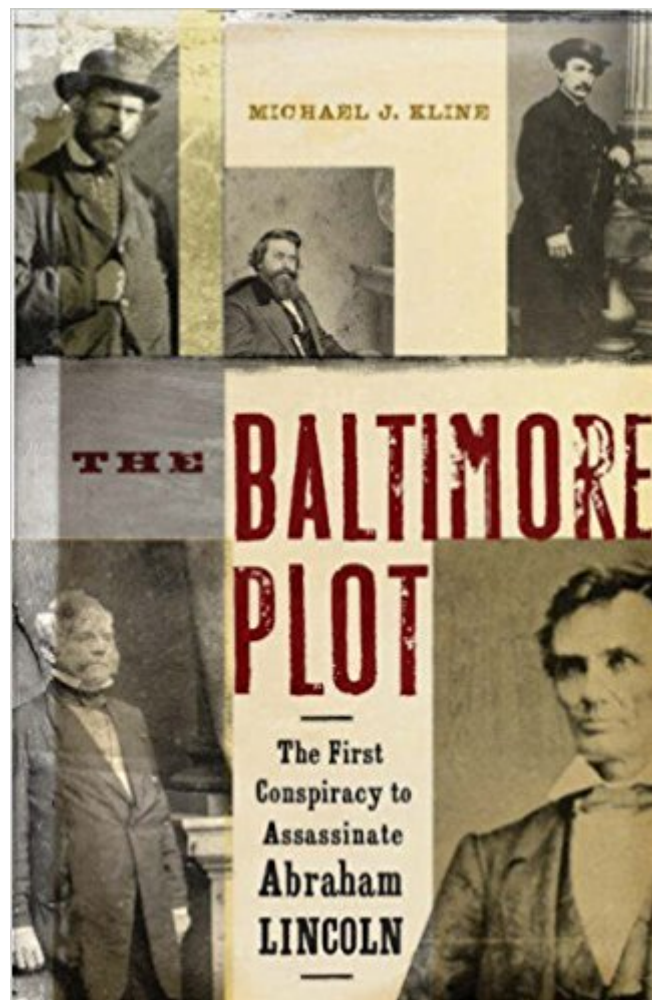




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# The Baltimore Plot: The First Conspiracy To Assassinate Abraham Lincoln



## Synopsis

"In a thrilling detective story of conspiracy, treachery and assassination, Michael J. Kline suggests how close the Baltimore plotters came to achieving their goal, and reveals how Lincoln and a few guards outwitted them. Meticulously researched and written with verve, "The Baltimore Plot" takes readers aboard Lincoln's inaugural train for a perilous and unforgettable journey." —James L. Swanson, author of the Edgar Award-winning New York Times bestseller *Manhunt: The 12-Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer*

On February 11, 1861, the "Lincoln Special" - Abraham Lincoln's private train — began its journey from Springfield, Illinois, to the City of Washington, carrying the president-elect to his inauguration as the sixteenth president of the United States. Considered a "sectional candidate" by the South, and winning the election without the popular vote, Lincoln was so despised that seven states immediately seceded from the Union. Over the next twelve days, Lincoln would speak at numerous stops, including Indianapolis, Columbus, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Albany, New York, and Philadelphia, expressing his desire to maintain the Union. But as Lincoln made his way east, America's first private detective, Allan Pinkerton, and a separate undercover operation by New York City detectives, uncovered startling evidence of a conspiracy to assassinate Lincoln during his next-to-last stop in Baltimore. Long a site of civil unrest — even Robert E. Lee's father, Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee, was nearly beaten to death in its streets — Baltimore provided the perfect environment for a strike. The largest city of a border state with secessionist sympathies, Baltimore had been infiltrated by paramilitary groups bent on killing Lincoln, the "Black Republican." The death of the president-elect would, it was supposed, throw the nation into chaos and allow the South to establish a new nation and claim Washington as its capital. Warned in time, Lincoln outfoxed the alleged conspirators by slipping through Baltimore undetected, but at a steep price. Ridiculed by the press for "cowardice" and the fact that no conspirators were charged, Lincoln would never hide from the public again. Four years later, when he sat unprotected in the balcony of Ford's Theatre, the string of conspiracies against his life finally succeeded. One of the great presidential mysteries and long a source of fascination among Lincoln scholars, the Baltimore Plot has never been fully investigated until now. In *The Baltimore Plot: The First Conspiracy to Assassinate Abraham Lincoln*, Michael J. Kline turns his legal expertise to evaluating primary sources in order to discover the extent of the conspiracy and culpability of the many suspects surrounding the case. Full of memorable characters, including Kate Warne, the first female undercover agent, and intriguing plot twists, the story is written as an unfolding criminal proceeding in which the author allows the reader to determine whether there was a true plot to kill Lincoln and if the perpetrators could have been brought to trial.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Was evidence of a plot to murder Abraham Lincoln as he traveled through Baltimore en route to his 1861 inauguration genuine, or was it a product of detective Allan Pinkerton's imagination? Historians have been divided on the issue, but to author Kline, a lawyer by occupation, a conspiracy case based on circumstantial evidence can be made, and he makes it in exacting but fascinating detail. For dramatic support to his legal briefs, Kline recounts Lincoln's train journey, climaxing in a scene in which Lincoln must decide whether to credit Pinkerton's report of having infiltrated a conspiracy and to heed Pinkerton's counsel to alter his travel schedule through Baltimore, then a secessionist hotbed with a reputation for mob violence. It was a second, independent source of intelligence that convinced Lincoln to accede to Pinkerton, which also buttresses Kline's conviction that the plot was real. Gathering inculpatory information, arguing its probative value, and re-creating the tension of the secession crisis, Kline will absorb Lincoln readers with his thorough presentation of Lincoln's surreptitious arrival in Washington, which Lincoln himself subsequently regretted. --Gilbert Taylor

