# WHERE WERE THE BODYGUARDS?



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This image, by the the FBI, depicts the murder weapon which killed President Lincoln. The FBI tells us <u>more about the gun</u>: "The Booth Deringer (Specimen K1) was described as a single-shot, muzzle-loading, percussion cap-fired Deringer pistol manufactured by/for the Henry Deringer Company of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Its notable features and markings included, but were not limited to, a black walnut stock with checkering; a barrel with an octagonal upper portion and a round lower portion; an S-shaped triggerguard; a hammer; and scrollwork on the sideplates, buttplate, stock tip, wedgeplates, front sight, escutcheon, and flashplate."

Crook, the President's chief bodyguard, was off-duty. In his place, <u>John F. Parker</u> (who was <u>late</u> showing up for work that day) was responsible for the President's safety.

Accounts vary on Parker's whereabouts at the precise moment Booth entered the State Box. Some say the President permitted him to take a better seat, thereby leaving Lincoln unguarded. Others say he was in a tavern across the street and wasn't seen again until around 6 a.m. the next morning.

With no one around to stop him, Booth pulled out <u>his pistol</u> and <u>fired one shot</u> into the President's head. The <u>bullet</u> (which was later removed in an autopsy) <u>entered</u> through his left ear and <u>lodged</u> behind his right eye.



As the <u>President slumped forward</u>, perhaps grasping one of the flags draped in front of him, Major Rathbone struggled with Booth who, using <u>his knife</u>, slashed Rathbone's arm.

Booth <u>jumped</u> from the box, but the spur of his boot caught (and tore) a U.S. <u>Treasury Guards flag</u>. When he fell to the floor, he <u>fractured his leg</u>. It is said that Laura Keene rushed to the President's box with a pitcher of water. As the actress helped to care for the stricken President, his blood allegedly stained her cuff.

Undaunted, Booth fled the theater through the <u>back door</u> and escaped <u>on horseback</u>. He crossed the "Eastern Branch" of the river, on <u>the Navy Yard Bridge</u>, about ten minutes ahead of fellow conspirator <u>David E. Herold</u>.

With Washington, D.C. behind him, Booth was a wanted man. About 1,000 people were in Ford's Theater when he shot the President. The <u>police blotter</u> shows he was the only suspect police would try to find.

# See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/WHERE-WERE-THE-BODYGUARDS-Assassination-of-Abraham-Lincoln

# See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/WHERE-WERE-THE-BODYGUARDS-Assassination-of-Abraham-Lincoln

# Questions 2 Ponder

## Could Lincoln's Assassination Have Been Prevented?

If John Parker had been on duty, guarding President Lincoln on the evening of April 14, 1865, is it likely or not likely that the shooting could have been prevented? Explain your answer.

Why would Mr. Lincoln put himself at risk if it is true he allowed Parker to take a better seat, so he had a better view of the play but not of the President?

If Booth was willing to shoot the President in front of about 1,000 witnesses, what does that tell us about his commitment to do the deed?

# Media Stream













### Ford's Theater - The State Box

Photo, courtesy National Park Service.

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View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Ford-s-Theater-The-State-Box

## Derringer Pistol - Used by Booth to Kill Lincoln

FBI photo of the pocket pistol used to kill President Lincoln. Online, courtesy FBI.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Derringer-Pistol-Used-by-Booth-to-Kill-Lincoln

#### John Wilkes Booth Shoots President Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln, America's 16th president, was the first U.S. president to be killed by an assassin. This broadside rendering, by E. R. & E. C. Kellogg, depicts an 1865 artistic interpretation of John Wilkes Booth firing his derringer at President Lincoln. Maintained at the Library of Congress, its title is: Assassination of President Lincoln at Ford's Theatre, Washington, D. C., April 14th, 1865. Click on the image for a better view.

Image of broadside, described above, by E. R. & E. C. Kellogg, Hartford, Connecticut, 1865. Part of the The Alfred Whital Stern Collection of Lincolniana at the Library of Congress. Public Domain. View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/John-Wilkes-Booth-Shoots-President-Lincoln

#### Lincoln Assassination - Booth Fires Fatal Shot

 $\hbox{U.S. Library of Congress, reproduction number LC-USZC2-194}.$ 

Online, courtesy Library of Congress.

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View this asset at:

 $\underline{\text{http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lincoln-Assassination-Booth-Fires-Fatal-Shotes}$ 

#### Knife of John Wilkes Booth - Lincoln Assassination

Carol M. Highsmith's America, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division. Reproduction number LC-DIG-highsm-04709 (original digital file). Public Domain.

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Knife-of-John-Wilkes-Booth-Lincoln-Assassination

#### Escape - Booth Jumps to Stage from Crime Scene

Stern Broadside v. 5, no. 1, from the Rare Books and Special Collections Division at the Library of Congress. Digitized image from the American Memory Collection.

Online, courtesy Library of Congress.

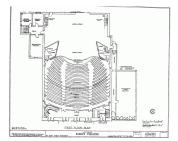
PD

View this asset at:

 $\underline{\text{http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Escape-Booth-Jumps-to-Stage-from-Crime-Scene}}$ 















# Lincoln Assassination - Jumping Booth Fractures Leg

Harper's Weekly, 29 April 1865. Image, courtesy Library of Congress.

PD

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lincoln-Assassination-Jumping-Booth-Fractures-Leg

#### Laura Keene - Bloodstained Cuff from Lincoln's Assassination

Photo, courtesy Smithsonian Institution.

PD

View this asset at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Laura-Keene-Bloodstained-Cuff-from-Lincoln-s-Assassination

#### Route of Escape - From Ford's Theater

Image, courtesy National Park Service.

PD

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Route-of-Escape-From-Ford-s-Theater

#### Route of Escape - On Horseback

Image of Booth and his rented horse, courtesy National Park Service.

Quotes from <u>The Death of Lincoln</u>, by Clara Elizabeth Laughlin, was published in 1909 and is available online courtesy Google Books. (Note that it, like many books of its time, uses language and descriptions not acceptable today.)

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Route-of-Escape-On-Horseback

## Navy Yard Bridge - Booth Leaves the City

Photo, courtesy U.S. National Archives - Civil War image 203.

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View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Navy-Yard-Bridge-Booth-Leaves-the-City

#### **Shooting of Abraham Lincoln**

Harper's Weekly drawing, 29 April 1865. Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

View this asset at: <a href="http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Shooting-of-Abraham-Lincoln">http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Shooting-of-Abraham-Lincoln</a>

#### Suspect - Booth Noted on Police Blotter

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View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Suspect-Booth-Noted-on-Police-Blotter





# <u>Lincoln Assassination - Bullet, Probe and Skull Fragments</u>

Images online, courtesy National Museum of Health and Medicine (in Silver Spring, Maryland).

View this asset at:

 $\underline{\text{http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lincoln-Assassination-Bullet-Probe-and-Skull-Fragments}}$ 

# <u>Treasury Guards Flag - Torn by Booth's Spur</u> Photo, courtesy U.S. National Park Service.

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View this asset at:

 $\underline{\text{http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Treasury-Guards-Flag-Torn-by-Booth-s-Spur}$