

*Lincoln's Legacy and Legend*

Actor Sam Waterston and Historian Harold Holzer in Special Performance Edition of

BILL MOYERS JOURNAL on PBS on Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at 9 p.m.

Honoring the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year of Lincoln's Birth

BILL MOYERS JOURNAL brings television viewers a deeply moving and intimate performance by award-winning actor Sam Waterston and eminent historian Harold Holzer. *Lincoln's Legacy and Legend* features the spoken poetry and prose of American writers as different as Walt Whitman, Frederick Douglass, Allen Ginsburg, Langston Hughes, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and many others who have struggled to find words that adequately describe this tall, plain and gangling man and the transcendent significance of his presidency. Responding to the arc of ideas, language and history included in excerpts of their writings, Bill Moyers says, "Lincoln changes as we hear these words, and so does the country."

This special performance edition of BILL MOYERS JOURNAL will be broadcast on PBS at 9 p.m. on April 10<sup>th</sup>, which is also Good Friday, the tragic day on which Lincoln was shot just as the Civil War was coming to a close. Lincoln's martyrdom catapulted him from president to icon, from mortal man to enduring myth, and each American generation has subsequently approached his towering legend through the prism of its own perceptions. While writers over 150 years have compared him to Washington, Jesus, and Moses, other more critical contrasting voices have cast him as Hamlet, too slow to pick up the mantle of Emancipator. Interpreting his political legacy for their own contemporary purposes, Republicans and Democrats, blacks and whites have shaped an evolving portrait of Lincoln that adds nuance and dimension to the marble hero.

Well-known as the star of television's *Law & Order*, Sam Waterston has inhabited the role of Lincoln on many stages and is a self-made scholar of the 16<sup>th</sup> president. Harold Holzer, a prolific author on the subject of Lincoln, is co-chairman of the U.S. Lincoln Bicentennial Commission underway this year and recently edited *The Lincoln Anthology: Great Writers on His Life and Legacy from 1860 to Now*, published by the Library of America. This anthology is the source for excerpts included in this

performance, from first hand observations by Lincoln's contemporaries to the words of Barack Obama, the most recent American president to lay claim to Lincoln's legacy.

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