

# The Lindbergh Baby Kidnapping Mystery

In the case known as “the Crime of the Century,” was an innocent man railroaded to the electric chair? Did politics underlie both the crime and its aftermath?



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**Start of fame:** Charles Lindbergh is pictured with the *Spirit of St. Louis*. Lindbergh made his historic 33-hour transatlantic flight with only a compass, maps, and the stars to guide him.

anonymous message authorizing him as go-between, with an enclosed letter addressed to Lindbergh. Because that letter bore the unique symbolic signature, Lindbergh met Condon, and accepted the old man as intermediary.

Condon communicated with the kidnapers through coded newspaper messages. On the night of March 12, at the Bronx’s Woodlawn Cemetery, he met their representative, who became nicknamed “Cemetery John.” Condon told “John” the Lindberghs wanted proof his gang had the baby.

A baby’s sleeping suit was mailed to Condon’s home. Lindbergh identified it as his son’s. The ransom money was gathered; though unmarked (as the kidnapers demanded), each serial number was recorded.

On the night of April 2, Condon received ransom-drop instructions. Lindbergh, with the money — and a pistol — drove Condon to St. Raymond’s Cemetery in the Bronx, where the old man gave “Cemetery John” the cash in exchange for a note on the baby’s location — the boat *Nelly* off Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts. Lindbergh chartered a seaplane and, with Coast Guard help, scoured the region for two days — but no such boat existed.

Further newspaper messages to the kidnapers went unanswered. On May 12, about four miles from Lindbergh’s house, the baby’s corpse was found in roadside woods by a trucker who’d stopped for a call of nature. However, police and volunteers had already searched this area. Furthermore, advanced decay suggested the body might have been kept someplace warmer — then deposited, conceivably as a “present” for Lindbergh. Outrage filled the nation.

by James Perloff

**A**fter Charles Lindbergh flew *The Spirit of St. Louis* from New York to France in 1927, completing the first solo nonstop transatlantic flight, he became America’s most admired hero. “The Lone Eagle,” as he was called, then helped develop aviation and married Anne Morrow, daughter of diplomat Dwight Morrow. Anne learned to fly, and she and Charles made spectacular intercontinental flights together. In 1930, the first of their six children, Charles, Jr., was born, dubbed “the Eaglet” by the press.

But tragedy struck on the windy evening of March 1, 1932. The child was snatched from his second-story bedroom. The kidnapper(s) left a crude note demanding \$50,000 ransom. It bore a mysterious “signature”: overlapping red and blue circles, and three punched holes. On the ground outside, police found a chisel and homemade three-piece ladder.

## The Lindberghs’ Response

As the largest manhunt in American history began, police and reporters swarmed the Lindbergh estate in Hopewell, New Jersey. Thousands of letters poured in from both well-wishers and cranks. Among these were notes from the kidnapers bearing the strange signature. These scolded Lindbergh for violating their instructions not to involve police. The Lindberghs publicly pleaded for the child’s return, promising to meet the kidnapers’ demands.

Because Charles Lindbergh suspected organized crime, his attorneys contacted known racketeers. The latter offered to make inquiries — but, they warned, the kidnapping didn’t seem like work of “the Mob,” who would have asked more than \$50,000 for Lindbergh’s son.

On March 8, John Condon, a retired New York City school principal, published a newspaper announcement, offering to be the intermediary for the ransom exchange. Condon then received an

## The Police Response

The police suspected an “inside job.” The kidnapers knew where the baby’s nursery was. Furthermore, the Lindberghs always stayed at the Morrow mansion in Englewood, New Jersey, on weekdays, while building their own home in distant rural Hopewell, where they stayed weekends as construction finished. On the week of the kidnapping, however, the baby came down with a cold, and the Lindberghs decided to remain longer at Hopewell. Without a tip, the kidnapers shouldn’t have known about this variation in routine. The baby was snatched on a Tuesday.

Suspicion fell on Violet Sharp, a Morrow maid. Sharp had taken Anne Lindbergh’s phone call about the change in plans. She lied to the police about her whereabouts the night of the kidnapping, saying she went to the movies — but couldn’t recall the film or her date’s name. On subsequent interrogation, she said she actually visited a roadhouse with an Ernie Brinkert — but Brinkert denied it. After the baby’s corpse was found, Sharp became increasingly disturbed. When the police came to question her again, she was dead, having swallowed cyanide. Oddly, a different “Ernie” later corroborated her roadhouse alibi. Today, investigators of the kidnapping still debate the reason for Sharp’s suicide — or was it even murder?

Another evidence of “inside help”: Police found no fingerprints in the nursery — not even the child’s, his nurse’s, or the

Lindberghs’. Eventually, Dr. Erastus Hudson — pioneer of a silver nitrate fingerprint process — lifted latent prints from the nursery. Hudson stated the only explanation for the missing fingerprints was someone methodically wiping down the nursery after the abduction. It hardly seemed likely the kidnapers waited around to do this. At the time of the crime, five adults were in the house — Mr. and Mrs. Lindbergh, the baby’s nurse, the cook, and butler. Only the butler, Oliver Whateley, was unobserved during the kidnapping. And like Violet Sharp, Whateley died suddenly, in 1933 of peritonitis.

