

B 3804 no 3; Witch 068, Mengeon Lausson de Fontenay et sa femme Mengeotte

7 March 1620

'Avertissement de ce que Mengon Lausson de Fontenay et Mengeotte sa femme sont tellement soubconnées de sortilege que le peuple pour les menaces, haynes d'eux et pertes qui sur lesdites haynes et menaces leur arrivent et aultres inconvenients ne peuvent plus les supporter; les indices estans tres notoires et personne ne voulant se rendre partie crainte des frais et dangers, il est de ces causes raisonnable, util et nécessaire, que Monsieur le procureur General ou le Sieur son Substitut se mouve a cause d'office, et requiert information secrète et préparatoire contre eux pour desla proceder avant comme se verra mieux a faire pour la justice.'

Followed by list of potential witnesses, and outline of evidence. Major witnesses suggested are Claude Mathieu, Jean et Laurence Colignon, Poirat Prestemol, Georgeon Barbier, Antoine Chaixel le Jeune, Mengeon et Claudette Claudon, Nicolas Bailliat, Jean Claudel Antoine, Pierron Pourel, Colas Poirat, Antoine Chaix, and a further dozen witnesses to ill fame.

Substitut had evidently forwarded this to Procureur General with request for action on 22 February; it was authorised on 7 March from Mirecourt, and prévôt of Bruyères ardered to act.

1 July 1620; prévôt of Bruyères summons witnesses for following Monday and Tuesday, 6 and 7 July. Sergent ordered to manage business so that names of accused should not be known, and affair remain secret.

6 July 1620; informations against Mengeotte Lausson

(1) Claudette femme Mengeon des Hayette de Fontenay, c. 24

6 years earlier had had three-year illness, which she and her late mother ascribed to witchcraft by Mengeotte; latter had been angry with her father, because he had not complied with request to purchase a cotillon at fair for her daughter Didiere, lending her six francs in process. At Christmas-time had given birth to baby, but lost milk after 15 days when frightened by loud noise in chamber. Asked Mengeotte to undertake pilgrimage in her name, but her husband prevented her, claiming that this would increase suspicions that she had already caused loss of milk to another woman. Witness, who had put child out to nurse, then obtained bread, salt, and ashes from Mengeotte's house, and milk returned after she had drunk a soup made of these.

(2) Mengeon des Hayettes de Fontenay, c. 26

Repeated story of loss of milk, and refusal of Mengeotte to undertake pilgrimage - husband objected that if it succeeded it would be spread about that she was the cause of the trouble. When on journey in Allemaigne he had taken advice and visited wife of executioner of Colombier; drugs she gave him had restored the

milk. Asked why he suspected Mengeotte, said that apart from general repute, she had asked particularly about his wife during her childbirth.

(3) Claudon Pourel le Viel de Fontenay, c. 80

Some 10 or 12 years before his son Pierron had a dispute with Mengeotte; they were in habit of cooking bread together, but she was always complaining, and eventually son told her to do baking elsewhere. Same day one of his horses fell ill, and died three days later. Suspected Mengeotte, both on account of dispute and of her reputation, based on threats she was accustomed to use.

(4) Mengeon Claudon de Fontenay, 40

3 years earlier, 'il se laissa persuader de Claudatte sa femme, de recepvoir en leur poisle plusieurs femmes et filles du village pour y filer, et veiller pendant l'hiver'. Mengeotte and three of her daughters came, but others refused to have them, and had to be sent away; she was angry, and threatened that they would repent. Three days later a horse he had recently bought died, becoming ill just after passing Mengeotte's house. Some 9 or 10 years earlier, as Maire of Ban de Vaudicourt, had caught her and her husband stealing communal timber to take into town; when warned off they were angry, tried to attack him, and threatened him. A few days after, three of his cows died within a week.

(5) Claudatte femme de Mengeon Claudon, 36

Story of veillée, after which she had been ill, to add to loss of horse.

(6) Ysabel fille Claudon Claude Nicolle de Fontenay, c. 25

Knew that her master Claude Matheu had suspected Mengeotte of causing death of a cow, and sickness of an ox, as result of quarrels and menaces.

(7) Mengeon fils Claudon Claude Nicolle de Fontenay, c. 24

3 or 4 years earlier had been in field with Antoine Chaxel, 'y tendants des lessets pour prendre des merles'; companion had become ill suddenly, having just had a quarrel with Mengeon and Mengeotte Lausson, who were also there. Went and accused them of causing it, which made them even angrier; but he recovered after leaving them.

