

Windham April 7th 1786

Dear Sir,

Received yours of ye [the] 31st ultimo in which you inform me that Norman Butler has sundry times applied for interest on Juba's notes & that your refusal to pay has made considerable talk among people who are of opinion that you ought to pay it to Butler & that you had no right to refuse it etc. I trust that no people of consequence will concern themselves in the affair. I know Butler talks big & threatens & I suppose some other speculators join with him but I hope & trust that their talk will not affect you or me when we adhere to the line of justice & right & to suppress the greatest fraud & imposition. The negro boy's freedom or slavery depends upon it. He was born & brought up in the family a slave. I had given him to my son when young. He had brought him up at a great expense. He offered him his freedom upon the only condition of serving 3 years with the army when he was but just above 16 years old & upon the condition that he, i.e. my son, had his wages, my son to supply him with necessities needful & was delivered to his call on that condition. The negro boy as far as he could & myself as his guardian agreed to it & gave those instructions to his officer & his wages was made over to my son when he the negro went into the army. The poor fellow, a minor under age & unskilled in the arts of designing men, was imposed upon & had his notes gotten from him for only 2/6 on the pound, paid in trinkets. He resigned his life 3 last years in the army & with giving to his master only these trifling depreciated wages to purchase his freedom & he is free only on condition of my son taking the benefit of these notes. Is [it] right, is it just, judge you & all mankind, that the poor fellow must remain a slave on such an imposition. It is the price of his freedom. Whoever knows this, will they blame you or me or is a poor young ignorant fellow to be cheated out of his freedom by the arts & imposition of such speculators. No, no. I consider myself his guardian. I have no personal interest, but mean to support him against such imposition & will defend you. I expect to be up in May then will bring you the proper vouchers, suspended till that time, though Butler should be a little angry & threaten. Liberty is dear it is too much to be lost to gratify such men.

Fm yr hle servt [From your humble servant]

Eliphalet Dyer

To John Lawrence
Treasurer, Hartford