

Foreword

IT IS doubtful if any crime in history has aroused the interest of all men and women, everywhere, as has the crime with which this volume deals.

So swiftly have events occurred; so numerous have they been, and so complex have they appeared, that only a very few persons can be said to have any clear knowledge of what happened during those hectic weeks.

To the observer—and who has not been?—only bewilderment rewarded an effort to get at the facts. Contradictory statements were so numerous that even mention of them seems superfluous here.

It is the function of the "True Story of the Lindbergh Kidnapping" to lead the way through the tangled mass, to give the intelligent reader a clear picture of the circumstances surrounding the case.

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PREFACE

*Hark! to the hurried question of despair:
"Where is my child?"—an echo answers,
"Where?"*

—From "The Bride of Abydos"
by Lord Byron.

Charles Augustus Lindbergh, Jr., twenty-months old son of Colonel and Mrs. Charles A. Lindbergh, was kidnapped from his crib in the Lindbergh home at Hopewell, New Jersey, on March 1, 1932.

The abduction has been characterized as the "most abhorrent crime of all time." The kidnapers have been called "Public Enemy No. 1 of the United States of America."

The abduction shocked the world. Its effect reached the furthest corners of this and every other nation.

The authors have tried to tell the "true story of the Lindbergh kidnapping." If the present effort serves the purpose of telling as much of the story of the crime as is pertinent and interesting, its purpose will have been achieved.

J. B. and E. R.
New York, 1932.

CHAPTER I

LINDBERGH BABY KIDNAPPED

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

Three words flashed around the world. Three words penetrated the homes and hearts of rich and poor, the high and the lowly, of every nation on the face of the globe. Three historic words written irrevocably into history. Three words that stamped Tuesday night, March 1, 1932, in the records of the world as a memorable date—one ranking in importance with the dates that men remember as significant in the annals of the human race. Three words, in short, that brought fear, and horror, and sorrow and sympathy to millions and millions of persons in all walks of life.

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

The incredible, the impossible, the utter absurdity, had actually happened!

War of all nations? Yes, that could happen! Japan and China were already at each other's throats.

The murder of a monarch? Yes, that, too, could happen! Unrest was rampant throughout the civilized world.

A rocket to the moon? Even that, of all nonsense, could happen! Scientists were every day digging out nature's secrets.

But the Lindbergh baby kidnapped? Preposterous! Ridiculous! The world might as well come to an end!

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

Newspapers flashed the headlines. Radio struck into the distant nooks and crannies with the incredible news.

Mothers clutched their babies to their breasts. Fathers watched solicitously over their broods. This very thing could strike the most humble, as well as the mightiest.

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

Modern science, modern ingenuity, modern man's acute brain got to work. Teletypes spread the news into every police precinct. Telephone wires burned with the story. Policemen, routed from their very beds, hustled out to the crossroads, the bridges, the rivers—the search was on. The greatest man-hunt in the world's history was under way scarcely before the hawkers of newspapers were on the city streets with their raucous "Wuxtra! Wuxtra!"

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

A night city editor of a New York newspaper, reading the wire flash, telephoned a famous publisher.

"The Lindbergh baby has been kidnapped!" he said.

"Now I'll tell you a joke!" laughed the publisher.

"But it's so!" the editor responded. "It's so!"

And the newspaper's machinery of reporters and photographers whirled into action.

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

By word of mouth, the news spread through the congested city neighborhoods. By word of mouth it was conveyed from farm to farm, as country folk drove miles to their nearest neighbor's homes, to discuss the story. The Lindbergh baby kidnapping filtered across the nation, through its very fabric, to its very soul.

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

The wheels of the nation were set in motion. Reports flew from the far corners of the nation to that homestead at Hopewell, New Jersey, where the man-hunt for the kidnapers was being organized. Theories mounted endlessly, into veritable tangles of misinformation. Confusion and pandemonium reigned. Everybody was in the chase.

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

President Herbert Hoover called Attorney General Mitchell into consultation.

