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DEETS PICKETI , . . . RESEARCH SECRETARY D. STEWART PATTERSON, ASS'TRESEARCH SEC. Charles C. rarick - Executive Secretary MISS INA L. BATES . . . OFFICE SECRETARY

110 MARYLAND AVE. N. E.
 July 7th, 1922.

FRANCIS B. SHORT - EXTENSION SECRETARY PAUL BARNHART . . . REP. FOR SO. AMERICA CLIFFORD H. MOOERS - MGR. LEAFLET DEPT. J. N. C. COGGIN . - -SEC. FOR COLORED WORK

Rev. William E. Barton, IL.D.,
Iake Street \& Kenilworth Ave.,
Oak Park, Illinois.
Dear Dr. Barton:
Your letter just received and I hasten to send you a first draft of my lecture notes on John Wilkes Booth. These notes are by no means complete as I have since written a volume of fifteen chapters not yet published and have greatly added to the information about this man, facts that ad. to the conclusiveness of the argument. But what I take it you want is to get an idea of what the contention is and upon what it is based and will not wish to wade through fifteen chapters unless you become deepIy interested in the subject in which case I might send you my manuscript later and want to recommend a volume not out of print but procurable from the author and perhaps you can find it in your Public Library - "The Sscape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth" by Finis I. Bates, Attorney at Law, Memphis, Tennessee. Mr. Bates was for two or three terms Attorney General of the State of Tennessee, he is Legal Idvisor now for Henry Ford's interests in the south, and he has the most amazing story to tell that the annals of crime can afford. He was the attorney for this man St. Helen stretching over a period of thirty-one years. Upon the death of this suicide Bates was sent for and ceme to Enid, had the body embalmed or mumified so that it will be in a perpetual state of preservation for identification. You can see it now in yaur own city by going out to River View Park, Chicago. You will find a man there lecturing on the record, identificetion, etc., and he, by the wey, has some copies of Bates' book and I think he would either sell it or lend it to Jou. As you have been for years interested in this Lincoln story. I think you would find it very interesting to look up the fate of his murderer although it leads you through some of the darkest mazes of deception and villiany and will lead you face to face with the fact that Andrew Johnson plotted the whole thing in order to get the Presidency.

I want you to keep this lecture until you have entirely satisfied yourself with it, but would appeeciate it if at the end of that time you would return it to me.

With best wishes,
Ever sincerely yours,

RTGHT VFARS A HUGQTIVE.
A MYSTTRY SMORY
TRAGEDY, ESCAPF, IIFE IN EXILE; CONFESSIONS, IDYNTIFICATION
ATD SUICIDE OF
JOHN WILKES BOOTH,
clarence PY rue Wilson.
Betwaen the ages of ten and fourteen, I lived in the aristocfatic old town of princess Anne, Maryland, and before the end of that period I was honored by the friendship of a full grown man of forty, who had travelled widely throagh his youth in central America, Mexice, and our southern states. One day as I was sitting on his Work-bench, studying one of my school books, he suddenly looked up, called me by my first name, and said, "I suppose you are studying American history and have read the tragedy of Lincoln's death?" "Yes," I replied, "my book said that Incoln was shot by John wilkes Booth, who jumped from the box, breaking his leg in the fall, but rushed across the stage and down to the ground floor, mounted a horse the $t$ was in readiness for him, rode thru the city, gave the password, and was permitted to pass thru the Federal lines, and entering the counties of southem Waryland was kept by friends and aided for fourteen days, getting safely acrose the river into Virginia, and finally in the dead of night was surrounded in a barn where he was sleeping; and on his refusal to surrender the soldiers set fire to the building and he was shot by Boston corbett".

To this he said, "Yes, thatis just the story," but replied, that the whole thing is false. Booth was miles away when his two companions were caught, one arrested, the other shot; and two full years after the tragedy I have slept thirty nights with Booth in Central America, tramped with him into Mexico, worked with him sixty

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daya on a rubber plantation, where we occupied the same tent. He was the most interesting man I ever saw. Sad at times, but when in good apirits a battery of magnetism. We became such fast friends that I wanted him to come north and go into business with me, and in atating why he could not again go into the stateam he gave me in strict confidence, his name and the sotry of his escape. When he spoke of it he said, 'I killed the best man in the world and the best friend of the south, and now I am under an assumed name, a fugitive from justice hated by all the world, and of course, God could not forgive me since man despises me so much!"