Heading the investigation was New Jersey State Police Superintendent H. Norman Schwarzkopf — father of “Stormin’ Norman” of Gulf War fame. A “political” appointee, Schwarzkopf’s only criminal justice experience before this position was as a department store floorwalker. President Herbert Hoover ordered federal agencies to assist the investigation — a process facilitated when Congress made kidnapping a federal crime. J. Edgar Hoover offered the superior criminology resources of the Bureau of Investigation (BI — later called FBI), but Schwarzkopf refused. While some might commend this as keeping police independent of federal intrusion, Schwarzkopf also rejected

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local assistance. New Jersey’s Governor authorized the state’s most famous detective, Ellis Parker, to help. Known as “America’s Sherlock Holmes,” Parker had solved over 200 murders. Yet Schwarzkopf declined, saying Parker was not in his jurisdiction. Since the kidnapping went unsolved for over two years, Schwarzkopf’s refusal of top resources was sharply criticized.

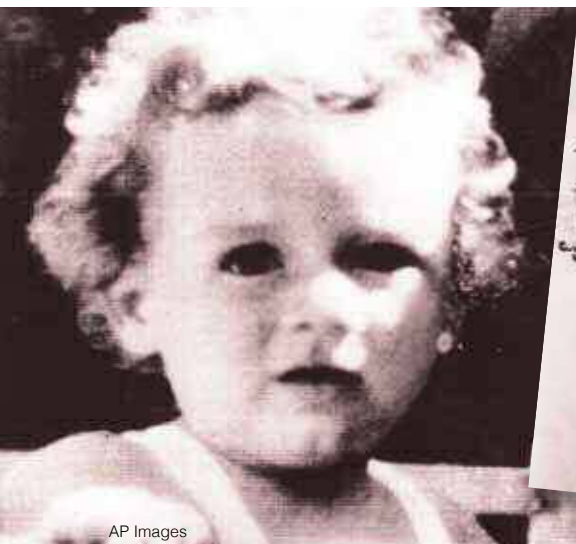
Investigation focused on tracing ransom bills, which appeared in a trickle. Since most were passed in New York City — outside Schwarzkopf’s own jurisdiction — this entailed interagency cooperation. Tracing money was difficult, however; few cashiers delayed customers to check serial-number lists. Most was found when later turned in at banks, but efforts to trace bills to original passers either failed or located someone cleared of suspicion.

## A Suspect at Last

The case broke in September 1934. A Bronx carpenter, Bruno Richard Hauptmann, passed a \$10 ransom bill at a gas station. Police found about \$14,000 more in ransom money hidden in his home.

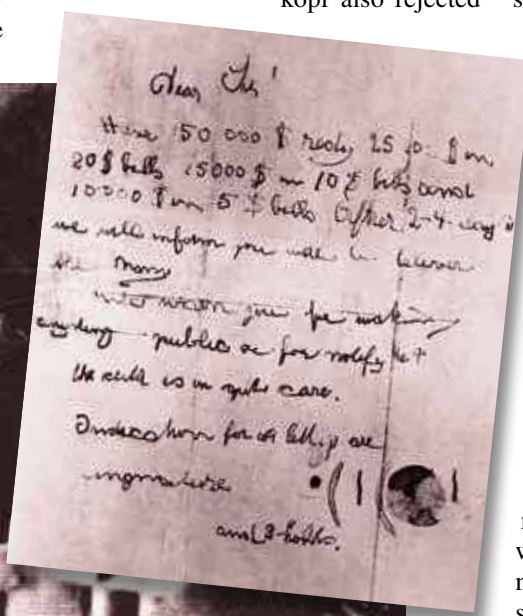
The German-born Hauptmann told police he’d discovered the \$14,000 in a box left with him in December 1933 by an associate, Isidor Fisch, who’d gone to Germany where he died of tuberculosis. (Fisch had indeed been in a joint venture with Hauptmann and died in Germany.) Fisch’s brother was coming from Germany to settle the estate. Hauptmann meanwhile decided to spend some of the cash he’d found — Fisch owed him over \$7,000 anyway, and Hauptmann said he didn’t know it was ransom money.

The police, however, dismissed Hauptmann’s explanation as a “Fisch story”; he was extradited to New Jersey for trial. In newspapers, the case appeared open-and-shut. Hauptmann had entered the United States as a stowaway, with a prison record in Germany for robberies. John Condon



AP Images

**The victim:** The first of the ransom notes for Charles Augustus Lindbergh, Jr. bore an occult-looking “signature.” The writing was crude — or designed to look that way.





