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ASSASSINATION OF MR. LINCOLN

Confessions of two of the Prisoners -- Statement of Arnold on his Arrest --
Confession of Atzerodt -- The Complicity of John Surratt -- Plans of the Conspirators
-- Their places of meeting. etc. ---- The Abduction and Assassination Conspiracy.

Now that the trial of John Surratt for participation in the assassination of President Lincoln has been thrown out of Court through the technicalities of the law, and he is announced as preparing for press a narrative of the whole transaction, it may serve a good purpose to give publicity to the following statement of Samuel B. Arnold, one of the prisoners at the Dry Tortugas, made in Baltimore voluntarily, four days after the assassination. We also give the confession of Atzerodt, made in his cell on the night before the execution. Both of these confessions we have in our possession in the handwriting of the prisoners, and they have hereto not been made public under the expectation that they would be used in the trial of John Surratt.

The confession of Arnold was made in the office of Marshall McPhail, on the 18th of April 1865, immediately on his being brought to this city from Fortress Monroe. He sat down at a desk and voluntarily wrote it without any questioning.

The confession of Atzerodt was made in his cell, at Washington, on the night before his execution. He asked for paper, and it is written with a lead pencil, the disconnected manner of it indicating the state of mind of the prisoner:

Confession of Sam'l B. Arnold, Made April 18, 1865

To Whom It May Concern:

Know that I, Samuel B. Arnold, about the latter part of August or first part of September, 1864, was sent for by J. Wilkes Booth, who was a guest at Barnum's Hotel, in the city of Baltimore, Md., to call to see him. I had not seen the same J. Wilkes Booth since 1852, when we both were schoolmates at St. Timothy's Hall, President L. Van Bokelin then having said Hall as a place of tuition. His reception of me was warm. Calling for wine and cigars, we conversed a short time upon our former school-boy days. We were interrupted by a knock at the door, when Michael

O'Laughlin was ushered in. After a formal introduction, we sat sipping our wine, and all three smoked a cigar. During smoking, he having heard previously of my political feelings or sentiments, he spoke in glowing terms of the Confederacy and the number of surplus prisoners in the hands of the United States. Then ensued the proposition by J. Wilkes Booth, and which he (J. Wilkes Booth) thought could be accomplished, viz: of kidnapping President Lincoln, as he frequently went unguarded out to the Soldiers' Home; and he thought he could be picked up, carried to Richmond, and for his exchange produce the exchange for the President of all the prisoners in the Federal Hands.

He, J. Wilkes Booth, the originator of the scheme, asked if we would enter into it. After painting the chances of success in such glowing colors, we consented, viz: Michael O'Laughlin and myself. We were bound not to divulge it to a living soul. I saw him once more in Baltimore, and then he (J. Wilkes Booth) left to arrange his business up North, first to New York, thence to the Oil Regions, and from there to Boston and finally to Canada, He was to be back in a month. I received a letter, which I destroyed, stating he was laid up with erysipelas in his arm, and as soon as he was able he would be with us. Months rolled around, and he did not make his appearance until some time in January. In his trunk he had two guns, cap cartridges, which were placed in the gun stocks -- Spencer rifles I think they were called, revolvers, knives, belts, cartridge-boxes, cartridges, caps, canteens,--all fully fixed for service -- which were to be used in case of pursuit, and two pair hand-cuffs to handcuff the President. His trunk being so heavy, he gave the pistols, knives and handcuffs to Michael O'Laughlin and myself, to have shipped or bring to Washington. He then returned from Washington, to which place he had gone, bought a horse, harness and buggy wagon, leaving the team, &c., with us to drive on to Washington. We started from Baltimore about twelve or one o'clock, after having shipped the box containing the knives, handcuffs and pistols, arriving in Washington about seven or halfpast seven the same evening. We met him on the street as we were passing the theatre. We alighted, took a drink, and he told us of the theatre plan slightly, saying he would wait till we put the horse away, and tell us more fully. He had

previously, as I now remember, spoken of the chances at the theatre if we could not succeed in the other plan at the Soldiers' Home. We went to the theatre that night, he (J. Wilkes Booth) telling us about the different back entrances, and how feasible the plan was. He had rented a stable in the rear of the theatre, having bought two horses down the country. One was in the stable behind the theatre, the other at livery. Met him next day; went together to breakfast with him. He was always pressed with business with a man unknown to us then, by the name of John Surratt; most of his (Booth's) time was spent with him. We were left entirely in the dark.

