

Lettre de Constantin Ruttgers à Émile Zola datée du 21 février 1898

Auteur(s) : Ruttgers, Constantin

Transcription

Texte de la lettre

Lancaster, Pensylvania, U. S. et. A. Feb 21 1889^[1]

Mr Emil (sic) Zola ,

London

Dear Sir

I take the liberty to address these lines to you with the hope that through your fame and influence they may find insertion into some leading newspaper either in England, Belgium or France. The herein told story seems incredible to most people, but I fear is of every day occurrence here, as, whenever I subit it to a lawyer, a cynical gratified smile everspreads his face. That the thing is true is likewise insured, as nobody's fancy could possibly hatcj out inch an outrage.

Also as I was liberated out of the madhouse by the german ministry of the exterior, to which my sister in Germany, as guardian of my children appealed in my behalf, he threatened the Governor Hvlcomb to sue the state of Nebraska for \$200,000 for putting me in penitentiary as false commitment, as in madhouse I was legally dead, the whole thing must be true in every particular. When this superintendent Mackay got the letter from the consulgeneral in Chicago, who received it from the embassy in Washington he came, while I and about twenty others, likewise incarcerated, mere amusing ourselves and laughingly remarked. "I got a letter from the Consul gen in Chicago about you,Your family seems to interest themselves about you, but he cannot help you. You are an american citizen ha ha". Now follows copy of a letter written to the legislature of Nebraska containing source of trouble.

For the presiding officer of the Senate

Nebraska Legislature

Sir

If You are an honest man, you will present this memorial to the Senate without delay.

In the year 1888 I was dispossessed by sheriff Brown of Dixon county Nebr. Of landed property, the S. W. ¼ of [mot illisible] 11 t. 29 5 east Niobrara series, now O'Neill Nebr. This was done on a judgement without jurisdiction, by justice Hewitt of Ponca on my appeal, judge I Powers jun, upheld this judgement and Norris sitting jointly with him as a disbar judge, wrote the "forthwith yectment". All these here named scoundrels knowing Sully well the sacrality thus committed. Both Barnes, of Ponca & Norfolk also George Mattison stand self committed as forgers on the petition to court saying that Mattison was seized in Lee simple "while he had not a valid entry. Judgment of Hewitt April 27th 1888 of Parrers, July 11th 1889, eviction by Norris Aug. 2nd 1889. After committing all this barratry it became a necessity to make me flee the country, and leave them in possession of they robbery undisputed.

On the first eviction sheriff Brown had an omana of the Barnes and Mattison, to put a revolver on my forehead, using insulting language, also he handcuffed me with new handcuffs, yet in the tissupaper of the store, presented by Bankwrecker Dorsey for this occasion, for ¾ of an hour around a tree, for their diversion, that whole plan concocted in a saloon in Ponca admist drunken bebanchery. The county attorneis (sic), then and afterwards in office J. J. Me Barty and his pupil in law, mendicity of perjury, Pearson. See these knew the whole disgraceful scandal as also did the otty gen. Lease Hastings, Churchill and Smythe also their Governors Thayer, Boyd, Crounse and Holcomb.

As sance for the goose also suits the gander, I thought to imitate the revolvertrick as no harm could [mot illisible] from such diversion, even while acting as robbers, as Brown and Mattison did.

I pulled a revolver on S. S. Me Carthy in the sheriffs office in Ponca was arrested to frighten me, put in steelcage in Ponca in defanet of enormous bail, an the indictment, in itselfs a howling humbug, [mot illisible] attempt to shoot the revolver empty and uunserviceable. Never an attempt to shoot ne [mot illisible], not in any code penal exists such an outrage on common sense.

After being in steelcahe seven months, twenty days, court sitting meanwhile, I ready a farce was held, Norris, the [mot illisible] raseal presiding while S. S. Me Carthy acted simultaneously as a chiefwitness and public prosecutor yet secunded by Mel. C. Lay, while Barnes, the forger was forced on me against my protest by the corrupt court Norris.