AP Images

**The Lindberghs' home** in Hopewell, New Jersey, from which the baby was taken. The Lindberghs subsequently donated the house, which today is a home for disadvantaged boys.

identified him as “Cemetery John.” Condon’s address and phone number were found scrawled in Hauptmann’s closet. Two eyewitnesses placed Hauptmann near the Lindbergh residence around the time of the kidnapping. Handwriting experts indicated similarities between the ransom notes and his writing. A federal wood expert said a board in Hauptmann’s attic matched a rail in the homemade ladder left at the crime scene. The three-quarter-inch chisel found at the scene was asserted to be Hauptmann’s — when police confiscated his tools, the prosecution said, only the three-quarter-inch chisel was missing.

The prosecution claimed Hauptmann alone did the kidnapping, murder, and ransom exchange. Brushed aside was the improbability of a Bronx carpenter knowing about changes in the Lindberghs’ plans. The jury found Hauptmann guilty; he was sentenced to death. When Harold Hoffman, New Jersey’s Republican Governor, learned much was wrong with the prosecution’s case, he granted Hauptmann stays of

execution while investigating — to jeers of newspapers, who accused the Governor of protecting a child murderer. Asserting innocence to the end, Hauptmann died in the electric chair in 1936. Then the case was gradually forgotten — except by Hauptmann’s widow Anna, who spent nearly 60 years seeking her husband’s vindication.

A breakthrough came with publication of *Scapegoat* (1976) by crime reporter Anthony Scaduto, who examined police and prosecution records that had been under wraps for decades.

### The Players

After World War I, food was scarce in Germany. Hauptmann, 19 and unable to find work, did turn to theft with a fellow ex-soldier. But after prison, he promised his devout mother, Paulina, it would never happen again. In 11 years in the United States before his 1934 arrest, Hauptmann never committed a known crime. He always went by his middle name “Richard,” but newspapers called him “Bruno” — it sounded more ruthless.

To her regret, Anna Hauptmann was persuaded by the Hearst newspaper chain to engage attorney Edward Reilly. In exchange for exclusive interviews, they would pay Reilly’s fee. With Hauptmann behind bars and Anna caring for a baby,

the family could not afford the enormous defense costs — so Anna welcomed the proposal. Reilly, however, though once notable, was now an alcoholic and two years later landed in a mental institution, suffering effects of syphilis. Before being hired, he opined that Hauptmann was guilty and should burn — sentiments echoed by the Hearst press that paid him. Reilly spent less than 40 minutes with Hauptmann before the trial, and though showing occasional adeptness in court, made mistakes that cost his client dearly. After one key blunder, assistant defense counsel Lloyd Fisher — who never doubted Hauptmann’s innocence — shouted at Reilly, “You are conceding Hauptmann to the electric chair!” Some think Reilly was hired to deliberately lose; he was seen dining and boozing with prosecutors.

New Jersey Attorney General David Wilentz, a powerful Democratic Party figure, led the prosecution. Responsibility should have fallen to the county prosecutor, and Wilentz had never before tried a criminal case. Some attribute his involvement to “ambition.” As we will see, there may have been another reason.

### Physical Evidence

• Scaduto discovered the original New York police receipts for Hauptmann’s tools, including his three-quarter-inch chisel; later he found the chisel itself in storage at New Jersey State Police headquarters in Trenton. The prosecution had lied about this being missing.

• Hauptmann writing John Condon’s phone number in his closet made no sense, since the Hauptmanns had no phone, and the number was in the phone book anyway. *New York Daily News* reporter Tom Cassidy eventually acknowledged scrawling it there to get a “scoop.”

• Not one fingerprint linked Hauptmann to the crime — neither in the nursery nor on the 13 ransom notes. Fingerprint expert Dr. Erastus Hudson lifted about 500 prints (including partials) from the homemade ladder at the scene — but none were Hauptmann’s. This seemed improbable if — as prosecutors claimed — he built it. New Jersey State Police Captain John Lamb then asked Hudson a stunning question: Could fingerprints be counterfeited? Hudson indignantly said yes, but that counterfeiting was detectable. The po-

Another evidence of “inside help”: Police found no fingerprints in the nursery — not even the child’s, his nurse’s, or the Lindberghs’.

lice then washed the ladder clean of fingerprints, and Schwarzkopf refused to let the public know Hauptmann's were never found on it.

- Hauptmann's shoes were confiscated for comparison to footprints at the crime scene and cemetery. The prosecution omitted this evidence — presumably they didn't match.

- The prosecution's challenge, then, was *something* to physically link Hauptmann to the kidnapping. The New Jersey State Police took over the lease on the Hauptmanns' apartment. Detective Lewis Bornmann — whose superior was Lamb — actually lived there. He suddenly reported discovering a partially missing floorboard in Hauptmann's attic — even though this was unnoticed in nine documented previous searches of the attic by 37 law-enforcement agents. At the trial, the prosecution claimed a kidnap-ladder rail matched the remaining partial-board in Hauptmann's attic, though of different width and depth. Why would Hauptmann — a professional carpenter with abundant lumber in his garage — rip a board from his attic to help build a ladder? Nonetheless, this became the prosecution's "smoking gun."