Michael O'Laughlin and myself rented a room on D street. No. 420 and obtained meals at the Franklin House, on the corner of D and Eighth Streets. We thus lived for nearly two months, seeing him perhaps three or four times during the week, and, when seen, always but for a short time, having still pressing business always on hand, viz; to see John Surratt -- Michael O'Loughlin and myself drove out, occasionally, the horse liveried at Mr. Nailor's stable. We drove always (but once) in the city and Georgetown, the once excepted across the Eastern Branch Bridge, when we went upward of five miles, I suppose, and returned. This was the only time I ever went over the bridge. How often J. Wilkes Booth crossed I cannot state, but, from his own words, often. Thus was Michael O'Laughlin's and my time spent for the most part -- down at Rullman's Hotel (Now Sinclair House), on Pennsylvania avenue and Louisiana Avenue, in drinking and amusements, with other Baltimoreans besides ourselves congregating there, all of whom knew nothing of our business but that of selling oil stock. Oil stock was the blind for them as well as my family. During the latter part of March, whilst standing on Rullman's porch, between eleven and twelve o'clock P.M., a young man -- name unknown, as I cannot remember names -- about five feet five or six inches high, thick set, long nose, sharp chin, wide cheeks, small eyes (Grey, I think), dark hair, and well dressed -- color I don't remember -- called Michael O'Laughlin aside, and said J. Wilkes Booth wished to see us both at Gottier's saloon, on the avenue. I was then for the first time introduced to him, but forget his name. We walked up together. Michael O'Laughlin, this unknown and myself were ushered into the presence of J. Wilkes Booth, who introduced me to John Surratt,

Atzerodt, alias Port Tobacco; --, alias Moseby, making in all seven persons. J. Wilkes Booth had sent word to Michael O'Laughlin to bring me up in a good humor (Still always in the dark). Then commenced the plan for seizing the President. Each had his part to perform. First, I was to rush into the private-box and seize the President, whilst Atzerodt, alias Port Tobacco, and J. Wilkes Booth were to handcuff him and lower him on the stage, whilst -- Moseby was to catch him and hold him till we got down. Surratt and the unknown were to be on the other side of the Eastern Branch bridge to facilitate escape. It was afterwards changed to Moseby and Booth to catch him in the box and to lower him to me on the stage. O'Laughlin and the unknown were to put the lights out, and Surratt and Atzerodt, alias Port Tobacco, to be on the other side of the bridge. I was opposed to the whole proceeding, and said it could not be accomplished. If ever, which was an impossibility, we could get him out of the box and to the bridge, we would be stopped by the sentinel. "Shoot the sentinel," said Booth. I said that would not do, for if an alarm was given there the whole thing was up, and, as for me, I wanted the shadow of a chance for success and escape. Michael O'Laughlin wanted to argue the same way, whereupon J. Wilkes Booth said, "You find fault with everything concerned about it." I said no; that I wanted to have a chance, and I intended to have it; that he could be the leader of the party, but not my executioner. Whereupon J. Wilkes Booth remarked, in a stern, commanding and angry voice, "Do you know you are liable to be shot? remember your oath." I told him the plan or basis had changed, and a compact on the part of one broken is broken by all. If you feel inclined to shoot me you have no further to go, I shall defend myself. This, if I remember aright, was on a Friday, or may be a Thursday night, when I said, Gentlemen, if this is not accomplished this week, I forever withdraw from it. I stayed up till about 6 or 7 o'clock the next morning, Friday or Saturday, and then went to bed. I remained in-doors until 12, when I arose and ~~myself~~ went to get my breakfast -- Michael O'Laughlin and myself roomed together, both arose at the same time, and were always, in a measure, together, Went to bed that evening about 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ o'clock. This day that I went to bed so early we met about 2 or

