

The son and brother of famous actors, John Wilkes Booth was a star and a wealthy man.

Booth was a secret agent for the Confederacy during the Civil War.

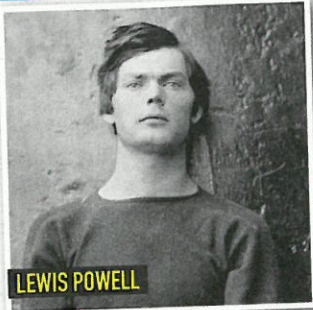
Booth believed he would go down in history as a great hero for killing Lincoln.

# WANTED!

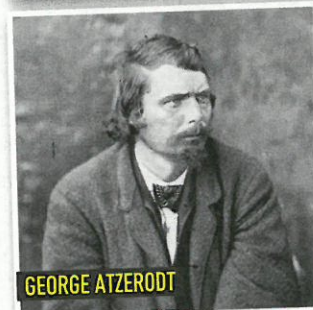
## THE PRESIDENT'S KILLER

The hunt for the famous actor who became one of America's most infamous villains

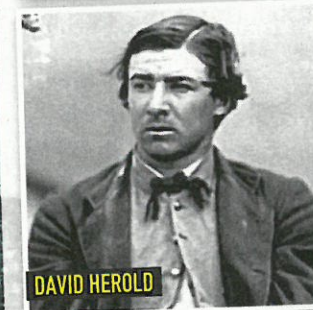
## CRIME AND PUNISHMENT



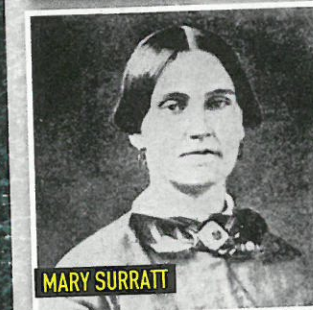
LEWIS POWELL



GEORGE ATZERODT



DAVID HEROLD



MARY SURRATT

Nine people were accused of conspiring with John Wilkes Booth. Eight were convicted; these four were executed.

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It was the crime of the century, and one of the most famous in American history: the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. Most people know the basic story: As Lincoln and his wife sat in a theater watching a play on April 14, 1865, days after the Civil War ended, John Wilkes Booth shot the president, then leaped to the stage and fled. But what happened next?

Here is how the infamous crime and the manhunt that followed unfolded, 150 years ago this month.

### April 13, 1865

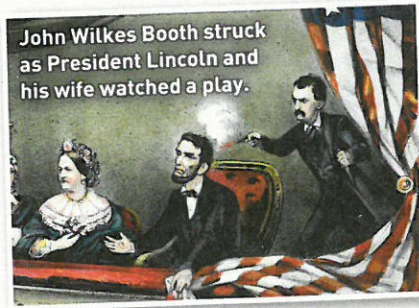
The nation's capital, Washington, D.C., is still celebrating. Just four days earlier, Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant. The four-year war between North and South is finally over, and President Lincoln has achieved his goal of preserving the Union.

John Wilkes Booth, 26, an actor, is a supporter of the Confederacy and of slavery. He sees the South's defeat as a disaster. For months he had plotted with friends to kidnap the president, smuggle him into the South, and hold him for ransom. Lee's surrender put an end to that plot, but now Booth has another.

On April 13, four **co-conspirators** meet. To destroy the government that destroyed the South:

- Booth will kill President Lincoln.
- Lewis Powell, 20, will kill Secretary of State William Seward.
- George Atzerodt, 29, will kill Vice President Andrew Johnson.
- David Herold, 22, will help Powell get away.

They don't yet know when or where they'll stage their attacks, but they'll wait for an opportunity.



John Wilkes Booth struck as President Lincoln and his wife watched a play.

### April 14

In the morning, Booth stops by Ford's Theatre (1) (see map, p. 14), where he'd recently appeared in a play. While there, he learns that the president will be attending that night's performance of the play *Our American Cousin*. He and his co-conspirators meet again. They decide to act that night, all at the same time—10:15 p.m.

