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**Booth was not the only person running from Ford's Theatre after shooting Lincoln.**

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*An old drawing of John Wilkes Booth riding away from Joseph B. Steward. The white boy standing at Ford's Theater backdoor is depicted as being John "Peanuts" Burroughs.*

**In truth:**

**John "Peanuts" Burroughs was a young black man who sat on a carpenter's bench and held the horse just before Booth shot Lincoln.**

**The person seen at the back door was a white man in shabby clothes, with a black mustache. Witnesses reported seeing him holding the back door shut until Booth rode away.**

## Booth's Signal Whistle

One significant piece of evidence is a report filed nine days after Lincoln's murder. Military investigator Colonel John A. Foster told about witnesses hearing whistles signaling back and forth from the streets and alleys around Ford's Theater, just before the President was shot [E&S p. 539]. Those same witnesses also heard three shrill whistles and several men riding rapidly away immediately after the murder [E&S pp. 138, 139, 1042 & 1195].

The whistle pictured on the right was among the many items recovered from Booth's body after his capture. Combining Colonel Foster's report, together with this old whistle evidence, verifies unidentified accomplices were helping Booth kill Lincoln.

Stanton's military police never investigated.



## Another Stanton Bait & Switch

By Don Thomas

*Who Was Atwood?*



On the night of Lincoln's assassination, Samuel Thomas approached George Atzerodt just as both men were about to check into the Pennsylvania House Hotel. Two weeks later, during his infamous lost confession, Atzerodt stated that he first met Samuel Thomas on the way to the hotel and that Thomas was a "complete stranger."

Pennsylvania Hotel manager John Greenawalt described Samuel Thomas as having a black mustache, about 140 pounds, and believed his shabby clothing was a disguise [Pitman, pp. 146-47]. Greenawalt's testimony was significant because Samuel Thomas also closely fit the description of the man who helped Booth escape Ford's Theater by holding the back door shut until Booth rode away [Pitman, pp. 79-80].



The evidence and witnesses presented during the conspiracy trial proved that the suspicious shabby dressed man with a dark mustache could not have been Ed Spangler. Yet, Stanton's prosecutors still convicted Spangler of helping Booth escape, sentencing him six years in prison.

Edward Spangler was just another bait and switch victim Stanton used to cover-up the Washington plot to kill Lincoln.

Stanton's military Investigator, Colonel John A. Foster, issued his report, on April 23, 1865, stating:

- George Atzerodt and Samuel Thomas occupied the same room at the Pennsylvania House, and at 6 AM on April 15, took the Rockville stage out of town. Foster added that two days later, soldiers traced Atzerodt to a point near Monocacy Junction and arrested him under orders from General Tyler [E&S, p. 537, 555].

The fact is: Monocacy Junction is nowhere close to where soldiers captured Atzerodt, five days after the assassination. Also, the sergeant who arrested Atzerodt followed orders from Captain Townsend. The man soldiers captured near Monocacy Junction, two days after the assassination, followed orders from General Tyler [E&S, p. 589].

- An annotation in E&S is a contradiction of Colonel Foster's report: *Samuel Thomas met George Atzerodt on the street as they both were walking to the Pennsylvania house. Thomas had no connection to Atzerodt nor Booth and was arrested but later released* [E&S, p. 614].

The fact is: Samuel Thomas was very much connected to Atzerodt and Booth.

Samuel Thomas was a suspect who stayed the night of the assassination in the hotel room with Atzerodt, and he fits the description of an accomplice helping Booth. Soldiers later arrested Thomas as a possible assassination suspect, who would have made an important witness. Still, he never testified at the

trial because Secretary Stanton ordered his release. Oddly, there is no report about his arrest nor surviving interrogation statement from Thomas to explain why Secretary Stanton let him go.

Soon after Foster issued his report, the Secretary of War aggressively took steps to cover-up Samuel Thomas by accusing that George Atzerodt was the man on the Rockville stage using an alias, *Atwood*. Any one of four witnesses could have identified the man calling himself *Atwood*, quickly ending any question about which man, Thomas, or Atzerodt boarded Howard's stagecoach escaping to Rockville. But a positive identification was the last thing Edwin Stanton would allow.

Before the assassination, Atzerodt had no escape plan and stayed the night of Lincoln's murder in Washington. The next morning Atzerodt checked out of the Pennsylvania House and honestly told the hotel manager that he was headed north to Montgomery County. Samuel Thomas left the hotel just ahead of Atzerodt, also leaving town [Pitman, p.146-47].

