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SUMMARY: The document below is a petition from Arthur Milles, dating from 1601 and apparently directed to Sir Robert Cecil, concerning his trial and acquittal after having been accused by Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham, of stealing a casket.

For Arthur Milles, see also TNA WARD 9/118, ff. 234-5; BL Lansdowne 63/76, ff. 191-2; BL Lansdowne 68/11, f. 26; TNA SP 12/151/51, ff. 111-12; TNA SP 12/234/6, ff. 8-9.

For Anthony Atkinson, see CP 42/27.

For Michael Cawley, see ERO D/DRg/2/26.

For Thomas Woodhouse, see TNA C 54/1094, Part 24.

It may be that the Countess of Oxford's servant 'Youngs', was her first cousin, Giles Yonge, who acted as a trustee in the Countess' purchase of King's Place from the executors of Sir Rowland Hayward. See TNA C 66/1476, m. 19.

Right Honourable, I most humbly beseech you to peruse these lines containing the heavy and troublesome wrongs done unto me by the Lady of Oxford, who through her greatness and most wicked practices of her agents, Anthony Atkinson and Michael Cawley, 2 of her followers, have and do seek my life, as by the sequel appeareth.

It is so that one Edward Motam, my Lady of Oxford's tailor, that day her casket was missed, was presently accused by my Lord of Oxford, as an eye-witness, for taking away the same, & so he protested upon his honour & other deep protestations before my Lord of Cumberland, Mr Thomas Woodhouse, Mr John Parker, Mr George Baker, myself & unto many others that he saw this Motam take it away, yet my Lady of Oxford did not imprison him, but within some few days after my servant was taken in the night at Greenwich & put close prisoner in the porter's lodge 3 days & 3 nights that no man might come to him but one Youngs, my Lady's trusty servant, who in this time offered him round sums of money to accuse me, which he confessed before the Clerks of the Green Cloth & before Youngs' face how he wrought him to accuse me.

Yet my Lady's malice did not cease there, but some 5 days after that I was accused for the same upon these three several points. First, that I was twice that day with the Lord of Oxford. Secondly, that I did not stay that day with him so long as I was wont to do. And the third accusation was that I came that day by his door with my cloak cast over my shoulders. My Lord at that time stood firmly to me, and told Mr Thomas Woodhouse, as he can testify, that my Lord protested to him that in truth his man stole it, and that his wife would needs in her will accuse me without cause, yet afterwards my Lord was so wrought by my Lady to say that I might receive some part.

Atkinson and Cawley, the two only men that arrested me upon this felony, so that I was hardly besieged with a great & powerful malicious Lady & by 2 so cunning & crafty persons to set the way for her for my undoing in body, goods and life, as I was enforced to appear at the assizes in Kent, where also my Lady's man Motam appeared, he being the principal, but was forthwith discharged, having nothing said to him, and I, being but a poor suspected accessary, had contrary to all law a bill of indictment preferred against me from which I was by the jury acquitted, though by Cawley & Youngs the jury were well laboured to the contrary. Yet my innocency cleared me therein.

Notwithstanding, as I hear, her Ladyship ceaseth not her malice, for Cawley told me my Lady would arrest me for some threescore thousand pounds upon an account for that which the Lord of Oxford spent in the time of my unfortunate service with him, wherein I spent in land of my own which I sold 3 hundred marks by year to maintain myself with credit in his Lordship's service.

I was [-I was] told also that my Lady means to arrest me once again upon felony for stealing certain hangings & and old hearse-cloth and divers other things some 25 years since, which were given me under his Lordship's own hand and seal, whereunto I have many good witnesses to testify the same in particular acquittances, besides his Lordship's general acquittance for the same & all other things whatsoever, yet this Atkinson & Cawley have persuaded my Lord, as I hear, to deny his hand & seal, and so what with arrests & troubles my Lady means to undo me, her Majesty's poor servant, if her gracious Majesty do not look upon me to defend my innocency, which hitherto never begged any other suit.

As the Lady gave great grace to her servant, being the principal, to be discharged without any question at all, & I, her Majesty's sworn servant, openly disgraced with a most shameful & public trial for felony in the same place by the grand jury, who found me most innocent in all my accusations, so I doubt not but if her Majesty did know in how great and cunning malice I have been prosecuted both in body, goods & name without any recompense at all, & no matter proved, her Majesty would look upon her innocent servant with her gracious favour, having hitherto protected the innocent only, & no other.

It may therefore please your good Honour to favour & further me in the best course I may take for my defence in so dangerous a case, prosecuted by so powerful an adversary, whose malice I am not able to resist without the favourable counsel and help of some great & honourable person. Otherwise I must needs perish in my innocency under the weight of so great and malicious an adversary to the utter undoing of my wife & children, whereof 2 serveth in her Majesty's wars at this present, & have their maintenance from me.

Your Honour's in many respect most bounden to honour, serve and love you and yours during life,

Arthur Mylls

Endorsed: Mr Arthur Mills his petition, 1601