LINCOLN ASSASSINATION TESTIMONY

REPORTED BY
JAMES TANNER
APRIL 14 – 15, 1865
LINCOLN ASSASSINATION TESTIMONY.

(April 14-15, 1865.)

I, James Tanner, of the City of Washington, District of Columbia, do deposing and say that the following newspaper article, appearing in the “Washington Post” of date April 16, 1905 and found on the following page hereof, contains a true and correct account of my participation in matters connected with the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln; the original stenographic notes of the assassination testimony with longhand transcriptions thereof, referred to in said newspaper article, I attached to this document, immediately following said article.

[ ZIG-ZAG HANDWRITTEN LINE]
TANNER ALSO PRESENT
War in the Group Around the Death Bed of Lincoln.

A Romantic Sequel to the Night.

Mrs. Lincoln's Distress
The heritage center of the Union League of Philadelphia
140 South Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

www.ulheritagecenter.org
foundations@unionleague.org
(215) 587-6455

Tanner, the Man of Steel,
Once Near to Giving Away –

My name is James Tanner and I was present at the death of Abraham Lincoln.

The President had been living in a house in Washington, D.C. at the time of his assassination. He was accompanied by his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, and their son, Tad. There were also several other individuals present, including Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase, and General John A. Logan.

At about 10 p.m., on April 14, 1865, the President was shot by John Wilkes Booth. The President died the next morning at 7:22 a.m.

I was a stenographer at the time and was called in to take shorthand notes of the President's final words. I sat on one side of the President's bed and Secretary Henry Rathbone sat on the other side.

Secretary Rathbone told me to write out the President's last words. I did so and the notes were later used to prepare a sworn statement of the President's death.

I was called in by Secretary Rathbone because he knew that I could write shorthand. I had been a stenographer for a number of years and was well known in Washington, D.C.

I was also present at the funeral of the President. The funeral was held in Washington, D.C. on April 19, 1865.

I have written this account because I believe it is important to preserve the memory of the great man who led our country through its Civil War and helped to bring about the end of slavery.

I hope that this account will be of interest to others and that it will help to keep the memory of Abraham Lincoln alive.
Hon. B.A. Hay  {Hill & Judge Carter [Cartter]} \(^1\)

{Question by Judge Carter [Cartter]}

What is your name Alfred Cloughly

Where do you reside -- [illegible]

State any & all facts About 1/2 past 10 o clk

{walking with a lady in}

A man crying out gates should be lock[ed] at Lafyte [Lafayette] Square we imdtly [immediately] after I heard cry murderer stop Tf [thief] - several voices. We rushed out to the gate Before reaching it Saw a man start put spurs to his horse & start of[f] at a run pacer should judge & crowd called Stop Stop The horse was going up 15 ½ St. North

[STENOGRAPHIC NOTES]

\(^1\) {brackets} = penciled insertion
Note: Many of the blank pages in the manuscript show leakage of ink from the preceding page.
Reported by Mr. James Tanner, Ord[inance] Bureau, War Depart[ment].

Before Chief Justice Carter [Carter]

Statement of Alfred Cloughley [Cloughly]

Q. Hon B.A. Hill

What is your name?
A. Alfred Cloughley

Q. Where to you reside?
A. I am a clerk in the Second Auditors Office in this City.

Q. State any and all facts in regard to the assassination of Mr. Seward.
A. About 10 o’clock this evening I was walking with a lady in Lafayette Square. I heard some one cry out that the gates should be shut immediately after the cry of murder & stop thief [thief]. Their [there] were several voices. We rushed to the gate. Before reaching it I saw a man on horse back bending forward & putting his spurs to his horse and start off. I think the horse was a pacer. The crowd called stop thief. The horse was going up 15 ½ Street North.
2

He went up North, then I immediately went across the street & looked down to see what was the matter & cried help murder & stop thief. We then went down to Mr. Seward's house. When I got down there I saw two colored servants at the house. I enquired the difficulty. They told me that Mr. Seward was murdered. I demanded admittance & obtained it. When I got in I saw Mr. Fred Seward in the entry, bloody all over him. He was in his drawers and shirt. He didn't have any pants on but was blood all over. I enquired of him about Mr. Seward and I believe [believe] he said he thought he was dying.

