

## THE COACHMAN'S BARE RUMP: DOCUMENT #2

*Archives Nationales, Paris*

*Y13772, Papers of the commissaries de Paris*

*Follow-up investigations by Commissioner Thiot, 10-17 February 1763*

I saw, Sir, the investigative report of last January 22<sup>nd</sup> filed with the clerk, which contains the imprisonment of Nicolas Dandeli, also known as Chambli, accused of having committed several indecencies on the stage where the Sieur de Pajot has plays performed. You will take the trouble to investigate the matter further at my request, by authority of the Ordinance of the Lieutenant General of Police. You will take a deposition from the said Sieur de Pajot de Villers, the said negro Capolin, the Lady Coppin, the young ladies her daughters, the Lady Bar, Mr. Lepur, Mr. Hutel, the said LeJean, also known as St-Jean, the witnesses they mention to you, and anyone else you can discover who has knowledge of this affair, for which I request from you all the propriety and care you normally bestow on these affairs.

Moreau [official in the central Paris police bureau]

This 28<sup>th</sup> of January 1763

To the Commissioner Thiot

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Deposition at the request of the King's Barrister on the subject of an indecency committed by the said Chambly

February 10<sup>th</sup> 1763

Deposition recorded by me, Antoine Joachim Thiot, Counselor to the King, Commissioner at the Chatelet, etc., at the request of the King's Barrister on the subject of the indecency committed by the said Chambly coachman of the Sieur de Villers, at his house, as he was accused according to the investigative report I prepared on January 22<sup>nd</sup> 1763, and filed with the Clerk at the Chatelet law court.

The said deposition performed according to the Ordinance of the Lieutenant Criminal of said place, and following upon the investigative report and during which I deposed in private each of the witnesses produced before me and recorded what follows.

On Thursday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1763, at eight in the evening:

The said Capolin, not baptized, a negro in the service of the said Pajot de Villers, aged thirteen years, living in the house of the said Sieur de Villers, Taranne Street, St-Sulpice parish; made aware yesterday of my ordinance by Bromaire, the document-server, showed us the copy served to him. After swearing to tell the truth, and after hearing a reading of my investigative report, and after declaring that he was neither a parent, ally,

servant or domestic of the parties involved, stated that about two weeks ago, being on the stage of his master's house after the plays were performed on that stage, he saw the said Chambly, coachman of his master, approach him. Chambly asked the deponent if he had seen the play, to which Capolin replied: "Yes." At which point the said Chambly raised his coattails and said, "Hey, here's a comic opera!"; and extended his rear end, which was covered by his pants that he had not undone. The deponent heard Chambly make a clapping sound at that moment, but he doesn't know with what. He assures me, however, that Chambly did not slap his hands against his rear, and he is sure that Chambly did not uncover himself, and that this act could not have been perceived by anybody [in the room]. The deponent said that that is all he knows. I read the deposition to him. He said it was true and he stood by it. He was given 20 *sous* and stated that he did not know how to read nor write.

Five words in this deposition have been crossed out.  
Signed: Thiot

Jean-Baptiste Lefan, also known as St-Jean, aged 26 years, a servant of the Sieur de Villers with whom he lives, received notice of our ordinance....

States that the day his master gave a play on the stage, about three weeks ago, he was busy putting out the candles after the play when the coachman of his master, the said Chambly, showed up on the stage at the same time. The young negro asked the coachman if he had seen the comedy, to which the coachman replied yes, and then told the negro he would make him see another. The deponent doesn't know what he [Chambly] did, nor what he intended to do, because he wasn't looking. At that moment the curtain went up, but he doesn't know who raised it. He heard it said by his master, who was watching them, that the coachman showed his bare rump, but the deponent doesn't believe it and imagines that it was just a joke. The coachman would not have had time to undo his pants between the moment when he spoke to the young negro and that when the curtain went back up. That was all he said he knew....

Signed: Thiot; J.B. Lefan

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On Saturday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1763 at eleven in the morning.

Master Christophe Louis Pajot de Villers, Chevalier, aged 36 years, living in Paris at his residence on Taranne Street, St-Germain des Près neighborhood, St-Sulpice parish, received word of our ordinance....