The fact is: On the morning after the assassination, the Washington stage left Howard's stable toward Rockville at 8 AM. Francis Kerns was the usual driver, but on Saturday morning, April 15, the stagecoach driver was a substitute, identified only as Webster.

The next day Webster reported to Kerns that he left Washington at 8 AM, but the military police in Georgetown stopped the stage and would not allow anyone to leave town without a pass [E&S, pp.777-78]. The guards at Georgetown took four passengers out but, for some unknown reason, allowed Webster's last remaining passenger (*Atwood*) to continue out of town [E&S, p. 537].

Why would the Union soldiers remove four passengers from Webster's stage, yet allow *Atwood* to travel out of Georgetown? Did *Atwood* have a military pass?

At 8 AM, as Webster was leaving Washington, George Atzerodt was already in Georgetown, having breakfast with Lucinda Metz [E&S, p. 895].

Was the man on the stage leaving Georgetown with Webster, Samuel Thomas, or George Atzerodt? At this point, only someone with a military pass could have gotten through the first roadblock [E&S, pp.777-78]. Colonel Foster explained why the other passengers were taken off but did not explain why soldiers allowed Webster's last passenger to continue [E&S, pp. 537, 555].

By 9 AM, Saturday morning, the stagecoach carrying only Webster and *Atwood*, soon approached a massive 50 wagon traffic jam, bringing it to another stop on the narrow road leading into Tennallytown. There, a second military roadblock was searching every wagon looking for Booth. [E&S, p. 777].

During this same window-of-time, George Atzerodt, (having finished breakfast) left Lucinda's house toward Cunningham's Tavern, hoping to reach Germantown before nightfall [E&S, p. 895]. However, he had no money, so he first visited Matthews & Wise Co. Store at 49 High Street. While at the store, Atzerodt left his gun with John Galdwell in exchange for a \$10 loan and was not found by military police until five days later [Pittman, p. 148].

The fact is: When the stage pulled out of Washington at 8 AM, Atzerodt was already in Georgetown having breakfast with Lucinda Metz. When Howard's coach met the massive traffic jam after leaving the first roadblock, around 9 AM, George Atzerodt was still in Georgetown, borrowing \$10 from John Galdwell [Pitman, p. 148].

About 11 o'clock, the stagecoach reached the second picket station where soldiers prevented anyone from going through, except Webster, carrying mailbags. Webster was allowed to proceed, but his last

remaining passenger (*Atwood*) was taken out of the stage by Union soldiers, and no one else was allowed to continue until each wagon had been searched, causing a three to four-hour delay.

By this time, it had taken Webster a full three hours to travel the short distance from Washington to Tennallytown. **(See Map)** The stage typically averages about four miles an hour [E&S, p. 776].

A local produce farmer, William Gaither, drove one of the detained wagons, and Sergeant Lewis L. Chubb was in charge of the guards who ran the second checkpoint station at Tennallytown. Gaither later stated to investigators that he saw Sergeant Chubb drink cider in the little store with the passenger (*Atwood*) left behind by Howard's stagecoach. Gaither added that this stranger (*Atwood*) walked among the wagons talking with everyone in a very "jovial" way as though he knew them.

During the long wait, the stranger (*Atwood*) spent most of his time with Sergeant Chubb, paying for their drinks while appearing to be well acquainted with him [E&S, pp. 581- 82].

Stanton's War Department claimed that the man posing as *Atwood* was George Atzerodt, an assassination suspect, who was on the run, nearly broke, and hoping not to be recognized. Yet, the man calling himself *Atwood* talked boldly with everyone and bought drinks for his friend Sergeant Chubb. (Was *Atwood* Atzerodt or Thomas?)

About 3 PM, after an almost four-hour wait, the guards thoroughly searched William Gaither's wagon before allowing it to continue through the checkpoint. *Atwood* asked Gaither for a ride, and Sergeant Lewis L. Chubb was later court-martialed, charged with two counts: "drunkenness on duty, and disobedience of an order" for allowing Atzerodt through the checkpoint with Gaither. However, Chubb was later found not guilty on both charges [E&S, p. 582].

If Chubb was court-martialed for allowing his friend Atzerodt to pass through the checkpoint, why was he found not guilty? Was Chubb's friend Samuel Thomas and not Atzerodt?

When *Atwood* got into Gaither's wagon, he made a very polite bow to the Captain and said, "*It's all right so far.*" **(What did he mean?)** [E&S, p. 581]. Did the Captain understand what *Atwood* meant?

