

## Quotations from John Wilkes Booth

I must have fame, fame, fame!

Madame I am Pondofio Pet—Pedofio Pat—Pantuchio Ped—Dammit! Who am I?

I don't know, and I don't care!

He was a brave old man; his heart must have broken when he felt himself deserted.

You all feel the fire now raging in the nation's heart. It is a fire lighted and fanned by Northern fanaticism. A fire which naught but blood & justice can extinguish. I tell you the Abolitionist doctrine is the fire which, if allowed to rage, will consume the house and crush us all beneath its ruins...Fierce Civil War will follow. And then, what then? *Why God alone can tell the rest.*

I promised Mother I would keep out of the quarrel, if possible, and am sorry that I said so.

Is this not a democratic city?

My goose does indeed hang high (long may she wave), I have picked up on an average this season over \$650 per week. My first week here paid me near \$900. And this week has opened even better.

I wish the President and the whole damned government would go to hell.

Never, if you value your life, never speak in that way again of a man and a cause I hold sacred!

If it were not for mother I would not enter Edwin's house. But she will leave there if I cannot be welcomed, and I do not want her to be unhappy because of me.

I would never darken Clarke's door, but for you.

It is the unwise move this country has yet made. The suave pressing of hordes of ignorant foreigners, buying up citizens before they land, to swell their armies. The time will come...when the braggart North will groan at not being able to swear they fought the South man to man. If the North conquers us it will be by numbers only, not by native grit, not pluck, and not by devotion!

So help me Holy God! My soul, life, and possessions are for the South.

I have only an army to give; my brains are worth twenty men, my money worth a hundred. I have free pass everywhere. My profession, my name is my passport. My beloved precious money—oh, never beloved till now!—is the means, one of the means, by which I serve the South.

What are actors, anyway? Mummies of the quality of skimmed milk. They know little, think less, and understand next to nothing.

In 1865, when Lincoln shall be king...No, by God's mercy, never that! This man's appearance, his pedigree, his coarse low jokes and anecdotes, his vulgar similes, and his policy are a disgrace to the seat he holds. Other brains rule the country. He is made the tool of the North to crush out, or try to crush out, slavery by robbery, rape, slaughter, and bought armies. He is Bonaparte in

one great move, that is, by overturning this blind Republic and making himself a king. This man's reelection, I tell you will be a reign!...You'll see, you'll see, that reelection means succession. His kin and friends are in every place of office already.

This country was formed for the *white* and not the black man. I have lived among it most of my life and have seen *less* harsh treatment from Master to Slave than I have beheld in the north from father to son.

My love (as things stand today) is for the South alone. Nor do I deem it a dishonor in attempting to make for her a prisoner of this man, to whom she owes so much of misery.

A Confederate doing duty *upon his own responsibility*. J. Wilkes Booth

Dearest beloved Mother...I have always endeavored to be a good and dutiful son. And even now would wish to die sooner than give you pain. But dearest Mother, though I owe you all, *there* is another duty. A noble duty for the sake of liberty and humanity due my Country. For four years I have lived a *slave* in the north (a favored slave it's true, but no less hateful to me on that account). Not daring to express my thoughts or sentiments, even in my own home. Constantly hearing every principle, dear to my heart, denounced as treasonable....Should the last bolt strike your son, dear Mother, bear it patiently. And think at the best life is but short, and *not at all times happy*. My Brothers and Sisters (Heaven protect them) will add my love and duty to their own, and watch you with care and kindness, till we meet again. And if *that happiness* does not come to us on earth, then may, O May it be with God. Come weal or woe, with never ending love and devotion, you will find me your affectionate son. John.

Lock this in your safe for me...let me *see* you lock it up.

What an excellent chance I had to kill the President, if I had wished, on inauguration day!

That means nigger citizenship. Now, by God, I'll put him through. That is the last speech he will ever make.

Our cause being almost lost, something decisive & great must be done!

*Sic semper tyrannis!* [Translation: Thus always to tyrants!]

Dearest Mother, I only drop you these few lines to let you know I am well...Excuse brevity; am in haste. With best love to you all, I am your affectionate son ever.

After being hunted like a dog through swamps, woods, and last night being chased by gun boats till I was forced to return wet, cold and starving, with every man's hand against me, I am here in despair. And why? For doing what Brutus was honored for, what made Tell a Hero. And yet I for striking down a greater tyrant that they ever knew am looked upon as a common cutthroat....I hoped for no gain. I knew no private wrong. I struck for my country and that alone....Yet now behold the cold hand they extend me.... So ends all. For my country I have given up all that makes life sweet and Holy, brought misery on my family, and I am sure there is no pardon in Heaven for me since man condemns me so. Tonight I will once more try the river with intent to cross....I do not repent the blow I struck. I may before God but not to man....Who, who can read his fate? God's will be done. I have too great a soul to die like a criminal. Oh may He, may He spare me that and let me die bravely.

Dear sir, Forgive me, but I have some little pride. I hate to blame you for your want of hospitality: you know your own affairs. I was sick and tired, with a broken leg, in need of medical advice. I would not have turned a dog from my door in such a condition. However, you were kind enough to give me something to eat, for which I not only thank you, but on account of the reluctant manner in which it was bestowed, I feel bound to pay for it...Be kind enough to accept the enclosed two dollars and a half (though hard to spare) for what we have received.  
Yours respectfully, The Stranger.

Captain, give me a chance. Draw off your men and I'll fight them singly. Give a lame man a show.

Tell...Mother...I died...for my country.

Let me die here.

Useless, useless.