



Manhunt

By James L. Swanson
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Introduction

The murder of Abraham Lincoln set off the greatest manhunt in American history. From April 14 to April 26, 1865, the assassin, John Wilkes Booth, led Union cavalry and detectives on a wild twelve-day chase through the streets of Washington, D.C., across the swamps of Maryland, and into the forests of Virginia, while the nation, still reeling from the just-ended Civil War, watched in horror and sadness. James L. Swanson's *Manhunt* is a fascinating tale of murder, intrigue, and betrayal. A gripping hour-by-hour account told through the eyes of the hunted and the hunters, this is history as you've never read it before.

Questions for Discussion

1. What if John Wilkes Booth had missed?
2. What if not only Booth, but also Lewis Powell and George Atzerodt, had accomplished their missions? Would the murders of the president, vice president, and secretary of state have plunged the Union into chaos and prolonged the Civil War?
3. How did the Lincoln assassination change American history?
4. What was Mary Surratt's level of culpability in the assassination? Was her execution an injustice?
5. What of Dr. Samuel Mudd? Was he guilty, and of what?
6. Who is the more admirable character, the actress Laura Keane or the assassin's sister, Asia Booth Clarke?
7. Is Thomas Jones, the rebel river ghost, to be admired for his code of honor or condemned for his aid to the assassin?
8. Is Ford's Theatre a monument to Abraham Lincoln, or his killer?
9. In what ways, if any, is John Wilkes Booth a sympathetic character?
10. Have we, nearly 150 years after the great crime, forgiven John Wilkes Booth?
11. Who is the hero of *Manhunt*? Is there more than one?

About the Author

James L. Swanson has written for a variety of publications, including the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and *American Heritage*. He is the coauthor of *Lincoln's Assassins: Their Trial and Execution*, and he is a member of the advisory committee of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.