I was declared "guilty of sanity" as Norris charged the jury, "if sane, guilty if insane not guilty". Either penitentiary or madhouse. The jury saw that I was sane in mind and body as I myself emphatically said, but my long imprisonment had cost the county, th be square with the ignorant, they sent me two years to penitentiary, but gave me all chance to escape on the way. I was two years in pen. When I cam out, I swore out criminal complaints against Me. Carthy, M. Cabe sheriff & deal constable, conspiracy to perpure, subornation to perjury, also against et E. Barnes, exdisfr judge John Barnes & Gev Mattison, for forgery of legal document, standing [mot illisible] dead and recorded in Court Docket in Ponca.

The combined courthouse sing prevailed on Asa Bose Probatyndge, before complaints were sworn and tool of Me Carhy to swear that he was afraid of me that of might possibly run a knife into his ribs. On this silly, infantile, crazy declaration I

was arrested on unlegal warrant of Court Clerk Harris by sherrif Me Cabe's deputy Me. Manus with revolverin Hand, Me Carty in the lunatic commission, then Me Carthy was, by Norris replaced by Pearson and he by Nodgers. Of course that commission did what was expected, found me insane. In the asylum in Norfolk I was employed as physician my prescription are on file cannot be denied, administred to attendants and patients, male & female. I was liberated on the threat of the Consul Gen of Germany in Chicago that he must sue the state of Nebraska for \$200,000 for putting me in pen. On known fulse commitment. If a man has been treated by an organized band of legal thieves, it become imperatively necessary to have everyone on the justices of the peace and the distr. Judge on their side deny him all justice. Distr, Judge Evans refused me a mandamus to compell the justices Geffreys of Martins burg as Hart of Allen to do their sworn duty.

"Verte" écrit en bas de la page.

The federal courts also refused to act, saying "that they had no jurisdiction". The State has been put to considerable expense. The county of Dixon to over \$1800, by their judicial anarchy.

Besides it has ruined me financially, has destroyed my hearing, my standing in the community, also has branded my children as the offspring of a penitentiary bird. Really the Dreyfus scandal is not in it by far.

Constantin Ruttgers.

Formely surgeon U. S. army.

An insertion of his as specified will you must help me, as I am poor and an old man of sixty seven years.

My best thanks in advance.

Believe me, Sir, to remain

Very Respectfully

Your very obedient servant.

Constantin Rutggers.

Lettre qui précède celle-ci :

Mr Emil(sic) Zola

Dear Sir

This letter was sent to England but by the inconveivable stupidity of the english mail held there in the general delivery and returned. Such is fame, caviar to the general.

Inclosed find a slip of a paper which, knowing my case, knowing me for 37 years, can in holy horror utter this, when every one knows, that such things happen here more often than anywhere. Of course all is true here given, nobody can invent such a plot. My boys branded as the offspring of a criminal will thank for giving this to the [mot illisilbe]. Very truly & at C. Ruttgers

verte^[2]

Je suis née à Bergheim près de Cologne, mes parents étaient bien comme las. Je parle le français mais j'ai oublié de l'écrire.

1. P.

^[1] La lettre parlant de Dreyfus, son scripteur a dû vouloir écrire « 1898 ».

^[2] Ce mot est simplement écrit en bas de la feuille sans qu'il ne paraisse lié au reste du texte.

Les folios

En passant la souris sur une vignette, le titre de l'image apparaît.

10 Fichier(s)

Relations

Ce document n'a pas de relation indiquée avec un autre document du projet.□

Citer cette page

Ruttgers, Constantin, Lettre de Constantin Ruttgers à Émile Zola datée du 21 février 1898, 1898-02-21

Centre d'Étude sur Zola et le Naturalisme & Institut des textes et manuscrits modernes, CNRS-ENS ; projet EMAN (CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne Nouvelle).

Consulté le 08/08/2025 sur la plate-forme EMAN :

<https://eman-archives.org/CorrespondanceZola/items/show/6732>

Présentation

GenreCorrespondance

Date d'envoi[1898-02-21](#)

AdresseLancaster, Pensylvania, U. S. A.

Description & Analyse

DescriptionDemande de le défendre pour une injustice similaire au cas Dreyfus.