He then described the most terrible scene of mentel agony and renorse under which John wilkes Booth was overcome with grief, and appeared to be almost choking to death, as his bad breathing and asthratic attacks seemed to affect his heart, and brought on a spasm of gasping. This seemed to have characterized almost all of his later confessions.
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I will not say that this/conversation thirty-five years ago, convinced me that Booth was at large, but I will say without h由sitantyox cy that it placed the matter in my mind as an open question, and started thirty-five years of interest and led to perhaps that many conversations and investigations, and without doubt, the securing of that many volunes which I now own on the Lincoln tragedy and John wilke Boothis relation to it. I believed that some day I should know what became of the murderer of president Iincoln. But after all these years of interest in the matter I was still scarcely prepared for the sudden announcement that came to me recently.

It was saturday night, January 29th, 1921. I stepped out of the train in Los Angeles, california, and was met by a campaign committee headed by Virgil $G$. Hinshaw of chicago. When we had gotten into oub
automobile and started for our hotel, Mr. Hinshaw said, "I was thinking of you the other day, Dr. Wilson. I have known of your interest in the John Brown episede and everything that pertained to the Iincoln administration and death, and I was down here a block and a half from your hotel and examined the body of John wilkee Booth; the murderer of Abraham Iinciln. He had committed guicide in Tnid, oklehoma in 1903. After various confeesions and an abundance of documentery evidence and photograph that proved his itendity, he died. They sent for his attomey, Mr. Tinis I. Batos, of Memphis, menn., and on his arrivel he not only identified the body of the dead man as that of John Wilkes Booth, but showed that he had been his attorney for thirty-one years, had corresponded with him and had wout his handwriting, his photographs, and his confessions; and taken a.ll in all it is the most tragic but interesting mystery story in American history The truth about the tragedy of John wilkes Booth may yet come out of the story of John st. Helen, the gentleman of leisure living in Texas towns, and oklahoma cities under different names, a new name in each place, may account for the tragic scene enacted at the Ford:s Theater, in the counties of Lower Maryland and over the Garrett barn or tobacco house, better than the concocted stories of the fortune hunting detectives, who filled the public mind some fifty years ago With contradictory narratives, moat of them without any suggeation of foundation in fact.

At the time of the tragedy the whole country was filled with reporte about the appearance of Booth in different localities. It is narrated that after he he had his leg set by Dr. Mudd of southern Maryland he got up in the doctor's absence and securing one of his razors, shaved off his mustache. Still, on the following days wherever he was seen, the same handsome mustache that had always character-
ized him on the stage and eisewhere, and even in the piotures of the fugitive up to the end in the burning barn.

Those whe read the story of his capture are equally surprised to find the variegated faisehoods tht have decorated the narrative of his death and burial. For instance, the body of this mysterious man mysteriously kept out on the Monitor in the center of the potomac River and unidentified by any member of his fomily or by these who knew him best in his professional life, and mysteridusly smuggled finally into the ground; all these historic tales are specifically told or vouched for by what ought to be authoritative sources.

When the public demanded to know what became of the body of Wilkes Booth they were gravely told that at midnight by order of the Secretary of War two men weighted the body with lead and tying a rock about its neck, dumped it into the midet of the potomac River, never to be seen again. There were pictures of this scene in books and magazines circulated over the country. Some American historians have even told it gravely with illustrative pictures.

Another equally grave story was told of the body being taken at midnight, dumped into a trench dug out in front of the old penitentiary on the drill ground, and while the rain had been coming down for days, the artillery was ordered out to circle over the field fifty times so as to obliterate the last possible trace of the burial place of John Wilkes Booth; while the truth is that dective Boker, with one assistant, lifted a stone slab from the ground floor of one of the celle of the penitentiary and wrapping the bady in an army blakket buried it there, filling the hole with earth, putting the stone back in place, then piling empty boxes into the vacant room as before, se as to obliterate all trace; and the secret was kept inviolate for seven years, when the government desired to remove the buiding and
erect the present War college on the site, in 1872 gave the body back to the friends, as they did those of the other conspirators Mrs. Surratt, Lewis Payne Powell. David E . Herold, and George A. Atzerott, the four fellow conspirators, who were hanged to aveng Iincoln'e des.th.

