

JEFF. DAVIS AND THE ASSASSINATION.

A Curious Statement—Interview Between Jeff. Davis and Booth—Jeff. Disapproves of the Assassination.

A man signing himself John B. Van Dusen writes from Fort Wayne, Indiana, under date of July 14th, a very curious letter to the Cincinnati Commercial, in which he gives an account of an alleged interview between Booth and Jeff. Davis. The thing looks very much like a canard but if true is of the very greatest importance. Immediate measures should be taken to discover the identity of the writer, his credibility, and the extent to which other facts substantiate his statement.

We subjoin the important part of his statement. After giving some incidents in his early career, and explaining how he came to be a clerk in the rebel War Department, he continues:

But I am still digressing. My duties in the war department were light, they consisting principally in indorsing, in red ink, and filing in appropriate places, all papers belonging to the confederate secret service. And I must here state that no documents were ever received, from parties in the North, with reference to the assassination of Mr. Lincoln. Many were, however, received from parties in the South, offering to capture or assassinate Mr. Lincoln, for certain sums of money. Such propositions, however, never received the least attention, but were universally passed over, without official notice; and none of them were ever replied to. And, from a conversation at which I was present, which occurred in the war department office, between president Davis, secretary Benjamin and Mr. Breckinridge, on the one part, and two strangers, together with a man named and introduced as Booth, on the other part, I am satisfied that neither Davis nor Breckinridge were in favor of the least personal injury being done to Mr. Lincoln, but, on the contrary, strenuously opposed any movement in that direction.

The gentleman above referred to as being called Booth was brought into the war office in company with the other two strangers, by president Davis and secretary Benjamin. Mr. Booth was introduced to Mr. Breckinridge by Secretary Benjamin. The other two men were not introduced, and took seats at the further end of the room, without taking part in the conversation that ensued, except that when they retired, they said, "Good-bye, gentlemen," to those who remained.

Booth commenced by saying that a plan was formed, by parties in the Northern States and Canada, friends of the confederacy, to capture or assassinate Mr. Lincoln; that he had a full list of the names, and all they desired was an official recognition on the part of the confederate authorities, and that then the project would certainly be executed. He further stated that they desired no pecuniary assistance from the Government, as that was already secured; that they were not after gain, but were actuated only by a desire to render the confederacy a service, by removing the tyrant who was the cause of so much suffering to the country and the only obstacle in the way of a speedy peace. These are the words, as near as I can now remember. Messrs. Davis and Breckinridge both expressed their hearty condemnation of the plot, and advised Booth to think no more of it. That they felt that their cause was just, and that God, in His own good time, would give them the victory, without resorting to any thing but the most honorable warfare, and that they were willing to leave Lincoln's punishment, for his great crime, to the providence of a just God and an outraged people. Benjamin said nothing. Booth retired, and the last words he uttered in the room were, "He must die!" After Booth and his friends were gone, Davis said, "These fellows came here merely to see the Richmond sights, and their assassination plot is mere 'fudge.'" Breckinridge and Benjamin laughed, and the latter said, "I think so." The matter received no more attention and all agreed with Mr. Davis, that the plot was mere "fudge." I am satisfied that none of them ever expected what has since become a dread reality. In conclusion, let me say that I am willing to be qualified to the above statement of facts. Truly, yours,

JOHN B. VAN DUSEN.