Notesarticle de « The Evening Post » sur la honte de la France

Information générales

Langue[Anglais](#)

CoteAME 1898_02_21 LEA.37.Ruttgers.21021898.Lancaster

Éléments codicologiques Lettre originale sans enveloppe, papier à lettre, trois feuilles grand format, quatre pages manuscrites.

Source

- Cas similaire
- Collection famille Émile-Zola
- Dreyfus
- francophobie

Informations éditoriales

Éditeur de la ficheCentre d'Étude sur Zola et le Naturalisme & Institut des textes et manuscrits modernes, CNRS-ENS ; projet EMAN (CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne Nouvelle).

Mentions légales

- Fiche : Centre d'Études sur Zola et le Naturalisme & Institut des textes et manuscrits modernes, CNRS-ENS ; projet EMAN (CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne Nouvelle). Licence Creative Commons Attribution - Partage à l'Identique 3.0 (CC BY-SA 3.0 FR).
- Image : Document reproduit avec l'aimable autorisation des ayants droit d'Émile Zola. Toute reproduction du document est interdite sans autorisation des ayants droit. Les demandes peuvent se faire à l'aide du formulaire de contact.

Contributeur(s)Cantiran, Élise

Notice créée par [Richard Walter](#) Notice créée le 21/12/2018 Dernière modification le 21/08/2020

THE EVENING SUN, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1898.

In all the history of criminal procedure there is nothing to equal the crime of the original Dreyfus conviction. France today, although righting a monstrous wrong, is in even a more humiliating situation than was Spain after her last war. Spain has ceased to be a nation, while France meets with universal contempt, which is more crushing than a Waterloo or Sedan. That fickle nation is either on the downroad of degeneracy or else longing for another Napoleon I.

Mr. Emile Zola

Dear Sir

This letter was sent to England.
Sent by the inconceivable stupor-
pidity of the english mail,
held there in the general delivery
and returned. Such is fame,
caviar to the general.

Inclosed find a slip of a paper
which, knowing my case,
knowing me for 37 years, can
in holy horror utter this, when
every one knows, that such things
happen here more often than
anywhere. Of course all is true
here given, nobody can invent
such a plot. My boy, branded
as the offspring of a criminal,
will thank for giving this to the
public. Very truly &c. E. Zola
verte

Je suis né à Bieghem
près de Bulgne, mes
parents étaient bien comme
lui. Je parle le français
mais j'ai oublié de
l'écrire. P. P.

Donc
L'homme qui

Lancaster Pennsylvania U. S. A. Feb 21, 1889

Mr. Emil Zola London

Dear Sir

I take the liberty to address these lines to ^{you} with the hope, that through your fame and influence they may find insertion into some leading newspaper either in England, Belgium or France. The herein told story seems incredible to most people, but I fear is of every day occurrence here, as, whenever I submit it to a lawyer, a cynical, gratified smile overspreads his face. That the thing is true is likewise insured, as nobody's fancy could possibly hatch out such an outrage.

Also, as I was liberated out of the madhouse by the German ministry of the exterior, to which my sister in Germany, as guardian of my children appealed in my behalf, he threatened the Governor Heblum to sue the state of Nebraska for \$200,000 for putting me in penitentiary on false commitment, as in madhouse I was legally dead, the whole thing must be true in every particular. When this superintendent Mackay got the letter from the consul general in Chicago, who received it from the embassy in Washington he came, while I and about twenty others, likewise incarcerated, were amusing ourselves and laughingly remarked, "I got a letter from the Consul gen in Chicago about you. Your family seems to interest themselves about you, but he cannot help you. You are an American citizen ha ha". Now follows copy of a letter written to the legislature of Nebraska containing source of trouble.

To the presiding officer of the Senate

or France. The herein told story seems incredible to most people, but I fear is of every day occurrence here, as, whenever I submit it to a lawyer, a cynical, gratified smile overspreads his face. That the thing is true is likewise insured, as nobody's fancy could possibly hatch out such an outrage.