As the fateful hour approaches, each man is in place. Booth works his way through the crowded theater, toward the box where Lincoln is watching the play with his wife and two guests. Powell is ringing Seward's doorbell as Herold stands by with their getaway horses. Atzerodt is at the hotel where the vice president is staying. But he can't bring himself to kill Johnson. Instead, he goes to the bar for a drink.

At 10:13 p.m., Booth slips into the president's private box, a pistol in one hand, a large knife in the other. He shoots Lincoln in the head and slashes the guest who leaps to Lincoln's aid. Booth then

continued on p. 14



# On the Run



## The escape route of John Wilkes Booth and David Herold APRIL 14-26, 1865



**1 FORD'S THEATRE**  
Washington, D.C.  
Fri., Apr. 14,  
10:13 p.m.  
Booth shoots Lincoln, then  
escapes the city on horseback.



**2 SURRATT TAVERN**  
Surrattsville, Md.  
Fri., Apr. 14,  
near midnight  
Booth and Herold,  
on the run, pick up  
weapons.

**3 MUDD HOME**  
Charles County, Md.  
Sat., Apr. 15, 4 a.m.  
Booth and Herold  
arrive at the home of  
Dr. Samuel  
Mudd, who  
treats Booth's  
fractured leg.



**4 COX HOME**  
Rich Hill, Md.  
Sun., Apr. 16,  
12 a.m. to 6 a.m.  
Samuel Cox gives  
Booth and Herold  
food and shelter  
before taking  
them to a new  
hiding place.

**5 PINE FOREST**  
Rich Hill, Md.  
Sun., Apr. 16, to  
Thu., Apr. 20  
Booth and  
Herold hide in  
the woods near  
Cox's plantation.

**6 HUGHES FARM**  
Indiantown, Md.  
Thu., Apr. 20, to Sun., Apr. 23  
After getting lost trying to  
cross the river in the dark,  
Booth and Herold hide at or  
near the Hughes farm.

**7 GARRETT FARM**  
near Port Royal, Va.  
Mon., Apr. 24, to  
Wed., Apr. 26  
Booth and Herold hide in  
the barn until the  
cavalry arrives. Booth is  
killed, Herold captured.



vaults onto the stage and makes his escape. At first, the crowd thinks it's part of the show.

Meanwhile, Powell has made it into Seward's house. He manages to wound Seward, but not kill him, and wounds several other people there before fleeing.

Powell's horse still waits on the street outside, but Herold is gone. When he heard screams from the house, he panicked and took off.

Powell goes into hiding in Washington, but Booth and Herold make it out of the city and meet in Maryland. Near midnight, they reach the Surratt Tavern (2). Mary Surratt, the landlady, has left weapons for them.

Booth and Herold ride on into the night. They head for Virginia, a chief part of the Confederacy, where Booth is sure that he'll be greeted as a hero.

## April 15

Booth fractured his left leg in his leap to the stage. The pain leads him to seek the aid of Dr. Samuel Mudd. Booth had met the doctor a few months earlier, while he was scouting a route to Virginia for his kidnapping plot.

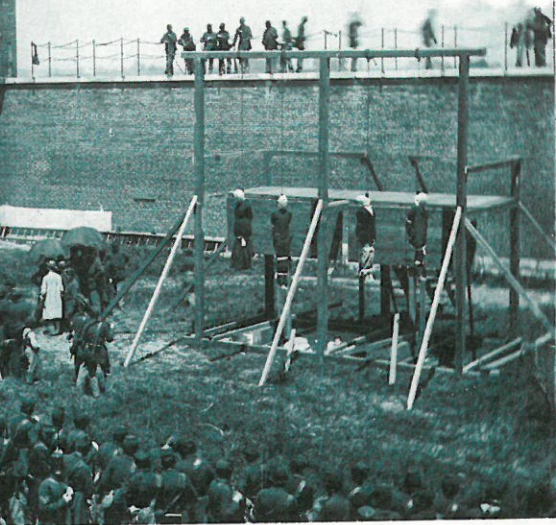
Booth and Herold reach Mudd's home (3) around 4 a.m. They claim that Booth was hurt in a riding accident. Unaware of what happened in Washington, Mudd splints the wounded leg and lets the travelers rest awhile at his home.