Amid such confussion any one who thinks he has discovered the truth ought to have the right to tell his story. It might bring order out of chaos, and Finis I. Bates has a story of interest and a theory that is consietent and he hae a record for reliability that makes his words worth while. I will let him tell his own story. (His chapter is not included)

Seven years after this date the government wanted to take down the penitentiary building and erect our present war college. It therefore offered the bodies of the culprits buried there to their respective families. When the Booth family wos offered the body secretly buried as John wilkes Booth, it was something of an embarrassment to them for the mother and at least one of the brothers had been making pilgrimages each year to the West in connection with their theatrical trips, to meet and stop at the same hotel for weeks with this mysterious man of the plains.

However, they were game and sent an undertaker and some men down to Washington, and Edwin Booth came himself to the city but Without appearing or looing at the body. They let the government exhume the remains and in the presence of an undertaker from Baltimore and one in Washington, with Mr. Ford of Ford's Theater fame, and his niece and three or four ethers, that the top of the box was removed and various men who had known Booth in life looked at the body, and some then and there, and others long after, declared that it in no way resembled John wilkes Booth. Some one euggested that
it would be interesting to examine the broken leg. Then one took hold of the boot of the right leg to pull it off and the leg came out in the boot. They were both thrown bak into the box together. They a.ll agree on this story, but they unwittingly prove by unditiable evidence that this was not John Wilke Bodth, for in the house they were pulling the right boot off and to this minute, the right boot of John Wilkes Booth, which was on the broken leg and which had to be cut off by Dr. Mudd and had been used as evidence in the trial of the conspiratorg, was and is still exhibited in the war Department at washington and can be seen there today.

By order of the family, a barrel of quick lime we,s then poured over the remains in this box, the box was sealed up and taken to Green Mount cemetary, Baltimore, and buried in a corner of the lot where the Booth family monument stood. Though the name of John wilkes Booth has never appeared on this monument, there was a bronze medallion attached to the monument with these striking lines, comitted to memory by Rev. Harry Dawson Mitchell, and since given to me.
"Behold the spot where genius lies,
0 drop a tear when talent dies,
of tragedy the Mightest chief,
Hi power to please surpassed belief.
Hic Jacet, Matchless Booth."
But just about the time that John st. Helen departed this life at Enid, Ollanoma, 1903, this bronz medallion was removed from the monument at Baltimore and its sentireant and message would probably never have been heard of but for the fact that one Methodist preacher made a note of it and cormitted it to memory.

OLD THEORIES WONT WORK.
We need a new theory if it can be found which will acoount for the facts of the abduction plot, for the particulars in which four people were hanged and four sent to penttentiary, the change of plan by which a moin who was simply to capture Mr. Iincoln and take him to Richmond, where he was to be held as a hostage until exhanged for all southern prisoners, the strange aocount of how two men could safely ride through the city which was guarded by a military watch and whose bridges were under the charge of sentinels, and how the criminals, Booth and Herold, could minduce the soldiers guarding them bridge to call assistance and hoist up the gate, letting the murderers of Iincoln through to safety, but stopping five minutes later the owner of the horse in pursuit of Herold to recover his stolen animal. This one honest man was turned back. If one undertakes to wade through the maze of contradiction, oross purpose, and restraction of the professional detectives, fortune hunters and sensational storymongers, who joined in the pursuit of Booth, and even followed through the volumes of scholarly historians who have used learning and literary skill to darken counsel by words without wisdom, hewill feel that it is time for the facts to come out or to call for the invention of a. more plaudable story.

Almost all of these books sore written for an ulterior purpose. One sifts the evidence, bent on the sentimental aim of exonerating Mrs, Surratt, the first woman hanged by a Federal Jury, so as to vindicate her name and fame, and most facts can be warped or ignored toward this defense.

Anotber is horrified at the converging lines of evidence that implicates Andrew Johnson in a guilty knowledge of the whole plot, if not of being the master-mind, profitting to the extent of presi-

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denoy through the death of Iincoln.
So Dewitt writes an elaborate volume to try to give that friend of Booth and of all the other conepirators, who drank with Booth on the night of the tragedy, and had him in his room at various times that day, and who badly needs to have his reputation resusticated, hence DeWitt writes a supposed history to restope to that coarce and drunken hoodlum a good name. His office seemed to require it.

