



# Lincoln's Avengers: Justice, Revenge, and Reunion after the Civil War

*Elizabeth D. Leonard*

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**Did the federal government mete out justice or revenge in response to Lincoln's assassination?**

On April 14, 1865, Abraham Lincoln was murdered by John Wilkes Booth, and Secretary of State William H. Seward was brutally stabbed. Clearly a conspiracy was afoot. Judge Advocate General Joseph Holt was put in charge of the investigation and trial. He first set out to punish all of Booth's accomplices and then wanted to go after Jefferson Davis, whom he felt had instigated the assassination?despite stern opposition, not least of all from Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson. Elizabeth D. Leonard tells for the first time the full story of the two assassination trials. She explores the questions that made these trials pivotal in American history: Were they to be used to make the South pay for secession? Were they to be fair trials based on the evidence? Or were they to be points of reconciliation, with the South forgiven at all costs to create a solid union? 36 illustrations.

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