

Extortion, kidnapping, and murder

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



When the baby's nurse, Betty Gow went to check on baby Charlie, She discovered that he was missing. Upon the realization that the child was missing, Gow revealed the information to the parents, and the local authorities were contacted immediately and there began the search for the Lindbergh baby. Because of the nature of the case and the high profile family, the New Jersey State Police constantly found themselves battling with other jurisdictions even the FBI over who would handle the case. During the police's initial investigation, they found an envelope with a note inside demanding a fifty-thousand-dollar ransom. The note had specific instructions on how to break the amount down into smaller bills and a delivery method to be scheduled a couple of days later.

The police also found fingerprints on the envelope, but due to the vast number of servants and smudging fingerprinting was of no use. They gathered more evidence such as soil-clay, scratches from a ladder, and chisel marks on the window sill. The most puzzling fact remains how the kidnappers were able to enter the home with everyone inside and pinpoint the exact room in which the child slept in. They also thought about why the family dog never made a commotion during the night of the kidnapping. Over the next two months, the police began to look at and interrogate suspects. The mother and father were ruled out and all suspicion ceased to exist. They then began to speculate that it could have been Anne's sister Elisabeth or the servants, but they too were ruled out as suspects.

The police finally caught a break when a gentleman by the name of Bruno Hauptmann used a ten-dollar gold certificate (the ransom payment) at a nearby gasoline station. Bruno had been under surveillance by the

authorities after he had been positively identified as the man that had been using the gold certificate. Then on September 19, 1934 he was arrested at his home and taken into custody. He was booked into the county jail where he was interrogated on his involvement in the death of the Lindbergh baby. While in custody the authorities compared Hauptmann's handwriting to the writing of the ransom notes and got a match. Hauptmann's initial appearance in court is where he was arraigned and entered a plea of not guilty on the first charge of extortion in the Supreme Court.

He was then later indicted on the charge of murder and kidnapping in Hunterdon County by the grand jury where he again pleads not guilty. He was remanded to the custody of Hunterdon County Jail where he would await trial. Hauptmann's trial would continue to last five grueling weeks.

Throughout the five weeks, the prosecution and the defense attorney's would be pleading their case to the judge and jury. They would present all the evidence they gathered whether it be direct or circumstantial. On February 13, 1935, the jury had reached a verdict after only eleven hours of deliberation. The jury found the defendant, Hauptmann guilty of murder and kidnapping in the first degree. The consequences of crimes such as these would be capital punishment. This would involve death by electrocution.

Hauptmann was then remanded to New Jersey Department of Correction where he would await his day of execution while on death row. On April 03, 1936, Bruno Richard Hauptmann was electrocuted at the Trenton Penitentiary in New Jersey for his involvement in the kidnapping murder of the Lindbergh baby.