



Bloody Crimes

By James L. Swanson
ISBN: 9780061233784

Introduction

As the Yankees approached Richmond on April 2, 1865, Jefferson Davis fled the capital, setting off an intense and thrilling chase in which Union cavalry hunted the Confederate president. Two weeks later, President Lincoln was assassinated, and the nation was convinced that Davis was involved in the crime. Preparing for the largest and most magnificent funeral pageant in American history, soldiers placed Lincoln's corpse aboard a special train to Springfield, Illinois. Along the way, several million mourners watched the funeral train roll by.

The saga that began with *Manhunt* continues as James Swanson masterfully weaves together the stories of the two fallen leaders as they make their final journeys through the bloody landscape of a wounded nation

Questions for Discussion

1. Robert E. Lee is remembered by many today, in the North and the South, as a great and celebrated American hero. Jefferson Davis less so. Why is that? Both men had once sworn loyalty to the Union. Both were responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of their fellow Americans. Both fought to defend the freedom of a new nation tainted by slavery. In the sweepstakes of historical memory, why is Lee considered to be a winner and Davis is a loser?
2. Why, in this 150th anniversary year of the Civil War, have commemorations and celebrations of it become so controversial?
3. What are the greatest similarities between Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis? The greatest differences?
4. In 1860, who, on paper, possessed more qualifications to serve as a president of the United States, Lincoln or Davis?
5. Should Jefferson Davis have been tried for treason after the Civil War?
6. Has any other event in American history rival led the emotional intensity of Abraham Lincoln's funeral events?
7. Why is Jefferson Davis the "Forgotten Man" of American history?
8. Did the Civil War really ever end?

About the Author

James L. Swanson is the Edgar Award-winning author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Manhunt: The 12-Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer*. In 2009 in *Newsweek* magazine, Patricia Cornwell named Swanson's *Manhunt* and Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* as the two best nonfiction crime books ever.