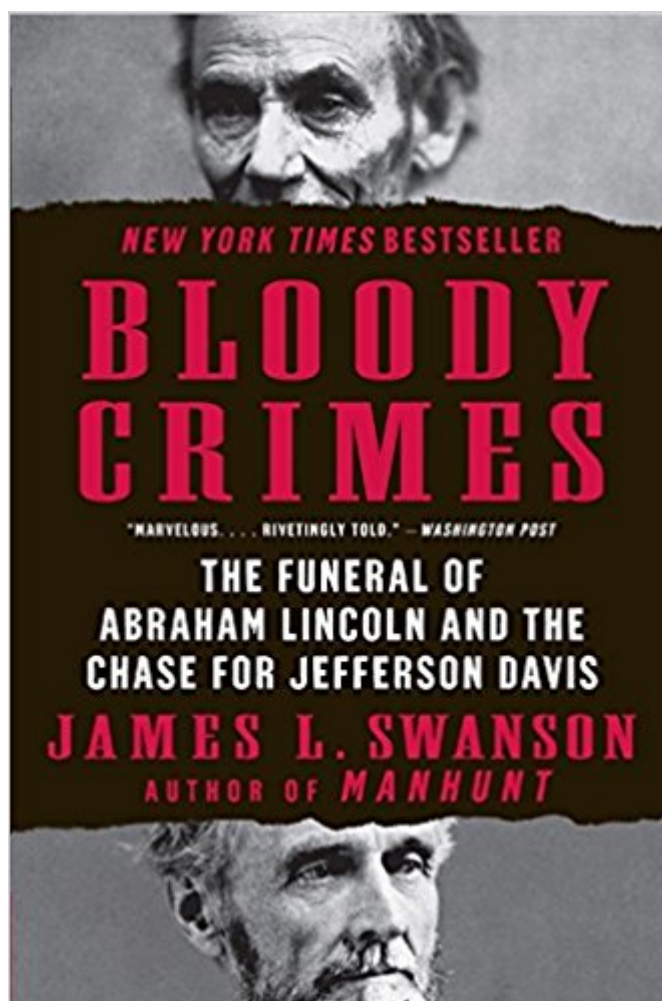


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# Bloody Crimes: The Funeral Of Abraham Lincoln And The Chase For Jefferson Davis



## Synopsis

In *Bloody Crimes*, James L. Swanson—the Edgar Award-winning, New York Times bestselling author of *Manhunt*—brings to life two epic events of the Civil War era: the thrilling chase to apprehend Confederate president Jefferson Davis in the wake of the Lincoln assassination and the momentous 20-day funeral that took Abraham Lincoln's body home to Springfield. A true tale full of fascinating twists and turns, and lavishly illustrated with dozens of rare historical images—some never before seen—*Bloody Crimes* is a fascinating companion to Swanson's *Manhunt* and a riveting true-crime thriller that will electrify civil war buffs, general readers, and everyone in between.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Best Books of the Month, October 2010: It's April 1865 and General Lee's troops have officially surrendered. Abraham Lincoln, looking forward to rebuilding the nation, celebrates with an evening's last alive at the theater. On the other side of the Mason-Dixon Line Jefferson Davis plans to move the Confederate government to North Carolina, away from Union troops that have captured Richmond. Under much different circumstances, both men embark on a dramatic final journey depicted by James L. Swanson in *Bloody Crimes*, a gripping account of the weeks following Lincoln's death and the end of the Civil War. While arguments erupted about where and how Lincoln's burial should take place, Jefferson Davis—refusing to let the South succumb—attempted to rally his people despite being hunted by Northern troops who suspected his involvement in Lincoln's assassination. Using relics and key

documents of the day, Swanson juxtaposes the travels of Davis and Lincoln, weaving a fast-paced narrative that lures readers in from the get-go. We know that eventually Lincoln makes it to his final resting place and Davis is captured, but along the way it's hard not to wonder if these two heroic leaders were more similar than perhaps anyone would have guessed. Whether read as a companion to *Manhunt* or on its own, *Bloody Crimes* is the next great Civil War-era read worthy of the recognition that Lincoln once said we should all strive for. --Jessica Schein Exclusive: James L. Swanson on Writing *Bloody Crimes*

