



The Cosgrove Report: Being the Private Inquiry of a Pinkerton Detective into the Death of President Lincoln

G.J.A. O'Toole , Nicholas Cosgrove , Michael Croft (Editor)

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The Cosgrove Report is both a gripping historical thriller and a new and entirely plausible solution to that still unanswered question: Why was Abraham Lincoln murdered? Republished to coincide with the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth, this is a novel of immense power and imagination, based on meticulous research into the government's official records of the assassination and the forgotten memoirs of many eyewitnesses. The novel opens when a recently discovered nineteenth-century manuscript falls into the hands of modern-day private investigator Michael Croft. His assignment is to verify the historical accuracy of the papers, which reveal the shocking cover-up of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the alleged capture and death of John Wilkes Booth. The manuscript itself, written by Pinkerton detective Nicholas Cosgrove, plunges both Croft and the reader back into post-Civil War Washington, where Cosgrove is hired by Secretary of War Edwin Stanton to investigate rumors that Booth is still alive. His search brings him face-to-face with some of the most illustrious people of the period, and exposes a trail of lies and evasions equal to any modern day political scandal.

The Cosgrove Report: Being the Private Inquiry of a Pinkerton Detective into the Death of President Lincoln Details

Date : Published February 3rd 2009 by Grove Press (first published 1979)

ISBN : 9780802144072

Author : G.J.A. O'Toole , Nicholas Cosgrove , Michael Croft (Editor)

Format : Paperback 424 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Mystery

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From Reader Review The Cosgrove Report: Being the Private Inquiry of a Pinkerton Detective into the Death of President Lincoln for online ebook

Kurt says

I did not expect to like this book, even with recommendations from my brother and my dad. It is a historical conspiracy theory novel, and I had been frustrated with the pervasive weakness of the historical aspects of the Da Vinci Code (and the present-day "thriller" on top of that, but that's another review). This novel, though, was a delightful surprise. It presents itself as a 19th century manuscript by a detective investigating the unsolved mysteries of the Lincoln assassination, as submitted to a contemporary detective who peppers the thing with footnotes to give the historical background to various observations. This could have been dreary or dry, but I was shocked at just how funny the novel is. From antiquated little euphemisms to occasional physical comedy, the book is just a pleasure to read, even for those of us without much interest in the conspiracy theories it fleshes out. Aside from an ill-advised adventure chase scene at the end of the book, this novel doesn't hit a false note at all, and I highly recommend it to anyone who isn't afraid of footnotes.

Pamela Beckford says

I struggled with this book. It started off slowly. It did pick up the pace in a few places. The storyline Cosgrove follows is beyond belief a time or two. It put me to mind of Sherlock Holmes in a few places. But then it went too far and too much belief had to be suspended.

I was put off by the language. The language was I'm sure authentic for the time period, but it made for slower reading. And since this was nearly a 500 page book already, it took a long time to wade through it, especially those sections that were slower.

I gave this book three out of five stars. It was written well, but the storyline and I just couldn't seem to mesh.

Kathleen Hoffman says

Loved this book! Realistic look at historic events from another point of view. Ending entirely unexpected!

Kathi Howard says

This book was very difficult to get through since the author did an excellent job of writing like someone in 1868 would speak and write. It seemed to take forever, especially considering the wealth of information provided in the footnotes. While I did wish it would end, I am so glad I stuck with it!!! So many twists and turns and the surprise ending was worth it. I would recommend it to anyone interested in the American Civil War thanks to the author's attention to details and facts (and despite that it is historical fiction!).

John says

A big disappointment. This might well set a new record for improbability & convoluted story lines. Avoid at all costs.

Mary-teresa says

The premise of the story is an intriguing one. I enjoyed following the trail that Cosgrove took to discover the whereabouts of John Wilkes Booth. However, I can't in good conscience give it 5 stars. First off, towards the end of the book, it seemed like the author was in a hurry to finally finish the book, or perhaps ran out of ideas as it had an abrupt ending. And an implausible one as well. My other objection to the book was his choice of vocabulary. The author uses many archaic or middle english words in an attempt to make the speech "authentic" to the period. Some of the words had no meanings offered in a dictionary and others didn't fit the context of the sentence. This took away from the enjoyment of the book for me. Perhaps other people won't mind this manner of writing.

Charles Jr. says

Sometimes you know how you read a book for its cool, sleek, sexy cover? In this case I came across an advance-reader copy - back when I didn't normally see that sort of thing - in a rough, yellow, near-featureless binding. For some reason that appealed to me, go figure. Book starts out great, as narrator Cosgrove is revealed as a Pinkerton detective hired to President Andrew Johnson to find out the true conspiracy to kill Abraham Lincoln after the grave of John Wilkes Booth turns out to have been empty all along. Things rather quickly went off the rails for me, though, as Cosgrove goes through spy-jinks and skullduggery and Sherlockian deductions (sometimes aided by an ex-slave servant who is even smarter). Mark Twain talked about "stretchers"; this one piles on bigger and bigger ones until Cosgrove is practically in 007/Wild West territory (the balloon ride was particularly hard to swallow), reminiscent of Dan Brown at his craziest and cliffhangerist. Then a twist ending sort of undoes everything if you take it literally...But maybe you're not supposed to take it literally, I dunno, kind of like the people who argue that the end of the film Total Recall is supposed to be absurd because it's not really happening; Schwarzenegger's just a guy in a game/simulation. Well...maybe something similar here. Maybe one day I'll try it again with that thought in mind.