Also, as I was liberated out of the madhouse by the German Ministry of the Exterior, to which my sister in Germany, as guardian of my children appealed in my behalf, he threatened the Governor Hulemb to sue the state of Nebraska for \$200,000 for putting me in penitentiary on false commitment, as in madhouse I was legally dead, the whole thing must be true in every particular. When this superintendent Mackay got the letter from the consul general in Chicago, who received it from the embassy in Washington he came, while I and about twenty others, likewise incarcerated, were amusing ourselves and laughingly remarked, "I got a letter from the Consul gen in Chicago about you. Your family seems to interest themselves about you, but he cannot help you. You are an American citizen ha ha." Now follows copy of a letter written to the legislature of Nebraska containing source of trouble.

To the presiding officer of the Senate.
Nebraska Legislature

Sir If you are an honest man, you will present this memorial to the Senate without delay. In the year 1888 I was dispossessed by Sheriff Brown of Dixon county Neb. of landed property, the S. W. 1/4 of sect. 11. T. 29. R. 5 east

Nebraska series, now O'Keefe etc. This was done
on a judgement without jurisdiction, by
justice Wherritt of Ponca. On my appeal, judge J.
Powers jun. upheld this judgement and Harris
sitting jointly with him as distr. judge, wrote
the "forthwith ejectment." All these here named
scoundrels knowing fully well the rascality thus
committed. Both Barnes, of Ponca & Norfolk also
George Wattison stand self-committed as forgers
on the petition to court, saying, that Wattison
was seized in fee simple "while he had not a
valid entry. Judgement of Wherritt April 27th 1888
of Powers, July 11th 1889, eviction by Harris Aug. 2nd 1889.
After committing all this barratry it became a
necessity to make me flee the country, and leave them
in possession of their robbery undisputed.

On the first eviction sheriff Brown had, on command
of the Barnes and Wattison, to put a revolver on
my forehead, using insulting language, also he
handcuffed me with new handcuffs, yet in the
tissuepaper of the store, presented by Bankwrecked
Dorsey for this occasion, for 3/4 of an hour around
a tree, for their diversion, that whole plan concocted
in a saloon in Ponca amidst drunken debauchery.
The county attorneys, then and afterwards in office
were Mr. Ellister, A. E. Barnes already mentioned
J. J. Mr. Carthy and his pupil in law, mendacity &
perjury, Pearson. All these knew the whole dis-
graceful scandal as also did the atty. gen. Leese, Has-
tings, Churchill and Amythe also their Governors
Thayer, Boyd, Cronase and Wolcomb.

It sance for the goose also suits the gander, I thought
to imitate the revolvertrick as no harm could ensue
from such diversion, even while acting as robbers, as
Brown and Wattison did.

I pulled a revolver on J. J. Mr. Carthy in the sheriffs

on one person so soon, saying, that Elphinstone
was seized in fee simple "while he had not a
valid entry. Judgement of Hemmitt April 27th 1888
of Powers, July 11th 1889, eviction by Harris Aug. 2nd 1889.
After committing all this barratry it became a
necessity to make me flee the country, and leave them
in possession of their robbery undisputed.

On the first eviction sheriff Brown had, on command
of the Barnes and Elphinstone, to put a revolver on
my forehead, using insulting language, also he
handcuffed me with new handcuffs, yet in the
tissuepaper of the store, presented by Bankwrecker
Dorsey for this occasion, for 3/4 of an hour around
a tree, for their diversion, that whole plan concerted
in a saloon in Ponca amidst drunken debauchery.
The county attorneys, then and afterwards in office
were Elphinstone, A. E. Barnes already mentioned
J. J. Elphinstone and his pupil in law, mendacity &
perjury, Pearson. All these knew the whole dis-
graceful scandal as also did the atty. gen. Leese, Has-
tings, Churchill and Smythe also their Governors
Thayer, Boyd, Cronase and Hulcomb.

As sauce for the goose also suits the gander, I thought
to imitate the revolvertrick as no harm could ensue
from such diversion, even while acting as robbers, as
Brown and Elphinstone did.