I wrote *Bloody Crimes* as a way of answering a question many *Manhunt* readers asked: "What happened next?" In *Manhunt* I told just one of the three incredible stories that unfolded at the climax of the Civil War. I could only hint at the strange and amazing things that happened to Lincoln's body after he died, and I could do no more than allude to Jefferson Davis's dramatic flight from Richmond and his six week odyssey to save the Confederacy. So it would be correct to say that *Bloody Crimes* is a sequel to *Manhunt*. Since I was a child, I've been fascinated by the Lincoln funeral train, and I debated whether to write a book about that story alone. It is hard for a modern reader to comprehend how much Lincoln's death, the White House funeral, the Pennsylvania Avenue procession, and the president's sojourn home to Illinois influenced America. Imagine the death of President Kennedy and intensify by several degrees the emotions it released. As I researched the Lincoln funeral pageant, I began thinking about another president on his great journey. As I studied Davis, I realized that he is one of the "Lost Men" of American history. Today we know so little about him. To my great surprise, he and Lincoln had much in common. Some of their shared experiences were stunning, even profound. And in April 1865, both presidents left their White Houses, took to the field, and sought to rally their armies at the climax of the war. Combining the final journeys of Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis into one book presented several challenges. I needed to return to the assassination, but I did not want to repeat material from *Manhunt*. I solved that problem by, like a film director, shifting the camera and pointing it in a different direction. In *Manhunt*, my camera captured every moment of action inside Ford's Theatre. In *Bloody Crimes*, that camera never sets foot inside Ford's, but instead takes position inside the Petersen House, capturing the assassination through fresh eyes, those of the boarders who lived there and the visitors who descended upon it. In *Manhunt*, once Lincoln was dead, he ceased to be a principal character in the book. In *Bloody Crimes*, though Lincoln is dead, he remains a vital character until the end. One of the pleasures of writing the book was meeting the splendid cast of characters who played significant roles in the death pageant,

including the larger-than-life Commissioner of Public Buildings in Washington, D.C., Benjamin Brown French, who kept an amazing diary. Another great pleasure was experiencing the final journey of Jefferson Davis through the firsthand accounts of his inner circle, cabinet members, young female loyalists, and his family, especially Davis's wife Varina. The love letters they exchanged during his darkest days go unread today, but they are as moving as the correspondence of John and Abigail Adams. I cannot write a book without holding in my hand the original sources—Civil War newspapers, documents, photos, and artifacts—and I must visit the sites where history happened. Through these objects and places, I travel back in time and, I hope, take my readers with me. Many of the places I visited while writing *Bloody Crimes* still haunt me: The Confederate White House, where toys still lie upon the floor, as if the Davis children will return momentarily to continue their play; the East Room of Lincoln's White House, site of his majestic funeral; the cemetery vault in Georgetown, where Abraham Lincoln's dead son Willie waited for his father to claim him and bring him home to Illinois; and the graves of Jefferson Davis and his family at Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond. Indeed, shortly before the publication of *Bloody Crimes*, I visited the grave of Jefferson Davis. A powerful storm had twisted and torn from the ground a mighty oak tree that had, for the past century, offered shade to Davis's grave and bronze statue. Had the massive tree fallen in a slightly different direction, it would have smashed the gravestone and toppled Jefferson Davis from his pedestal. The final journeys of Lincoln and Davis, each a martyr to his cause, tell the stories of two men, two peoples, and two nations during the most thrilling days in American history. Their dual stories form an American epic, a kind of American Iliad, that made our history, and that continues to influence it to this day. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The disparate fates of contending presidents make an odd juxtaposition in this ungainly history of the Civil War's last gasps. Swanson recounts the April 1865 odyssey of Abraham Lincoln's funeral train as it wound through the North, intercutting it with Jefferson Davis's flight south from Richmond through a disintegrating Confederacy. The intertwined narratives lack the drama of the John Wilkes Booth saga Swanson told in his bestselling *Manhunt*. Lincoln's progress is a vividly described but lugubrious study in Victorian pomp, with giant hearses, trackside bonfires, choruses of white-robed young women, and huge crowds filing past the slow-moldering corpse. Davis's journey is a deluded, lackadaisical picaresque as he tries and fails to rally demoralized Southerners--his own cavalry escort pillaged the accompanying treasury wagons--until his anticlimactic capture by Union forces. Swanson works hard to make Davis a noble (no, he was not captured wearing his wife's dress, just

