

SUMMARY: The document below is the deposition, dated 1 February 1623, of George Archer, given in response to interrogatories in a lawsuit brought in the Court of Chancery by the family of Nicholas Brend (d. 12 October 1601), who had leased the land on which the Globe playhouse was built to William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon and other members of the Lord Chamberlain's Men on 21 February 1599, against Sir John Bodley, landlord of the Globe from 1601-1622, claiming that Bodley had unduly enriched himself as a trustee appointed under the will of Nicholas Brend. For Bodley's role in the financial affairs of Nicholas Brend and as landlord of the Globe after Brend's death, see TNA C 54/1682, mm. 10-11.

The Brends' bill of complaint and Sir John Bodley's answer have not survived. For the Brends' replication, see TNA C 2/ChasI/Z1/6. For the interrogatories, see TNA C 24/496/114, m. 9. For the depositions given by three other witnesses, William Fellows, Mary Strelley, and Mercy Brend Frobisher, see TNA C 24/496/114, ff. 1-4, 7-8.

After a full hearing on 26 June 1626, the case was dismissed with costs against the Brends, the Court having determined that Sir Matthew Brend had no standing since the properties concerned were not part of his inheritance. For orders in the case, see TNA C 33/147, ff. 932-3; TNA C 33/149, f. 537; TNA C 33/149, f. 936; TNA C 33/151, f. 485; and TNA C 33/151, f. 528.

It appears from the deposition below that Archer acted in some capacity as Sir John Bodley's servant.

1o Februarij 1622
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P {ro} Zinzan mil {ite}

1 George Archer, dwelling in Maid Lane in the Bankside in the parish of St Saviour in Southwark in the county of Surrey, porter, of the age of 60 years or thereabouts, sworn and examined etc.

That he doth know Sir Sigismund Zinzan, knight, and Dame Margaret, his wife, and Sir Matthew Brend, knight, named for three of the complainants, and hath lately seen John Brend, Jane Brend and Frances Brend, but hath no great knowledge of them, and for Robert Meese and Mercy, his wife, named for two other of the complainants, this deponent saith he never saw to his remembrance, but Sir John Bodley, knight, named for defendant in this suit, this deponent saith he doth very well know and hath so known him these ten years or thereabout, but hath known him by sight a great while longer, and Sir Sigismund Zinzan this deponent hath known about a year and an half, and Margaret, his wife, about these twenty years, and Sir Matthew Brend from his infancy.

2 That he doth not know the manor or farm called the Mace in the parish of Cudham in the county of Kent nor any other of the tenements in the article particularly mentioned, only he saith he was in the house of Nicholas Brend, esquire, on St Peter Hill at the time of his death, he dying in the same house, but of what clear yearly value the same house or any the manor or farm or any other of the houses in the article mentioned were at the time of the death of the said Nicholas Brend, or what yearly value the same or any of them now are of, or what several rent or rents were at the death of the said Nicholas paid or payable for the same or any of them as by the article is questioned this deponent saith he knoweth not, nor can more say concerning the contents of this interrogatory.

3 That he doth not know of any sum or sums of money that the defendant was offered for the inheritance of the said premises or any part or parts of the same, neither doth this deponent know that the defendant did sell the said premises or any part or parts of the same unto any person or person[s] as is supposed by the article, neither can this deponent depose anything for satisfaction of any the particular questions of the interrogatory.

4 That he hath heard that Sir Matthew Browne, knight, in the article named died about some two years after the death of the said Nicholas Brend.

5 That he doth no know nor remembereth he hath heard that Sir John Bodley, the now defendant, is now of better ability in lands & goods or in either of them than he was about the time of the death of the said Nicholas Brend, for that this deponent saith he doth not know of what estate either in lands or goods or both the said defendant then was, howbeit he saith that he doth estimate the estate of the said defendant in lands is now worth about some five hundred pounds a year which did all descend unto him by inheritance as this deponent believeth, and this he saith is the effect of that he can depose to th' interrogatory, either upon his own knowledge or by credible report of others.

6 That he did never know nor heard that the said defendant did sell any of the lands or premises whereby he did raise any sum or sums of money, neither did this deponent ever hear the said defendant confess that he had in his hands any money at all which he had raised by the sale of any of the said lands or premises as by the article is questioned, neither can he depose anything certain or material to any of the particular questions of the interrogatory.

7 That he doth not know of what age or ages the said complainants John Brend, Jane Brend, Mercy Meese and Frances Brend or any of them were at the time of the death of Nicholas Brend, their father, nor can tell what to believe thereof, and this deponent further saith that he doth not know nor doth remember he hath heard that the said children or any of them did oftentimes or at any time demand of the said defendant their portions and maintenance which their said father gave them before the defendant paid then [sic] the same, as by the [f. 6r] article is questioned, howbeit he saith that he doth know that the defendant hath paid unto them certain moneys quarterly for their maintenance, for this deponent saith that he, the deponent, hath sundry times by the appointment of the defendant paid moneys to some of them or to their uses, and this deponent hath received acquittances for the same to the defendant's use.

8 That he doth not know nor hath credibly heard that the defendant, Sir John Bodley, did require or had ten pounds pro centum per annum use money allowed him for such money as the said Nicholas Brend at his death owed to the defendant or for which the defendant stood engaged for the said Nicholas at any time before the death of the said Nicholas Brend as is supposed by the interrogatory, neither can this deponent tell what to believe therein, and therefore can depose nothing material touching any the particular questions of the interrogatory.

George Archer