### Changing Testimonies

- Hauptmann said he worked at the Majestic Apartments in New York City until

5 p.m. the day of the kidnapping. His supervisor Joseph Furcht confirmed this in a sworn affidavit with attached documentation. But after being summoned to the New York District Attorney's office, Furcht was no longer "positive," and work records for that time vanished.

- Both of the witnesses placing Hauptmann near the crime scene were discreditable and handsomely paid. Unknown to the defense, 87-year-old Amandus Hochmuth was partially blind and admitted to prosecutors pretrial that he couldn't identify Hauptmann. When Governor Hoffman interviewed Hochmuth, he couldn't identify a flower vase 10 feet away. Illiterate Millard Whithed, labeled a chronic liar by neighbors, had denied to police seeing anything suspicious after the kidnapping — but came forward two years later, motivated by reward money.

Hauptmann had much better witnesses for the kidnapping time-frame. On Tuesdays his wife Anna worked late at Fredericksen's, a New York bakery-café. Hauptmann always waited there for Anna, and sometimes walked the Fredericksens' dog. Not only did the Fredericksens confirm Hauptmann was there on the kidnapping evening, but August Von Henke saw Hauptmann walking the dog. Mistaking it for his own lost dog, he argued with Hauptmann. Louis Kiss, a bakery custom-

er, remembered the argument. Von Henke and Kiss weren't friends of Hauptmann, had no incentive to lie, and threatened the prosecution's case.

The day after Kiss testified, a New York attorney named Berko pressed him to change his testimony with a threat of arrest and an offer of money. Berko admitted his legal career was failing, but that Attorney General Wilentz offered to help him get a position on Manhattan special prosecutor Thomas Dewey's staff if he could persuade Kiss to recant his testimony. Kiss informed Berko he'd told the truth in court and wouldn't change it for any price. He summarized the incident in a sworn deposition corroborated by a witness.

- When Hauptmann was arrested, Condon declined to say he was "Cemetery John." FBI agent Leon Turrou wrote: "He [Condon] remarked on one occasion that Hauptmann is not the man because he appears to be much heavier, different eyes, different hair, etc." Yet in court, after reportedly being threatened with "obstructing justice," Condon emphatically identified Hauptmann as "Cemetery John."

- After Hauptmann's arrest, the New York police gave samples of his writing to handwriting expert Albert D. Osborn, who reported they didn't match the ransom notes. But after the frustrated police told Osborn large ransom sums were in Hauptmann's residence, Osborn requested more samples. The police forced Hauptmann to write the ransom note words dozens of times; "best" examples were selected. Osborn changed his mind, explaining in court that Hauptmann made the same spelling errors as the actual ransom notes. But as Scaduto revealed, the police forced Hauptmann to write with the spelling mistakes *dictated to him*.

The state paid eight handwriting experts over \$33,000 to testify that Hauptmann wrote the notes. But "experts" testify for who pays their fee, and many differences in Hauptmann's writing were disregarded. The defense could only afford one handwriting expert, who was simply outnumbered.

**The homemade three-section kidnap ladder**, which remains controversial to this day, is brought to court by a state trooper. Its light weight suggested it was designed for rapid carry.



- Isidor Fisch, who Hauptmann said left the “money box,” had been a confidence man in many swindles, even swindling Hauptmann in their joint venture. Fisch was seen laundering “hot money” after the ransom payment, and applied for a passport the day the baby’s body was found. Hauptmann’s friend Hans Kloppenburg saw Fisch give him the box before departing for Germany. Kloppenburg told Anthony Scaduto that prosecutor Wilentz warned him: “If you say on the witness chair that you seen Fisch come in with the shoe box, you’ll be arrested right away.” Kloppenburg testified anyway.

- Wilentz used a partner of Isidor Fisch — ex-con Charlie Schleser — to spy on defense witnesses. Feigning friendliness to Hauptmann, Schleser learned about defense plans and reported to Wilentz.

## Climax

In his summation to the jury, Wilentz demanded the death penalty, calling Hauptmann “a fellow that had ice water in his veins, not blood ... an animal lower than the lowest form in the animal kingdom, Public Enemy Number One of this world ... no heart, no soul.”

Wilentz’s summation violated jurisprudence rules by introducing new arguments; he described Hauptmann using the chisel to bludgeon the child in the nursery. Had he suggested this during normal proceedings, the defense could have refuted it — the nursery had no signs of bloody violence.

