrymen, forty forward and as many aft, Sergt Murray ask'd me if I would join with them, I told him he had better not attempt it, I went upon the fore Castle and saw One Forest who told me that they would take the Ship, I ask'd him whether they intended to murther any body on Board, he answer'd no, he would put the Officers on Shore in a boat when they got in with the land.

John Forest

Q. Do you know any thing of a Mutiny on Board

A. Savage & Murray were often asking me to Join with them in the Mutiny in taking the ship. I said no, they ask'd me if any of my messmates would join them, I answer'd if you want to know you must ask them; Savage was upon the fore-castle several times he impertun'd me all this afternoon and even follow'd me to dinner to persuade me to join them. Savage and Murray said for encouragement they could Command the Arm Chests and have the keys any time. I heard Wm Thomas say the People were uneasy and about to Mutiny, I know nothing of a round Robbin I never saw Pen, Ink or paper since I came on Board. I told Thomas Felds the people were about to mutiny. I enter'd for this Ship of my own free will. I never heard any body propos'd to Command the Ship after she should be taken—

William Murray

Q. Do you know any thing respecting a mutiny on board the Ship

A. I know nothing of any Mutiny I've heard nothing of the Kind

Q. Was you ever in John Forests birth

A. I never was except One time when I went to put out lights between decks

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decks before we left Boston. I never spoke to Savage or Forest about the Mutiny or any thing else—

Charles Shrimpton

Q. Do you know any thing of a Mutiny on board among the Men

A. Whe[n] I went down below for a drink of Water Savage gave me a Shove I ask'd him what he meant by it, he answer'd because you are not to know what is going forward. Savage ask'd me if I would Join, he said he had thirty Men of his own I told him I had no notion of it, that's the first I heard of it, I have heard Savage speak of it several times since we came from Boston, he said he had the charge of teh Arms, and that today was the day, the push was for the Quarter Deck as the Arm Chests were there. I heard him speak of it to Forest's mess mates, no reply was made by any One I heard him say that he and Murray had thirty Men at their Command if the Seamen would Join them, I enter'd on board of my own Accord, at dinner time Savage said if the People would do as he would direct, some to secure the Magazine, some between decks and some to the Arm Chests they could take the Ship, if they could not Command the Arm Chests, they would take handspikes for that would Surprize the Officers, Savage and Murray were teh Chief Actors in the Mutiny and first proposed it to the Ships Company — -

Sergeant Murray again, being promised his life by the Marquis La Fayette and Captn Landais if he confesses all, he begi[n]s, The Evening I fell down the gangway as I was lying in my hammock Jno Brown the Cooper came and ask'd me how I did and ask'd me if I had a mind to go to my own Country, how can I get there said I, he answer'd there is a Number of Men forty that will Join me to take the Vessell to Ireland, Fowler said it might be easily accomplish'd. I gave what they took to be a Consent to it, James Mann said he wanted to speak to me, and said McKensie had taken a list of the Men to rise and take the Vessell and ask'd me to be One. I said I would, Mann and Forest said the

the plan was laid and they would give the Frenchmen the Boat and the Captⁿ and Marquis were to be kept Prisoners, Forest said if the Officers made any resistance they would kill One or two for an Example, this was said on the fore-castle yesterday afternoon, it was propos'd to me by Geo: Fowler and John Brown seriously the night after I was hurt, Savage was equally concerned with me, I went to call up Forest to consult about the Matter, this afternoon was not propos'd to put the Conspiracy into execution not till we got into Soundings. we were afraid the Officers suspected it: and were about to execute our design last night we were to secure the Officers upon the Quarter deck, break open the Arm chests and confine all the Officers onboard in the Wardroom under Guard this was propos'd by Brown, Fowler, and Forest and I assented to it, they intended to attack in the Middle watch between twelve and four in the Morning they intended to force the Command of the Ship upon Mr Dege for they look'd upon him as an Old Countryman, they determin'd to send One up to cry out ad sail, and when all hands were call'd to Quarters and the Arms in their possession they were to make the attack, this was in case they made land in the day time, If we had to fight before we had possession of the Vessel we determin'd to stand to our Quarters and not flinch, I heard a paper was sign'd forward but I never saw it, I received the cartridges found in my Chest of Salt, Ellwood before we came out, the two how Guns were to be pointed 'aft and Annington was to command them, Forest, Kelly & Malbone told me this

William Malbone

Q. Have you heard that the people outboard are about to rise and take the Ship

A. The first I heard of this Mutiny was this morning Savage & Forest talking about it, they said they were going to take the Ship, but did not speak to me about it. I did not know what they were talking about till now, only suspected

Item

Title Proceedings of a Board of Inquiry to Investigate Conspiracy on Alliance
 Creator Landais, Peter
 Date Feb 2, 1779
 Archive University of Pennsylvania
 Collection Benjamin Franklin Papers
 Date Added Nov 7, 2025, 4:04 PM
 Modified Nov 7, 2025, 4:22 PM

Photo

Title correspondence-to-benjamin-franklin-from-pierre-landais-president-1779-february-2-3
 Date Nov 7, 2025, 4:03 PM
 File correspondence-to-benjamin-franklin-from-pierre-landais-president-1779-february-2-3.pdf
 Size 1,333x2,128, 13.57 MB
 Date Added Nov 7, 2025, 4:04 PM
 Modified Nov 7, 2025, 4:04 PM

Note 1

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William Malbone

Q. Have you heard that the people on Board are about to rise and take the Ship

A. The first I heard of this Mutiny was this morning Savage & Forest talking about it, they said they were going to take the Ship, but did not speak to me about it. I did not know what they were talking about 'till now, only Suspected.—