(8) Laurence femme de Jean Collignon de Fontenay, c. 34

Some 6 years earlier had heard Mengeotte say at poisle commung 'que quant on l'avoit fasché elle s'en souvenoit encor de sept ans apres, sans en faire semblant.' Around that time her husband 'gaga' a horse belonging to Laussons; they were so angry they didn't even want to come and take horse away. Believed that as a result of this they had caused loss of a horse, two cows, and the child she was carrying.

(9) Poirat Prestemol de Fontenay, c. 70

7 years before all inhabitants had gone to wood to cut timber; when piles had been allotted Mengeon tried to cut some more for himself, but several others objected. Witness said to him 'qu'il estoit un fascheux homme, et que pour estre cognu, quel il estoit, il ne failloit si fort faire le mauvais.' Mengeon responded with threats, and witness believed he and his wife had subsequently caused deaths of his wife and daughter, and of a horse. Had called Mengeon 'sorcier' during quarrels, but no action followed.

(10) Jacquette femme Godey Mandray de Fontenay, c. 50

Some three years earlier, in poisle commun, Mengeotte had quarrelled with Bastienne, wife of Nicolas de Hadeguey, who didn't want her to sit next to her. Told her she would repent, and quickly; shortly afterwards Bastienne had a miscarriage, and died herself.

(11) Claudatte fille Godey Mandray, c. 22

Repeated mother's story; a few days afterwards heard Mengeotte say outside Bastienne's house 'par la nom Dieu, elle s'en repentiroit et se donneroit de garde.'

(12) Jacat Lernat de Fontenoy, 62

Some 6 or 7 years before had witnessed a quarrel at market of Bruyeres between the Laussons and Nicolas Bailliat dit de Hadiguey. Mengeon Lausson was complaining that his wife and daughters had been humiliated at poisle, and in particular that Hadiguey's wife hadn't wanted to sit next to them; was asking him if they stank. A few days afterwards Hadiguey's wife slipped on ice, had a miscarriage, and died; her husband attributed this to both the Laussons. Mengeotte had always been reputed a witch since she had been in village.

(13) Edelynne veuve Claudin Fedoiart de Fontenay, c. 50

Repeated story of quarrel at poisle, which had been in their house. Had also involved Bastienne Collignon, who had joined Bastienne Hadeguey in trying to prevent Laussons sitting on their bench. Both subsequently died. Mengeotte long suspected of witchcraft.

(14) Cleron femme de Mengeon Philippe Baguel de Fontenay, c. 27

Reputation as long as she could remember. When she had been 15 she had guarded the pigs with her in the woods; weather was bad, and after Mengeotte told her not to fall she did so repeatedly; had trouble with legs for long time afterwards. Also story of quarrel at poisle.

(15) Claudon Lallement de Fontenay, c. 44

Long reputation of Mengeotte; had only recently heard husband suspected.

(16) Claudette femme de Claudon Lallemend, c. 44

Mengeotte's reputation more than 18 years. They had lost various beasts, but did not know the cause.

(17) Parizat Bailliat de Fontenay, c. 40

Mengeotte long suspected, although not much talk about husband. Had heard from Mongeon Bessat of Aydoille that when he had been escorting one called la Guengatte to Bruyeres, where she was subsequently executed, she said Mengeotte was as bad as her.

(18) Colas Poirat de Fontenay, 40

When his mother had been dying Mengeotte had come to offer her three pears; she had refused them, saying she had come too late; they had quarrelled shortly before. After mother's burial Mengeotte went to her grave once a week after mass; a woman claimed to have heard her praying to God 'de ne jamais la recepvoir en son Paradis'. He and all his family believed Laussons to have caused her death.

(19) Jean Bruyant d'Aydoille, 48

Some 11 years earlier had owed Laussons money, and been unable to repay; Mengeotte had threatened them. Wife was already ill, and became worse, despite pilgrimages he made on her behalf. Persuaded him to arrange for them to live in Lausson's house, paying them; she tried 'soubs main' to persuade Mengeotte to cure her during 6 months they were there, but eventually died. Reputation 20 years, and several had come to harm after her threats.