Meanwhile, in Washington, Lincoln lies unconscious in a house across the street from Ford's Theatre, where he was taken after the shooting. At 7:22 a.m., he dies.

When news of the assassination reaches Mudd, he realizes what Booth has done. He tells them to leave—but doesn't alert the

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS (DAVID HEROLD); JOHN WILKES BOOTH; TOM WILLIAMS/ROLL CALL PHOTOS/NEWS.COM (SURRATT TAVERN); HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES (DR. SAMUEL MUDD); GEORGE EASTMAN HOUSE/GETTY IMAGES (GARRETT FARM); IMI MCPHAIL/SHUTTERSTOCK (MADD)

Four co-conspirators were hanged on July 7, 1865, including Mary Surratt (far left), the first woman executed by the U.S. government.



authorities right away. That gives Booth and Herold time to escape. About midnight—after a five-hour ride—they reach the plantation of Samuel Cox (4), a Southern sympathizer who helps them hide.

### April 16 to April 23

Still trying to reach Virginia, Booth and Herold spend a week in various hiding places (5, 6). As federal troops search the countryside, a few Southern sympathizers give the two fugitives food and newspapers.

Booth is shocked by what he reads. Instead of as a great hero who has freed the nation from a tyrant, he finds himself labeled a murderer and a coward.

“With every man’s hand against me, I am here in despair,” he writes in his last diary entry, on April 22. “And why? . . . I think I

have done well, though I am abandoned. . . . I have too great a soul to die like a criminal.”

On April 23, Booth and Herold finally make it across the Potomac River into Virginia. But who can they trust, even in the South? The \$100,000 reward (worth nearly \$1.5 million in today’s money) for “the murderer of our late beloved President” would tempt anyone.

### April 24 to April 26

A farmer named Richard Garrett lets Booth and Herold hide out in his barn (7). But the U.S. Cavalry has finally picked up their trail.

Early on the morning of the 26th, troops surround Garrett’s barn and demand that Booth and Herold give themselves up. After a standoff, Herold comes out with his hands up. But Booth refuses to

give up his weapons, declaring, “I intend to use them on you gentlemen!” Soldiers set fire to the barn, but before Booth can flee he is shot by Sergeant Boston Corbett. Wounded in the neck, Booth dies two hours later. His body is taken back to Washington, along with Herold, Garrett, and Garrett’s son.

### Afterward . . .

Though it took nearly two weeks to capture Booth and Herold, most of the other co-conspirators were soon tracked down and arrested. They were tried and convicted quickly. Four were hanged on July 7, 1865 (see photos on p. 13 and above).

Four others, including Dr. Mudd, were sentenced to life in prison. President Andrew Johnson (who became president after Lincoln’s death) **pardoned** them in 1869. One—Mary Surratt’s son John—avoided capture until 1866. He was freed when a jury failed to convict him. —Kathy Wilmore

#### YOUR TURN

How was Booth able to avoid capture for so long? Could it have happened today, in an age of cell phones, TV, and the Internet? Explain.

## Lincoln’s Legacy

The assassination of Abraham Lincoln was a profound shock to the nation. He was the first U.S. president to be killed in office, and the murder set off waves of emotion: fear, rage, panic, and mourning.

The U.S. had just survived the greatest threat since its founding—the Civil War—only to have the man who had preserved that union cut down.

Many Southerners who resented or even hated Lincoln were appalled at the way he was killed: not face-to-face in a fair fight, but shot from behind.

Before the Union’s victory, Lincoln wasn’t much loved in the North either. Some thought he’d taken too long to win the war or disliked how it was fought. Others thought he’d acted too slowly to end slavery.

But the war was finally over, and Lincoln had promised to heal the nation “with malice toward none, with charity for all.” Now he was dead—brutally slain at a key turning point in the nation’s history. That cemented his **legacy**: Almost overnight, he became a respected, beloved figure—and remains so, worldwide, to this day.