thereabouts; told me I spoke angrily the night of meeting; said I had been drinking. I told him no; I was in my sober senses, and meant every word I said; if not accomplished this week I withdraw.-- Next day the thing was to be accomplished on the Seventh street road and failed. On Sunday I stayed in Washington, and on Monday or Tuesday I returned to the city of Baltimore, and thence to Hookstown. J. Wilkes Booth in the meantime went to New York, and returned to Baltimore during the week, on Saturday, I think. He said he wished to see me on very urgent business, and my father sent for me. I came from the country, and he had gone to Washington, whereupon I wrote him the letter which was found in his trunk. The Richmond authorities, as far as I know, knew nothing of the conspiracy. The letter was written after my return to the country, after finding he could not wait to see me in Baltimore. During the week I came to the city and met Michael O'Laughlin, who asked me to go to Washington with him to finally arrange his affairs. I went in the morning -- Friday, I think -- and returned same evening home, having cut loose forever from it. Next day I received a letter from J. W. Wharton, at Fortress Monroe, giving me employment. Went to the country, got my clothing, and on Saturday, the 1st day of April, left Baltimore for Fortress Monroe, at which place I have remained, never corresponding with Booth or seeing him from the above named date to the present writing. The groundwork was to kidnap the President without violence. He never to me said that he would kill him, Further than this I know nothing, and am innocent of having taken any active part in the dark deed committed.

Samual B. Arnold.

The Plan of Escape

Was to place Mr. Lincoln in the buggy purchased for that purpose, and cross Eastern Branch bridge. Surratt and Atzerodt, alias Port Tobacco, were to follow them to where he had a boat concealed; turn the horse loose, place the President in the boat, and cross the Potomac to the Virginia shore, and thence to make our way to Richmond. Surratt knew the route, and was to act as pilot.

Samuel B. Arnold.

A box painted black, like unto a sword-box, was sent by Booth from the hotel by the porter there to our room. The next day it was transferred in a wagon, O'Laughlin acting pilot, to some place. I was not present. After giving the box to

the driver went to Georgetown, and O'Laughlin had the full charge of it. M. O'Laughlin said he took it to Mr. Heard's, and from thence the unknown carried it home. Took the guns out and carried them to Pedee. This latter clause Booth told me.

Samuel B. Arnold.

Witness: V. Randall, E. G. Horner.
Baltimore, April 18th, 1865

Note:- Besides this written statement of Arnold's he verbally communicated the fact that Booth was the correspondent of Doctors Mudd, Garland and Queen. This fact was told the Secretary when I presented him Arnold's statement.

J. L. McPaail.

Confession of Atzerodt Relative to the Assassination of
President Lincoln.

I had not seen John Surratt for about eight days before the murder. Booth told me a few days before the murder that he was in Washington. Kate Thompson, alias Brown, came from Richmond with John Surratt about the time that Richmond fell. He had come previously with Gustavus Howell, now in the Old Capital Prison. Kate Thompson stopped at Mrs. Surratt's, and also at the National and Rinnell Hotels. This woman was about 21 years of age, spruce and neat, medium size, black eyes and fair complexion. She had a sister in New York, who, it was said, was a widow. Surratt was made known to her in New York by a signal conveyed by a small switch with a waxed end and a piece of red ribbon on the butt, handled horizontally through the fingers. This sign was given on a hotel pavement on Broadway. He went with her South, and hired a horse at Howard's stables for the purpose.

Harold came to the Kirkwood House and left the knife, pistol and coat, on the evening of the murder, about half-past six o'clock, as I was about leaving, I having told the clerk to tell whoever might call that I was gone out. This was before Harold came in. Harold and I then went to the Herndon House, Mrs. Murray's, corner of Ninth and F streets. It was then about 8 o'clock, and saw Booth, Wood and Payne in Wood's room. Here the proposed murder was first mentioned. I refused to take part in it, when Booth said, "Then we will do it, but what will become of you? you had better come along and get your horse." I then left them and went to