(20) Mengeon Claudon Laurent de Fontenay, 28

Some 20 months earlier, Mengeotte's daughter Didiere had taken his small daughter, aged 6 months, to her father's house. Baby became ill, and remained so for a year; his wife asked Mengeotte (whom they suspected) to find a cure. She said it needed a pilgrimage to Bel Bernard, which she offered to make. After she had been, or pretended to go, the child recovered. Had a horse sick the previous winter, after Mengeotte had reproached them with slowness in undertaking sewing job for her daughter; recovered after being given some rye she had brought.

(21) Jannon femme de Mengeon Laurent, 27

Repeated husband's story in all essentials. After pilgrimage brought 'vin benist' which was given to child for 9 days.

(22) Catherine femme Dieudonné Jean Martin de Fontenay, c. 60

Previous year her son Jean Loys, paistre du troupeau des porcs, had lost a sow belonging to Mengeotte while bringing them home. After subsequent quarrel he had fever for 9 months; Mengeotte advised pilgrimage to Bel Bernard, but when witness consulted curé of Aydoille he dissuaded her from this. Had also heard Mengeotte say that if she were burned as a witch, she would denounce her husband's sister Toussainte as one too, and that if she were taken many others would be too. On another occasion said she was 'bien aisé que son marit estoit ainsy qu'elle, qu'autrement ses soeurs le feroient depationner.'

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(23) Barbon femme Claude Matheu de Fontenay, c. 33

Some 2 years earlier their son Mengon aged 9 had been keeping their animals; an ox escaped into meadow of Laussons, and their daughter Collatte took his hat as gage. He called her fille de sorciere; after his parents had offered to pay for damage, and his hat had been returned, Claudatte told witness to punish him for insulting her, which she promised to do. A week later their best cow became sick, and died after 5 weeks; blamed Mengeotte in view of her ill fame. She advised witness to make offering to St. Don, but she had not wished to do so.

(24) Pierron Pourel de Fontenay. c. 40

Repeated father's story (3) about dispute over baking (between his wife and Mengeotte), and subsequent death of horse. Believed they had lost other animals as a result of quarrels. Also some 9 or 10 months before his daughter Jacquette had been ill - he believed bewitched by Mengeotte - and cured after 7 or 8 weeks when latter's daughters gave her some fruit. Had also heard indirectly that she advised going to offer to Bel Bernard and to St. Demenge, and his wife had done this.

(25) Jennon femme de Pierron Pourel, c. 40

Similar story to husband. Added that they had lost some other animals when living near Laussons, and had finally moved elsewhere.

(26) Claude Matheu de Fontenay, c. 38

Told essentially same story as wife (23). Also thought she had made an ox sick previous year; when she asked him how it was, he said the devll had made it sick. Next day her daughter came to borrow some butter, and again asked how it was - it quickly recovered.

(27) Jean Richier de Fontenay, 36

4 years before at coming Christmas, his wife had been at poisle when someone reported that Mengeotte was on pilgrimage to Bel Bernard for a woman of the village. Wife said 'qu'elle ne scavoit sy Dieu vouldroit qu'elle en deut mieux valoir'; this was reported to Mengeotte by one of her daughters. Soon after his wife

became as if 'forcenée', and he had to take her to Monsieur St. Humbert d'Aultrey, where she did a neuvaine and recovered.

(28) Dieudonné Antoine Dieudonné de Fontenay, c. 40

Long reputation.

(29) Jean Collignon de Fontenay, c. 40

Laussons had threatened him 4 years earlier after a quarrel, and he had lost a horse and two cows.

(30) Anthoine Chaxel le Jeune de Fontenay, c. 28

Had been ill a year before, so that he could not eat, sleep, or work. Mengeotte had told him about similar illness of her husband, during which he and she had seen a white 'fantosme' which might have been his guardian angel. Advised him to go and make offerings to St. Don and St. Demenge; did so and was cured. Believed himself to have been bewitched, but did not know by whom.

(31) Nicolas Ferry le Vieulx de Fontenay, c. 80

Long reputation of both Laussons.

(32) Catherine femme de Colas Jean Bagay de Fontemay, c. 50.

Some 8 or 9 years before they had lost a sow immediately after quarrel with Mengeotte; she also became ill herself for 9 months, and had to go on crutches. Had two pilgrimages made, to St. Curien in church of Vaudeville, and another to St. Curien in Allemaigne, without result. Discussed illness with Mengeotte, who advised her to send her children to Vaudeville again and to drink a soup made on Good Friday; then gradually recovered. Had already suspected Mengeotte of causing harm to her husband some 24 years back, when he had been touched by a whirlwind in fields, and become 'comme demoniacle'; was eventually somewhat healed by soup provided by Mengeotte.