However, the judge, Thomas Trenchard, gave Wilentz leeway — as he had throughout the trial. The court transcript reveals Trenchard’s marked bias toward the prosecution, overruling the defense in great disproportion. Perhaps the worst impropriety was his 70-minute charge to the jury, in which he aggressively argued for the prosecution. Reviewing the defense’s arguments point by point, Trenchard repeated, “Do you believe *that*?” By emphasizing the word “that,” Trenchard conveyed disdain — but helped protect himself, since court records didn’t include voice inflections.

While the jury deliberated, a mob surrounded the courthouse chanting, “Kill Hauptmann!” Perhaps some jurors feared becoming victims of mob violence unless their verdict was “guilty of murder in the



**Whose interests did he represent?** Bruno Richard Hauptmann (right) with his attorney Edward J. Reilly. After the Hearst press paid his fee up front, Reilly showed limited interest in his client.

AP Images

first degree” — which it was. As *Editor and Publisher* declared, “No trial in this century has so degraded the administration of justice.”

Hauptmann was told if he would confess, his death sentence would be commuted to life imprisonment. He refused. His spiritual advisor, Reverend John Matthiesen, stated: “I have had fifteen very intimate and soul searching interviews with Bruno Richard Hauptmann, and am convinced that he tells the truth.” Just before electrocution, Hauptmann requested that John 14 be read to him, then knelt in prayer. His final statement (translated from German):

Soon I will be at home with my Lord, so I am dying an innocent man. Should, however, my death serve for the purpose of abolishing capital punishment — such a punishment being arrived at only by circumstantial evidence — I feel that my death has not been in vain. I am at peace with God. I repeat, I protest my innocence of the crime for which I was convicted. However, I die with no malice or hatred in my heart. The love of Christ has filled my soul and I am happy in Him.

In a generation no longer gripped with media-driven hatred of Hauptmann, Anthony Scaduto (and subsequent writers like Ludovic Kennedy) convinced many that the carpenter was railroaded to the electric chair. But if Hauptmann didn’t do it, who did?

## Attacking Lindbergh

Over the last two decades, some authors have claimed Charles Lindbergh, or others in his family, killed the baby. This began with *Crime of the Century: The Lindbergh Kidnapping Hoax* (1993) by Gregory Ahlgren and Stephen Monier, whose contempt for the aviator is undisguised.

Lindbergh, known as a practical joker, once hid the baby from Anne as a prank. From that, the authors devised this scenario: Returning home from work on March 1, 1932, Charles decided to play a joke. He himself climbed the ladder and took the baby, intending to enter the front door saying, “Look who was with me in New York.” But, they declare, he accidentally dropped the baby, killing him. Lindbergh, concerned only for his reputation, drove off, dumped the body in the woods four miles away, hurried home and wrote a fake ransom note before the baby’s nurse returned to the nursery.

Their source for this? *Their imagination*. Their 286-page volume has only one page of footnotes. This theory, like many, cherry-picks details that support it while ignoring what doesn't. The ladder abandoned at the scene didn't belong to Lindbergh and wasn't sturdy — if he'd wanted a ladder, he had a strong one in his garage. It was dark with a gale blowing; with no one holding the ladder steady, it would have been insanity for Lindbergh to risk his life and his sick child's for a joke.

Lindbergh's daughter Reeve says he was "very gentle" as a father, and he was unquestionably courageous. If Lindbergh had really dropped his son, his instinct would have been to seek help — not cravenly dump the body in the woods.

Many people offered to pay the ransom. But Lindbergh insisted on paying himself, selling investments at steep losses to raise the \$50,000 (around a million dollars in today's currency). If Ahlgren and Monier are correct, why would Lindbergh pay the ransom knowing the child was dead?

Others go beyond this "prank" hypothesis. Lindbergh was a leader of the America First Committee, which, before Pearl Harbor, tried to keep the United States out of World War II. Some Lindbergh haters claim he was a "Nazi racial supremacist," and deliberately murdered his son over some defect in health or appearance. In fact, Charles, Jr. was a handsome, healthy boy who could talk and run. Although less than two, he already attended a Montessori-type preschool. He did have rickets (not uncommon then) and a couple overlapping toes — hardly incentives for murder.

One year after the Ahlgren-Monier book came Noel Behn's *Lindbergh: The Crime*, alleging Anne's sister Elisabeth had wanted to marry Charles and killed the baby out of jealousy, and Charles covered *that* up. Behn based this largely on undocumented recollections of 93-year-old Harry Green — an investigator

once attached to the case — even though he admits "Green had a habit pleading senility."

William Norris, in *A Talent to Deceive*, claimed Lindbergh's brother-in-law, Dwight Morrow, Jr., murdered the baby.

These suspects, rotated like a game of *Clue*, are all Lindbergh family members. The theorists rely largely on the same "proofs." Five trendy ones:

1. "Why did Lindbergh call his **LAWYER** before calling the police?" So asks the website [lindberghkidnappinghoax.com](http://lindberghkidnappinghoax.com), implying legalities worried Lindbergh more than his child. This question twists the truth over a technicality. While Lindbergh searched the grounds with a gun, he had the *butler* phone the police. Later he called his friend/attorney Henry Breckinridge for advice.

