

People seem to love theories and conspiracies, and it's especially true when it comes to this case. Many don't believe that Bruno Richard Hauptmann was the man who kidnapped and murdered "Little Lindy". Some believe it was an inside job, going as far as to say that Charles Lindbergh killed his own son.

I thought it would be fun to present some of these different scenarios to you. So, here we go!

### ***Theory #1: Charles Lindbergh killed his son***

Charles Lindbergh became a beloved figure around the world after making his solo transatlantic flight. He became the most popular man in the media and the most eligible bachelor around. In the eyes of the people, he could do no wrong. But what if I told you that the person, we saw in front of the camera was nothing more than an act? A show put on by someone trying to save face? That might have been exactly what C. Lindbergh was doing because people who knew him didn't have high thoughts of him. In truth, Charles Lindbergh was a racist, misogynist man who didn't listen to anyone but himself. Charles Lindbergh, America's golden boy led a double life. One that might have led him to kill his own son. A case of circumstantial evidence could have easily been built against him but never was. Instead of becoming the main suspect in his son's kidnapping, he was put in charge of the investigation, this could have helped pull strings and push authorities in the wrong direction. So, who was Charles Augustus Lindbergh really?

#### **- Charles the cad**

"Lucky Lindy" was lucky all right, especially when it came to the ladies. Throughout his marriage to Anne, he had many affairs that resulted in him fathering seven children out of wedlock. That dirty dog. In 1957, Lindbergh, who was in his mid-fifties, met and fell in love with Brigitte Hesshaimer, a thirty-one-year-old hatmaker living in Munich, Germany. They began a long-term affair that only ended when C. Lindbergh died in 1974. Lindy would visit Brigitte two or three times a year and they went on to have three children together. Their children knew nothing of their relationship as it was kept a secret from them. When visiting, he would introduce himself to the children as Mr. Careu Kent. Around the same time, C. Lindbergh was also having an affair with Hesshaimer's sister, Marrietta (oh, that son of a bitch), and a third woman, Valeska, his German translator, and private secretary. He went on to have two children with each of the women and again kept the identity of his fatherhood a secret. Ten days before his death in 1974, C. Lindbergh wrote a letter to his three mistresses, asking them to continue to keep his fatherhood a secret, which they did until his daughter Astrid confronted her mom in the 1990s. Even upon learning the truth of her father's identity, Astrid was sworn to secrecy, which she kept until her mom died in 2001. The other two families have kept their silence. In 2003, Hesshaimer's three children broke their silence. While they did not claim their dad's estate, they went public because they wanted to verify their family relationship before publishing a book about their late mom.

Let's break this down, shall we?

#### *Children with Anne Marrow Lindbergh:*

- *Charles Augustus Lindbergh Jr. (1930-1932)*
- *Jon Lindbergh (1932- 2021)*
- *Land Marrow Lindbergh (1937- )*
- *Anne Spencer Lindbergh (1940-1993)*
- *Scott Lindbergh (1942- )*
- *Reeve Lindbergh (1945- )*

#### *Children with Brigitte Hesshaimer:*

- *Dyrk Hesshaimer (1958- )*
- *Astrid Hesshaimer (1960- )*
- *David Hesshaimer (1967- )*

*Children with Marietta Hesshaimer*

- *Vago Hesshaimer (?)*
- *Christoph Hesshaimer (?)*

*Children with Valeska (Surname unknown)*

- *A son (name unknown)*
- *A daughter (name unknown)*

- **Charles the Nazi**

With Germany building up its military in the 1930s, the United States government asked C. Lindbergh, then living in Europe, to tour the nation's flying fleet. In 1936, C. Lindbergh was asked by the American military ambassador in Berlin to report on the state of Germany's aviation program. While in Germany, Charles, along with his wife, Anne, attended the Summer Olympic games as the special guest of Field Marshal Hermann Goering, the head of the German military air force (Luftwaffe). The Lindberghs toured German factories, took the control of state-of-the-art bombers, and took note of the multiplying airfields. C. Lindbergh visited Germany twice over the next two years and with each visit, he became more impressed with the German military and the German people. He was soon convinced that no other military in Europe could stand up to Germany in the event of war. During a dinner in 1938 at the home of the US ambassador to Germany, C. Lindbergh was awarded the Service Cross of the German Eagle medal from Luftwaffe commander Herman Goring on behalf of the Fuehrer himself, Adolf Hitler. Kristallnacht (the Night of Broken Glass), which found 7,000 businesses owned by German Jews destroyed and tens of thousands of Jews taken to concentration camps, occurred just a few weeks later. Facing pressure to return the medal, Charles Lindbergh refused. This led many people to be repulsed to see an American wear a Nazi decoration, believing this to be an acceptance of their policies. Charles Lindbergh was not shy about his white supremacist and anti-Semitic beliefs. He felt that the only way to have peace in the world was to ban together protect the "most priceless possession" which was the inheritance of European blood. He followed Hitler's belief in humans carrying a gene that formed the "superior Aryan race". This consisted of having blonde hair, blue eyes, and being born with no deformities or illness. Charles Jr. Had been born with a rickets-like condition that affected the development of strong bones, he required large doses of vitamin D on the daily basis, and exposure to a sunlamp that was kept at his crib side. He had hammertoes on his left foot, a too large head, and unfused bones in his skull. That right there meant he was not part of the superior race. The Lindberghs returned to America in April 1939 and C. Lindbergh turned his attention to keeping his country out of a war in Europe. He asked that American remain neutral. In his first nationwide radio address, C. Lindbergh criticized President Roosevelt, who believed the Nazis must be stopped in their conquest of Europe. Lindy viewed a Nazi victory as certain and thought America's attention should be placed elsewhere. As Germany pushed to invade France and began its Blitzkrieg (an intense military campaign intended to bring about a swift victory) bombardment of England, Americans began to change their isolationist views. One, however, stood steadfast to the belief that America should remain neutral. The America First Committee was the most powerful isolationist group in the country. It had 850,000 members from all different walks of life. The AFC was led by Robert E. Wood and Sears Roebuck. Impressed by what they had seen from Charles Lindbergh, he was invited to join their executive

