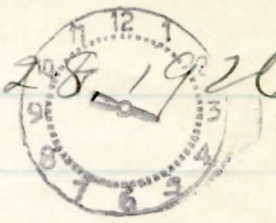
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FORD MOTOR CO
DEARBORN



MAY 1 1926

Ewing Ky. April 28. 1926

Mr F. L. Black
Dearborn Mich.

Dear Sir;-

I am returning your print of John St Helen to you. I found all I expected to find and even more. I have been investigating for twenty five years at intervals. I studied him carefully for marks of identification in order to be able to prove beyound a question of a doubt that he was Booth. As soon as I saw St Helen's picture I was sure that it was the picture of Booth. I can prove it now. If the general likeness and two marks, very distinct will prove it. You make the mistake and Shepherd makes the mistake of believing

the lies of those men that brought back the body. Their story if true would naturally cause us to believe that he was captured.

I have written the story of my investigations, and the only thing that keeps me from publishing it is the family. He had the crippled left foot and seven marks about the face and neck; I have a picture of him, but as fate would have it it only shows two marks and those not very conclusively. But the family has numerous pictures and if I can get hold of them I can show conclusively that he was Booth. I found only one difference. Booth had a disfigured right ear. My man's ear was disfigured but not so much. I discovered the blemish on the man himself first. ~~I~~ I tried to get Harper's to get behind me financially

so I could do a little more research work. But in view of the findings of Mr Shepherd they would go no further. Mr Ford is quoted as saying history is "bunk" and your Magazine purports to Chronicle neglected facts.

Booth escaped, was a sailor turned up in Texas and died in Kentucky. I am the one man in the world that can or at least is interested in establishing the fact. I would like to make some money out of what I know if possible, I would like to do it and not lose the friendship of the family. I would like to get hold of several of his pictures here in Kentucky, and several of his younger pictures and publish them along with St Helens picture calling attention to the same marks I find on all three. These together

with the story of my investigations ought to be interesting enough to sell. I have one picture but it is in another part of the state. I can send it to you in a month. I know where I can get another, but the position is not just what I need to show what I want.

He was a wonderful man. Would have made an ideal College president. He came into Kentucky tramping and was suspected from the first of being Booth, but I happened to be the only one to get interested.

I want to thank you for letting me have the print. I tried to get it from Bates fifteen years ago. If he had sent it to me I might have let him come up and see his man.

I learned from your article that Booth

had not recovered from the throat or bronchial affection which Clara E Lachlan mentioned as threatening his future on the stage. I would like to know his birthday, who his sweetheart was, where he went to school, and a few more things to complete my research. Knowing a thing like that and proving it are two different propositions. But I am at the place now where I can prove it, or else establish sufficient facts to justify no other conclusion. I suspect that you will think that I am insane but you should not for you know it is a question

Very truly yours
Bruce A. Franks