(33) Nicolas Ferry le Jeune de Fontenay, c. 46

Suspicions against both Laussons, but her much more than him.

(34) Nicolas Antoine Dieudonné de Fontenay, c. 44

Three years before his second wife had fallen gravely ill, with ulcers on her body; Mengeotte had said that she would go on a pilgrimage to Bel Bernard, for which he had paid her. After this wife's condition improved, but then one of Mengeotte's daughters heard group of women talking about it, and told her mother that the pilgrimage was giving her a bad reputation. Wife then relapsed, although he sent to St. Genoy in Burgundy at Mont Doré (she was evidently now dead.)

(35) Claudon Bailliot de Fontenay, ? (blank)

4 years before he had allowed a procureur he was employing in another case to defend the paistre against the Laussons, who wanted to make him pay for a cow which had died. Mengeotte had been angry, and told him he liked the herdsman better than he did them. Soon after he went to woods, and wife went with him to help. Hurt her knee with an axe, although it seemed no more than a scratch; had terrible pains for two years and finally died. Believed Mengeotte had caused her illness.

28 July 1620; interrogation

Said she was Mongeotte, daughter of Claudon Durant of Amouzey, aged about 60. Had been married for 32 years to Mengeon Lausson, had three daughters.

General denial of all charges. Suggested that wife and daughter of Poirat Prestemol had died because they had killed and touched the meat of an infected bull. As for Jehennon wife of Jean Bruant d'Aydoille, she had been suffering from hydropsy. Agreed to having made various pilgrimages. Said of Jean Louys, son of Dieudonné Jean Martin, that 'elle l'aymoit comme un des siens.'

4 August 1620; confrontations and confession

At first continued denials, then while waiting in separate room for next confrontation said she was ready to confess. Said that some 10 years before one of their horses had escaped and done slight damage to sheaves allotted for tithe. Tithe-collectors were informed by another village woman (now dead), and demanded excessive reparations, eventually demanding 8 reseaux of wheat from husband, when they only had 3 in the house for themselves. While still upset she went to cut heather in Void d'Arches as bedding for animals; met man in black who promised to aid her against those who were persecuting her, and in all necessities. Copulated with her, but penis was cold, produced no semen, and gave her no pleasure. met her again in same place 2 days later, said he was Satan, and made her renounce God.

Numerous attendances at Sabbat, sometimes on a 'ballet' which her master greased. Usual miserable food and drink. Many others there, but were all masked, and could recognise none of them. Cleared her husband of any complicity; asked how she had managed to go so often to sabbat without his knowledge, said she had sometimes been transported when at work, or if it had been at night, had waited until others were in bed, and pretended to be attending to fire or some other household task. Denied having used powder or done harm to anyone.

7 August 1620; confession

Repeated earlier confessions. Now admitted that she had tried powder on a blind horse of theirs, and also said she had recognised the woman of Aydoiles and Jean Adam (both already executed).

10 August 1610; PG des Vosges asks for execution, after torture to establish maléfices and accomplices.

14 August 1620; Change de Nancy approves.

18 August 1620; interrogation under torture

Given thumbscrews and rack, but would add nothing to previous confessions, protesting that she could not lie when under oath.

19 August 1620; sentence carried out.

6 July 1620; informations against Mengeon Lausson

(1) Nicolas Bailliot dit de Hardeguay, 36, de Fontenay

Told how 6 years earlier his late wife Bastienne 'estante retourne du poisle commun ou elle avoit veillé et fillé avec les aultres femmes et filles, elle luy dict en se mettant au lict que Mengeotte femme de Mengeon Lausson y avoit esté et encor deux ou trois de ses filles, et qu'ayant dict a Nicolle fille Godoy Mandray de se tirer pres d'elle ladite Mengeotte s'en offensa et allegua a ses filles qu'il s'en failloit aller puis qu'elles puoient et addressant sa parole particulierement a elle, luy auroit dit que puis que ladite de Mandray estoit meilleure qu'elle pour estre aupres de soy et de ceste cause les desdaignoit, elle se pouvoit asseurer qu'en bref elle s'en repentiroit, ce que luy qui parle ayant ouy Il dit a sadite femme qu'elle se debvoit bien taire, pour ce qu'elle scavoit bien depuis qu'elle estoit a Fontenay qu'on la soubconnoit, et encor ledit Lausson son marit de sortilege.' Following day the Laussons arrived outside house and reproached his wife bitterly with repeated threats. Fall on ice followed two or three days later, and 10 days later miscarried of dead child. Some 3 weeks later met Mengeotte at church, who said nothing to her; returned home, sickened, and died.