committee. C. Lindbergh of course accepted. In early 1941, Lindbergh testified before Congress in opposition of the Lend-Lease Act, which eventually passed and allowed the US to offer aid to Allied nations. In September of that year, C. Lindbergh delivered an infamous speech in Des Moines, Iowa. In this speech, he blamed American Jews for the tilt towards the war and stated: "Their greatest danger to this country lies in their large ownership and influence in our motion pictures, our press, our radio, and our government,". Even by the standards of the day, the remarks were thought to be outrageous and C. Lindbergh's reputation was tarnished. The America Forst Committee disbanded on December 10, 1941, after Pearl Harbor made America staying out of the war unavoidable. Charles Lindbergh requested to rejoin the U.S. air force which was quickly shut down by FDR. Germany lost the war in May 1945 and WWII ended that September. Charles Lindbergh tried to save face and criticized Germany and other dictatorships for the way they ran their countries during the war. But his earlier Nazi affiliation left him in ruins and it was a long time before the words American hero and Charles Lindbergh's name were uttered in the same sentence.

#### - **Charles the misogynist**

Charles Lindbergh's views about women more or less lined up with those of the time. He believed that women belonged in the home, cooking, cleaning, and raising children. He had little to no respect for female pilots and gave them no support. Many believe this was because he felt threatened that a female pilot would meet or go beyond his accomplishments. Many people who knew C. Lindbergh claimed that in general he was kind of person who wanted the attention on him and nobody else. He never teamed up with female pilots to accomplish anything. He was a man who didn't want to share credit with anyone, especially women. I believe that deep down he knew pilots like Louise Thaden could have given him a run for his money. He had little respect for his wife, Anne, and the sanctity of their marriage. As stated above he had many mistresses at one time. I will say in C. Lindbergh's defense that most men of that time held chauvinistic views. That was just the way society worked.

#### - **Charles and the circumstantial evidence**

Now that I've torn the man to shreds let's discuss the circumstantial case that could have been built against Charles Lindbergh. Charles Lindbergh loved to play practical jokes on people. The only problem is they were often cruel and dangerous ones. Could he have accidentally killed his son while attempting a practical joke and staged the kidnapping to cover up his crime? Or maybe he killed his son because he was born with deformities (as mentioned above) and was not deemed part of the "superior race" which was something he fully believed in. Sometimes if it looks guilty and sounds guilty, chances are it's guilty. Even after all these years, people believe this theory to be the most plausible one and there has to be a reason behind that.

Let's take a look at the evidence, shall we?

Many people noted that C. Lindbergh had been acting suspiciously on the night of his sons kidnapping. One thing that stood out the most was that he left instructions for his son to be put to bed at 8:00 p.m., and that no one should bother the child or enter the nursery until 10:00 p.m., which was after the child had already been kidnapped. Very peculiar. Strike one Charles.

- Charles Lindbergh was scheduled to attend the New York University (NYU) alumni dinner the night of the kidnapping, but he never showed up or called to cancel. C. Lindbergh was known as being a very reliable person it was out of character for him to blow off the event.
- Lindbergh told Anne that he heard the sound of wood snapping outside, but later on Anne and three of the house employees said they didn't hear anything that night, and their normally alert guard dog, Wagoosh, did not bark.

- When Betty Gow found the empty crib at 10:00 p.m., both she and Anne assumed that Charles had taken the baby as a prank, as he had done several weeks before, hiding the child in a closet.
- When Lindbergh saw the empty crib for himself, he announced. “Anne, they have stolen our baby!” Even before he searched the house for the toddler, he planted the seed that Charles Jr. Had been stolen.
- Anne and the house employees searched the house, starting in the nursery, and none of them saw the ransom note on the window sill. But Lindbergh found the ransom note after returning to the nursery alone.
- Handwriting experts agree that this first note was different from the thirteen other ones, suggesting it was written under great pressure and in such a way as to try and disguise the handwriting.
- Charles Lindbergh insisted that the New Jersey police turn over all the information they have regarding the case to him. At one point he even threatened to shoot any officer who did not comply.
- When Hoover sent two FBI agents to assist with the investigation, C. Lindbergh turned them away, refusing help from the one agency whose training and experience gave them the best chance of returning his son safe.
- C. Lindbergh shunned the FBI yet invited numerous tipsters, mediums, and gangsters to help with the investigation while blocking any logical police procedures which might have yielded useful information.
- C. Lindbergh replace solid investigative procedures with amateur methods which resulted in obscuring the trail, creating false leads, and taking actions designed to create deceptive clues.
- C. Lindbergh rejected a New York police department plan to stake out the ransom drop at the cemetery.

