Rowdy Notions of Emancipation political cartoon, 1863

This cartoon depicts the violence perpetrated against African Americans during the New York City Draft Riots of July 13-16, 1863. It shows Abraham Lincoln, at far left, standing with his back turned to the riot taking place behind him. Lincoln, shown wearing striped pants and a jacket, is scowling and looking off into the distance; he has his arms crossed across his chest with one hand raised to his chin, as if stroking his beard. Behind him, at the center of the cartoon, an Irish-American man wearing striped pants and a shirt decorated with stars (evoking the flag of the United States), stands over the body of an African American man lying on the ground. The Irish-American man raises his right fist to strike at another African American man, who he restrains with his left hand. The African American man threatened by the rioter stretches his arm out in an appeal to the unresponsive Lincoln. At right, another white rioter, whose face we cannot see, grabs the African American man's shirt, pulling him toward the background of the cartoon, in which a gallows can be seen. Behind them can be seen numerous other rioters. Below the illustration is a caption in which eyewitness accounts from the scenes of the riots, reported in local newspapers, are partially reprinted.