Mr. Shurts of the Treasury Department and another gentleman who
was there and myself concluded to go down and get the President's body guard. I did not had not heard of the attempt upon the President at that time. My idea was to get the President's body guard to pursue the murderer. I went down and knocked on the door of the officer of the guard. He came to the door and I asked him for the body guard immediately. He said he had but two or three men in. I related to him the circumstances of the murder of Mr. Seward and he said he would tend to it and I then left. I sent Mr. Shurts up to Colonel Ingraham's office to start them out. The gentleman that was with us along with Mr. Shurts suggested that the President
should be informed of the murder. I said by all means inform the President of the assassination of Mr. Seward. After the gentlemen had left me and Mr. Shurts I asked Mr. Shurts if he had heard that the President was at Grovers [Theater]. He said he was not sure. I then suggested that he go to Col Ingrahams office and I would go to Fords Theatre to inform the President. I then rushed down F St. and when I reached 13th St. in crossing I met two gentlemen coming up on a run. Supposing that they had heard of the assassination of Mr. Seward & not supposing that the President had been assassinated I asked them if they had informed the President. I think they said
– “The President is dying” or has been shot, or some thing of the kind. From the excitement of the moment I cannot recollect which. Not understanding them I hailed them and then asked them if they had informed the President of the assassination of Mr. Seward. They then informed me that the President had been shot. Horror struck. I left them. Being there at the corner of 13th Streets and F I went down to Senator Conness of California. There I saw Senators Conness and Sumner and two or three other gentleman [gentlemen] I believe [believe] and informed them of it. It was the first they heard of it. I presume they was very much surprised and came out with me first asking me if I was sure.

Q. Who was the lady in your company when you heard the cry of murder.
A. She is a lady in the Treasury Department, Registers Office.
Q. How many men were there pursuing this fleeing man with the cry of murder or thief?

A. I should judge there was about fifteen or twenty. They appeared to be soldiers the majority of them.

Q. Where is your residence out of the City?

A. I reside at No. 444 Broadway, N.Y. City; have resided there for the last ten years, in the county and City of New York. I was appointed here a year ago last February.

Q. How near did you approach to the man on horseback?

A. Well I had not time to approach him. I should judge I was
about ten or thirteen steps from the gate and he was in the road.

Q. Did you observe what kind of horse it was?

A. I think I could recognize the horse. I think he was a kind of light brown with a light mane and the man was about the same build as I am.

Q. Where the gas lights burning?

A. Not very bright.

Q. Was that at the corner of the square?

A. It was at the corner of 15th and H streets.
Q. Was the horse a large horse?
A. He was a moderate sized horse.

Q. Are you sure you could identify that horse.
A. I think I could.

End of testimony of Mr. Cloughley. [Cloughly]
Testimony of Mr. A. M. S. Crawford.

Q. State if you please Mr. Crawford what you know of this matter.

A. I was sitting in the dress circle of Fords Theatre. Not on the upper floor but row of seats but on the upper floor. I suppose about five feet from the door of the box. My chair was close to the row of chairs in front. Captain McGowan who was with me was at my right and against the wall. This murderer came around the middle of the first scene in the 3rd act of the play of “Our American Cousin.” To pass us he had to come around me and then to pass in front of the Captain. I looked up at him four or five times. He attracted my attention. I thought first that he was intoxicated. There was a glare in [his] eye and he was a little over middling height. He had on a dark slouch hat.
a dark coat, jet black hair, dark eyes, a heavy black moustache, no whiskers and no beard. It was just at the close of the third scene as all the attention was directed to the stage. He left very suddenly and stepped into the box where the President was. I turned to Capt. McGowan intending to say something to him in reference to this man’s manner. The next instant the shot was fired. I said at once that it was in the President’s box and jumped to the door. I passed through the door and into the box. A gentleman whom I afterwards ascertained to be Major Rathbone who asked me not to allow any one to enter the box and I sent for a surgeon.

