

Andrew Jackson to Martin Van Buren, August 8, 1831, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO MARTIN VAN BUREN.

Washington, August 8, 1831.

My D'r Sir, I am in the receipt of your kind letter of the 4th instant, and for your kind expressions and good wishes, I present you my thanks.

I have had the pleasure of seeing and greeting Mr. McLane arrival here, in vigorous health from whom I learn the superior comforts of a passage in a fine packet ship, compared with that of one of our Frigates, therefore, for your comfort, I am gratified in your choice, notwithstanding my desire of sending you out in the fine Frigate Potomac. I hope a kind providence will preside over your destinies, protect and prolong your useful life, restore you to your country in due season, when the People will fully appreciate your merits, when the present organised corps of designing Demagogues, for political effect, will have ceased to cry plot, plot, to hide their own intrigues and injure you. They have fell into the pitt they dug for you. Before your return Duff Green and Co. will be burried in the oblivion of forgetfulness for the profligate and wicked course they have pursued, whilst you will be and remain, in the full affections of the People of these United States.

The course pursued by Ingham, Branch and Berrien has truely astonished me and as far as I have seen, disgusted the whole people. I never could have supposed, until they told the *tale*, that they were secretely taking notes, visiting each other, consulting together, and comparing notes, and statements to reconcile them to each other, (I suppose regardless of truth) so that, at some future day they might certify, or screen for

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each other, as occasion might require, regardless of the truth of the case. Was there ever such a dishonorable combination before, and with such unblushing offrontery to acknowledge it? But the most barefaced impudence is, their denying that the statement I had committed to writing was made known to them when invited to the interview. I made the statement to them from the paper in my hand resting on my knee. You will recollect, I had prepared the statement to send to them, when, on consulting with you and Eaton, you remarked, it would be better to send for them, and have no communication with them in writing, but from the prepared statement on paper to make it to them, that nothing improper, or more than I intended, should be said to them. I took this course, sent for them. Ingham and Branch came first, when from my paper in my hand, resting on my knee, I made the communication to them, first, bringing to their view the information received, that had induced the interview, And when Berrien came, to him I made the same communication. I thought it some what extraordena[r]y at the time that they did not all come together, and afterwards, as it is on my mind, I related the whole circumstances to you. But that the statement from the paper prepared, was made to the three gentlemen, are positively true, in which was distinctly avowed by me, that with the regulation of the private intercourse of their families, or that of society, I solomnly protested against. with that I never had or would I interfere. This I aver to be true, their statement, "that they saw no paper in my hand," to the contrary, notwithstanding, and on the back of the paper made the endorsement, read to them, and their assurance that they would be the last men who would do an act intentionally, to degrade Major Eaton, or injure him and his family in society and *therefor not dismissed*.

What situation was I placed in, having three such men amongst my confidential advisers comparing notes, reconciling their statements, fearful of contradicting each other that they might lie and swear for each other, if occasion should require and prevent detection.

I cannot but *regret your seperation* and that of *Major Eaton from me* , but with the Gentlemen selected, who are now all with me, and in whom I have great confidence, I

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trust, I will be able to navigate the national vessel into a safe harbour before I leave her. None of these surely will keep *notes*.

You are aware My D Sir how irksome to my feelings and wishes it is for me to be here. The unworthy course of some of my professed friends, who urged me from my chosen retirement, aided in placing me here, has filled me with sincere regret, and I am now convinced that their support in conjunction with Duff Green, Ingham and Co, were with the sole view to put down Mr. Adam's and Clay by which the way would be opened to their idol Calhoun to his ambitious views, his popularity not being sufficient to effect it; and all, *now*, who will not worship this idol are to be destroyed, or lyed down, if their intrigues can accomplish it? How many faithless recreants we find in our passage thro life. But with all my partialities for retirement, I see, I cannot retire now, or at the end of my term as you are aware my wishes dictate. I will not be driven by my enemies; and contra[r]y to the expressed wishes of the People, I cannot withstand, but should the people again elect me, the national debt paid, and the Bank question settled, you will see me adopt a course worthy of myself, and the principles I have always advocated.

Before you sail let me hear from you. give me your views fully and freely, if confidential, your letter will be destroyed. Give me your recollection of the statement I made to you after the interview I had with Ingham, Branch, and Berrien, and also, that which preceeded it, and my statement being prepared in writing with the conversation I had with you on this subject, and if you have held any conversation with those men since give there relation of the interview, and what they observed that I said to them. If your conversation were not confidential, if it was of that nature, I am sure you will not reveal it, or would I ask it.

I had a hope Berrien would have retired like a gentleman, but his course has proven to me that he is as great a stranger to what constitutes one, as he is to consistency and truth? Who could have supposed, that he, who was dancing around and about me with so much apparent friendship, on all public occasions, and with so much officiousness as Mr. Berrien, could have come into office with the base views he now avows, to drive Major

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Eaton out of office, who had brought him in, and to whom daily he was professing so much kindness and friendship as he was to Major Eaton? *What a wretch!* This *southern hotspur*, will not fight—he appears to think too much of his sacred person to risk it. It is said Eaton has put him to the test, he declines. My Creed is true—there never was a base man a brave one, and Berrien has proved craven.

I shall expect you to write me before you sail. I take this occasion to present you with my best wishes and prayers for you[r] safety, prosperity and happiness thro life and a happy immortality beyond the Grave. Your friend sincerely