He stated that last Friday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1763 he gave a little show on the stage in his house. The spectacle being completely finished and the curtain lowered, three domestics

were on the stage busy putting out the candles, out of sight of everyone who remained in the room. The deponent learned that his coachman, who was drunk, joined another of his servants and a young negro in his service. The coachman joked that he was quite pleased to have seen the play, but the young negro made fun of him, saying that he hadn't seen it. The coachmen then took his revenge by undoing his trousers and showing the young negro his rear. The negro, angered by this, remarked that there wasn't any light anymore backstage, but there was a lot in the room on the other side of the curtain. He then raised the curtain in order to take advantage of the spectacle the coachman offered him. Unfortunately for the coachman, who thought he would simply entertain himself and his colleagues by pulling a carnivalesque prank, he was caught in this indecency by four or five persons still in the room. Someone notified the deponent of this bad joke, which made him angry with his coachman. The deponent climbed onto the stage where he found the three domestics, who would not tell him anything about the affair. But, because the deponent wanted to know the truth, he called me. The coachman admitted to this monkey business, which is why the deponent demanded his imprisonment as being absolutely necessary to allow the coachman, who was really quite innocent on his own, to make amends. Unfortunately, this event became an insult to the reputation of the deponent after the fact. The deponent only wanted to teach the coachman the lesson of a short imprisonment; had he known it would be anything more he would not have pursued the matter, in order to avoid any other consequences for the coachman. With this testimony he wishes to retract entirely the complaint he registered against the coachman by means of the investigative report; in fact, he now insists on the nullification of that report. He says that is all he knows....

Signed: Thiot; Pajot de Villers

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On Tuesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1763, at seven in the evening.

Lady Madeleine Roussin, fifty years old, wife of Mr. Louis Francois Coppin, Ropyal Receiver of the Farms, living in Paris on Chanvriere Street, St-Eustache parish, became aware of our ordinance....

She deposed that last January 21<sup>st</sup> she attended a performance at the house of the said Sieur Pajot de Villers. Once the performance was over and the majority of people in attendance had left, the said deponent noticed that someone raised one side of the curtain onstage. Then she thought she noticed the naked behind of a man, but she wasn't entirely sure. She doesn't know who else saw it. Then the said Sieur Pajot de Villers, furious about it all, accused his coachman, but the latter said he didn't do it. She says that is all she knows....

Signed: Roussin; Thiot

Miss Reine-Elisabeth Coppin, twnty years old, daughter of the said Mr. and Mrs. Coppin named above, and living with them, was notified....

She deposed that around last January 20<sup>th</sup> she went with her mother, the preceding witness, to see the play performed at the home of the Sieur Pajot de Villers on Taranne Street. Once the performance was over, very few people were left in the room. She heard a noise that she supposed to be that of hands clapping, then she heard complaints about an indecency committed by someone who was said to have shown his behind on the stage. She heard the coachman of the said Sieur de Villers, to whom the impertinence was attributed, say that he had only lifted his jacket to show his rear, covered by his pants, to the little house negro who was also on the stage. The coachman also clapped his hands at the same time. Then the little negro raised the curtain of the stage, which had been lowered, when the coachman appeared simply to [illegible], without which no one would have complained about anything. She said that was all she knew....

Signed: Thiot; R.E. Coppin

Miss Victoire Coppin, sixteen years old, daughter of Mr. Mrs. Coppin named above, living with them, was notified....

She deposed that one Friday last January she found herself with her mother at the play staged by the Sieur Pajot de Villers at his home on Taranne Street. When the play was over, she heard a clapping noise, but she doesn't know who did it, nor why. At that time, when there were very few people left in the theater room, she heard nothing about this incident. On the way out of the room, however, she heard complaints about an indecency committed, so it was said, by the coachman of the Sieur de Villers, who showed his behind on the stage when the clapping noises were heard. The young lady deponent had heard this, but she did not see it. She heard the coachman trying to explain what happened by saying that he had shown himself to the little negro of the said Sieur de Villers who was on the stage, that he just wanted to play a prank, and so he had lifted his coattails and shown his behind covered while slapping it with his hands. Then the little negro had maliciously raised the curtain of the said stage, which had been lowered. If he hadn't done so, the coachman would never have played his prank and no one would have seen his bum. She also heard that the little negro admitted to having raised the curtain at precisely the moment when the coachman showed him has rear, but that the little negro also claimed that the coachman's rear was covered. That is all she says she knows....

Signed: V. Coppin; Thiot

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On Thursday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1763, at three in the afternoon.

Mr. Simon de Liépure, 33 years old, a resident of Paris, living on St. Anastasia Street, St-Gervais parish, was made aware....

He deposed that he did not see anything having to do with the events contained in our investigative report, even though he was present after the performance of the said play at the home of the Sieur Pajot de Villers, and that he even found himself present in the room at the moment of the prank that they say took place on the stage. He definitely heard the rumor of the lewdness that was attributed to a domestic, about which he hears different things. He said that was all he knows....

Signed: Liépure; Thiot