2. *Why didn't Lindbergh immediately open the ransom note? A concerned parent would!* Lindbergh knew a crime scene shouldn't be disturbed, and that police would dust the note for fingerprints —

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which they did. If Lindbergh *had* torn that note open, his critics would surely excoriate his "obstructing justice."

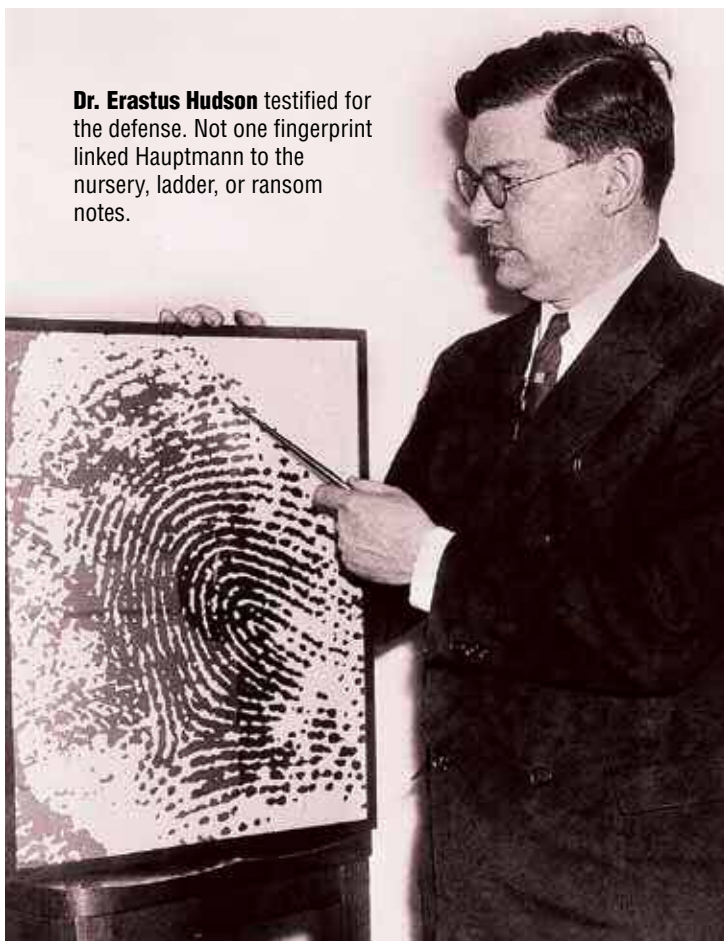
3. *Lindbergh kept the police from the ransom drop — he was hiding something!* The kidnapers had warned Lindbergh not to involve police. The Lindberghs complied; their priority was the child's life. Many kidnapping victims have paid ransoms without even notifying authorities. Note the two-headed coin of Lindbergh's critics — cooperating with police means "guilt"; so does *not* cooperating.

4. *Lindbergh himself wiped off the fingerprints in the nursery!* The fingerprints of Lindbergh and his family would be expected in the nursery. The wipedown could have only benefited outsiders.

5. *Lindbergh cremated the baby's remains to destroy evidence!* Lindbergh, the child's nurse, and the child's pediatrician viewed the remains. An autopsy was performed. However, a news reporter and photographer gained entry to the mortuary, forced open the casket, and photographed the remains. Realizing their baby would never escape paparazzi exploitation, the Lindberghs respectfully decided to cremate, and scattered the ashes from an airplane.

Let the arbiter be Anna Hauptmann, who fought for six decades to exonerate her husband. Though Ahlgren and Monier took blame off him in promoting their claim, Anna said she was "outraged" another

**Dr. Erastus Hudson** testified for the defense. Not one fingerprint linked Hauptmann to the nursery, ladder, or ransom notes.



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book was exploiting the tragedy. Her attorney, Robert Bryan, called their book “reckless” and “full of errors.”

## Why Lindbergh?

In 1992’s Republican presidential primaries, Pat Buchanan was the leading opponent to George Bush, Sr. Buchanan deliberately revived Lindbergh’s cry “America First” while challenging the interventionism of neocons in Bush’s administration. This battle continued in 1993-94 (when the Ahlgren-Monier and Behn books appeared), as patriots fought to keep America out of NAFTA and the World Trade Organization. Joining those entanglements devastated American manufacturing and sent millions of jobs overseas.

No one had symbolized “isolationism” more than Lindbergh. And his father, U.S. Congressman Charles Lindbergh, Sr., was a chief opponent of our entering World War I and bitterly fought the Federal Reserve Act, which he prophesied would benefit a few bankers while plaguing average Americans with inflation and economic despair.

