



0. A FOILED PLOT - Story Preface
1. ASSASSINATION PLOTS
2. WARNINGS AND OMENS
3. DREAMS OF DEATH
4. TO KIDNAP A PRESIDENT
5. THE WORST
6. WHERE WERE THE BODYGUARDS?
7. NO HOPE
- 8. A FOILED PLOT**
9. MULTIPLE FUNERALS
10. BOOTH'S CAPTURE AND DEATH
11. THE CONSPIRACY TRIAL
12. EXECUTION
13. THE REST OF THE STORY
14. THE LAST WORD

Lewis Payne (also known as Lewis Powell) attempted to assassinate Secretary of State William Seward at the same time that John Wilkes Booth was assassinating President Lincoln. This drawing depicts the foiled assassination of Seward, included in *The Assassination and History of the Conspiracy* (published in Cincinnati, during 1865, by J.R. Hawley & Co.).

William Seward, an abolitionist who wanted to be President in 1860 but supported Lincoln when he became the Republican Party's nominee, was home the evening of April 14, 1865. Actually, he was in bed recuperating from injuries he had sustained in a carriage accident.

Lewis Payne intended to assassinate Seward at home while Booth killed Lincoln at Ford's Theater. The indictment against Payne, read at the trial of the accused assassination conspirators, details what happened:

...Lewis Payne did, on the same night of the 14th day of April, A.D. 1865, about the same hour of 10 o'clock and 15 minutes P.M., at the City of Washington, and within the military department and the military lines aforesaid, unlawfully and maliciously make an assault upon...William H. Seward...in the dwelling-house and bed-chamber of him...and the said Payne did, then and there, with a large knife held in his hand, unlawfully, traitorously, and in pursuance of said conspiracy, strike, stab, cut, and attempt to kill and murder the said William H. Seward, and did thereby, then and there, with intent aforesaid, with said knife, inflict upon the face and throat of the said William H. Seward divers grievous wounds.

Had it not been for the neck brace Seward was wearing, as a result of his accident, Payne would have killed him. Instead, the Secretary of State lived to have his name associated with "Seward's Folly" - the purchase of Alaska, from Russia, which he negotiated for \$7.2 million. (The links take you to the actual Russian document and the "paid" U.S. Treasury Warrant of \$7.2 million.) The Alaskan town of Seward (founded in 1903) is named for him.

Lewis Payne, of course, met a far different fate after he was captured at the home of Mary Surrat. The indictment continues:

...Lewis Payne, in further prosecution of said conspiracy...did attempt, with the knife aforesaid, and a pistol held in his hand, to kill and murder Frederick W. Seward, Augustus H. Seward, Emrick W. Hansell, and George F. Robinson, who were then striving to protect and rescue the said William H. Seward from murder by the said Lewis Payne, and did, then and there, with said knife and pistol held in his hands, inflict upon the head of...Frederick W. Seward, and upon the persons of...Augustus H. Seward, Emrick W. Hansell, and George F. Robinson, divers grievous and dangerous wounds...

Only Lewis Payne died as a result of what he did that night.

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

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/A-FOILED-PLOT-Assassination-of-Abraham-Lincoln>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/A-FOILED-PLOT-Assassination-of-Abraham-Lincoln>

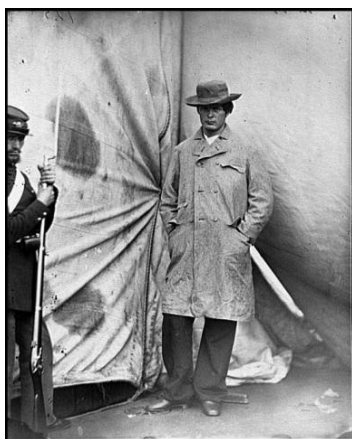
Questions 2 Ponder

Why Did Booth's Assassination Plan Include More Than Lincoln?

William Seward survived an attempted assassination because of a neck brace he was wearing following a recent accident. Booth's plan, to kill both the President and a leading cabinet member, was thereby foiled. Was this due to Booth's inattention to detail? Explain your answer.

Although he could not kill Seward, Booth's co-conspirator was able to inflict serious injuries on others who tried to protect the Secretary of State. What does this tell us about his determination to commit murder that night?

Media Stream



Lewis Payne - Attempted Assassin of William Seward

Image online, courtesy American Memory Collection at the Library of Congress.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lewis-Payne-Attempted-Assassin-of-William-Seward>



Seward's Home

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Park Service (NPS).

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Seward-s-Home>



Seward's House - Scene of Assassination Attempt

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Seward-s-House-Scene-of-Assassination-Attempt>



William Seward - Attempted Assassination

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/William-Seward-Attempted-Assassination>



Attempted Assassination - Protecting Seward

Image online, Library of Congress.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Attempted-Assassination-Protecting-Seward>



Frederick W. Seward

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Frederick-W.-Seward>



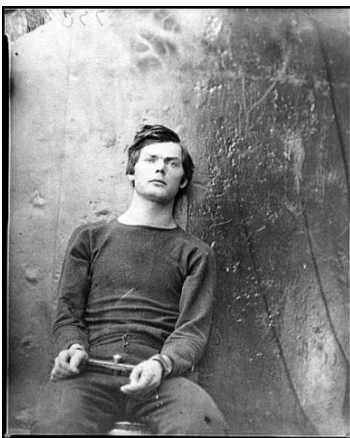
Payne - Pistol Whipping Seward and his Protectors

Image online, Library of Congress.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Payne-Pistol-Whipping-Seward-and-his-Protectors>



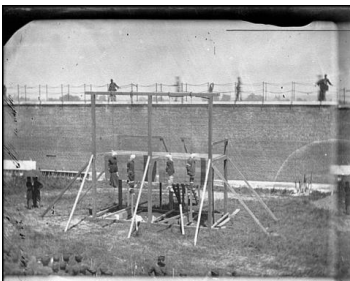
Lewis Thornton Powell a/k/a Lewis Payne

Image online, courtesy American Memory Collection at the Library of Congress.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lewis-Thornton-Powell-a-k-a-Lewis-Payne>



Execution - Lewis Payne

Image online, courtesy American Memory Collection at the Library of Congress.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Execution-Lewis-Payne>



Seward, Alaska - Part of Seward's Folly

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Seward-Alaska-Part-of-Seward-s-Folly>



A FOILED PLOT

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/A-FOILED-PLOT>