

Thomas Jefferson to Charles Pinckney, January 20, 1807, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO THE GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA J. MSS. (CHARLES PINCKNEY.)

Washington, Jany 20, 07.

Dear Sir, —I received two days ago a letter from Genl Wilkinson, dated at N Orleans, Decr 14, in which he enclosed me an affidavit, of which I now transmit you a copy. You will perceive that it authenticates the copy of a letter from Colo Burr to the General, affirming that Mr. Alston, his son-in-law, is engaged in the unlawful enterprises he is carrying on, and is to be an actor in them. I am to add, also, that I have received information from another source, that Mr. Alston, while returning from Kentucky last autumn through the upper part of your State, proposed to a Mr. Butler of that part of the country, to join in Colo Burr's enterprise, which he represented as of a nature to make his fortune, & is understood to have been explained as against Mexico, as well as for separating the Union of these States. That Butler communicated this to a person, of the same part of the country, called Span, who communicated it to a Mr. Horan, the clerk of a court in that quarter; that Butler & Span agreed to join in the enterprise, but Horan refused.

Nobody is a better judge than yourself whether any & what measures can be taken on this information. As to Genl Wilkinson's affidavit, it will be laid before the Legislature in a few days, and, of course, will be publick; but as to the other part, if no use can be made of it, your own discretion & candor would lead you to keep it secret. It is further well known here that Mr. Alston is an endorser to a considerable amount, of the bills which have enabled Colo Burr to prepare his treasons. A message which I shall send into the

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Legislature two days hence, will give a development of them. I avail myself with pleasure of this opportunity of recalling myself to your recollection, & of assuring you of my constant esteem & high consideration.¹

¹ On February 22, 1807, Jefferson wrote to Gallatin:

“I send you Allston's letter for perusal. He thinks to get over this matter by putting a bold face on it. I have the names of three persons whose evidence, *taken together*, can fix on him the actual endeavor to engage men in Burr's enterprise. Some appropriation must certainly be made for provisions, &c., arrested. I expect we must pay for them all, and use the provisions for the army. But how is the appropriation to be introduced?”