



# Revised History

## The Diary

By Al Benson May 10th, 2022

First there was the diary, supposedly in all its pristine completeness. Second, there were the missing 18 pages from this not-so-pristine diary. And third, there was the Secretary of War, Edwin McMasters Stanton, who was accused of removing the missing 18 pages because they contained damning evidence of who was really behind the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

In going through the books in my research library (many of which I am not going to be able to keep) I came across one I must have read some time ago and forgotten about. It was written by a John Cottrell and titled *Anatomy of an Assassination*. I obviously read it because lots of stuff is underlined.

Cottrell has one chapter in which he listed 11 reasons why Edwin Stanton could have been suspected of having to do with Lincoln's assassination. He concluded that there was no direct evidence to pin this rap on Stanton but there was lots of circumstantial evidence that pointed to it.

One thing was Booth's diary. Cottrell noted: "That Stanton suppressed the evidence of Booth's diary and removed pages which may have indicated who really master-minded the assassination." This was one of the contentions that made Stanton seem to have had a hand in the assassination. Cottrell said: "Booth's diary, indicating that kidnapping and not murder was the original intent of the conspirators, was the most astounding omission in the evidence presented at the conspiracy trial. For two years the diary was locked up in the War Office archives and might have remained there if (Lafayette) Baker had not recalled its existence in his *History of the United States Secret Service*, published in 1867." It seems that Stanton was more than happy to have the diary buried and forgotten.

Ahh, but there was more. Cottrell observed that: "Another bombshell was dropped when Baker stated under oath that the diary had been mutilated since it was taken from Booth's body. He claimed that eighteen pages had been cut out, pages dated prior to the time of Lincoln's death, and he recalled having seen a pencil sketch of a house on one page—now missing, On the other hand, Stanton testified that the diary was without these pages when he first saw it... So it was Baker's word against Stanton's. When Baker was recalled, he further embarrassed the War Secretary by revealing that some of his detectives had made copies of the diary, but they had been ordered to hand them over to Stanton. He reaffirmed that no pages were missing when he first saw the diary." It seems to be a case of which liar do you want to believe?

Cottrell asked the question— "Why then was the diary suppressed at the trial? The most obvious explanation is that it contributed nothing toward the prosecution's case; rather it provided an impediment." I can imagine if the diary spoke only of kidnapping Lincoln and not of assassinating him, that might have been somewhat of an impediment to their case. On the other hand, if it did contain the names of those Northerners who wanted to remove Lincoln by whatever means necessary, that would have been quite an impediment to the case against the conspirators that the government had planned to hang for the crime.

Sounds as if Stanton may have been operating his own version of Biden's new "ministry of truth." doesn't it?