I pulled a revolver on J. J. Elphinstone in the sheriff's
office in Ponca, was arrested, to frighten me, put in
stockade in Ponca in default of enormous bail, on
the indictment, in itself a howling humbug, I vainly
attempt to shoot the revolver empty and unserviceable.
Never can an attempt to shoot be felony, not in any
code penal exists such an outrage on common sense,

31

After being in stockade seven months, twenty days, court sitting meanwhile, I ready, a farce was held, Harris the aforementioned rascal presiding, while S. P. Mc Carthy acted simultaneously as chief witness and public prosecutor yet seconded by Mcl. E. Say, while Barnes the forger was forced on me against my protest by the corrupt court Harris.

I was declared, "guilty of sanity" as Harris charged the jury "if sane, guilty, if insane not guilty." Either penitentiary or madhouse. The jury saw that I was sane in mind and body, as I myself emphatically said, but my long imprisonment had cost the county, to be square with the ignorant, they sent me two years to penitentiary, but gave me all chance to escape on the way. I was two years in pen. When I came out, I swore out criminal complaints against Mc Carthy, Mcl. Lake sheriff & Deaf constable, conspiracy to perjure, subornation to perjury, also against Mcl. E. Barnes, ex dist. judge John Barnes & Gen. McArthur, for forgery of legal document, standing live dead and recorded in Court Docket in Ponca.

The combined courthouse ring prevailed on Asa Rose private judge, before complaints were sworn and told of Mc Carthy, to swear that he was afraid of me that I might possibly run a knife into his ribs. On this silly, infantile, crazy declaration I was arrested on illegal warrant of Court clerk Harris, by sheriff Mcl. Lake's deputy Mcl. Hannus with revolver in hand, Mc Carthy in the lunatic commission, then Mc Carthy was, by Harris replaced by Pearson and he by Rodgers. Of course, that commission did, what was expected, found me insane. In the asylum in Norfolk I was employed as physician, my prescriptions are on file, cannot be denied, administered to attendants and patients, male & female. I was liberated on the threat of the Consul Gen of Germany in Chicago that he must sue the state of Nebraska for \$200,000 for putting me in pen. on known false commitment. If a man has been treated by an organized band of legal thieves, it becomes imperatively

to escape on the way. I was two years in pen. When I came out, I swore out criminal complaints against Mr. Carthy, Mr. Lake sheriff & Deaf constable, conspiracy to perjure, subornation to perjury, also against St. E. Barnes, ex dist. judge John Barnes & Gov. McArthur, for forgery of legal document, standing over deed and recorded in Court Docket in Ponca.

The combined court house ring prevailed on Asa Rose private judge, before complaints were sworn and told of Mr. Carthy, to swear, that he was afraid of me, that I might possibly run a knife into his ribs. On this silly, infantile, crazy declaration I was arrested on illegal warrant of Court clerk Harris, by sheriff Mr. Lake's deputy Mr. Hannan, with revolver in hand, Mr. Carthy in the lunatic commission, then Mr. Carthy was, by Harris replaced by Pearson and he by Rodgers. Of course, that commission did, what was expected, found me insane. In the asylum in Norfolk I was employed as physician, my prescriptions are on file, cannot be denied, administered to attendants and patients, male & female. I was liberated on the threat of the Consul Gen of Germany in Chicago, that he must sue the state of Nebraska for \$200,000 for putting me in pen. on known false commitment. If a man has been treated by an organized band of legal thieves, it becomes imperatively necessary, to have every one of the justices of the peace and the dist. judge on their side, deny him all justice. Dist. judge Evans refused me a mandamus "to compel the justices Jeffreys of Hartington or Hart of Ellen, to do their sworn duty. Verte

The federal courts also refused to act, saying, that they had no jurisdiction." The state has been sent to considerable expense, the county of Dixon to over \$1800, by this judicial anarchy.

Besides it has ruined me financially, has destroyed my hearing, my standing in the community also has branded my children as the offspring of a penitentiary bird. Really the Dreyfus scandal is not in it by far.

Constantin Pentzgers
formerly surgeon U. S. Army.

An insertion of this as specified will
you must help me, as I am poor and
an old man of sixty seven years -
My best thanks in advance

Believe me, dear Sir, to remain
Very Respectfully

Yours Very obedient servant
Constantin Pentzgers