In the 1990s, globalists of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) — whose members dominate key positions in both Republican and Democratic administrations — envisioned a “new world order” where America would yield sovereignty to a NAFTA-based North American Union and engage in endless foreign interventions. They also thirsted for billions in bailout dollars for their multinational banks and corporations. Since these bailouts would come largely from “fiat” money (created from nothing by the U.S. Federal Reserve), working Americans would pay for the bailouts through soaring inflation.

These schemes required manipulation of public opinion. The name “Lindbergh” symbolized opposition to them.

And since the aviator was still emblazoned as a hero, now was the time to destroy his image. New books would repaint “the Lone Eagle” as “the Nazi who murdered his own son.”

In 2002, President Bush appointed Stephen Monier U.S. Marshal for New Hampshire.

## A New Theory

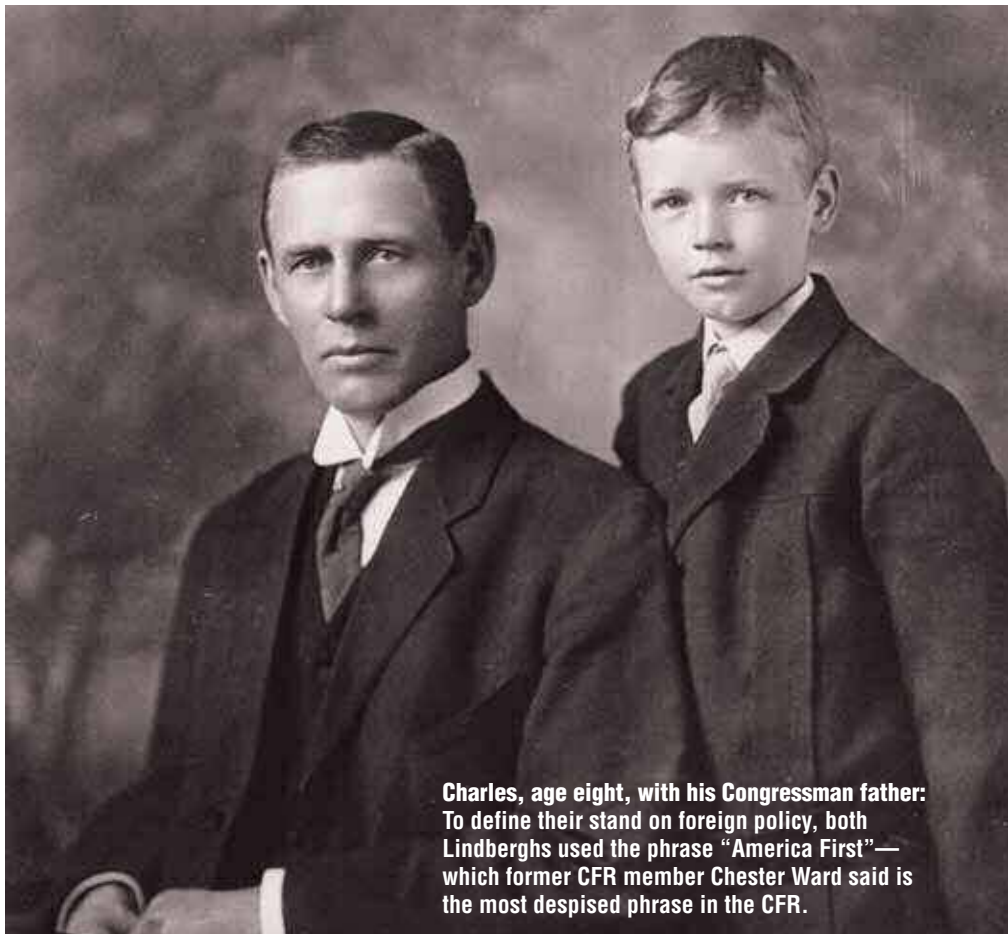
According to the FBI’s files on the kidnaping (released in 1999), gangster Johnny Torrio, Al Capone’s mentor, “expressed his opinion to the Intelligence Unit agents that the Lindbergh baby was not kidnaped for ransom ... that the baby was kidnaped and subsequently murdered by someone who had a grudge against Lindbergh and it was purely a case of personal vengeance.”

Logic dictates the kidnaping wasn’t about \$50,000. That was a lot in 1932 — but there were many wealthier families whom the public never heard of. To take

Lindbergh’s kid for money would be foolish — the whole country would be after you.

Besides inside knowledge of the Lindberghs’ plans, much evidence suggested conspiracy. Several police officers attempted to reenact the abduction single-handedly, yet none succeeded — even with a sturdier ladder in daylight. Lindbergh and Condon believed they saw lookouts at the cemeteries. Ransom money still appeared after Hauptmann’s arrest. Ellis Parker — considered New Jersey’s best detective — independently found another suspect. But ironically it was *Parker* who went to prison; in seizing the suspect, it was charged he’d violated the new federal kidnaping law!