"The entire nation's resources must be pressed into service!" was the tenor of his order.

The Department of Justice, the Postal Inspec-

tion Service, the United States Secret Service, the Prohibition Enforcement Bureau—in fact the whole Federal machinery devoted to the pursuit of law violators, swung into action.

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

Thousands of letters flowed in upon Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh, the international idol, the personification of youth, and his wife, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, the courageous, self-effacing and lovable girl who had borne the "most famous baby in the world." Authorities tracked down every clew. Arrests and "detentions" were recorded throughout the nation. Folks suspected everyone upon whom the least iota of doubt might rest. The nation's hubbub was visible and audible. The Japanese-Chinese war was relegated to the limbo of forgotten things. Nothing else in all the world was of any importance but—

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

The ransom note. The ladder. The lonely Sourland mountains. The mysterious phone calls. The badly written and badly spelled letters carrying direful hints of death. The finger of suspicion.

All were on the lips of the nation.

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

A maniac? A degenerate? A gang of international plotters? Bootleggers? Organized, mercenary kidnapers? A common thrill-killer?

Conjectures piled upon conjectures. The world was baffled.

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

The baby's diet. Anne Morrow Lindbergh, with the solicitude of eternal mother love, broadcast the list of her child's foods. The heart of a nation ached. Milk and cereal. Cooked vegetables. Stewed fruit. The baby's diet.

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

What the baby looked like. Twenty months old. Blue eyes. Fair and curly hair. Fair complexion.

At the time of the abduction, the famed "eaglet" was garbed in a white sleeping suit. He was able to walk a little. He could talk a bit, but used only those "few simple words such as a child beginning to talk would know."

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

Mothers, everywhere, read eagerly. Fathers, with eyes upon their offspring, were engrossed, too. Every scrap of description was seized upon with avidity. He had a chubby face. True, chubby faced babies are to be seen throughout the world and always will be, but *this* baby had a chubby face and that became synonymous with the Lindbergh infant.

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

Famous men dropped their work. The president of a college. The Governors of several states. United States Senators and Representatives. Ministers and priests and rabbis. Financial wizards and

industrial magnates. Overlords of the underworld. The gamut of American life, shocked, stunned, inarticulate.

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

Three words rang around the world. Sober, erudite editorial writers penned suggestions prescribing the best methods of conducting the search—as they saw them. Learned men threw customary dignity to the proverbial winds and entered the search. Everywhere, everyone offered aid. Yet the bald, inescapable fact was that the Lindbergh baby had simply dropped out of everyday existence. For once the whole of the world was stumped; for once the unthinkable had actually taken place.

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

Into every home in the land, the subject was carried as common conversation. The days passed. There were optimistic statements from the famous men who were players in the greatest drama of the ages. Still more days passed. Everyone held out hope. Each day dragged by. Each hour seemed an eternity. It could not last forever! It could not!

Yet the days became weeks and the search went on. And still—

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

The words scared the minds of men. The mystery gripped them. The unknowable confronted them. All they saw, or heard, or thought of was

Lindbergh Baby Kidnapped!

CHAPTER II

THE RANSOM BABY

The most famous baby in the world!

The infant who had endeared himself to the hearts of a nation on the very day of his birth!

The child whose disappearance shocked millions!

What did he look like? What sort of a life did he lead? How was he cared for? Who were his companions? Whom did he resemble? What was his disposition? Was he robust? Was he an average, normal child?

Only the relatives and the most intimate and close friends of the Lindberghs knew that Charles A. Lindbergh, Jr. was 30 pounds of soft chubby babyhood, that he had blue eyes the color of the sky on a soft summer day; that his hair was light, and curled in precious little ringlets about his head. And that he stood 2 feet 9 inches in his stocking feet.

Like his father, the Lone Eagle, he had a very deep dimple in his chin, the adorable cleft being the most distinguishing mark of identification on the child. And he had a broad baby smile which made those few persons who were privileged to see him his immediate slaves for life.