The Captain of the checkpoint station also allowed Gaither and *Atwood* to proceed north towards Rockville, but the army did not charge the Captain with disobeying orders. When the wagon reached John Mulligan's Tavern & Blacksmith Shop twenty miles north of the second checkpoint station, *Atwood* told Gaither that his father's wagon was behind them and would get out to wait for his father there [Ibid].

If Atzerodt had been in Gaither's wagon and not Thomas, as the military investigators claim, why would he get out at Mulligan's and not ride as far as Gaithersburg? **(See Map)** When William Gaither reached the Tavern, he turned west toward Germantown, but *Atwood* got out to travel north toward Monocacy Junction. Foster reported that soldiers following Gaither's wagon arrested Atzerodt near Monocacy two days later, under orders from General Tyler, but that was not true [E&S, p. 537].

About the time Gaither dropped *Atwood* off at the Tavern to wait there for his father's wagon, George Atzerodt was already several miles to the west of Rockville heading towards Germantown. John Kinder, Clapper's Mill manager, gave Atzerodt permission to spend the night at the mill, before finishing his journey to his uncle's home [E&S, p.781].

The fact is: When Gaither's wagon reached Mulligan's Tavern, Atzerodt was already approaching Clapper Mill several miles ahead of *Atwood* and William Gaither. Also, Monocacy Junction is nowhere near Germantown [E&S, pp. 581, 886]. Saturday morning General Tyler ordered soldiers to follow the stagecoach leaving Washington, and on Monday, April 17, they arrested Samuel Thomas on the road



leading to Monocacy Junction. In contrast, soldiers under orders from Captain Townsend captured Atzerodt near Germantown on April 20.



*Rockville District Map 1865*

The location of William Gaither's home at Gaithersburg is on the road leading towards Clapper's Mill near Germantown, where George Atzerodt spent the night of April 15. Why would he get out of the wagon at the Tavern?

Monocacy Junction was north of Mulligan's Tavern, and nowhere near the location Sergeant Gemmill arrested George Atzerodt. Monocacy Junction was also the area suspects fired at soldiers while fleeing Washington.

Again, evidence and testimonies substantiate that Atzerodt was not the man in Howard's stagecoach driven by Webster, nor the man, *Atwood* riding in William Gaither's wagon. Colonel Burnett's military investigators switched *Atwood* to Atzerodt to protect Thomas from further analysis [E&S, p. 555].

On the day of Atzerodt's arrest (April 20), William Gaither stated to investigators, "I do not know a man by the name of Atzerodt. I do know of a man who I *have heard* was Atzerodt. The first time I ever saw him (*Atwood*) was when he got out of the stage up at the pickets. It was Saturday morning near 11 o'clock. There was no one else besides him in the stage except the driver" (Webster) [Ibid].

Webster's only stage passenger was calling himself *Atwood*. George Atzerodt and Samuel Thomas were both arrested, so why wasn't William Gaither, Webster, or Sergeant Chubb asked to positively identify the man they saw on Rockville's road calling himself *Atwood*?

## ***Stanton used reward money for bait.***

From the beginning of Stanton's bait and switch, things did not go to plan. One of Booth's kidnapping conspirators, Louis Wiechmann, panicked after discovering Booth had murdered the President. Wiechmann attempted to cover his association with the kidnapping plot, running first to Howard's Stable, where anyone working there could identify him as frequently riding out with Booth.

At around 5:30 AM, Wiechmann found Brook Stabler, the manager for Howard's Livery Stable located near 6<sup>th</sup> & G St. Washington, and begged Stabler not to disclose any information about him knowing Booth or Surratt. However, Stabler immediately reported his whole conversation with Wiechmann to General Fry at the War Department [E&S, pp. 1178, 1181].

Wiechmann's next move was to run to the Metropolitan police station to convince the authorities he had nothing to do with the assassination. However, when Secretary Stanton learned that Weichmann was divulging secret information previously known only to the War Department, he flew into a berserk rage. **[Read the details in Chapter 13 of *The Reason Lincoln Had to Die* by Don Thomas].**

Later that same Saturday afternoon, the stage driver heading back to Washington also told police about seeing Gaither's wagon. However, the return driver was not the substitute Webster, but Webster's boss, Francis Kerns. Kerns had stayed Friday night in Rockville on personal business, and on Saturday evening, he drove the stage back to Howard's Stable in Washington.

