

Captain M'Daniel, *Massachusetts Gazette*, 1 January 1788

To the Citizens of Massachusetts.

...But to be *serious*—the antifederalists are now grumbling that the members of the late federal convention exceeded the powers vested in them. This brings to my mind the story of a captain of an English man of war, who, in the reign of queen Elizabeth, when the English nation was at war with France (I will not be positive, but I think it was with France) was stationed at a particular place, and commanded not to leave it on his peril. The captain, however, found, that by leaving his station it would be in his power to render a very great benefit to his country. He therefore quitted his station, and by so doing effected what he had in view. The English admiral informed him, that notwithstanding he had done his country such service, he was liable to suffer for disobeying his orders. I know it (replied the captain) but the glory of my country I ought ever to consider before my personal safety. I do not know whether I have related the matter, verbatim, as it happened, but am confident that it is not essentially different in the main point.

Allowing that the convention have in some degree exceeded their powers, it by no means is in favour of antifederalism. They no doubt had the welfare and honour of their country in view; and considered that their proceedings were to be investigated by a community of enlightened and candid freemen, and in whose power it would be to decide whether they should be null or valid.

The convention have conducted worthy the representatives of a free people; this must be obvious to every true republican.—Citizens of Massachusetts, adopt the new constitution, as by so doing you will reap the benefits of struggling for independence.

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