Told story of episode after fair at St. Dié a year before, when Mengeon had been forced to pay 9 gros by the 'corretiers'; had blamed this on his companions Pieron Pourcel, Colas Lausson, and Colas Prestemol. Latter two agreed after threats to pay him 3 gros each, but Pourcel refused and then lost two horses. 2 or 3 years before, when Marguerite daughter of Poirat Prestemol of Fontenay was married to Mongeon Caymant de Dongneville, she had been mounted on a cart for the wedding. Mongeon, as maistre des chetifs, had asked for his 'droict au Marié'; when this was not paid immediately he tried to stop horses, and the carter touched him with his whip. Replied with threats, and later on journey carter had his leg broken when wheel ran over it. Had also heard in Dongnonville some 18 months before that Mengeon had threatened Jean Sebille of that village for not having completed payment to one of his daughters who had been in his service; three days later Sebille was killed under his own plough in the fields.

(2) Mengeon des Hayettes, de Fontenay, c. 26

Reputation as long as he could remember.

- (3) Mengeon Claudon de Fontenay, c. 40

Repeated earlier testimony about exclusion of wife from veillée, and incident over woodcutting.

- (4) Ysabel fille Claudon Claude Nicolle de Fontenay, c. 25

Repeated story of death of animals belonging to master after quarrels.

- (5) Mengeon fils Claudon Claude Nicolle de Fontenay, c. 24

Repeated story of quarrel when catching merles.

- (6) Laurence femme Jean Collignan de Fontenay, c. 34

Repeated story of losses which followed time when her husband 'gagea' horse of Laussons.

- (7) Antoine Colignon de Fontenay, c. 70

Report of woodcutting incident some 8 years before, after which he had lost 2 cows (this was general dispute mentioned by others).

- (8) Poirat Prestemol de Fontenay, 70

Repeated earlier testimony about woodcutting incident.

- (9) Parizat Bailliot de Fontenay, c. 40

Repeated testimony about reputation (primarily Mengeotte).

- (10) Colas Prestemol de Fontenay, c. 40

Six years earlier, before his own marriage, had still been living with parents. Two bulls had been castrated, and one became so sick it had to be killed, and the flesh sold cheaply. Mengeon came to buy some, but when mother named price 'Il se fascha de la pretendue exhorbitance et apres l'avoir pincé sur l'une des mains, et luy dit qu'elle s'en repentiroit, il sortit et s'en alla en la tenssant et murmurant, dequoy luy qui parle s'estant aperceu et scachant qu'il avoit un mauvais bruict il dit a sadite mere qu'elle luy debvoit avoir laissé ladite chair a sa volonté, mesme alla apres et l'ayant remené et faict entrer la luy laissa et delivra pour neant que neantmoins il ne delaissa de tousiours gronder contre ladite deffunte, qui au lendemain devient malade d'une enflure qui commenca sur la main que ladit Lausson avoit pincé, laquelle monta et s'extendit par toutes les parties nobles, voir jusques au col, chose qui la suffocqua et fist mourir trois jours apres. Mourut encor le cinquiesme jour

Laurence sa soeur, sy subittement qu'on n'eut le moyen de luy ministerer les Saints Sacrements, chose qui l'a laissé en croyance que ledit Lausson en est cause.'

Told of incident in previous year to above, when witness, Mengeon, and various others had been to market at St. Dié and then to eat in tavern. At end of meal 'Maitre des Corretiers' of town came in (evidently with others), and some repartee with Mengeon ended with his being obliged to stand them a 'pot de vin.' Blamed witness, Pieron Pourcel, and Colas Hugneguy for this, 'mesme en Murmura et les picqu'a tellement qu'il les menassa que s'ilz ne luy rendoient neuf gros qu'il avoit payé Ilz s'en repentiroient. mesmes les auroit les uns apres les autres, occasion que luy s'en faschant luy repartist, que si Il luy mescheoit, il l'accuseroit de sortilege . .' Did pay him money, however, as did Colas; but 'quant audit Pourcel il n'y voulut entendre, en disant qu'il n'y feroit rien, deut il faire mourir tout son bestail, femme et famille, pour n'avoir este cause de ceste costenge.' Pourcel lost two horses within 4 or 5 days.