the Oyster Bay on the avenue, and stayed some time; then to the stable and got my horse and went up D street. This was about 10 o'clock. I called at the Rinnell House and got a drink. I saw none of the party after we separated about 9 o'clock that evening. I then went out C street toward the Baltimore depot; went between the old and new Capitol, came on the avenue again, and concluded to come back. I rode down the avenue and the cavalry were dashing by me. This was the first I heard of the murder. I then went up Eight street, left the horse at the stables opposite the Franklin House, and then went to the Herndon House, and heard a little boy talking about the murder. I then took a car and went towards the Navy Yard. This was about 11 o'clock, and I met two young men named Briscoe and Spates, with whom I had some talk. After walking some distance I took a car to the corner of Sixth street and Pennsylvania avenue. Here I met a man inquiring for a place to sleep at. I took him around to the Rinnell House, and we retired to one room with six beds in it. I left early next morning and passed through Georgetown on my way to Montgomery county. No one left the hotel with me.

I saw Mike O'Laughlin about a week before the President was killed. I never wanted O'Laughlin and Arnold's aid; met o'Laughlin once or twice at Suthard's and a few times in the street.

When we were at Murray's, on the night of the murder, Harold said he had a letter from a printer to Andy Johnson. He said he was going to give it to him, and he wanted me to give him the key of my room, which I refused to do.

Previous to the arrangement for the murder Booth heard that the President was to visit a camp. The coach was to be taken out Seventh street. Surratt was to jump on the box as he was the best driver, and drive through Old Fields to the Long Bridge. This was about the middle of March. O'Laughlin, Samuel Arnold, Payne, Surratt, Booth, Atzerodt and Harold went to the Long Bridge with two carbines, and were to wait for us. They did so until midnight and returned to Washington next morning. This failed. All was quiet then for some time. Booth went to New York, Arnold to Baltimore, O'Laughlin also, and Payne left for New York. After this Howell brought a woman across the Potomac. Howell was made prisoner, and Surratt took her North, about a week before the murder. Booth told me that Surratt was in the Herndon House, on the

night of the murder, the 14th of April, we were not altogether at the Herndon House. Booth told me Surratt was to help at the box, that he expected others in the box. Booth went from the Herndon House, down Ninth street. The words of Booth were "I saw Surratt a few moments ago." All the parties appeared to be engaged at something on that night, and were not together. ^x Booth appointed me and Harold to kill Johnson, in going down the street I told Booth we could not do it. Booth said Harold had more courage and he would do it. Harold and I were on Pennsylvania avenue together. I told him I would not do it, and should not go to my room for fear he would disturb Mr. Johnson. He left me to go for Booth. This was after nine o'clock, I went to the Oyster Bay, and Harold came in and said that Booth wanted to see me. Harold left me here. I promised to get my horse and come. I was not at the Kirkwood House after two o'clock. I have no recollection of being there after that. I had nothing to say at any of the meetings. ^x One of the attempts was at the theatre; the gas was to be put out, &c. No discussion was had about failure, and what to do in that case. The coil of rope at Lloyd's was to stretch across the road to trip the cavalry. I know nothing about Spangler's rope; I believe him innocent. Booth told me an actor was to be the best assistant in the theatre to turn off the gass. Arnold and O'Laughlin were to grab the President and take him off; and Booth said, when applied to for money, he would go to New York and get some, as he had it there. Mrs. Surratt, Mrs. Slater, Major Banon and John Surratt left Washington together; got horses at Howard's, Mrs. S. Stopped at Surrattsville. John Surratt and Mrs. Slater crossed, and Banon and Mrs. Surratt came back. Banon was in the Rebel army I don't think Banon knew anything about the conspiracy. I sold a horse for Booth and thought the affair was about over. ^x ^x The murder was broached first on the 14th, at night, when Harold came for me. I did hear Booth say Lincoln ought to be killed. ^x ^x A widow woman was living near Mr. Seward's, and Booth said by her influence he could get entrance to Seward's house; through her influence with the chambermaid and house servant. The girl at the house was good looking and knew the widow. Harborn was into it first; he came to Port Tobacco for me with John Surratt during the winter. The boat was at the head of Goose Creek and moved to Nanjemoy Creek. It was a lead-colored flat-bottom boat, and will carry fifteen men. This boat was bought of James Brawner, the old man. Mrs. Slater went with Booth a good deal. She stopped at the National Hotel.