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Recommended Readings

*Manhunt: the 12-Day Chase for Lincoln’s Killer*


Reviewed by Richard J. McGowan

This year, Washington, D.C. has enthusiastically displayed Lincoln memorabilia in all manner, shape, and form. For instance, the Library of Congress displayed the original Emancipation Proclamation, the one shown his cabinet in private. That display is entirely appropriate for the 200th birthday of the President many revere as the greatest president ever. Hence, as the year ends, it is fitting to read *Manhunt*, which vividly portrays Lincoln’s end. Lincoln’s assassination began perhaps the greatest pursuit of a criminal in history. But how could the assassin, John Wilkes Booth, have eluded the greatest hunt, with federal soldiers and private investigators scouring the forests of Virginia and swamps of Maryland to find him? James L. Swanson, a thoroughly meticulous researcher and Lincoln buff, provides that account. The story involves good luck and bad, heroic characters and the worst scoundrels. Among the little snippets, presented with great detail, are the actress Laura Keene, using the drama of Lincoln’s death as a steppingstone; the plotters assembling in a boarding house; and Stanton’s remark when Lincoln died. At the heart of the tale, though, is the vain and villainous John Wilkes Booth. Swanson explores as he explains the man who shot Lincoln.

The federal troops finally captured Booth and Swanson has very much done the same: he captured the person of Lincoln’s killer.

- Richard McGowan is an instructor of business ethics and philosophy at Butler University.