"In a thrilling detective story of conspiracy, treachery and assassination, Michael J. Kline suggests how close the Baltimore plotters came to achieving their goal, and reveals how Lincoln and a few guards outwitted them. Meticulously researched and written with verve, *The Baltimore Plot* takes readers aboard Lincoln's inaugural train for a perilous and unforgettable journey."--JAMES L. SWANSON, author of the Edgar Award-winning New York Times bestseller *Manhunt: The 12-Day*

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LINCOLN MICHAEL J. KLINE WEST HOLME PUBLISHING, 2008 HARD COVER, \$29.95, 520

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NOTES Baltimore's identification with secession was well known. Just 2,294 of the city's voters-2.5% of the total vote-cast their votes for Abraham Lincoln in the November, 1860 presidential election. Instead, 46% of Baltimore's voters had supported John Breckinridge, the South's Democratic Party candidate while John Bell, of the Constitutional Union Party (hastily formed in May, 1860 at Baltimore's First Presbyterian Church) had claimed 45% of the vote, and the Union Democratic Party candidate, Stephen Douglas, claimed 6.5% of the vote. Baltimore's proximity to Washington D.C. established the city's importance to the Union. Almost all railroad and telegraph traffic between Washington D.C. and points north passed through Baltimore. The city was a transportation and communication hub but had no thru traffic because of where the many railroad depots were physically located. As Southern states cascaded into secession and formed the Confederate States of America during the winter of 1860 and early spring, 1861, Baltimore's primary market was disrupted and the city's economy fell into bankruptcy and mass unemployment. Pro-Union and larger pro-secession rallies vied with the Workingmen's Aid Association for the attention of the unemployed before Lincoln had even departed Illinois to assume the presidency. It was in this background, that Lincoln received a letter threatening him with assassination in Baltimore while on his trip to Washington D.C. Samuel Felton, president of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad, on which Lincoln was to ride to Baltimore, had heard of the plot and hired Alan Pinkerton, a detective already working for him, to investigate. Due to the railroads terminating in depots scattered around the city, two of these, the Calvert Street Station and the Bolton Street Station, were in the northern part of the city. The President Street Station, the terminal for Felton's railroad, lay on the eastern side of the harbor, while the Camden Station, depot for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company and the only link to Washington D.C., lay on the western side of the harbor. Everyone traveling from Pennsylvania through Baltimore to Washington D.C. had to get off the train at one of the three depots and then travel by foot or streetcar to the Camden Street Station. Lincoln himself did so on the night of 22 February 1861. In disguise in the middle of the night, President-elect Lincoln traveled in a closed, horse-drawn streetcar from the President Street Station to the Camden Street Station, doing so against the advice of his military advisors. THE BALTIMORE PLOT: THE FIRST CONSPIRACY TO ASSASSINATE ABRAHAM LINCOLN is a lively, gutsy, and

provocative book. This book crackles with drama and its characters are fresh and human. Written with an attention to detail, author Michael J. Kline has penned an absolute masterpiece of detection and reconstruction. This is historical sleuthing at its finest. Lt. Colonel Robert A. Lynn, Florida Guard Orlando, Florida

With his eventual assassination at Ford's theater in 1865, most people may not know of the very first plot to kill Abraham Lincoln. It was actually hatched by southern sympathizers in 1860. The plan to murder him as he changed trains in Baltimore, a lawless city filled with southern spies and thugs who hated Lincoln. Luckily for old Abe the plot was uncovered by union agents and Detective Allen Pinkerton. The book details all the tactics used to assure his safe arrival in Washington. A must have for any Lincoln buff on the look out for new information on the life of Lincoln.

I am not certain which book Mister Durney was reading, but I have a hard time believing it was "The Baltimore Plot." I found the book fascinating and exactly what Michael Kline said it was - - an in-depth investigative look at circumstantial evidence surrounding the possibility of a plot. I am a former Federal Agent, and I found Kline's methodology interesting and thorough. He admits that it is circumstantial as there are no witnesses to interview, and written documents differ and contradict. His presentation kept my attention and I learned much from the text. What Kline did was very much like what is done in the intelligence community today when analyzing bits and pieces of unsubstantiated data from sources of varying reliability. Other than going back in time, as I'm certain Kline (and I) would love to do, his analysis is as good as it gets. I personally agree with his conclusion that there is a high probability of a plot, and recommend the book to anyone interested in Lincoln, the causes and political machinations of the Civil War, or anyone who wants to view an excellent word picture of those turbulent times.

Glad to find this book to add to my civil war library. With the threats against him before being inaugurated, it was a miracle that Abraham Lincoln survived to lead us through the civil war. Important case study.

I haven't finished this book yet, I pick at it here and there. I thought it would be better, but it's not terribly well written. After looking at the author bio, being written by a lawyer pretty much explained why. The writing is difficult to follow at times. The story is good, and worth reading, but the book overall is just okay.

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