Charles Lindbergh tried to explain away his odd behavior but other things didn’t add up and caused questions to arise. Why did Lindbergh call Anne the night of the kidnapping to tell her he would be home a little “late”, but then strangely honk his horn he arrived at the home at 8:25 p.m.? Why did he forget to bring Charles Jr.’s dog that always slept under his crib to the nursery that night? Why did he call Betty Gow to the nursery to look at the note, send her to the kitchen to get a knife to open the envelope, then refuse to open the note until authorities arrived? Why did he take his family to Europe for “safety” once Governor Hoffman re-opened the investigation? Why not take them immediately after the kidnapping? Why the hell did C. Lindbergh order for his son to be cremated right after identification was made? Not only could the child’s body contain important evidence but he didn’t even ask Anne how she would like to have their son laid to rest. Charles Lindbergh continuously tried to explain away his odd behavior on the night Charles Jr. was kidnapped but suspicion still hangs over him even in death.

### ***Theory #2: It was an inside job***

#### **- Theory #3: The sister did it**

Anne Lindbergh’s older sister, Elizabeth Marrow, was Charles Lindbergh's original love interest but Elizabeth suffered from heart disease and since Lindbergh was a eugenicist, and a believer in white supremacy, according to those beliefs he might have felt that people born with birth defects were considered to be a drain on society, so, Elizabeth would not be the kind of wife Lindbergh would have preferred. Lindbergh soon turn his attention to Anne and ended up proposing to her instead. Elizabeth stayed at the Lindbergh estate the weekend leading up to the night of the kidnapping. Allegedly C. Lindbergh gave strict orders that his sister-in-law was not be left alone with the child at any time. Could she have killed Charles Jr. In a fit of delayed jealous rage over Lindbergh jilting her for her younger sister? Shortly after the child went missing Elizabeth Morrow was put into an institution for her heart condition. If this theory is believable the Lindbergh family, Morrow, and the workers of both homes lied

on the witness stand during the trial. Throughout the 1950s, many rumors floated around claiming that Elizabeth was the culprit but the rumors were never founded.

- **Theory #4: A family hoax**

Strange claims that Charles Lindbergh Jr. is still alive have been made by many people. They claim to be the lost child who was the center of a plot to be removed from the Lindbergh family and raised elsewhere as the children of other families. Obviously having a “dad” who advocated for disabled people to be sterilized and/or killed couldn’t risk the public knowing he had a son with physical disabilities. They tell people that their “dad”, Charles Lindbergh, conspired to get rid of them by hiring people to help him, and his wife, with a plot to deceive the world about the loss and death of their first-born child. The toddler was then smuggled out of the country and a dead child from somewhere was used as a decoy. The decoy was the child found on the side of the road and after being identified by the nanny was quickly cremated the next day to ensure that nobody would ever know it wasn’t actually Charles Lindbergh Jr. Okay, I’ll admit that this theory is a big stretch. I’m not sure I believe this one.

- **Theory #5: A trio of kidnapers**

This theory does point to Bruno Richard Hauptmann being guilty of the crime but that two other men acted alongside him, both either German or native German speakers. This theory would make sense as it would be a lot of work for one man to orchestrate the whole kidnaping and murder plot. Not to mention, the money. Hauptmann had indeed been making flashy purchases before he was arrested, but between approximately \$14,000-\$20,000 had been found at his residence after his apprehension. Could he really have spent \$30,000 - \$36,000 in two and a half years? If he had, what did he spend it on? It would make sense that he was working with two other people whom he then split the \$50,000 ransom with. Another piece of evidence that might prove Hauptmann didn’t work alone was the difference in handwriting between the many ransom notes. Another clue is a phone conversation Dr. Condon had with the “kidnappers”. During the phone conversation, Dr. Condon heard someone shouting “Statte cito” (shut up in Italian) in the background. This would mean the letters were written by a man from Germany and the phone calls were from a Scandinavian gentleman with an Italian in the background. That seems like there were a lot of hands in the pot. However, this theory is largely disputed because Hauptmann had multiple chances to give up his accomplices and confess to his own role in the kidnaping and murder of Charles Jr. In exchange for a lesser sentence, but he never did.

If I listed all the theories floating around about the Lindbergh baby kidnaping, we would be here until tomorrow. So, I’ll stop there. I hope you enjoyed these alternative scenarios. Did they make you think? Did they change your mind about who the real perpetrator was at all?