Statmonkey says

Really would like to rate this higher but frankly there are too many issues. Interesting, for me anyway, in that I knew very little about assassination conspiracy theories relating to Lincoln. The book is well researched and the information it presents is both amazing and in many cases true. Some of the characters who were involved I did not know of and learned a great deal. That is really the good. The negative is that the plot wanders, is both farcical and predictable. I think the author got to a point where he just did not know what to do with what he had created. The last half of the book IMO just fell apart. The premise is amazing, the initial direction fantastic but then it just falls apart. No spoilers but when you get to the section you will know what I mean. I would recommend it as a nice summer read but not much more.

Donna Breylinger says

This is a historical thriller that takes the reader through a solution as to "why Abraham Lincoln was assassinated". I enjoyed reading about the research into the government's official records of the assassination and the forgotten memoirs of many eyewitnesses. I loved the ending.....

Gram says

Fans of conspiracy theories will love this book. Mr O'Toole merges an investigation by a top Pinkerton detective, Nicholas Cosgrove, with the Pitman transcript the 1865 Lincoln Assassination Conspiracy Trial and other historical documents to produce a mystery which reaches some startling conclusions about the murder of Abraham Lincoln and what happened to his alleged assassin, John Wilkes Booth. I found the writing a bit long winded, but, since the document of the title involved a report written more than 150 years ago, I suppose that fault can be excused. That said, if the book had been shorter it would have been 4 stars instead of 3 as the plot tends to meander all over the place. On the plus side, it's clear the author has thoroughly researched the events immediately after the Lincoln assassination and the role played by various known conspirators and the death of John Wilkes Booth by a single gunshot wound on April 26, 1865 at Richard H. Garrett's farm, in Caroline County, Virginia.

By means of solid detective work, and several happy coincidences, Cosgrove uncovers a conspiracy much larger than that detailed in the 1865 trial. But long before that, there are shocking revelations surrounding Booth's "death" and burial. Ultimately, Cosgrove's report alleges that the conspiracy reached the highest levels of American government, implicating Army officers and the office of the then Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton and Lincoln's successor President Andrew Johnson - himself the subject of an Impeachment trial by the US the House of Representatives. The latter is featured heavily in the closing chapters of this book. But there follow several twists in the story which lead us to believe that this "report" may not have been compiled by a top Pinkerton detective after all. - and that its real author was closer to the Lincoln assassination than most.

One final note - I was surprised that none of the other reviews on this site mentioned the striking similarity between evidence given to the 1865 Lincoln Assassination Conspiracy Trial, large parts of which mysteriously failed to appear in the final publication, and the findings of the Warren Commission report on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Maybe it's a conspiracy!

Beth says

In many ways I liked the book - the writing was good and the author was fantastic about using terms, phrases, and a writing style of the era. He obviously researched the background and the historical details were wonderful. I felt it bogged down a bit in a couple of places as in too much detail or we following the hero's tracks a bit too specifically. But what really got me, was one completely fantastical episode with the hot air balloons that just made me laugh. It does have a ripper of an ending though, so if you like this era or topic, I would recommend it.

Donald says

George O'Toole, who was already renowned in my eyes for his classic work on the JFK assassination "The Assassination Tapes," followed that up with a stellar work of historical fiction in "The Cosgrove Report." The Lincoln assassination has fascinated me almost as much as the assassinations of the 1960s, and I always suspected a bigger plot than the official one of John Wilkes Booth and his rag-tag band of followers. While O'Toole ultimately comes up with what I consider to be a weak and unsupportable conclusion as to who or what really lay behind the assassination, the story is well-written and full of impressive, important research. For students of the Lincoln assassination, this is an essential book.

Bruce MacBain says

[This review originally appeared in Historical Novels Review:]

Originally published in 1979 and now reissued to coincide with the Lincoln bicentennial, the novel purports to be a manuscript written by one Nicholas Cosgrove, Pinkerton agent. In 1868, Cosgrove is assigned to determine whether John Wilkes Booth escaped from the burning farmhouse in Maryland and still lives. His report, having lain concealed for a century, now falls into the hands of private detective Michael Croft, whose job is to verify and annotate it. Writing in a grandiloquent High Victorian style, Cosgrove tells a tale of switched identities, doctored documents, and bitter feuding within the White House as he pursues the elusive Booth. Historical characters, such as President Andrew Johnson, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, Alan Pinkerton, and many others make their appearance to either aid or thwart Cosgrove in his mission. And Cosgrove himself is an ambiguous figure with seemingly no family, friends, or worldly attachments. It all ends with a duel and a fatal balloon chase—or does it? One final plot twist turns the whole tale on its head. 'Croft's' annotations, like the footnotes in George MacDonald Fraser's Flashman novels, are, in this reviewer's opinion, the best part of the book. With impressive scholarship and sharp wit, O'Toole lays bare for the non-specialist the real and persistent mysteries that still surround the trial of the Lincoln assassins. Altogether, highly entertaining and highly informative.

Neil Pierson says

If you like historical fiction, this book is for you! Everyone knows the story of Abraham Lincoln's assassination, the pursuit and death of John Wilkes Booth, and the hanging of his co-conspirators. But Edwin Stanton, Lincoln's Secretary of War, is not so sure that the official version is true. He hires Pinkerton's Detective Agency to verify or disprove the chain of events.

Allen Pinkerton assigns Nicolas Cosgrove, the finest detective in the world--or so Cosgrove, at least, believes--to investigate the matter. Cosgrove questions and scams a number of historical characters to come up with a surprising revision to history.

If you think conspiracy theory was born in Dallas in 1963, get a load of this.

Marti says

Cosgrove was supposedly a Pinkerton detective hired to find out the truth about Lincoln's assassination. Then he was to locate John Wilkes Booth, who was first thought to have been killed. This story is based on some actual facts.