her shawl) worthy of the Dixie-wide memorial procession with which the book closes. But Davis's story is incomparably less resonant than the martyred Lincoln's; in Swanson's best sections, outpourings of grief--Lincoln's own and those of his mourners--make for a moving evocation of wartime loss. B&w photos. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I think you will love this book. If history is what you want and Lincoln and the Civil War are your passions, then James Swanson has brought to life a period that is central to the American story. I have always found it amazing that some authors can take extraordinary historical events and make them as boring as watching wet paint dry, while others can put you right into the event. You feel you are there, and you can't put the book down until you are finished. This is what *Bloody Crimes* does for you. When Swanson is done, you will understand the Civil War, and you will understand not just Lincoln but his counterpart, Jefferson Davis the President of the Confederacy. Davis was a man who many felt was destined to be President of the United States, West Point educated, an innovator who changed the army with his concepts of command and control before leaving for his position in the South. In the early days of April 1865 word came to Lincoln that the North was ready to invade Richmond, Virginia, it had never happened before in four long years of fighting. President Davis was informed that you have to get out of Richmond, and get out now. Davis knew there were still things he had to do would take another 24 hours, but he instructed his wife to get ready to leave within hours. As she was leaving she embraced him. He told her, if I live, you can comfort me when the struggle is ended, and then realizing how dire the situation was, he told her, I do not expect to survive the destruction of the constitutional liberty. The poignancy of the departure is striking. Even though most readers are dedicated to Lincoln and the sacredness of his mission, the author is able to get you into both corners sympathizing with both sides. If one reads serious history, then you realize that true history may not be as it is portrayed in the history books. History is written by the victors, and so the losers are relegated to being bad guys no matter what the real story is. In this book some of the amazing things you will learn include: \* On April 4th, 1865 a week before his death, Lincoln is getting ready to enter Richmond himself and he thinks to himself, that thank God, he has lived to see the end to this horrid dream for four years, and now the nightmare is gone.\* In the midst of this horror show Lincoln talks about a man who came to visit him, and asked for an ambassadorship. Lincoln told him he could not accommodate him. He then asked to become a minister somewhere; Lincoln could not help him out. Well what about a civil service job - can't do it. The man left after Lincoln gave him a pair of trousers. Even amongst the pain and horror of the

war, Lincoln kept his sense of humor.\* Richmond has been taken, the city severely damaged, burned and looted. Lincoln accompanied by just a dozen soldiers takes a small boat to Richmond. Getting off the boat he quickly is seen by a handful of former slaves. The group enlarges within seconds, and they kneel down to him, grabbing his pants leg. Lincoln looks at them and tells them, not to kneel down to him, that is not right. Kneel only to God. He Lincoln, is only God's instrument, but they may rest assured that as long as he lives, no one shall put a shackle on their limbs, and they shall have the rights that God has given to every other free man, and citizen of the Republic.\*

