

M. Gwynne to HRH.

Oct. 13th 1806.

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In obedience to the Commands of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, Mr Gwynne begs leave to transmit the following Narrative, in addition to that, which he had the Honor personally to communicate to His Royal Highness.

The confession of Thomas Price having been attentively considered, by Mr Bowen & Mr Gwynne, & finding that it did not conform the expectations, which had been raised by his expressions at the time the application was made for his Respite, either as to the Rank of the Persons, their number, or the extent of their criminality, & suspecting that this might properly arise from a want of a proper examination, or from a design on the part of the Culprit to conceal, what he had before his Respite promised to reveal, they determined, as the most probable means of gaining every information to go themselves to Lancaster, which they immediately did, & had the unhappy Prisoner under examination for nearly three hours. He was told by them that the confession which had been transmitted to them was by no means of that importance either in extent of numbers or of Crime, which his

promises had led them to expect from him, that though it gave considerable information as to the prevalence of most indecent practices, yet that it appeared purposely to conceal all charges of a capital nature, which no innocent mind could believe did not exist, where such deeds as he acknowledged, were so frequently perpetrated, that if he conceived a concealment or denial of the more criminal acts either in himself or any other person would be the means of saving him from the penalty of the law, he was completely deceived, for that it was only by a full & open disclosure of every particular instance of guilt, which he knew of, that his life would be spared. Mr Bowen & Mr Gwylllyn further told him that conceiving he had mistaken the proper line of his own interest & duty, they had out of consideration for him, as well as from a sense of public duty in themselves come over to Lancaster to inform him how only his life might be spared; that they had already transmitted his Confession to Government without any comment, but at the same time without a hope, that in its present form it would

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under him ⁴⁰⁷⁵⁹ any source; that the time still admitted
of a further application for Pardon, but that it must
be accompanied with that unreserved, acknowledged
of every criminal act, which he himself either
knew or ever heard of. - He appeared, much affected
with this address, but in a little time recovering
himself, he calmly said, "that he had told all
he knew, that he was not aware he had ever
promised to give any other information, nor could
he do so, that all he had said was truth, & he
knew no more; that he now wished he had suffered
with the rest, & that he had made up his mind
to his fate, for though his Life might be spared,
his Character was gone, & no one would either employ
him or assist him, & that he had nothing more
to say." Many questions were put to him, relative
to Persons, whom there was reason to believe he had
some knowledge of, but he denied any personal
intercourse with any of them. Some few explanations
respecting Names mentioned in his Confession were
given by him without reserve, but to the last he
denied the knowledge or perpetration of any criminal

Act, & after every means, which could be devised, had
been tried, ineffectually, he was ordered back to his
Cell. The Magistrate afterwards sent for Isaac Hitchen
but it here becomes necessary to state the reasons
why any application was made for a Respite for
this Culprit. His Royal Highness will recollect
that Hitchen was the Person at whose house
all these Men were accustomed to assemble years
every Monday & Friday Evening & it was suspected
that others who had not yet been discovered, were
also concerned, in these practices under his Roof,
There could be no doubt of this Man having a
very extensive intercourse with persons of this
description, & consequently that he had, if he should
most important information to reveal. For this
reason an application was made for his Respite
also. - But a circumstance of a most mysterious
nature, & which has hitherto baffled every effort
to unravel it, had previously occurred, which
it was thought his Respite might tend to
elucidate. In stating the following part of this
Narrative to His Royal Highness, Sir Gwynne

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feels that an apology is due for his not naming
the Circumstances, when His Royal Highness honored
him with his conversation at Knowsley, but he
hopes, when the very delicate nature of the
Charge is stated, that he shall receive His Royal
Highness's excuse for withholding what had never
passed his lips, & what he did not think himself
at that moment authorized to disclose. - Mr Gwyllgo
now relates it as he received it from his Colleague
Mr Brown. Mr Brown remained at Lancaster until
the Affairs were ended, which was on Monday the 25th
of August. Mr Gwyllgo had returned the day before,
the principal trials being concluded. Mr Brown just
before he was leaving Lancaster had occasion to call
upon Mr Sergeant Cochele, the Attorney General for
the County, who had conducted all these unpleasant
Prosecutions. Immediately upon his coming into the
Room, Mr Cochele, much agitated, told him "that
the horrid business in which they had been engaged
was not nearly at an end, that a Person, a
resident of Warrington, had just been with him,
who told him that the Men, who were convicted, were
not the Persons, who should have been brought forward

as Examples on this occasion; that there remained there, who he had come to accuse, & that he would personally name them to him, though he had stated the Case in writing, & had left in with a fee in the hands of his Clerk before he came into the Room, that he did mention five names of great respectability & consequence, before he could interpose, when he interrupted him, & ordered him to withdraw, saying he (Mr C.) was not the proper person to hear such accusations, & that he immediately directed his Clerk to return the Case & Fee he had left with him, & desired the Person to leave the Room". Mr Cockshill being asked by Mr Benson the name of the Person, Mr Cockshill positively refused to tell, & being still further pressed for the names of the Gentlemen, he refused that information also, but Mr Benson, having previously heard the names of several Gentlemen mentioned, though without having given any credit to the report, desired to know whether, if he himself mentioned the real names, Mr Cockshill would then tell him, if there were the Gentlemen mentioned to him; Mr Cockshill promised he would, when to his

