

Title:

Closed Circuit TV: Keeping Presidents, Politicians, And The Public Safe

Word Count:

565

Summary:

We all know the story. The date was April 14, 1865. Four people were in the presidential box of Ford's theater, enjoying "Our American Cousin," a comedy play about a rugged American and his noble English relatives. They included Major Henry Rathbone, Civil War veteran; and his fiancé Clara Harris, daughter of a U.S. Senator. Also seated in the box were President Abraham Lincoln and his wife, Marry Todd Lincoln. Lincoln was shot while watching the performance. He died the next...

Keywords:

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Article Body:

We all know the story. The date was April 14, 1865. Four people were in the presidential box of Ford's theater, enjoying "Our American Cousin," a comedy play about a rugged American and his noble English relatives. They included Major Henry Rathbone, Civil War veteran; and his fiancé Clara Harris, daughter of a U.S. Senator. Also seated in the box were President Abraham Lincoln and his wife, Marry Todd Lincoln. Lincoln was shot while watching the performance. He died the next day. His assassin was John Wilkes Booth, a Confederate supporter. But how did Booth access the location of the President of the United States? Booth had performed several times at Ford's theater, so he was very familiar with the building's design. He arrived at the theater's back door, at around 9:00 in the evening. Then, Booth walked down a tight hallway between the theater's balcony, and Lincoln's box. Booth entered the box's door, secured it, and then murdered one of America's most popular presidents ever. Could Lincoln's assassination have been prevented if a closed circuit TV, or CCTV, had been available in 1865?

Protecting Presidents

Abraham Lincoln was the first American President to be assassinated. Others who were killed while in office include James Garfield (1881), William McKinley (1901), and John F. Kennedy (1963). Today, security for the American President has improved dramatically. A small army of bodyguards constantly protects him. The U.S. Secret Service guards the lives of the President and his family, as

well as other executive officials. It includes over 3,000 agents and 1,000 uniformed officers. Closed circuit TV is one of the tools that assist in the protection of the president and other government officials.

Protecting Politicians

Today, closed circuit TV has become useful in protecting government officials in local, state, and federal government buildings. Due to their being high profile areas, government buildings require additional security. This is especially true in political surroundings and those that could become hostile. Local governments must also provide security for numerous areas in town. These include town halls, administration buildings, galleries, zoos, libraries, swimming pools, gardens, and parks. In fact, cities are putting closed circuit TV cameras to monitor several public areas. The goal is to reduce crime, harm to government property, and burglary. Installing closed circuit TV creates "virtual" patrols that are very cost effective. Also, the recording can be used as proof against wrongdoers. Today, the White House is one of numerous governmental buildings monitored by closed circuit TV.

Protecting Privacy

While closed circuit TV has become a useful tool for protecting a government's officials and its jurisdiction, would closed circuit TV be lawful to watch Lincoln's presidential box at Ford's Theater today? A place where one expects to be safe from surveillance that is not authorized is a private place. In fact, the majority of U.S. video recordings are legal, whether or not consent has been secured. Nonetheless, many laws addressing the idea of expected privacy involve "Invasion of Privacy." This concept includes areas such as bedrooms, changing rooms, dressing rooms, locker rooms, and restrooms. In all of these locations, one would demand a particular degree of personal privacy. Therefore, it is always wise to consult with an attorney or a law enforcement official prior to installing closed circuit TV.

Today, one can only speculate whether closed circuit TV could have prevented Lincoln's assassination. However, it can certainly help to safeguard the nation's officials and citizens.