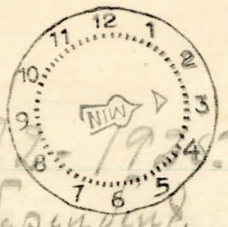
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Ardmore, Okla. May. 22nd 1925.

The Dearborn Independent
Dearborn Mich.

Yours of the 18th inst. in reply to mine giving the Statement of one James Bentley as to the escape of John Wilkes Booth, has been received. At the time that I was with Bentley, the circumstances of the assasination of Lincoln was fresh on the peoples minds. The killing of Booth, with the details of the identification of the body had all been published in the press all over the country, and the reading public was familiar with it all.

When Bentley would tell his

story, it was at the first receiv
ed with doubt by the listener who
had who had read the whole story
in the press, including the identifi
cation of the body of Booth.

This always caused an argument
about the identification of the body,
which according to press reports
was sufficient to satisfy the govern
ment and to leave no room for
doubt.

While it has been fifty-two years
since I heard Bentley discuss this
matter of the identification of the
body as being that of Booth, and
heard him tell how it was done, and
why it was done, though many
of the details have been forgotten, the
main facts as he told them

are indelibly stamped on my mind.

At the time this occured Lee had surrendered. The south was prostrate at the feet of the north. The policy of Lincoln toward the south was that of conciliation, and that of restoration into harmony with the Union, and this view was supported by the commander of the governments military forces, General Grant. However in the North, and high in the councils of the government at washington, was a strong and powerful force who was opposed to this, and who were clamoring for the arrest and the execution of every man in the South who had taken a prominent part in Secession and the

war of rebellion.

These two opposing factions in the north were at daggers points, and almost at the point of a civil war among themselves. Those favoring the policy of Lincoln, were in the majority in the government at Washington and had the good will of Grant the Supreme Military Commander. They had direct charge of the government with the power of exercising all constitutes authority.

The assasination of Lincoln by a Southern sympathiser had fired the heart of the north against the south and greatly strengthined the hands of those opposing conciliation.

The government at Washington knew this and to let it be known that Booth had escaped to the South where he

would be concealed and protected from capture would so inflame the vindictive spirit in the north against the south, that the government could not controll it, and if it should attempt to do so it might, and probably would result in the overthrow of the Constituted government at Washington, with a condition of ruthless reprisals, and distruction in the south which would forever destroy all hopes of a reunited, and homogeneous north and south.

The government at Washington well knew this. Something had to be done. To allay the vindictive spirit of the north the Southern assassinator of Lincoln must be captured and killed and the proof must be adignate. They could not bring a live man

to Washington as Booth and expose him to a public trial, and execution without the deception being found out. But they could bring a Corpse from Virginia, which a skillful undertaker had so marked as to resemble Booth, and that with the absolute powers held by the government at Washington at that time, both Civil and Military. That they could, and did secure an identification of the body as that of Booth, and which satisfied the people of the north that Booth was captured and killed.

This is just what Bentley said they did do. He also said that he remained in the army for five years after that, and had talked over the matter privately with other officers who knew the facts

in the matter the same as he did. That the identification of the body as being that of Booth was a matter of public policy, and all those taking part in it so understood it, and that it was never seen by the public.

That while he belonged to the Army he had never mentioned the matter to any one except Army officers who knew the facts as well as he did, and all of whom, the same as himself were under a military obligation to keep it secret.

That the reason the body was sunk in the quick sands of the potomac river was to prevent any possibility of the false identification ever becoming known.

Whether or not Booth was caught can be of no real interest to any one at this time. All that

stories relative to the matter can do now is to arouse immaginations, and speculations, to no profit one way or another. To discus the matter before the public is just a waste of time.

One thing is sure, the fact that the north, and even the south believed him to have been killed, removed a cause for friction, and animosity between the two sections that was of vast benifit to both, besides it lessened the cause for friction between the opposing forces in the government at Washington. itself.

Respectfully

B. J. Hurley.

1011-3rd Ave. N.E.

Ardmore. Okla.

After.....10.....days, return to

D. J. Worley.

1011-3rd Ave. N. E.

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