Q. Can you describe the man’s form that jumped from the box.

A. Yes sir. I saw him as he ran across the stage. I saw him as he passed
across two thirds of the stage and out between the scenes. He had then a knife in
his hands right hand. As he went through the scene he threw his knife hand behind
him & the knife was up in sight. I think I could recognise [recognize] him. I think
his face was familiar. The side of his face was towards me. It was the left side of
his face. No immediate pursuit was made on the stage, not for a moment or two.
He was dressed in ordinary business suit. He very strongly resembled the Booths.
What attracted my attention particularly was the glare in his eye. He did not say a
word that I heard. I think he shot the President with the left hand. There was a
dispatch brought to the President about 20 minutes before this occurred. I think the
name of the bearer was Hanscom [Hanscom]. He asked me where the President
was I showed him and he went in and gave it to him. He was a rather
good looking, short necked fellow about five feet eight inches high with grayish pants I think. I could identify him among a thousand if I could see him in the same position.

My residence is at No. 136 Penn. Ave. I am a Lieutenant in the V.R. Corps. End of the testimony of Mr. Crawford.

---

3 The Veterans Reserve Corps, formerly called the Invalid Corps
2/27/07  Interview with Mr. “Harry” (Wm Henry) Hawk

Jam A. Tanner

Statement of Wm Henry Hawk.

I was on the stage at the time of the firing & heard the report of the pistol. My back was towards the Presidents box at the time. I heard something tear & somebody fell & as I looked towards him he came in the direction in which I was standing & I believe to the best of my knowledge that it was John Wilkes Booth. Still I am not positive that it was him. I only had one glance at him as he was rushing towards me with a dagger & I turned and ran & after I run up a flight of stairs I turned and exclaimed “My God thats John Booth.” I am acquainted with Booth. I met him the first time a year ago. I saw him to day about one o’clock. Said I “how do you do Mr. Booth” and he says “how are you Hawk.” He was sitting on the steps

---

4 James Tanner or his son James interviewed Harry Hawk again in 1907; however, there is no known record of that interview beyond the above brief notation.
of Fords Theatre reading a letter. He had the appearance of being sober at the time. I was never intimate with him. He had no hat on when I saw him on the stage. In my own mind I do not have any doubt but that it was Booth. He made some expression when he came on the stage but I did not understand what.

End of Mr. Hawk’s testimony
Statement of James C. Ferguson

Mr. Ford came to me today about 1 or 2 o’clock & told me that my favorite, Gen. Grant was going to be present at the theatre to night & had secured a box. I went in the theatre & engaged seats 58 & 59 on the opposite side from the Presidents box. When the President came in I saw that Gen. Grant was not with him but I still kept watch of the box expecting Gen. Grant to come in knowing that if he came in he would go in the same box with the President. After the curtain went up for the 3rd act I saw Mr. Booth go to the door leading to the passage of the private box which the President occupied & try the door. In a moment afterwards I was looking with an opera glass to see who the citizen was that was with the President. I then heard the report of the pistol and saw Mrs. Lincoln catch him around the neck. I saw him throw up his
right arm at the same time I saw Booth run his hand in his side & pull a knife and run before between Mrs. Lincoln & a lady in the same box. He put his hands on the cushion of the box and threw his feet right over. As he jumped over he pulled part of a state flag off & had part of it under his feet when he fell on the stage. The very moment he struck he said exclaimed “Sic Semper Tyrannis.” As he came across the stage facing me he looked me right up in the face and it alarmed me & I pulled the lady who was with me down behind the banister. I looked right down at him & he stopped as he said “I have done it.” and shook the knife. All I know of Mr. Booth is this. I never saw him in my life untill about two or three months ago. I have often heard of Wilkes Booth. He himself told me that he was born & raised in Baltimore. He is a theatrical

