

Official Description of John Wilkes Booth's wounds:

The following excerpt is from *The Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion. (1861-65.)* Part 1, Volume 2, p. 452. It contains a description of the mortal wound to J. W. B., killed on April 26th, 1865. It indicates the nature of the wound to the throat of Booth, as the deceased assassin was officially identified.

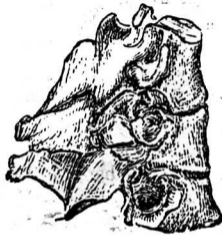


FIG. 205.—Third, fourth, and fifth cervical vertebræ, showing gunshot fracture of the fourth and fifth. *Spec.* 4086, Sect. I, A. M. M.

CASE.—J. W. B——, was killed on April 26th, 1865, by a conoidal pistol ball, fired at the distance of a few yards, from a cavalry revolver. The missile perforated the base of the right lamina of the fourth cervical vertebra, fracturing it longitudinally and separating it by a fissure from the spinous process, at the same time fracturing the fifth vertebra through its pedicle, and involving that transverse process. The projectile then traversed the spinal canal almost horizontally, but with a slight inclination downward and backward, perforating the cord, which was found much torn and discolored by blood. (See *Specimen* 4087, Sect. I, A. M. M.) The ball then shattered the bases of the left fourth and fifth laminae, driving bony fragments among the muscles, and made its exit at the left side of the neck, nearly opposite the point of entrance. It avoided the large cervical vessels and the filaments of the second and third cervical nerves. These facts were determined at the autopsy, which was made on April 28th. Immediately after the reception of the injury, there was very general paralysis. The phrenic nerves performed their functions; but the respiration was diaphragmatic, of course, and labored and slow. Deglutition was impracticable, and one or two attempts at articulation were unintelligible. Death, from asphyxia, took place about two hours after the reception of injury.