

Joseph's Order to Destroy the Expositor Press

*P. 103, The Secret Chamber: Spiritual Wifery & the Doctrine of Christ
Val Brinkerhoff / 1/26/2020*

Those in the secret chamber at Nauvoo (pro-polygamists who were practicing “spiritual wifery” secretly behind Joseph’s back) knew that the destruction of the Expositor press violated the laws of freedom of the press. They were convinced it would lead to the imprisonment and potential murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. In 1879, former Apostle William Smith, then an old man, sent a letter to his nephew, Joseph Smith III (then President of the RLDS Church), in which he (William) revealed three important things tied to Joseph and Hyrum’s murder by the secret chamber. He stated:

(1) That many of the Apostles were teaching polygamy among the Nauvoo Saints secretly prior to Joseph’s murder. Emma Smith (President of Relief Society over the whole Church) had concerns that spiritual wives doctrines were being shared with women under her care in Nauvoo in 1844. William quoted Emma, stating that, “some complaint had been made to her [Emma Smith] by females whom she had visited, that John Taylor, Willard Richards, and Brigham Young had been teaching some doctrines among the Saints privately that was going to ruin the Church, unless there was a stop put to it, as it was contrary to the law and rules governing the Church. Your father remarked that he would attend to the matter as soon as he got through with his troubles with the Laws and Fosters. But mark you their conversation took place only a few days previous to your father's death.”

(2) That two church Apostles - John Taylor and Willard Richards - had put pressure on the Prophet Joseph (as Mayor of Nauvoo) to get him to sign the order (by the City of Nauvoo) to destroy the press (Taylor also served on Nauvoo City Council). William knew this because he was present when both things occurred at the home of Joseph and Emma Smith. He was there to have breakfast with Joseph and Emma. William stated:

“What fixes the stain of guilt upon these parties named in this letter making them more criminally murderous, is the part that the City Council at Nauvoo took in getting up the ordinance which resulted in the destruction of the Expositor press. And I wish here to name the fact that the principal instigators in getting up that ordinance were **men who feared the revelations that this organ** (Expositor) was about to make of their secret and ungodly doings to the world. The persons who were most conspicuous in the work, and were the means of bringing on the scenes that finally resulted in the bloody tragedy which took place at Carthage Jail were no other than John Taylor and Willard Richards, **who by constant importunities** prevailed upon your father to sign his own death warrant by placing his name to that accursed ordinance which resulted in his death and the death of your Uncle Hyrum. To these importunities of Richards and Taylor **I was a witness, and was present** when Richards brought in the book containing the ordinance and asked for your father’s signature to make it a law in the City of Nauvoo. I remonstrated with Richards at the time, against my brother Joseph putting his name down in such a place, as it would most certainly result in his death. Richards, failing to secure your father’s name at this time, both he and Taylor **called on your father the next morning**, with feigned tears of desperation, expatiating upon the great necessity of having that Expositor removed, as a means to the further growth and prosperity not only of the City of Nauvoo, but of the cause of the Church abroad. Thus these men, with the sophistry of their lying tongues, like wolves in sheep’s clothing, ensnared the prophet from off his watch tower, and led him as a lamb to the slaughter, they promising, also, **to be his assistants in case he should fall into trouble, as a result of his name being placed to that ordinance. This accounts for the whys and the wherefores, that Taylor and Richards were both in jail at the time your father and your uncle Hyrum were murdered**” (William. B. Smith. Kingston, Caldwell Co., Mo., March 25th, 1879, published in 'The Saints' Herald 26 [April 15, 1879], p. 117).

(3) Richards and Taylor were in Jail with Joseph to see that he and Hyrum were killed. They were the back up plan in case the Carthage Greys did not take out the Smith brothers. William stated, “Thus these men...led him as a lamb to the slaughter, they promising, also, to be **his assistants in case he should fall into trouble**, as a result of his name being placed to that ordinance...” The conspiracy against the Smith’s had been strengthening over the years. William said, “Thus you see, by the secret workings and secret doings of these men for years gone by, the Church was robbed of her prophet and patriarch, by a most hellish plot that had been in vogue for not only months, but years previous to the time of their deaths” (see <https://restorationbookstore.org/articles/nopoligamy/jsfp-vol2/2chp14.htm>).