Jefferson Davis was a former Secretary of War in the American government. Learned, educated, the possessor of a vast library, he revered George Washington and the founding fathers. He was an able and elegant statesman. His library numbered books in the thousands, and Davis had studied every one of them.\* Lincoln meanwhile couldn't afford books, so he read the same books narrowly, and deeply. He had read Shakespeare, the Bible, politics and history, until he had thoroughly absorbed their contents and could quote from them verbatim.\* Lincoln knew he was not a perfect man, but thought that George Washington and Henry Clay were. He also felt that if Washington was not perfect, it was better if we thought of him that way. This allowed Lincoln to staff his government with super stars who were not perfect but thought of themselves as such. Lincoln found he could understand and deal with such men.\* Davis however could not deal with men who were not perfect. He could not abide men who failed to live up to the standards he set for himself. This would be his downfall.\* Lincoln dies, and it is a 1600 mile trip to Springfield. The detailed and sad events of the circumstances surrounding the hours it took Lincoln to die, the events, the chase, the mourning, it's all here in detail, and very well written.\* One million Americans viewed the open casket, and another 3 million Americans stood at the railroad sidings to see a man who would become immortal in history. Davis on the other hand travels throughout the South with a \$100,000 bounty on his head. This book and this author have it all. The event is a game changer. The Civil War changes everything. It addresses the one issue that the founding fathers knew they could not address. The founding of the Republic had to include slavery or the Southern states would not join the United States. It was left to Lincoln to end slavery and begin the second founding of the United States with his election, and his actions. This will ultimately make him the second greatest President in American history after the founder George Washington. Doris Kearns Goodwin a masterful historian in her own right returns the favor and calls Swanson a "master storyteller". Prominent historian Douglas Brinkley says that Swanson now "emerges as one of America's greatest historians." I couldn't put the book down, and neither will you. Compelling history, our history, wars, battles, assassination, chases, ceremony, euphoria, sadness, and depression, it is all here, and told as well

as it can be told. Give yourself a chance to relish a history told in a way that has never been told before. It is an exquisite book of hope, and reverence. Enjoy it, and thank you for reading this review. Richard C. Stoyeck

It's hard to write anything new after 87 previous reviews, but I do have a few observations to make. James Swanson has written a follow-up to his previous outstanding book entitled *Manhunt*. This latest effort entitled *Bloody Crimes* provides us with details of the story that have often been neglected following Lincoln's assassination. We know the fate of Lincoln's killer and several of the conspirators, but I learned several details that were previously unknown to me. I was aware that Lincoln's body was returned to Springfield, Illinois, via train, but I didn't realize the round-about route it took during its eighteen day trip. Stops were made at Baltimore, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, New York City, Albany, Buffalo, Cleveland, Chicago, and other minor cities en route to Springfield. Each city wanted to celebrate the life of President Abraham Lincoln, and it was a challenge for the mortician to preserve Lincoln's corpse throughout this period of time. Lincoln's deceased son Willie also made the trip, and was buried with Lincoln. Lincoln's wife, Mary, remained in Washington, D.C. rather than make the trip. She refused to leave the White House for over one month before President Johnson could take occupancy. She spent the remainder of her life a very unhappy woman. This is also the story of Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, and his flight from Richmond, Virginia, to avoid capture. Davis was being implicated in the plot to murder Lincoln even though he had nothing to do with it. He realized the North would be less sympathetic to the South under Johnson than Lincoln. Davis wanted to continue the Civil War, and was upset with Lee's surrender at Appomattox. Davis was eventually captured and spent over two years in a prison at Fort Monroe, Virginia. The South was rightfully upset when Union soldiers referred to their President insultingly as "Jeffy", and told lies about him trying to disguise himself as a woman to escape from his captors. Edwin Stanton could see this was not true when he saw the clothing worn by Davis when captured. In order to perpetuate the lie Stanton refused to sell the clothing to P. T. Barnum, because people would then see the truth behind the lie. Upon his eventual release there was controversy over what to do with him. It turned out the man who campaigned to divide the nation and gave orders to fight and kill Union soldiers was never tried. Jefferson Davis died in December of 1889 outliving Lincoln by twenty-four years. If you have read Swanson's previous book entitled *Manhunt* his latest effort *Bloody Crimes* tells us the rest of the story following the first assassination of an American president. This is a very well written book, and I'm pleased to see that the author has also written a companion volume entitled *Bloody Times* for younger readers.

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