While driving south, Kerns passed about 15 market wagons leaving Washington heading north. He gave investigators a very confusing and uncertain statement about the man he saw in Gaither's wagon, even unsure about the produce farmer William Gaither, and which day it was he saw the wagon. **(Francis Kerns was not allowed to make a positive ID of Atwood.)**

Kerns told investigators that about 3 PM, half-way between Washington and Rockville (ten miles), he saw Atzerodt in the wagon with Mr. Gaither. But that cannot be true; Gaither's wagon was still in Tennallytown at 3 PM [E&S, pp. 776-77]. Kerns added, he had seen Atzerodt before at Howard's Stable, and several times around the Pennsylvania House, but never knew his name [E&S, p. 778].

The fact is: After Howard's Stable boss, Brook Stabler, talked to Wiechmann, he convinced Kerns to tell the police that the man in Gaither's wagon was Atzerodt [E&S, pp. 1182-83].

Brook Stabler had a financial reason to accuse Atzerodt of being *Atwood* because Stanton posted no reward for anyone other than Booth's former kidnapping accomplices. Stabler wrote a letter on May 2, claiming an equitable share of the money offered for information leading to the capture of a suspected kidnapping conspirator [E&S, p. 1184]. Stabler's primary motive for his War Department report was to collect the bounty for the arrest of George Atzerodt.

The proof Stabler had already talked to police about Atzerodt before talking to Kerns is that he learned about Samuel Thomas from the investigators, but he misunderstood *Atwood's* name. Stabler referred to Atzerodt (a man he was well acquainted with) as Azworth, just like Francis Kerns, identified Atzerodt during his statement [E&S, p. 1178 & Pitman, p. 71].

Kerns got his information about Atzerodt from his boss Brooks Stabler before being interviewed by the military investigators, which makes his statement about seeing Atzerodt riding in the produce wagon skewed [E&S, pp. 1183, 776-77].

Brook Stabler was not an eyewitness to the man riding in Howard's stage nor Gaither's wagon, and there was no reward offered for anyone other than Booth's kidnapping accomplices. Kerns admitted he never knew the man in Gaither's wagon was Atzerodt until Brook Stabler pointed him out [ibid].

Francis Kerns, Webster, William Gaither, and Sergeant Chubb never made a physical identification to prove that George Atzerodt was *Atwood*, and none of those witnesses ever testified at the trial. The only witness who said the fugitive escaping Washington spoke with a German accent was Sergeant Gemmill, and only after he arrested Atzerodt on April 20 [Pitman, p.149].

If it was Atzerodt calling himself *Atwood* on April 15, then:

- Why didn't any of the other witnesses mentioned that *Atwood* had a thick German accent?

***Booth was not working alone before he shot Lincoln, and he was just one of many people running away from Ford's Theater after the assassination*** [E&S, pp. 138-39, 1042, 1195].

All-day April 15, soldiers searched the countryside looking for two men who entered Jared Hopkins's barn a few miles from the Snell's Bridge heading north to Baltimore. Mr. Hopkins's young niece saw the two strangers in the barn and ran to the house, giving the alarm. Both men took to the woods; one man stole Mr. Hopkins's horse and was traced west to Sugarloaf Mountain neighborhood, where he got away. Neither man was ever found [E&S, pp. 1185-87, 538].

On the road between Washington and Baltimore, a party of about 8 to 12 men fired upon another detachment of soldiers. The suspects also took to the woods but were not followed because of darkness. Other men also fired at soldiers on the road leading from Washington to Marlborough, and again in two or three places in Prince George County towards the Patuxent River. All these suspicious characters were shooting at soldiers while running north from Washington, but the soldiers never caught anyone.

Stanton needed to quickly change the investigation's focus away from the escape of Samuel Thomas and all the other suspects escaping north after the assassination. They were men who helped Booth kill Lincoln, but the reward posters entice witnesses to concentrate only on Booth's former kidnapping accomplices, John Surratt, George Atzerodt, and David Herold.

Stanton personally authorized a local farmer, James W. Purdom, to be a Clarksburg District Montgomery County civilian detective for the War Department. The Secretary of War ordered all officers and soldiers to afford Purdom assistance and protection. Prudom informed the soldiers that George Atzerodt was in Germantown with his uncle [E&S, p. 221]. James Purdom received a \$2878.78 reward for information leading to George Atzerodt's arrest, Samuel Thomas was never heard from again [E&S, pp. 1068, 308, 589, 651, 803, 1190].