utmost astonishment Mr Boscawen named in succession
 all the peers. The Rev^d Mr Horabey, the Rector of Winwick
 Mr Bankes, the late High Sheriff of the County of Lancaster
 Mr Leigh of High Leigh, in Cheshire, late High Sheriff of
 that County, The Rev^d Dr Blackburne, warden of
 Manchester, & Mr Birch of the Hazles, near Knowsley.
 It was also stated that they had gone to Hitchen's House
 for these purposes. Upon being again pressed for the
 name of the Accuser, Mr Cockshill most presumptuously
 refused, but added "you may be assured it will
 all come out, & a Special Commission will issue".
 Mr Boscawen on receiving this information instantly sent
 an express for Mr Gwyther to meet him as soon as
 possible at Garstang, where the next day Mr Boscawen
 imparted to him this shocking information, & it was
 determined that he should return to Lancaster to remain
 to remain there a few days to take any confessions
 that the Culprits might be inclined to make, &
 that Mr Gwyther should return home to be ready
 to receive the information of that Person, who had
 applied to Mr Cockshill, & who it was fully expected
 would on his return lay an accusation before him
 against those Gentlemen. This however has not been

done, nor has the name of the Accuser ever yet been obtained, - It is now necessary to relate what steps have been taken to elucidate this most mysterious history. The circumstance of its being stated that these Gentlemen had met at Hitchens' was another reason why application was made for his Respite, and when he was brought before Mr. Bouverie & Mr. Gurblym, the whole story which has just been related, was mentioned to him, with every particular except the names of the Gentlemen, & he was then asked whether now when he found that the entire history of the proceedings at his house were known, he would himself inform the facts, & enable the Magistrates to recommend him to Government for a Pardon, or whether he chose by continuing obstinate to suffer an ignominious Death. On being first called on, he appeared much agitated but while the question was putting to him, he had recovered, & firmly replied "that he had no knowledge of what they had been relating to him, that he knew no more of it than the Dead, that the whole business was Greek & Dreach to him, for that no person either Rich or Poor had to his knowledge ever come into

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his House for such purposes, as had been stated, & he begged the Magistrates to take that as his final answer. He was then earnestly urged to consider both the present & future consequences of such a denial of his Guilt, that after the proofs that had been brought forward upon his Trial, no Person could doubt it, & especially when all the three Men who had already suffered, Holland, Powell & Stockton had, on the very scaffold, confessed his guilt along with their own; that this was the strongest testimony that could be given, for that there never was an instance of a Man confessing a Crime for which he was about to suffer, if he was unjustly accused of it. To this he only made the same reply, & "that he had nothing to do with what others had said". Some further questions were put to him, to which he gave much the same answer, & he was then ordered back to his Cell. It appeared, still possible to the Magistrates that this Man might yet in his last moments confess the statement they had heard, & therefore they desired Mr Higgin the Garder to ask him just before execution, whether the story told to him by the Magistrates was true or false; but on the morning of his Execution after he had

received the Sacrament, & before he arose from the Table
he prevented the necessity of this application, by the
following most dreadful appeal. "Before I arise from
this holy Table, I do solemnly declare before that
God into whose presence I must in a few moments
appear, that I know nothing of the List of Names
given to Sergeant Corbett, & that neither Rich nor
Poor Persons have been in the habit of appearing
at my house for criminal purposes. This declaration
I wish to be published to the world". The last hour
of this wretch's existence has thus been reported
to the Magistrates by the Chaplain of the Castle, &
he adds that his official attendance upon him
since his condemnation has been of the most painful
nature, for that he has always appeared to be a
Man, who had no idea of a future State of Existence.
Rich also died without a confession of his Guilt.

Every particular relative to the last examination
of Rich & Hitchen by Mr Barron & Mr Gwilliam at
Lancaster was faithfully stated to Lord Spencer, (the
Confession of Rich having been before transmitted) &
an offer was made by those Magistrates to undertake

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on investigation, founded on Rice's Confession, of every
every circumstance which he had related with respect
to Manchester, provided it was the wish of Government
that it should take place. These Magistrates thinking
it proper that every information they received should
be known by Government did also at the same
time mention every particular that occurred, in
Mr Bous's interview with Mr Sergeant Cokelle, but
Lord Spencer's answer does not notice the latter
instance, & only states his Lordship's & Lord Ellenborough's
opinion, that as Rice did not confirm the promises
he had made, the Sentence of the Law was to be
put in Execution, which accordingly took place
at the termination of the Respite on the 27th September.

A letter has some weeks since been written
to Mr Cokelle again soliciting the name of the
accuser of the Gentlemen mentioned, that they might
from their knowledge of the Character of the Man
form some judgment, whether his accusation was
likely to be founded in truth; but no answer has
been returned. Another letter also has within these

few days been written to the same purpose, to which if
Mr Bosc & Mr Gwatkin receive no answer, or a refusal
of their request, it is their present intention to
mention the whole circumstance either to the Gentles
themselves, or to some of their friends, for it appears
to them indispensably necessary that the truth or
falseness of this information should be ascertained.

Mr Gwatkin has thus committed to His Royal
Highness the whole account of his official conduct
in this business, as well as every information
which has come to his knowledge. With respect
to one part, he is aware that he has related
a history of a most mysterious & unaccountable
nature, affecting Characters hitherto unapproachably
& highly respected, but when he considers the
August Personage to whom he is intrusting this
important information, he feels no hesitation in
revealing, what from every one else he has
felt it his duty most strictly to conceal.

Mr Gwatkin would have transmitted these
particulars to His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales.

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much sooner, had he not expected from the answer
of the Sergeant Lockhart to have been able to state
at the same time the explanation of the secret
part of this narrative. The length of time that
answer has been delayed, & the probability of
some space still elapsing before a full elucidation
of it may be procured, has induced Mr Gwilliams
rather to transmit it in its present imperfect
state, than to incur any risk in the mind
of His Royal Highness of a want of the
most respectful attention to the Commands, with
which he has been honored. Whatever further
information may be obtained, shall, if it is His
Royal Highness's pleasure, be faithfully reported.

Brewsey

at Warrington

Oct^r 13th 1806.

