

Virginia

~~Bahama's~~

From Col Spotswood,  
Gov: of Virginia, dated the  
3<sup>d</sup> of July 1716.

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Recd 5<sup>th</sup> Sept: }  
Recd 10<sup>th</sup> Do } 1716

P: 92

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Virginia July the 8<sup>th</sup> 1716

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My Lords

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Since my late to your Lordships of the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May (whereof there is enclosed a Duplicate) I have received Advice of some Events in these parts which I judge deserve the attention of His Majesty's Ministers, and therefore would not lose the first opportunity of communicating the same to your Lordships. The inclosed Affidavits will informe your Lordships of the State of the Bahama Islands; more particularly that of Providence, where a Nest of Pirates are endeavouring to establish themselves, and by the Addition they expect also probably will receive of loose disorderly people from the Bay of Campeachy, Jamaica and other parts may prove dangerous to the British Commerce, if not timely suppressed. Your Lordships will observe by these Affidavits, the Robberies they have already committed on the Spaniards and French, and that they have taken a Ship of the latter, of 32 guns; What is the result of this force, manned by a Company of such desperadoes may be able to attempt, is easy to imagine, and that they cannot long be without a greater power of Shipping amongst the number of Merchantsmen which constantly pass through the Gulf from Jamaica, almost in sight of the harbour they have possessed themselves of. Upon this occasion I judge it incumbent upon me, not only as having the honour of being the servant of His Majesty's Government, but as having power by a Commission from His late Majesty King William under the Great Seal of Great Britain for the appointments of the Officers of the Admiralty in these Islands, to make a particular enquiry into the State thereof; and to that end have encourage the Master of a sloop bound hence on a Trading Voyage to these parts, to make extraordinary the Vessel under his Command, and to endeavour to obtain the

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best accounts he can of the number strength and design of these Pirates, a copy of whose Instructions I had here inclosed. The man of War which I had not being yet returned from St. Augustine, whether I informed your Lordship should be dispatched for the service of South Carolina, I was unwilling to delay till her return, the obtaining this Information of the Condition of these Islands, being of importance, that His Majesty should be timely informed thereof, that proper measures may be taken in time to prevent the consequences of suffering such a Crew of Robbers to fix themselves there: And I know what I have done herein will not be reckoned too officious or impertinent, seeing the Government of this Colony is by the aforementioned Commission entrusted in some measure with the care of these Islands: And I hope I may be pardon'd if I offer my humble opinion, that it highly concerns His Majesties Service, and the Interest of Great Britain that some Government be speedily established in the Island of Providence, and the place made defensible against the sudden attempt either of Pirates or their Neighbouring Spaniards, who have so often obstructed the settlement thereof, as well knowing that should the English open strong there, that Island might be reckoned the very Key of the Gulf of Florida.

Amongst others who have been on their piratical Designs, One Forbes, with three other men arriv'd in this Colony about the beginning of last month, pretending the Ship to which they belong'd and whereof Forbes call'd himself Captain was cast away at Cape Hatteras: but soon after his arrival in being discover'd by his own discourse, and the common talk of his men that he had been concern'd in driving their Spaniards from their Possessions, except on the Coast of Florida for guarding the Ships, and that he had been the Secretary to the taking the aforementioned French Ship. This man committed to Prison till he should give sufficient Security for his appearance when required to answer the Charge against him: but he has since made his escape, and I doubt not has returned to the same Company with whom he had first associat'd.

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I have on this occasion writ to the Lords of the Admiralty that another Man of War may be sent hither besides the present Squadron, for the security of these Trades in these parts, and to be employ'd if need be, jointly for the supply of these Trades at Providence: for this I shall always be unwilling to put His Majesty to any extraordinary charge, where the service doth not require it: yet I am sensible that there is an absolute necessity of reinforcing the Guard of this Coast, since whatever proficients the Spaniards make of not attacking the English, and that they will only content themselves with making Prize of all French and Spaniards they meet with, yet there is so little Trust to be given to such people, that it is not to be doubted they will use all Nations alike, without any regard to Advantage, as they have already plundered some Trading Vessels belonging to these parts that have fallen in their way. +

In my last I sent your Lordship the copy of my Charge against Mr Ludwell Deputy Auditor, upon which I found my self oblig'd to suspend him: The next day after I had finish'd the Charge I offer'd it him, and now after 8 weeks that he has had to answer, he at last touch'd upon to return in a letter that he took upon me as an unequal Accuser, and therefore will not enter into a paper War with me here, but send his Answer direct to your Lordship's Board, without allowing me a right of reply, unless I will submit the dispute between us to the determination of the Council, which I don't think a very reasonable Request, seeing he has there six in number are his Relations, and who will never give their votes for turning him out of his Employment for a misbehaviour, besides that I don't find by His Majesty's 14<sup>th</sup> Instruction that the Council have any Cognizance of such Cases. I am thereby impowr'd without the Council's participation to suspend Officers, and to transmit my reasons to your Lordship, and to the Commissioners of the Treasury, and this method I have pursued, and believe the Case is before as competent and impartial Judges as those Mr Ludwell proposes to be try'd by:

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But since by his refusing me a sight of his Answer, I am disabled from  
making my Reply, I beg the favour of your Lordships that I may have the  
liberty of seeing that Answer, and making my Observations thereon before  
your Lordships proceed to any Decision therein, seeing I can sufficiently  
make out every Article of the Charge, whatsoever Mr. Leonard may  
pretend in his Justification. And I doubt not when your Lordships  
consider that I have no other Aim than the doing Justice to His  
Majesties Service and Interest, you will not too hastily give Ear to  
the Representations of a person who has shewed himself regardless of  
both. Except this dispute with the Auditor, this Colony is perfectly  
easy, so that I have nothing further at present to trouble your Lordships  
with, than to repeat the Assurance of my being with the utmost  
Respect

My Lords

Your Lordships

Most Dutifull &

Most Obedient

Humble Servant

*D. J. Postwood*