

ARMY WAR COLLEGE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

June 11, 1943

Governor Herbert O'Connor,
Baltimore, Md.

My dear Governor: The State of Maryland is being subjected to the worse kind of publicity because of the action of State Attorney Prentiss W. Evans of Somerset County intimidation of Editor Mathews in the Tawes case.

Here is a case where a state official sworn to uphold the law, and a lawyer supposed to be instilled with ethics, is using the great office he occupies under the people of Maryland, to break down the law of our country. He shows by such action, that politics to him is everything; that he regards such above patriotism and our war effort; that law to me means taking care of my friends first, the country and the people afterwards."

This type of official should be driven from public office Governor. He is a menace to free and honest government. All his law school training and association with honest judicial officials have went for naught.

Recall that it was not Mr. Tawes that influenced this act of intimidation. Evans says so himself. He saw a chance to enhance his own prestige by ~~bowing~~ bowing to Tawes and at the expense of the law office of the people that he is supposed to represent.

Look at his picture. He is a young man and apparently a powerful one physically. He looks like good soldier material, the kind of corn-fed lads that the army can trim the good living off in a few months and turn into a husky soldier. Instead however he sits in a law office down in Somerset County, putting on fat, and interfering with fellowmen, living up to the laws of a war country. After seeing what a young and husky man lad he is thousands of Americans will be wondering why HE is not in the army. Is he hiding behind some petticoats or the fact that as a State official he is not subject to draft ?

I think the best thing a patriotic Governor of Maryland could do in this case to uphold the good name of the Old Free State of Maryland would be to initiate proceedings to remove this bogus patriot from the law office he now holds under the State Government. His ilk belongs in the Army - not in a draft dodging job.

Harry P. McDevitt.



HERBERT R. O'CONNOR
GOVERNOR



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

July 21, 1943

Mr. Harry P. McDevitt,
c/o Army War College,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. McDevitt:-

You wrote me recently concerning the action of the State's Attorney of Somerset County in connection with criminal charges of libel preferred against Dr. Rives Matthews of that County.

You express your emphatic opinion that this action was unwarranted and I assume, of course, that you based your assertion on the best information available to you through the press and other reports as to the factual background. It is my understanding that the case is now awaiting the action of the Grand Jury of Somerset County and under the constitution and laws of this State, no criminal prosecution can be maintained without an indictment by the grand inquest.

I might advise that under the constitution, the State's Attorney is designated as the principal law enforcement officer of the County. He is elected by the people and, of course, is primarily answerable to them.

You may be sure that I am most anxious to see that the rights of every citizen are observed and particularly that the right of free speech must be maintained at all costs. It is not for me to say whether, in certain articles alleged to have been published by Mr. Matthews, criminal libel was committed because this matter is pending in the Courts and is for their determination.

However, I want to thank you for your interest in writing me and to assure you that I welcome from you constructive criticism at any time.

Yours for Victory!

Governor

Eastern Shore

Publishing Co.

MARYLAND HERALD

Saturday Weekly

ESTABLISHED 1828

PRINCESS ANNE, MD.

June 11, 1943

Governor Herbert R. O'Connor
Executive Mansion
Annapolis, Maryland

Dear Sir:

We are sending you a copy of this week's *Marylander and Herald*. We believe that Prentiss Evans was justified in instituting action against Rives Matthews.

In the four years that Matthews has conducted a newspaper in Princess Anne he has continuously attacked our leading citizens. His writing always have been bordering on libelous.

In his issue of March 3 he has, in Mr. Evan's opinion, overstepped the limits of decency.

It is possible, you know, for Mr. Tawes to be wrong and for Matthews to be libelous. Two wrongs do not make a right.

There is not room for men such as Matthews in the newspaper business. It is possible to draw the public attention to such things as violation of the pleasure driving ban, without being slanderous and libelous.

The law provides protection against such actions. Should Matthews be placed above the law of the land?

We believe in Freedom of the Press, and we are fighting with all our might to protect this right and privilege. We believe that editors and publishers who print the articles that Matthews turns out are a constant threat to the Freedom and we would believe it was to the benefit of the legitimate newspapermen of the country to see that they are punished.

Eastern Shore

Publishing Co.

MARYLAND HERALD

Saturday Evening Weekly

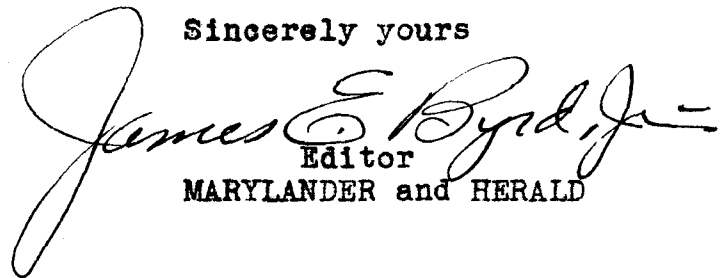
ESTABLISHED 1828

PRINCESS ANNE, MD.

Governor Herbert R. O'Coner
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To people everywhere the power of print cannot be denied. Not knowing the true facts they naturally take the editors words as the truth. Naturally newspapermen everywhere will take Evan's action as an "assault on the Freedom of the press." But we here on the scene, who know the true case, and who have read the writings of Matthews for over four years, know that in reality Evan's action is a protection of that Freedom.

Sincerely yours



Editor
MARYLANDER and HERALD

JB/mlc

C O P Y

June 18, 1943

Mr. James E. Byrd, Jr., Editor,
Marylander and Herald,
Princess Anne, Maryland.

Dear Mr. Byrd:

Prior to Governor O'Connor's departure to Ohio to be in attendance at the Governors' Conference, he requested me to acknowledge receipt of your letter of June 11th in which you express your views regarding the recent case. *(Ries Mathews)*

The Governor desires to thank you for giving him the benefit of your views and, also, for sending him a copy of the Marylander and Herald which you kindly enclosed.

With kindest personal regards, I am,

Yours for Victory!

A. J. Bourbon,
Executive Secretary

AJB:H

C O P Y

June 29, 1943

Mr. Rives Matthews,
The Somerset News,
Princess Anne, Md.

Dear Sir:

Your letter was received at the Executive Offices and, inasmuch as it requests information which is in the possession of State Treasurer Hooper S. Miles, I am taking the liberty of forwarding your communication to him.

The State Treasurer, as you doubtless know, was appointed by the Governor with full authority in regard to the use of State-owned automobiles. Therefore, any information should come from this official to whom your letter has been referred.

Yours for Victory!

A. J. Bourbon,
Executive Secretary

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