The impossibility of this avthor's onception of things will be indicated, when one finds tat Dewitt socepts the story of the capture in the burning barn and the death of the unidentified man in question, but undertakes to deny to the bravest and the most unselfish soldier that ever was assigned to the pursuit of Booth, the man begged his commanding effieer to let him go into the barn and bring the two captives out, and who thrice refused, stood exposed to the fire of the culprits within until he saw this armed desperado in the act of charging the door where he knew his commander would be killed, when Boston corbitt fired the fatal shot. But DeWitt elaborately writes a volume to deprive this plain soldiee who had the distinction of fighting the whole war through as a volunteer, of any honor connected With the affair, by trying to prove through a series of feverish author's assumptions and frantic rhetorical flourishes that Booth fired the shot himself and was a suioide, leaving corbitt a pretender.

Boston corbitt was the first man to volunteer from Boston for the war. He was a religious fanatic, the kind that martys are made of. Those who know what he did and at what cost to maintain the virtue of his life, would really know that Boston corbitt would have suffered his tongue to be pulled out by the roots or would have burned at the stake before he would have deviated one hair-breadth from the exact truth in the matter, and he said he shot the man in the burning
supposed to be John wilkes Booth.
Text to the unlimited misapprehensions and falsehoods that attended the whole narrative of the pursuit of Iincoln's assassin, is the persistent and well-night universal tradition tat he never Was captured. Go anywhere in southern Maryland, to surrattsville as I did last week, to $T$. B., where Booth made his second stop, talk With the men now who live in the houses where he was cared for during his flight and you will get the same story; a belief that some other man wes shot and not John Wilkes Booth, that he made his escape. Go over along his trail into Virginia, ask anybody what the belief is and four out of five will express the faith that Booth escaped.

Recently I met in New England a Bishop known for intellect, penetration, and clear judgment, who has never been known to advocate a. vagary. I said: "You were born and raised in weet Virginia?" "Yes, I spent my youth there," was the reply. "What was the tradition in your state with reference to John wilkes Booth?" I asked. "It was very generally belleved and asserted that he escaped and was not the man shot in the barn or buried so mysteriously in Washington". I replied, "When most criminals are shot and buried, they are through, They atop making traditions and starting reports or rumers." The reason the John Wilkes Booth tradition still persists in Virginia, West Virginia and through the southwest to Mexice, is that he traveled horsembrok and afoot over that trail, stopping a week at a time in West Virginia house and over night and for meals at fifty houses; and the people who entertained him would not let the tradition die. There is no doubt about the fats of a mysterbous character under assumed names with a broken leg not yet healed, making his way in a southwesterly direction through the various states, bus especially country places, crossing the Missippi at oatfish point and entering

Indian Territory, mingling with the tribe until he finally beceme associated with the Apachee tribe, becoming the friend of its chief and a familiar among the bucks, whom he later accurately and vividly described. But although his safety was secured and the kindnese of $t$ these children of the forests was marked, this high-spirited and petted Baltimore aristocrat and actor could not accustom himself to the haunts and habits of these rude people and longing for kindred companionship, drew back egain to the homee of civilized man.

We find him at Nebraska city, Nebraska, were he is intertained In the home of $M r$. I. Treadkell who had a contract with the united States for hauling overland the supplies of the United states army then stationed at salt Iake cityh Utah. Here, in the fall of 1866 , under the name of Jesse T: Smith, Booth is hired as a teamster. In speaking of his distinguished driver, Mr. Preadkell afterward Wrote, "There was always a strange thing about Jesse Smith, or Booth. While he was a good driver of mules four in hand, he did not have the slightest knowledge of how to harness his team or even how to hitch them to a wagon, but he was the life of the camp at night and rendered it so agreeable the $t$ I never thought of discharging him for ignorance in this respect, that he was never able to hitch up his own team. The otir drivers were always galdy willing to do this service for him and I myself would much rather do this than to give him up, on account of his igmormmes ability to entertain us a.ll at night. He would recite shakespeare's poems, plays, etr., and tell of his travels which seemed to be extensive. His recitations were grandly eloquent."

The day before reaching salt Lake city, where they would see the army officers, this mysterious driver left his wagon and employer disappearing without notice or compensation. It has been proven that he avoided recognition by eluding the army, but continued his journey
to San Franolsco, where he met his mother and Junius Brutus Booth, his bfother, in the palaxce Hotel.

