

Wash. D.C. Evening Star April 15 1865

THE ASSASSINATION.

Affidavit of Mr. J. S. Clarke, the Comedian.

Among the many witnesses confined in the Carroll military prison at Washington was Mr. J. S. Clarke, the celebrated comedian. It is but justice to that gentleman to state he was unconditionally released last Friday, by the direction of Secretary Stanton, without ~~even~~ any examination or the smallest taint upon his loyalty and devotion to his country. At his own request, before leaving he was permitted by the Secretary of War to make the following affidavit, which was witnessed by Judge Turner:

May 5, 1865. - I did not see John Wilkes Booth after February, 1865. I have no recollection of receiving but one letter from him in four years, which was purely on theatrical matters. I had no conversation with him upon political subjects for at least two years. I am, and always have been, in every way loyal to the United States Government. I have repeatedly volunteered my professional services and acted gratuitously in aid of the United States Sanitary Commission, and have made many private contributions beneficial to the Federal cause. I do believe, and have always thought, the Booth family (save John Wilkes) to be in their sentiments and feelings entirely loyal to the United States Government. John Wilkes Booth, during the past few years, occasionally left at my house, in Philadelphia, large envelopes, in care of his sister (my wife); these he invariably said contained "stocks, etc," and were left for safe-keeping, as he was obliged to travel in the far West, to meet his professional engagements. These envelopes have remained sometimes for months, and he has taken them away. I think during the latter part of November, 1864, while I was from home, acting in New York, he left an envelope in this way at my house, sealed and directed to himself as they all were. During January he again visited my house, and asked for it, returning it or a similar one, which was, as usual, placed in my safe. On the Saturday afternoon after the assassination of the President - April 15 - Mrs. Booth, the mother, came to my house from New York. On Sunday we thought of the envelope. The whole family was of course much depressed and excited.

We determined to open it. We found therein an address to the people of the North, and a letter for his mother, three thousand dollars in five-twenty bonds, one thousand dollars in Philadelphia city sixes, and for his brother Junius an assignment of some oil lands in Pennsylvania, and nothing more. Thinking the authorities would inquire at the residence of his family for articles belonging to him, I kept the papers during Monday. On Tuesday I took them to United States Marshal Millward, suggesting that, as an act of justice to the distressed family, I should like him to cause to be published the letter for his mother, as in that he exonerated his relatives from any sympathy with his secession propensities. I was surprised the next morning to find the address published instead of the letter for his mother. I had no idea the address would appear in the newspapers, the publication of which being a discretionary act of the government officer into whose hands, as a duty, I had delivered it. Upon the arrival of Junius B. Booth at my residence, April 19th, on his way to his home in New York, he suggested that I should make known his whereabouts to the authorities, as he would do likewise in New York, as he might be required to testify to any knowledge they might suppose him to possess regarding J. Wilkwa Booth, whereupon I introduced him to the United States Marshal on the 20th of April. On the 25th of April Mr. Booth was arrested.

J. S. Clarke

Sworn to and subscribed before Judge Turner, Military Magistrate,  
Washington, May 6, 1865.