

From: "Stuart Green" <stuartgreenmd@yahoo.com>
To: "Benjamin Franklin" <dr_benjamin_franklin@yahoo.com>
Subject: **Scarcely escape newspaper defamation**

Dear Doctor Franklin:

Because you're the first revitalized person, few will believe announcements of your unearthing and revival. People will want proof of such an astounding occurrence. Skeptics will claim that Philadelphia's officials faked the story of your discovery for publicity purposes. Members of the press, by the time you read this, will have established a vigil outside your hospital window, awaiting a glimpse, a word, anything tangible to share with the world.

At some point after you reawaken, Sir, you must meet with the press to prove your identity. This won't be easy. Simply declaring, "I am Dr. Benjamin Franklin of Philadelphia" will not do. Instead, you must supply details about your life and your family and your accomplishments to convince even the most cynical disbeliever of your return. We're all naturally doubting Thomases.

I recommend, however, that you wait a while before granting any interviews—to regain your strength, reacquaint yourself with the history of your times, and become familiar with the modern vernacular. My emails will, I hope, help.

Once you feel ready, you have two ways to make yourself known to the public. One, a *press conference*, is a large gathering of reporters shouting out their questions without orderliness or courtesy. The experience will remind you of the unpleasant time you testified in the House of Commons to get the Stamp Act repealed. (Although you had "friends" among the Members of Parliament who asked "planted" questions, recall as well the "enemies" who tried to humiliate you with challenging queries.)

The other format available to convince the public of your identity is the *personal interview*. In this situation, one person asks all the questions, which you answer. The public watches over the interviewer's shoulder, so to speak, on a device similar to the one in front of you.

You must, Sir, be wary of the press. Their desire to gain fame by attacking others hasn't changed from your time to ours. Recall you once predicted that even if the Angel Gabriel reappeared, "he could scarcely escape newspaper defamation from a gang of hungry ever-restless, discontented and malicious scribblers."

I recommend that you avoid the press conference and select the personal interview instead. The commotion during a press conference will prove so distressing you'll wish you were back in your barrel. Also, you're reportedly uneasy when speaking in public but have a favorable reputation as conversationalist in private discourse.



Madame Helvetius

Although many are qualified to conduct a meaningful interview, I suggest that you consider one of several ladies who have become famous for their interrogatory skills. One, with an agreeable nature, will remind you of your Paris friend Madame Brillon, while the second being closer to your age, will take you back to Madame Helvetius. The first has a warm interview technique that will prove quite comfortable, whereas the second is more abrupt. Indeed, her first question (after exchanging pleasantries) might be, “Tell me Benjamin, who was the mother of your illegitimate son William?”

Nevertheless, you might prefer the second because, being divorced, she is, shall I say, available. An interview with her could turn into an interesting match-up, like the chess games you so enjoyed during your lifetime: she would battle to corner your King, while you campaign to topple her Queen.