It was onjy a few years after this episode that Mr. Treadkell purchased a book that told the story of the assassination of president Iincoln and conterined a picture of John Wilkes Booth; the assassin. At the first glance of this picture, Mr. Treadkell was surprised to recognize his mysterious teamster, Jesse smith.

We know of his being in San Francisco and Fresno on that western trip; that colonel Edward. Levan of Monterey, Mexico, knew him intimately during the winter of 1868 in Lexington, Kentucky, going by the name of J. J. Marr, and playing the character of lawyer. Upon Colonel Levan telling him he believed him to be John wilkes Booth, Mr. Marr did not deny the allegation, but disappeared from Lexington and settled at Village Mills, Texas, when he later moved to Glen Rose Mills and assumed the name of John St. Helen and purchased a little store in the remest settlement. He sold liquor without a license, and had to employ a lawyer not only to get him out of the trouble but to manage the case so that he would not have to appear in the united states court. He retained $M$. Finis I. Bates, and later confessed to him that his true name was John wilkes Booth, the assassin of Abraham Lincoln, told how he escaped after the deed which robbed the world of Iincoln and inflicted the presidency of Andrew Johnson upon a helpless nation and made himself a fugitive, depriving the stage of the greatest actor the the American continent had produced. In this confession he explained how he slept for a night at the Garrett residence, sending Robey and Herold back over the Rappahannock piver to secure his papers whi ch he had left in a wagon belonging to William Lucas, a colored man who had brought him concerled to the ferrys After procuring these, the two men were to go to Bowling

Geeen and secure him a pair of shoes, as the boot which he wore had. to be cut off of his broken and swonen leg. This progrem was carried out. They remained at Bowling Green and the next day returned to the Garrett Farm, walking the sixteen miles and arriving at ten 0:0lock at night? Meantime Booth had been called for and furnished a horse by Majors Bainbridge and Ruggles of the Moseby command. The country was filling up with Federal soldiers and these men thought it was best to get Booth as far to the west as possible. They rode with him forty five miles. That night Herold and Robery, finding their chief gone on, asked the privilege of sleeping at the Garrettis, but the southern hospitality of this honored family was reaching its limit, as they wage began to suspect their guests, but linally consented to allow the two men to sleep in the tobacco house, fomerly a com-crib, providing they would consent to be locked in for the night. As the two Garrett boys were possessed of fine horses thich they had secured through the generosity df General Grant who alowed the confederates to keep their horses, they became hervous lest these strangers might appropriate a riding horse apiece; they themselves went out heavily armed to sleep in the barn, so as to guard their prizes.

At three oiclock that night colonel Baker and condor with the soldiees had arrested captain Jett at Bowling Green and arrived in search of the fugitives. They aroused the household and when old Mr. Garrett told them that the men had taken to the woods they flew at the old man in an abusive way, ohoking him and threatening to to hang him if he did not tell them where the men were. Just then a son came forward from the barn and explained to them that the men had gone to the woods but two of them had come back at ten o'clock that night and were sleeping in the barn.

The story is very generally known that the soldiers promptly
surrounded this barn and demanded the surrender of its innates. Then one willingly surrendered and the otar showed fight, He refused to come out until the barn was fired. When he sprang full armed toward the door to fight his way out, it was Boston corbitt's pistol that laid him low. They mysterious man of the plains states that this was not John Wilkes Booth, but. Tranklin Robet whose possession of the Booth diary, piotures, letter and check on a canadian bank Was the only means of identification as the assassin of the president,

When I got this story I detemmined, if possible, to locate the man who was killed through fifty-six years had passed. I had never *mown heard the name of Robey and wanted to see if it was fictitious. Turning to the trial of the conspirators, I found four different Robeys summoned from that section as witnesses, so there was a Robey family there. consulting with a Methodist superintendent who travels that country? I learned there are several Robeys fanilies in the countries traversed by Booth. Turning to the volume written by Jones Who cared for Booth, fed him, wrapped him up, changed the splints on his broken leg, took him on his own horse to the potomac River, put him in his own boat, and sent him acrose in the darkness, and who has written a perfectly truthful story of the whole transaction, I find that he refers to pranklin Robery as the foreman of his foster-brother, Who cared for Booth the first night, and who left him on his hands so that he could go aoross the river and secure helpers who would see Booth throughe This man who secured the aid of captain Jett and officers Ruggles and Bainbridge, the three confederates from Mossby's command who would secure safety, disappeared from Southern Maryland and is never heard of again.