War Department, Washington, April 20, 1865,

**100,000 REWARD!**

**THE MURDERER**

Of our late beloved President, Abraham Lincoln,  
**IS STILL AT LARGE.**

**\$50,000 REWARD**

Will be paid by this Department for his apprehension, in addition to any reward offered by Municipal Authorities or State Executives.

**\$25,000 REWARD**

Will be paid for the apprehension of JOHN H. SURREAT, one of Booth's Accomplices.

**\$25,000 REWARD**

Will be paid for the apprehension of David G. Herold, another of Booth's accomplices.

LIBERAL REWARDS will be paid for any information that shall conduce to the arrest of either of the above-named criminals, or their accomplices.

All persons harboring or receiving the said persons, or either of them, or aiding or assisting their concealment or escape, will be treated as accessories to the murder of the President and the attempted assassination of the Secretary of State, and shall be subject to trial before a Military Commission and the punishment of DEATH.

Let the guilt of slaying blood be removed from the land by the arrest and punishment of the murderers.

All good citizens are exhorted to aid public justice on this occasion. Every man should consider his own conscience cleared with this solemn duty, and one either might one day wish it to be accomplished.

**EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.**

DESCRIPTIONS.—**BOOTH** is Five Feet 7, or 8 inches high, slender build, high forehead, black hair, black eyes, and wears a heavy black mustache.

**JOHN H. SURREAT** is about 5 feet, 8 inches. Hair rather thin and dark; eyes rather light; no beard. Weight 145 or 150 pounds. Complexion rather pale and clear, with color in his cheeks. Wears light clothes of the quality. Shoulders square; chest broad; nose rather prominent; ears narrow; ears projecting at the top; forehead rather low and square, but broad. Parting hair on the right side; neck rather long. His lips are firmly set. A thin mustache.

**DAVID G. HEROLD** is five feet six inches high, hair dark, eyes dark, complexion rather heavy, full face, nose short, head short and fleshy, feet small, hands high, round bodied, naturally quick and active, slightly closed his eyes when looking at a person.

NOTE.—In addition to the above, State and other authorities have offered rewards amounting to about one hundred thousand dollars, making an aggregate of about TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS.



The War Department paid \$25,000.00 for the arrest of George Atzerodt but denied Brook Stabler's reward claim. Only one civilian received War Department money for Atzerodt's capture, and he was commissioned a civilian detective, by and for the War Department.

Major E.R. Artman 213<sup>th</sup> Pa. Vols. \$1250.00.

Sergeant Z. W. Gemmill, 1<sup>st</sup> Del. Cav. \$3598.54.

Six Privates 1<sup>st</sup> Del. Cav. each @ 2878.78 = \$17272.68.

James Purdom \$2878.78. Total \$25,000.

## Summary:

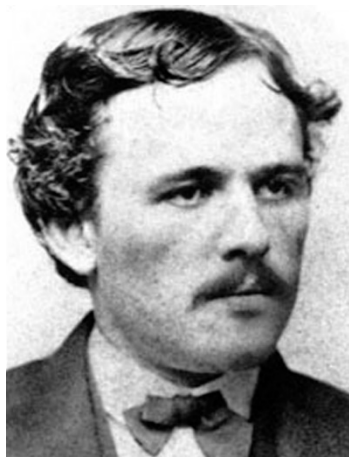
During the search for suspects escaping north of Washington, soldiers were attacked from several different locations, but their search ended with no arrest. Meanwhile, other men were hiding and stole horses, yet Stanton's investigation focused on finding only Atzerodt, Herold, and Surratt.

- **What happened to Samuel Thomas and all those other men who ran north from Washington while shooting at the soldiers?**

In response to a firefight between soldiers and suspects, Stanton orders Colonel L. C. Baker to print reward posters and have them passed out, pulling the search away from the north in Montgomery County, to the south in Charles County. An opposite direction from where the soldiers were attacked by men fleeing north after the assassination.

Using the Surgeon General's photographic laboratory Colonel Baker was able to attach pictures of Booth, Herold, and Surratt to some of the reward posters [E&S, p. 242]. To accomplish the photo poster Baker received help from Louis Wiechmann, a suspect arrested for being part of the Booth kidnapping plot [E&S, p. 1333].

Wiechmann knew John Surratt was not in Washington before or during the assassination yet worked with Stanton to portray Surratt as a primary assassination suspect [E&S, pp.1324-1327]. John Surratt was arrested and tried two years later and found not an assassination accomplice to John Wilkes Booth.