Had heard from Mengeon's sister Libaire that if her brother were a witch, he had become so since his youth, 'qu'ayant ja espousé Mengeotte sa femme il auroit ouy bruyée qu'elle se comportoit impudiquement et que lors la fascherie qu'il en consequet l'induit de se jecter comme un desesperé dans certaines bois de chesnes prez de chez luy, et qu'il s'en seroit retourné de nuict tout gasté et enbourbé, finablement qu'ayant ledit Lausson esté coustengé par Mengeon le Maire et autres pour un sien cheval prins dans les dismages, en estoit devenu tout deconforté, il l'ouit invocquer le Malin Esprit affin de le venir querir plustost que d'estre ainsy tourmenté et qu'il ne scauroit plus tenir coups.'

(11) Antoine Chaxel de Fontenay, c. 80

'A dict n'avoir veu aucun mal a Demenge Lausson, et qu'il croit qu'aussy n'en dira il poinct de luy.'

(12) Vallentin Pierrat mareschal demeurant a Aydoille, c. 36

Had heard rumours that Mengeon was witch since his own arrival 16 years before. Some 3 years before, returning from Fontenay, he took 'un bon boire' in house of Claudon Andreu, then met Lausson near church, and called him a witch. When he met Lausson again shortly afterwards latter asked him if he were still angry, and offered him some pears, which he refused for fear they were poisoned.

(13) Claudon Andreu d'Aydoille, 46

Some 3 or 4 years before, when he was 'paullier des dimes' of Aydoille, he tried to get on a cart driven by Mengeon, and wheel went over his foot; 'ce qui le fascha et occasionna de l'appeler sorcier en presence de plieurs et luy dire que s'il luy mescheoit qu'il le feroit brusler, dequoy neantmoins il ne se seroit plaint.' Long reputation.

(14) Jean Riant de Fontenay, c. 40

Had a dispute with Mengeon some 6 years before when acting as Commis for community, and conveying a decision to him. Three years later his wife had fallen ill and eventually died 'mais que pour cela il ne l'en a autrement subsonné a cause du longtemps de leur dispute, sinon qu'a cause du mauvais bruict qu'il a il en seroit par fois entré en quelque opinion.'

(7 July 1620)

(15) Pieron Pourcel de Fontenay, c. 40

A year before last Easter had accompanied Colas Prestemol to fair at Stoff en Allemaigne to buy horses. On way back they stopped at village called Crattesin, where he took two of them to drink from castle moat; suddenly took fright and went wild, and if there had been more water in moat he would have been killed. Thought Mengeon responsible, on account of ill fame, but also because before leaving he had quarrelled with witness, who refused to sell him a haystack 'a sa fantaisie'. Also told story of incident at St. Dié, and his subsequent loss of two horses.

(16) Jennon femme de Pieron Pourcel, c. 40

On occasion of sickness of horses Mengeon had offered advice on how to treat them; shared husband's belief he was cause.

(17) Claude Matheu de Fontenay, c. 38

Some 3 years earlier he and Mengeon had made arrangement to associate to plough their land; had ended in quarrels, with plough being damaged by being left too long in one of Mengeon's fields, and Mengeon complaining that Claude's land was better ploughed than his own. Subsequently (10-12 days after quarrel), as he stood outside house, a group of oxen from common herd suddenly rushed at him as if 'en furie et enragés' - only just escaped. Also lost one of own best oxen.

(18) Jean Richier de Fontenay, c. 36

Had heard quarrel reported in (17).

(19) Dieudonné Antoine Dieudonné de Fontenay, c. 40

Said that 6 years before, after Mongeon had been 'coustengé' by community for some wood he had cut, he became 'comme desesperé', and had since been suspected of having become a witch. Told story of threats to driver of wedding cart and subsequent accident, and of quarrel with Claude Matheu.

(20) Jean Collignon de Fontenay, c. 40

Quarrel with Laussons 5 years earlier; death of horse and 2 cows.

(21) Georgeon Barbier de Fontenay, c. 40

6 years before, as forester of Ban de Vaudicourt, had caught Mongeon cutting wood; latter had threatened it would cost him 40 francs, and soon afterwards several of his animals died.

(22) Jean Thouvenel de Fontenay, c. 24

Backed up previous witness (his brother-in-law).

(23) Anthoine Chaxel le Jeune de Fontenay, c. 28

Told story of how he had collapsed while hunting merles in woods. Mengeon, hearing his conversation with companion, then told him to get up; he found he could use limbs again, despite some pain, and was fully recovered next day.

