



the national archives

# palaeography

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## *further practice*

**Document 36: State Papers: Letter regarding John Palmer alias Dick Turpin, dated 24 February 1738/9**  
(Catalogue reference: SP 36/47 folios 87 and 89)

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## *About this document*

Correspondence concerning Dick Turpin, dated 24 February 1738/9. (Catalogue reference: SP 36/47 folios 87 and 89)

John Palmer is committed to York Castle on suspicion of stealing sheep and horses. It is revealed that John Palmer confessed to his subsequent identification of Richard (Dick) Turpin, the infamous highwayman.

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.

127

York Feb 24<sup>th</sup> - 1750

My Lord



33

87

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of October last a  
 fellow was committed to York Castle on  
 suspicion of stealing sheep & horses by the  
 name of John Palmer - From the  
 information taken yesterday before me &  
 other two gentlemen whose names are  
 subscribed to it (of which I inclosed is a  
 true copy) & from many other  
 circumstances concurring it suddenly  
 appeared that the person is Turpin a  
 whom a Proclamation issued, he long  
 persisted

86 69

in denying his knowledge of y<sup>e</sup> Informer  
e of every thing contained in y<sup>e</sup> Information  
I went to him again in y<sup>e</sup> evening he  
then confessed to me that y<sup>e</sup> Information  
was true & that he was Turpin & y<sup>e</sup>  
he had been in y<sup>e</sup> Neighbourhood of  
Hull for about y<sup>e</sup> last two years so that  
I think no doubt can remain as to y<sup>e</sup>  
Identity of y<sup>e</sup> person. I thought it my  
duty to give your Grace y<sup>e</sup> most early  
notice of this. Orders are given for his  
strict confinement till his Majesty's  
pleasure concerning him can be known I am

Your Grace's

Most dutyfull & obedient serv<sup>t</sup>

88

The Duke of 70

## Transcript

1. York Feb 24th 1738
2. My Lord
3. On the 16th of October last a
4. fellow was com[m]itted to York Castle on
5. suspicion of stealing sheep & horses by the
6. name of John Palmer. From the
7. Informac[i]on taken yesterday before me &
8. the other two gentlem[e]n whose names are
9. subscribed to it (of which the inclosed is a
10. true copy) & from many other
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12. appeared that the person is Turpin ag[ains]t
13. whom a Proclamation issued, he long
14. persisted
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17. I went to him again in the evening he
18. then confessed to me that the Information
19. was true & that he was Turpin & th[a]t
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21. Hull for about the last two years so that
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23. identity of the person. I thought it my
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25. notice of this. Orders are given for his
26. strict confinement till his Majestys
27. pleasure concerning him can be known I am
28. Your Graces
29. Most dutyfull & obedient Serv[an]t
30. Tho[mas] Place