

PROCEEDINGS AGAINST JOHN ESCOTT

House of Lords

Thursday, 23 June 1642 [OS]

Henry Willis, of Lancheston, in the County of Cornwall, gentleman, makes oath that on 30 May last, being Whitsun Monday, he did hear John Escott, of Lancheston aforesaid, woollen-draper, voluntarily to deliver these words following (or to the same effect); videlicet, that he never knew nor heard of a Parliament that did proceed so basely as this present Parliament now does; that many able honest men of the House were grieved at their proceedings; and that Mr. Seldon (who was a man that had more learning than a thousand round-headed Pymys) being demanded by an acquaintance of his why he came so seldom to the House, made answer that he knew not to what purpose he should come thither; they were so overborn that there was no good to be done; and that then the said Mr. Seldon instanced thus to his said acquaintance:

Suppose that you and I were playing a game at slam, and I have one card in my hand, which I am sure will either get or save the game, which is the ace of trumps; which I play, and you play the knave of trumps upon it, and take up the trick. I ask you why you do so? You answer because you have gotten it. "How?" say I. "Does your knave get my ace?" You tell me yes. Hereupon we refer it to a vote; and the major voice carries it for you.

And this deponent says that then the said Escott further said thus the Parliament commands the King—or used words to that purpose—and did then also deliver other words derogatory to the Parliament, which this deponent does not now certainly remember. And he says that the same words were so delivered at Lancheston aforesaid.

Monday, 4 July 1642 [OS]

John Escott, of Lancheston, in the County of Cornwall, being sent for as a delinquent by this House, was brought to the bar and the affidavit of Henry Wills was read before him; and, after it was read, John Escott denied he spoke any such words; whereupon he was commanded to withdraw. Ordered, that the witnesses against him shall be sent for and the said John Escott to remain in custody in the meantime.

Tuesday, 26 July 1642 [OS]

The witnesses in John Escott's cause were called in; and, upon oath, Henry Willis said he heard John Escott say he has not known a Parliament proceed so basely as this Parliament did; and averred what he had deposed in his affidavit. Nettle said he heard Mr. Escott say this was the basest Parliament that ever was, and they were a company of Roundheads.

They withdrew; and the House, taking these words into consideration, gave this judgment against him:

1. That John Escott shall pay to the King £100 fine.
2. That he shall stand upon the pillory in Cheapeside and the New Palace at Westminster, with a paper on his head declaring his offence.
3. That he shall pay £10 to Nettle for his charges.
4. That he shall be imprisoned in Newgate during the pleasure of this House.
5. That he shall find sufficient sureties for the good behaviour when this House shall think fit to release him; and that he shall stand publicly, with a paper on his head expressing his offence at the next quarter sessions to be holden for the County of Cornwall after his release-ment.

The said John Escott was brought in as a delinquent; and having kneeled until the Speaker bid him stand up, the Speaker, by the directions of the House, pronounced the said sentence against him.