(24) Jean Claudel Anthoine, de Fontenay, 32

Two years before he had given Mengeon hope that he would be allowed to cut hay of one of his meadows, but he had finally been unable to do so. Mengeon had been very angry, and sworn that he would repent; shortly afterwards lost one of his bulls. Also believed he or his wife had killed one of Nicolas' sows, which had entered their meix on night of a great tempest.

Mengeon had also told him that if an inhabitant of Dogneville had not forced him to give a 'couvrechef' to his daughter, he would not have died. In response to question from judges, said man had been killed while ploughing; leading horses became frightened, and he was run over trying to restrain them. Finally told how, threshing wheat at Lausson's house, he dined with him, and was told 'qu'il seroit mary, qu'une personne print du mal chez luy, croyant qu'il tenoit telz propos pour bien scavoir qu'on le soubconnoit.'

(25) Nicolas Ferry le Vieuls de Fontenay, c. 80

Long reputation.

(26) Catherine femme Colas Jean Bagay de Fontenay, c. 50

Had heard Mongeon say that if the individual from Dogneville had not troubled him, he would not have been killed - she retorted 'qu'il disoit souvent des choses qui ne valloient gueres'.

(27) Nicolas Ferry le Jeune de Fontenay, 46

Told story of quarrel at St. Dié, at which he had made the accord.

(28) Demenge Georgel demeurant au Memesnil, c. 60

Had heard quarrel in woods some 2 years earlier, but couldn't identify those involved.

(29) Claudon Bagay de Memesnil, c. 34

Had heard quarrel, and threats made by Mengeon against Anthoine Collignon.

(30) Quirien Villemain de Memesnil, c. 32

Had sometimes employed Mengeon; saw no harm in him.

17 July 1620; Procureur general orders imprisonment and continuation of case.

28 July 1620; interrogation

Said he was Mengeon Lausson, a mason by trade, aged about 60, native of Fontenay. Resisted some hostile questioning by prévôt of Bruyères, making no serious admissions, even to quarrels alleged against him. Did admit that once, when in a temper with his wife, and upset for another reason, he had left the house by night in a fury. Had then seen large white bird, which he believed to have been 'un ange de Dieu'; after this he returned home.

4 August 1620; confrontations

Said of Mengeon Claudon that if he had been 'homme de bien' he would not have gone to Mirecourt to secure his arrest.

Pieron Pourcel added story to his deposition; he and Lausson had been to law before justice of Ban de Vaudicourt 6 months earlier, and he had smiled when he heard Lausson's advocate describe his client as 'un pauvre bon viellard'. Later Lausson had told him he would not always mock him, and 5 days later a great wind nearly blew him off the road into an etang. Mengeon denied everything, and himself charged that Pourcel had paid Dieudonne Colin 'quelque escot' to depose against him.

Generally denied not only any evil-doing, but also threats alleged to have been made by him. Did agree to having recovered 6 of the 9 gros he had paid for wine at St. Dié.

10 August 1620; PG des Vosges asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire, with appropriate moderation.

14 August 1620; Change de Nancy approves

18 AUGUST 1620; interrogation under torture

Said that if he were not 'homme de bien', 'il ne se laisseroit desrompre comme il y a apparence qu'il sera'. Was given thumbscrews on hands and feet,

racked, and placed on strappado with two stones weighing 40 lbs attached. Still held firm and denied everything.

24 August 1620; PG asks for more witnesses to be produced

26 August 1620; Prévôt of Bruyères agrees

31 August 1620; supplementary informations

(1) Claudon Mathieu de Fontenay, c. 40

In previous deposition had forgotten occasion 18 months earlier when a number of them had been at cabaret of Claudon Andreu. He saw Mengeon there 'auquel il dit et recommanda de ne luy plus faire de niches, et que s'en estoit assé du fait, et que sa response fut qu'il ne luy en feroit plus, ne scait s'il entendoit bien le subject pourquoy il luy tenoit tels propos, ou non, tant y a, que pour luy, il entendoit parler et le soubconner des pertes des bestailz par luy faites . . .'