Every description of Franklin Robey that can be prooured about him by those who knew im and his surviving relatives, exactly coin-

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cide with the description of the man whow was killed by Boston corbett, who in no way ever resembled Booth.

Dr. H. W. Gay, who knew John Wilkes Booth as early as 185 ? and had been captivated by him as one of the most hospitable and genial fellows he ever $\begin{aligned} & \text { nnew, } \\ & \text { ays that in company he was always quoting }\end{aligned}$ Shakespeare or some other post and exclaims, "How often I have seen


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The aspiring youth who fires the Ephesian Dome, outlives in fame the pious fools who reared it.""

He read of his capture and death and never doubted it until 1869 when living in Tate county, Mississippi, one evening about dusk a man elaiming tiat he was one of the Ku Klux Klan run out of Arkansas by Powell olayton's militia. This man was an erratic fellow who stopped at Dr. Gay's house and told him that John Wilkes Booth was not killed but made his escape, spent a short while in Mexice with Maximillian:s army but got into trouble. His life was saved by reason of the fact that he was a catholic. The man stated that during Booth's short stay in Mexico he had lived in disguise as an itinerate catholic priest. He also told the story of how Booth escaped after the assassination and the story coincided precisely With Mr. Bates? narrative of John St. Helen's confession, even to the crossing of the Mississippi at catifish point and going thence
up the Arkansas River to Indian Territory, and that Booth afterWard met Junius Brutus Booth and his mother in San Francisco. This meeting was probably arranged by correspondence while John Wilkes Booth was in Indian Territory, and may explain his employment as a team driver from Nebraska dity to salt Lake dity by Mr. Mreadkell and his unceremonious desertion of his post just before reaching his destination. So we trace him meeting his
oldest brother and mother in San Trancisco in 167 .
Again we locate him at Lexington, Kentucky, in company with
colonel Levan in $: 68$ 169; he is seen by Dr. Gay in Tate county, Mississippi in 169; in 1872 he is intimately acquainted with Finis L. Bates at Glenrose, Texas; in 183 Mr . Connelly saw him at Village Mills, Texas; and again in 185 he is seen by numbers and recognized by General Pike.

Colonel M8 W. Connelly, a distinguished newspaper man, has Written over his own signature an indentification of john Wilkes Booth as the man he saw in 183 at Millage Mills, Texas. Some time later he tells of his being in the piakwiak Hotel bar-room at Fortio Worth, Texas, talking with General Albert pike, the famous mason, statesman, lawyer and post; Tom Powell, the Mayor of Fort Worth, joined them, and Temple Houston, the youngest son of General sam Mouston of san Jacinto fame. When this Village wills friend came In accompanied by Iong Sherlock, editor of the chroniole of dayburn, Texas, General pike suddenly threw up his hands, his face as white as his hair and beard, exclaiming, "My God!, John Wilkes Booths" General pike could not get over this exaltement, and the four men talked long and esmestly about this mysterious man who appeared to them like an amparition, and was recognized as the assassin of President Iincoln.

It may be of interest to state that Fort Worth, Texas, was only about forty-five milea from Granbury, Texas, where st. Helen, or Booth, made his home and where he had made his full and complete confession to Bates, and employed him as his attomey, a relation that existed for thirty-one years.

Trom this plsce St. Helen has drifted in 1878 to Leadville, Colorado. From thenee to Tresno, California, is next identified
n 1885 in Fort Workh, Texas, by General Albert Pike in company with 1. W. connelly and other distinguished men.