---

5 “Sic Semper Tyrannis” is Latin for “Thus Always to Tyrants.” Many inaccurately attribute this quote to Marcus Junius Brutus during the assassination of Julius Caesar. According to Plutarch, Brutus either said nothing or no one heard what he said.
man by profession. I heard him say a few weeks ago that he had an estate left him in the oil regions of Penn. He played here some five or six weeks ago at the benefit of Mr. John McCollum. He came today near one or two o'clock in front of my house on a little bay horse. I think the President was shot about 10 o'clock, just as the curtain went up for the 3rd act. I do not know what became of Booth after he left the stage. There was a great excitement. I think there were many persons in the orchestra who might have caught him if they had immediately pursued him. I do not know the color of the horse. I think it was a little small bay horse. He told me where he bought the horse but I do not remember now. He says “He’s a very nice horse, he can gallop & can almost kick me in the back.” It was not a pacing horse. He started off on a lope.
I went down to Mayor Wallach and stated these things to him. Mr. Harry Hawk was on the stage at this time. The same hat which Wilkes Booth had on when I saw him today is now in charge of the police at the station house. They say they found it in the box which the President occupied.
H. B. Phillips,
Stage Manager at Fords
and an old Philadelphian

Statement of Mr. Henry B. Phillips [Phillips].

I have heard Mr. Booth repeatedly speak in favor of the South. I have heard him regret the announcement of any Union victory. Last Monday I saw him on the corner of 14th St & Penn. Ave. I was in company with some gentleman that I met at the Atty Gen’s office & we were going to take a drink & Mr. Booth met us & {I} asked him to join us & he said “yes anything to drive away the blues.” I said “What is giving you the blues?” He said this news is enough to give any body the blues” or words to that effect. I did not propose to converse with him because knowing that he had a strong southern feeling I did not want to enter into any argument with him. I was in company with three officers of the Atty Gen’s [Attorney General’s] office & I did not want him to commit himself as I have been a very dear friend of Mr Booth almost from infancy. As far as regards the cries I was in front of the house during
a portion of the two first acts. Just before the third act commenced I went to my dressing room to dress to sing a patriotic song which I had written for the occasion & which we had intended to sing to night & I was partially dressed & washing my hands when I heard the report of the pistol and a scream. I rushed down stairs in my shirt sleeves & made enquiries of the first man I met & he told me that the President had been shot & that the man jumped from the private box rushed across the stage past him & went out of the back door, jumped on a horse & galloped off & I said “Why didn’t you stop him?” He said “he had a knife drawn & I couldn’t.” Almost immediately after I heard somebody say it was Wilkes Booth. I did not see Booth in the theatre to night. When I saw him this afternoon he appeared to be perfectly sane and sober. He is of an excitable temper. I think him about 24 yrs of age. He has a slight black moustache. I saw Harry Hawk who was on the
stage at the time I crossed it as I was trying to allay the excitement. Hawk said to me “that was Wilkes Booth who rushed past me.” Said I “are you certain it was Wilkes Booth?” He said “I could say it if I was on my death bed.” A Mr. Bennet who was in the front of the house said to me “I have got the glove of the man who jumped over the box.” And I said you bring it to me & he showed it to me the glove.

Mr. Booth had his horse stabled in the rear of our theatre for some time. The man who has had charge of his horse for several days past is also missing since the shot was fired. He was seen in the theatre before the shot was fired.

About 7 o’clock this evening I was standing at the counter of the National Hotel & a man came in & threw a key upon the counter and Capt. Ferry nudged me with his elbow saying, there goes “J. Wilkes Booth.” I turned and saw his back only. Capt Ferry knows him well and can identify him.
CITY OF WASHINGTON, )
) SS.
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA)

James Tanner, being duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that the facts set forth in the foregoing account of his participation in matters connected with the assassination of Abraham Lincoln are true and correct; and further that the stenographic notes, with longhand transcriptions thereof, attached to and made a part of, are the original stenographic notes and transcriptions referred to in the newspaper articles hereinbefore set forth.

Sworn and subscribed to James Tanner [SIGNATURE]

before me this 10th day of June, A. D. 1908

W. J. Griffith [SIGNATURE]

Notary Public.
James A. Tanner,  
Attorney at Law,  
803 Bailey Building  
Philadelphia