(2) Simon Neufville d'Epinal, c. 30

Told of quarrel a year earlier when he and Demenge Rouyer had gone to collect debt of 10 francs owed by Mengeon. They had eventually taken two 'seriers' as security, and these were left in house of Dieudonné Jean Martin. When they returned a fortnight later to sell them, they found that his child had arms and legs twisted, and he and his wife said he had done them a bad turn by leaving goods in their house; child might be ill all its life. Mongeon (who had threatened on earlier occasion that some one would repent) finally settled debt and reclaimed goods, but was still furiously angry. Witness 'l'appella sorcier, et luy dit que s'il luy mescheoit, il se rendrait partie contre luy pour le faire apprehender, et tourneroit pour rançon afin d'y parvenir'. His wife then objected to him that he must be a witch if he took no action, and that everyone would be able to reproach him with it in future.

(3) Mengeon Poirat de Fontenay, c. 25

Told how 8 years before he had seen Mengeon in desperate state, wandering about village at night calling on Devil to take him away.

(4) Jean Bagay de Fontenay, c. 60

Some 5 years before had refused proposition by Mengeon that they should join up their horses for ploughing. His own horses had then become excessively difficult to handle over period of 5 weeks. Attributed this to Mengeon, especially since he had heard that he had complained around village that witness 'le dedaignoit'.

(5) Jean Thiriat d'Aydoile, c. 32

Previous year, when passing Mengeon's house, he had remembered that latter had taken his hat as gage without cause. Called out that he was a witch; next day one of his cows died suddenly.

(6) Mengeon Philipe Lanson jeune fils, 14

A year before, when returning at night with other youth of village from guarding horses, found Mengeon by a hedge dressed only in his shirt. His daughter Collatte, who was with them, asked what he was doing. He said he was returning from the oven, then said that he had been watching a field of oats - witness doubted whether he had one, let alone whether it was sown.

(7) Claudon Lerbat jeune fils, 14

Repeated same story.

(2 September 1620)

(8) Mengeon Claudon de Fontenay, 40

Confirmed Claudon Mathieu's story of exchange in cabaret.

(9) Nicolas Rouyer le jeune de Deyviller, c. 36

A year before, returning from market at Epinal with Mengeon after drinking heavily, called him witch etc. - no action followed.

(6 September 1620)

(10) Claude fille du Sr. Jean Pilot homme de chambre de S.A. residant au chateau de S.A.

Previous Thursday, passing tower where Mengeon was imprisoned 'entre nuit et jour', had heard two voices. One resembling Mengeon's said 'Ma foy Monsieur pardonne moy pardonne moy je ne lay pas fait'; other 'plus grosse' replied 'qu'il avoit menty', adding something as if between teeth which she could not hear.

(11) Mengeon Jean Colas Ferry de Thiriville, 30

Prisoner in same tower as Mengeon. On a Wednesday in August had heard terrible noise as if 20 men were fighting, and also heard Mengeon calling 'Sire, je vous crie mercy', and 'se plaignant de Dieu'. Began to pray, fearing that tower was going to collapse.

(12) Mengeon Francois le Jeune, commis doyen, c. 35

When he took food to the two prisoners after the night mentioned above, Ferry complained to him about noises and safety of tower. He then found Mengeon lying down and unwilling to take food; when he said he was ill, goaler said he should take care not to be like his late wife, who had pretended illness when she had really been beaten by the Devil. Mengeon replied, shaking his head, 'qu'il luy faisoit tousiours la guerre, et que tous luy en vouloient' - presumably referring to Devil.

6 September 1620; interrogation

Maintained denials of all significant points. Claimed that noise in tower had resulted from his walking about to warm himself; he had still been feeling pain in arm as result of torture.

14 September 1620; confrontations

Yet again denied everything. Said that two teenagers were 'petits coquins' and had made up their story.

17 September 1620

Some members of court went to the tower to experiment with noise; seem to have found that it was noisy when they walked about, although not so much as to account for Ferry's testimony.

23 September 1620.

PG des Vosges asserted seriousness of new accusations as yet to be purged by torture. It would be 'odieux de voire tel monstre parmy le peuple, auquel trop cogneu et craint il ne pourroit aporter que sedition'; yet while he could be tortured again, it was all too likely that he would still deny. Cited various legal authorities in Latin to show that in such cases it was normal to condemn accused to galleys or prison in perpetuity, and then asked for permanent banishment and confiscation of goods.

28 September 1620; Change de Nancy calmly ignored this extraordinary plea, and recommended that Mengeon be 'renvoyé jusqu'a rappel'. Should also be 'admonesté de se comporter a l'advenir en telle sorte qu'il ne donne aulcun subiect de plainte'.