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Document 35: State Papers: Informant on Dick Turpin, dated 23 February 1738/9
(Catalogue reference: SP 36/47 folio 88)

Contents

About this document	1
Image	2
Transcript	3

About this document

Correspondence concerning Dick Turpin, dated 23 February 1738/9. (Catalogue reference: SP 36/47 folios 88)

James Smith of Hempstead in Essex reveals the true identity of John Palmer, to be Richard (Dick) Turpin - the infamous highwayman. John Palmer, was committed to York Castle on suspicion of stealing sheep and horses.

Turpin was born at Hampstead in Essex. Having made a career of stealing livestock and robbing farmhouses he left Essex in 1737 to avoid arrest and settled in Yorkshire under the name John Palmer, a horse dealer. Turpin was actually stealing the horses on frequent excursions into Lincolnshire, and supplementing his income by highway robbery.

Please note:

- The document is written in a cursive mixed hand.
- Remember to transcribe ye as 'the' and yt as 'th[a]t'.

Castle of Yorks. The Information of James Smith of Hempstead
in Essex taken upon Oath before George Nelthorpe
John Adams and Thomas Place Esquires this 25.
day of February 1738.

This Informant saith upon Oath before us. That he this
Informant saw a Letter directed to one Samp^r. Rivernall
of Hempstead in Essex with the York Post Stamp upon it
and the said Rivernall refusing to take the Letter in
this Informant acquainted One Thomas Stubbing of
Bumpstead Helion in the County of Essex Esquire who
sent to Saffron Walden Post Office and paid the postage
And this Informant upon perusing the said Letter had a
Suspicion that it was Turpin's hand writing. And four
of his Majesty's Justices of the peace in the County of
Essex desired this Informant to go to York Castle to see
whether it was the said Turpin or not who says and declares
before us That the person now shown to this Informant
is Richard Turpin and no other person. And this
Informant is the better able to know the said Turpin
by being bred and born in the same Town with him
and also went to School with this Informant and that
Constantly for several Years since been in Company
with him till within the three or four Years. And further
saith that the said Samp^r. Rivernall Married one
Dorothy Turpin the said Richard Turpin's own Sister.

James Smith

TAKEN upon Oath before us
three of his Majesty's Justices
of the peace for the West-
Riding of Yorks. the day
and Year above mentioned.

J. Place
Geo. Nelthorpe
Jn. Adams.



Transcript

1. Castle of Yorke. The Information of James Smith of Hempstead
2. in Essex taken upon Oath before George Nelthorpe
3. John Adams and Thomas Place Esquires this 23^[r]d
4. day of February 1738.
5. This Informant Sayth upon Oath before us. That he this
6. Informant saw a Letter directed to one Pomp[adou]r Rivernall
7. of Hempstead in Essex with the York Post Stamp upon it
8. and the said Rivernall refusing to take the Letter in
9. this Informant acquainted One Thomas Stubbing of
10. Bumpstead Helion in the County of Essex Esquire who
11. sent to Saffron Walden Post Office and payd the postage
12. And this Informant upon perusing the said Letter had a
13. Suspision that it was Turpin's hand writing. And four
14. of his Majesty's Justices of the peace in the County of
15. Essex desired this Informant to go to York Castle to See
16. whether it was the said Turpin or not who Says and declares
17. before us That the person now Shewn to this Informant
18. is Richard Turpin and no other person. And this
19. Informant is the better able to know the said Turpin
20. by being bred and Born in the same Town with him
21. and also went to School with this Informant and hath
22. Constantly for several Years since been in Company
23. with him till within these three or four Years. And further
24. Saith that the said Pomp[adou]r Rivernall Marryed one
25. Dorothy Turpin the said Richard Turpin's own Sister.
26. James Smith
27. Taken upon Oath before us
28. three of his Majesty's Justices
29. of the peace for the West-
30. Riding of York[shi]r[e] the day
31. and Year above mentioned
32. T. Place
33. Geo[rge] Nelthorpe
34. J[oh]n Adams.