From Fort Worth he changes his name to deorge D. Ryan, and his residence to duthrie, Oklahoma Territory; then he lives at Hennesy in the year 1896, playing the role of a gentleman. Here he remained until sometime in 1899 when he located at El Reno, Oklahoma, sixty-five miles from Hennesy, boarding at the Anstein Hotel. Here he advertised himself as "David Bt.Gearge, Housepainter" in the Daily Democrat, a newspaper publi hed at $\mathbb{E l}$ Reno. He opened a bank account in the state Bank of that place under the name of David $\mathbb{E}$. George, made deposits of money, purchased a home for $\$ 3500$ in the town, and seemed to have adequate means without work. Tiring of hotel life and owning his own cottage, he installed a family by the name of Simonds, who were to board him for the rent of the house. They took as boarders also the Reverent $\mathbb{E}$. C. Herper, a congregational minister, and his wife, and for some months at this place they had the dellghtful association of living under the same roof With the most dramatic and interesting personality they ever saw, until one day, having taken some strong drug, he thought himself dying. This in the middle of April, 1902. Three women were in the house, and calling them he told of his illness. He held a mirror, looking at the dilation of his eyes. Mrs. Bears proposed to coll a, phraician, bolioving ho had taken an overdose of morphine. While holding the mirror, he exclaimed, "stay woman. Stay. This mescenger of death is my guest and $I$ desire to see the curtain of death fall upon this last tragic act of mine," which passionate utterance brought tears to the eyea of the three; and; when Mrs. Harper turned to wipe her eyes, he called her to his side and said: "I have something to tell you. I am going to die in a few
minutes and I don't believe you would do anything to injure me. Did it ever occur to you that I am anything but an ordinary painter? I killed the beet man that ever lived. I am John wilke Booth." "Am I dying now?" he asked. "I am growing cold as if deathis loy hand was closing my life as the forfeit for my crime." He made a complete statement of the tragedy, his escape, and the remorse he had suffered ever since, until the arrivel of Dr. Arnold broke off the conversation and began the successful efforts for his restoration. Some days later Mrs. Harper was looking at a picture of Iincoln When vr. George asked why she was looking at that. She replied, "I have always admired Iincoln". Is that the only reason you have for looking at it?" he asked, regarding her with a fierce look. A peculiar expression came over his face, his eyes glared, he tumed pale and walked out. Mrs. Harper atill resides in Oklehoma with her husband who is the paster of the congregational ohurch at oklaboma city, and often entertains her friends by belling of the mystertous man who confessed himself to be John Wilkes Booth, descibed him as having one eye-brow that was a little higher than the other, and the many physical marks that the Government has always recognized. as descriptive of the murderer of the president.

It will be remembered that when he left Hennesy for El Reno, he changed his name from George D. Ryan to David $E$. George, and his occupation from that of a gentleman of leisure to that of a joumeyman painter of houses. Although he painted but one house and did that in such a blundering way that it was never undertoken again, he continued to pay Four Dollars a month to keep the announcement in the papers. He played this part while living in $\mathbb{F l}$ Reno. He renoved to $\mathbb{E n i d}$, oklahoma, on the third day of December, 1902, and registered at the Grand Avenue Hotel under the name of

David E. George. In the meantime Rev. Mr. Harper and his wife had removed from El Reno to Enid and upon the suicide of Devid E. George at this Hotel. Mr. Harper went to the hotel and identified the man as the resident of $\mathbb{E l}$ Reno who had confessed to them that his true naxe was John wilkes Booth. There were nine people in the room When he died and he rppeated his confession to the hotel proprietors and the others.

A striking proof of twe"truth is stranger than Fiction": is this: When the city of Enid was all excitement and people were pouring in to see the mysterious man who confessed to being the murderer of the president, among the interested spectators was a citizen of that town well-known in church circles as a mission worker, street preacher and evangelist, who had noticed this mysterLous stranger standing on the edge of the crowds several evenings. Who was this lay preacher but Boston corbitt, Whose name had gone into history in connection with the capture of the man in the barn.

When I told this story to M. Oldroyd, suthor of the best book on the assassination, he said, "What will you do with the man that was actually killed, held out here in the Potomac River on a Monitor, and finally buried in the old penitentiary, and whose body lies in Baltimore now?"

I responded, "What will you do with the man who escaped, traveled thru all the states toward the south-west, lived there for thirtyeight years, transacted business, left many thousands of people living, Who had known his as a mysterious stranger hiding from officers, covering up his identity and finally dying with the confession on his lips that he was John milkes Booth; and whose body is still perfectly preserved for indentification?" If that corpse now on indetification in chicago, is not John Wilkes Booth, who is it? I can tell you

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Who the man was who was shot by corbett and who died on carrettis porch - that was Franklin Robey. The man who escaped claimed consistently thru a period of thirty-eight years he was John Wilkes Booth.