The prosecution suppressed all evidence of conspiracy, claiming Hauptmann acted alone. Wilentz’ insistence on the death penalty, not life imprisonment, made little sense, given the meager evidence. If really guilty, in prison Hauptmann might eventually reveal how the crime was done, or name accomplices. Electrocutation made this impossible. Was Hauptmann made a patsy to protect someone?



Charles, age eight, with his Congressman father: To define their stand on foreign policy, both Lindberghs used the phrase “America First” — which former CFR member Chester Ward said is the most despised phrase in the CFR.



AP Images

The trial's injustices — involving the prosecution, judge, and some police officers — suggest a powerful hand at work. Lindbergh was popular, but lacked the wealth and political influence to compromise an entire justice system. Could the kidnapping, and eventual smearing of Lindbergh as perpetrator, *both* trace to the Lindberghs' enemies?

In his new book *The Lindbergh Baby Kidnap Conspiracy*, Professor Alan Marlis, who taught for 35 years at City University of New York, believes James P. Warburg was behind the kidnapping. A prominent banker and member of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "brain trust," Warburg is perhaps best remembered for telling a Senate subcommittee in 1950 we would have world government "by conquest or consent." He was the son of Federal Reserve architect Paul Warburg.

Marlis' book, currently available only from the McNally Jackson Bookstore in New York City, is clearly a self-published manuscript, but demonstrates extensive research. Marlis describes a context of sudden deaths for enemies of the FDR-Federal Reserve crowd:

- Walter Liggett, speechwriter for Lindbergh, Sr., was murdered in 1935 — a case never solved.
- In 1936, Louisiana politician Huey Long, possibly FDR's biggest reelection threat, was assassinated — an incident still controversial.
- Louis McFadden, the Fed's chief con-

gressional critic, survived two attempts on his life before dying suddenly, also in 1936.

- After triggering the Great Depression, "establishment" bankers wanted Roosevelt elected as President in 1932 to spawn an era of government borrowing, erosion of the Constitution, and moves toward world government. Lindbergh's father-in-law, Dwight Morrow, now Republican Senator for New Jersey, was touted as a possible presidential candidate. In October 1931, Morrow, 58 and fit, attended a charity dinner hosted by Lehman Brothers — heavy backers of FDR. (Herbert Lehman was Roosevelt's Lieutenant Governor in New York and signed the papers extraditing Hauptmann to New Jersey.) After the dinner, Morrow returned home — and died that night. Thus vanished a remaining hope for the Republicans, whom newspapers blamed for the Depression.

In 1932, one man still posed a threat to FDR's election — Charles Lindbergh. Lindy was too young constitutionally to run for President, but his popularity was so universal that his active presence alone might have kept Republican hopes alive. But five months after Morrow's sudden death, Lindbergh's baby was murdered — effectively removing the grieving father from the political scene. Some of the links Marlis draws to James Warburg:

- The Lindberghs and Warburgs had what Marlis calls a "blood feud." In 1913, Charles Lindbergh, Sr. tried to stop creation of the Federal Reserve — which Paul

**A new book blames him:** James P. Warburg sits before the Senate Banking Committee in April 1935, about two months after Hauptmann was sentenced. The friction between Warburg and Charles Lindbergh echoed that of their fathers.

Warburg, its first vice-chairman, had designed. In 1917, Lindbergh tried to have Warburg, as well as FDR's uncle Frederic Delano, impeached from the Federal Reserve Board. According to Marlis, Lindbergh "Jew-baited" Warburg at the Fed chairman hearings; Paul told his son, and the insult wasn't forgotten.

- In 1941, the fathers' feud continued between the sons. James Warburg helped found and finance the Freedom First Committee to oppose Lindbergh's America First Committee, debated Lindbergh at Madison Square Garden, and publicly denounced him.

- Paul Warburg died less than two months before the kidnapping.

- The police had suspected the crime was an inside job. The governess in James Warburg's household was the sister of the Morrrows' seamstress, Marguerite Junge, who knew about the Lindberghs' change of plans. Junge's alibi for the kidnapping night: She was "out riding" with Red Johnsen — boyfriend of the baby's nurse.

- In April 1932 (just after the kidnapping and ransom payment), James Warburg took a two-month trip to Europe.

- Warburg's estate was in Greenwich, Connecticut — the town where the very first Lindbergh ransom gold certificate was passed, by a well-dressed woman at a bakery. The cashier, checking the serial-number list, exclaimed it was Lindbergh ransom money. The woman snatched it back and ran outside into a chauffeured sedan — which police unsuccessfully searched for.

Dr. Marlis makes an interesting case, but also seems to draw some unnecessary inferences from coincidences. Warburg ordering the kidnapping cannot be *proven*. As with Hauptmann, fairness should negate "convicting" him on circumstantial evidence.

This article could not address many facets of this still-debated case. For those interested in more, good starts are Anthony Scaduto's *Scapegoat*, Lloyd Gardner's balanced *The Case That Never Dies*, and [www.lindberghkidnap.proboards.com](http://www.lindberghkidnap.proboards.com). ■