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INTRODUCTION

Kidnapping is not a new crime. People have “stolen” others for hundreds of years. Often the victims were enslaved.

Today, kidnapping means something else. When most people think of kidnapping, they think of strangers taking children.

But sometimes people kidnap to make money. In 1932, Charles Lindbergh Jr. was kidnapped for money. The kidnapper left a ransom note. It demanded \$50,000 in exchange for the child.

Betty and Barney Hill of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, said they were kidnapped for a very different reason. The Hills say aliens abducted them in 1961. They say the aliens ran tests on them.

Kidnappings also happen for political reasons. In 1979, a mob of students stormed the US Embassy in Tehran. They took more than 60 hostages.

Terry Anderson's kidnapping in 1985 was also political. Anderson was a reporter. He was working on a story about the Lebanese civil war when he was taken hostage. The kidnappers held Anderson for nearly seven years.

In child kidnapping cases, most often the child knows the kidnapper. In 2002, Elizabeth Smart was taken from her bedroom. Eventually, Elizabeth's sister helped solve the case.

No matter what the reason, kidnapping is terrifying. Lives are changed forever. Those who survive a kidnapping cherish their freedom.

CHAPTER 1

Charles Lindbergh Jr., Kidnapped

DATAFILE

Timeline

May 1927

Lindbergh flies nonstop from New York to Paris.

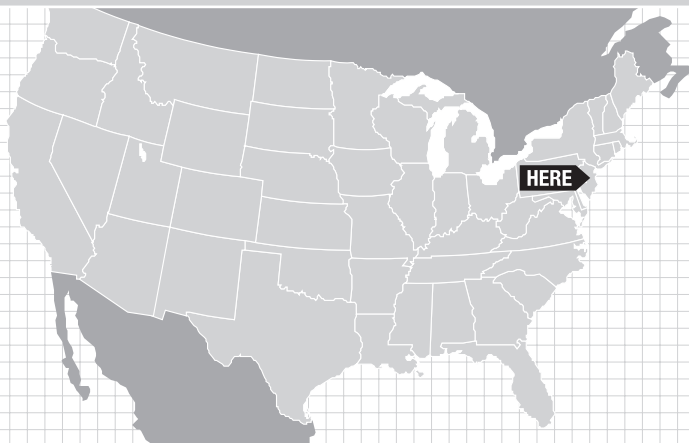
March 1932

Charles Lindbergh Jr. is taken from his crib.

May 1927

Bruno Richard Hauptmann is found guilty of Charlie's murder.

Where Hopewell, New Jersey?



Key Terms

alias—a false name

autopsy—a study done on a dead body to determine the cause of death

gold notes—US paper currency used from 1865 to 1933; each bill was worth a certain amount of gold

shield—to protect

verdict—a decision made by a jury in a court of law



Did You Know?

The New Jersey State Police chief at the time of Lindbergh's kidnapping was H. Norman Schwarzkopf. His son of the same name led the US forces during Desert Storm in 1991.

CHAPTER 1

Charles Lindbergh Jr., Kidnapped

Little Charlie was like many 20-month-old children. He was a happy boy with blond hair. He had a dimple in his chin. His parents loved him.

But baby Charlie was also different. He had famous parents. His father, Charles Lindbergh, was the first to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. That feat put Lindbergh in the record books.

Baby Charlie was famous at birth. His parents tried to shield him from the public eye. They built a house in a quiet area of New Jersey. Sadly, it was not enough to protect the boy.

“They have stolen our baby.”

The night of March 1, 1932, was damp and cold. Charlie had a cold. His nurse, Betty, rubbed medicine on his chest. She dressed him in a one-piece sleeping suit. Betty put the baby to bed at about 8:30 p.m.

Downstairs, Anne Morrow Lindbergh waited for her husband, Charles, to come home. Then they ate dinner together. After dinner, Anne got ready for bed. Charles went to his study.

At about 10:30 p.m., Betty checked on Charlie. She entered the room. Betty expected to hear his breathing. She heard nothing. She crept closer to the crib. She felt for the boy, but could not find him. The crib was empty.

Betty tried to stay calm. She asked Anne if she had the child. Anne did not. Then the two went to

Charles's study. They hoped he had brought Charlie downstairs. He had not. Charles headed for the nursery. He immediately noticed an open window. An envelope was sitting on the sill.

*"They have stolen our baby."
— Charles Lindbergh*

The Ransom

Charles called the police. He opened the note when the police arrived. The kidnappers demanded \$50,000 in exchange for Charlie. The kidnapper used a special "signature." The signature was a group of circles. It would help Lindbergh know which notes were really from the kidnapper.

Police also found pieces of a ladder and a chisel near the house. Hundreds of people searched the area around the Lindbergh's house.

Dear John

About a week after the kidnapping, a man named John Condon joined the search. Condon was a retired schoolteacher who admired Lindbergh. He placed an ad in a local paper offering help of any kind. He wrote to the kidnapper and said he would act as a go-between.

The kidnapper took Condon up on his offer. Lindbergh also let Condon contact the kidnapper. Condon, who used the alias “Jafsie,” wrote several notes and newspaper ads to the kidnapper.

On March 12, 1932, Condon received a note. It told him to go the main entrance of the Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx.

The Drop Off

At the cemetery, he met a man called “John.” John told Condon he now wanted \$70,000. Condon demanded proof that the kidnapper had the boy. A few days later, Charlie’s sleeping suit arrived by mail. Lindbergh agreed to pay more money.

On April 2, 1932, Condon and Lindbergh brought the money to the cemetery. Lindbergh paid the ransom with gold notes. Gold notes were not often used. The police also recorded the serial numbers of the notes. This would make it easier for police to trace the money if the kidnapper spent it.

Condon handed over the money. The kidnapper gave him a note. The note said that the boy was on a boat called the *Nellie*. The boat was “between Horseneck Beach and Gay Head near Elizabeth Island,” New Jersey.