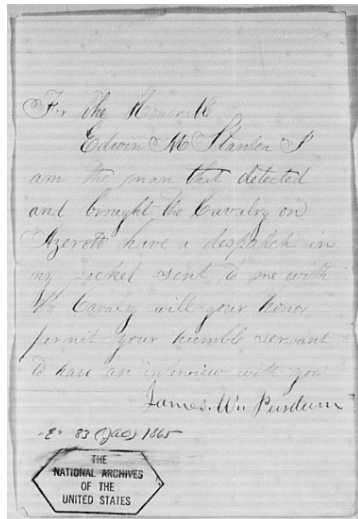
*Louis Wiechmann, John Surratt's best friend.*

Despite Louis Wiechmann's profound association with John Wilkes Booth and being actively involved with everyone convicted as a conspirator, he became the War Department's prime prosecuting witness. After the trial, Wiechmann writes to Stanton:

- *"I therefore **again** have recourse to you, confident that you will assist me as far as you can. I do not like to say that I claim a reward. I would be very grateful to you if you could assist me in procuring a situation for a few months, at least, in the Custom House or Post Office of this city [Washington] or Boston" [E&S, p.1333].*

Edwin Stanton and Joseph Holt procured Wiechmann a position at the Philadelphia Custom House, but he lost his job in November 1866, under the Johnson administration. When Ulysses Grant became President, Stanton again arranged to get his job back, and Wiechmann worked at his government job for the next twenty years. Yet, Wiechmann got fired once again, after the election of Grover Cleveland.

Some individuals then and now maintain Stanton did not threaten to hang Wiechmann if he refused to give false testimony about Booth's kidnapping conspirators [E&S, p. 1319]. However, no logical reason or supporting evidence can substantiate that claim. Whereas there is overwhelming evidence to validate, Wiechmann did strike a deal to save his own life by agreeing to help with Stanton's bait and switch cover-up. [E&S, p. 1328].



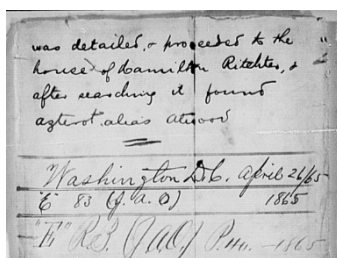
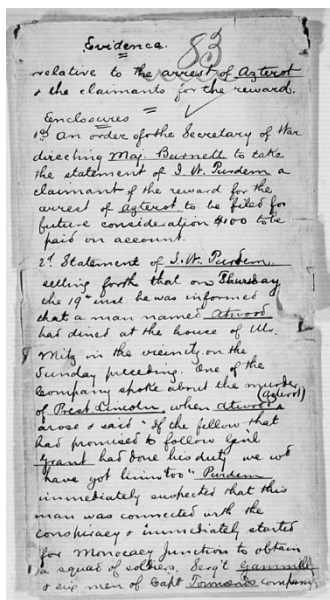
James Purdom asks Stanton for a private interview.

James Purdom had a dispatch containing contrary testimony, by Hezekiah Metz, concerning what Atzerodt said about killing General Grant.

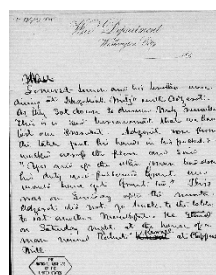
Purdom asked Stanton for a private interview, and Stanton ordered Burnett to take his statement (written in Stanton's handwriting) and file it for future consideration, \$100 to be paid from his pre-approved reward account [E&S, p. 1070, 1190, 2:231].

During the conspiracy trial, Hezekiah Metz gave his version of Atzerodt's comment about killing Grant. However, the other witnesses, who also heard the same statement, James and Somerset Leaman, gave a different rendition that did not implicate Atzerodt or Michael O'Laughlin as accomplices in the alleged plot to kill Grant [Pitman, pp. 149, 152]. Michael O'Laughlin died in prison convicted for lying in wait to kill General Grant, despite having no evidence, and several opposing testimonies [Pitman, pp. 226-27, 229-33].

Below, is the document of Stanton's order for Colonel Burnett to pay Purdom \$100 for Hezekiah Metz's statement against Atzerodt [E&S, pp. 1189-90, 2:221-32].



(2:221-22)



Purdom's dispatch in Stanton's handwriting.

[See statement by James Stabler [E&S, pp. 1185-88]. See, New York crowd article "How They Got Away with Murder"

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