

SUMMARY: In this letter written 2 August 1582, Sir Christopher Hatton advises Lord Chancellor Thomas Bromley that the Queen was highly pleased with his reply of 28 July 1582 to her request that he provide a reason for denying Thomas Knyvet's request that a commission be granted authorizing his trial for the killing of Oxford's man Robert Breninges to take place at a privy sessions during the vacation time. Hatton also reports that Thomas Knyvet was equally pleased with Bromley's reply. In reality, it seems likely that the Queen was shocked to learn how seriously she had been misinformed, either deliberately or inadvertently, by Knyvet. The transcript below is taken from Nicolas, Sir Harris, *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton* (London: Richard Bentley, 1847), pp. 263-4.

My very good Lord, I have showed unto her Majesty your honourable and grave letters in answer of those which by her Highness' direction I sent unto you of late touching Mr Knyvet, which were in all respects so acceptable and amply satisfying her expectations as it pleased her very graciously to commend them, allowing your judgment for the stay and respite of the special commission to be no less considerate and agreeable to justice than this answer of yours importing the same effect to be wise and full of all honourable and orderly dealing, wherein her Majesty, with her great good liking, taketh especial notice of your Lordship's most discreet and careful service, for the which she yieldeth you her most princely thanks.

When I had showed her Majesty your letters, she commanded me to make Mr Knyvet privy to them, who finding them written with all honourable care and declaration of the due course of justice, resteth likewise exceedingly well satisfied in all respects, saving only in the error which I had committed in my former letters to your Lordship wherein I termed and mistook the fact to be manslaughter, which in very truth was found by the coroner's inquest to be *se defendendo*. In which case he was advised by his learned counsel to be an humble suitor to her Highness for her gracious favour in requesting your Lordship by letter or otherwise to vouchsafe him a special commission whereby he might in ordinary course plead the statute, and without any suit of pardon or further trouble be forthwith delivered and relieved by virtue thereof. According to which direction he made her Highness privy to the state of his cause, and humbly besought her princely goodness to signify her pleasure to this effect to your Lordship, by whose favour he might the rather obtain the commission which he sued for, wherein if her Majesty have proceeded more roundly than the cause required on your Lordship's behalf, he is sorry for it, and humbly beseecheth you not to impute it to any complaint or want of duty in himself, but to her Majesty's own direction and most gracious care of the good success of his troubles, in the which as he confesseth that your Lordship hath dealt very honourably with him in affording him the comfort of your good favour from time to time, so doth he protest. And for my own part I may boldly affirm as much unto you, that he never uttered any word, either by himself or any other, to irritate her Majesty's displeasure in any respect against you, as, he saith, he must and will make known the goodness you have showed him unto her Majesty, and endeavour in all faithful service and good will to deserve it.

And so most earnestly craving that anything passed in this action may not diminish your Lordship's good opinion of the gentleman, who in truth resteth clear from any such suspicion of ill-deserving, I commit your Lordship to the grace of God. From the court at Nonsuch the 2nd of August 1582.

Your good Lordship's most bound assured poor friend,
Christopher Hatton