

# Traitor Of Arnhem

**WHAT** makes a resistance hero turn spy, and betray his comrades to death and indescribable torture?

The confession of Christian Lindemans—"King Kong" as he was known in the Dutch Underground movement—gave some of the answers, in 24 pages of typed foolscap.

With Lindemans in Breda Prison, by my orders, I took the confession to my office, to study it.

The tale of Lindemans' perfidy had begun in 1943 when his popularity as a leader of the Dutch Interior Forces of Resistance was at its highest. He had begun collecting jewels and valuables from rich ladies—not all of them young—to provide fighting funds for the underground "Escape Route" through Belgium and Holland into Portugal.

He spent these fortunes in taverns and night clubs, adorned his huge hairy wrists with gold straps, elaborate wrist watches; gave priceless diamond and sapphire pendants to bistro girls for favours, describing them boastfully as "loot from the Nazis."

In February of 1944 the Gestapo had captured Lindemans' youngest brother during a raid upon a house through which the "escape route" functioned. Also, they captured a girl cabaret dancer named Veronica, who had grown up next door to Lindemans in Rotterdam, and undoubtedly had been his sweetheart since childhood.

Perhaps the worst feeling a man can endure is to know that

his loved ones are being questioned under Nazi torture.

Lindemans withstood it for 10 days. To his worries—and perhaps the most important of his worries—was added the fact that other Resistance leaders were growing increasingly curious to know what had happened to the fortunes in jewellery and money that had been entrusted to him.

So, in March of 1944 he contacted two Dutchmen in Brussels whom he privately knew to be in Nazi pay. One was Cornelis Verloop, known as "Satan Face."

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Over a cup of coffee, Lindemans offered his services to his country's enemies; for: (a) worthwhile money rewards; and (b) the instant release of his youngest brother and sweetheart Veronica from Gestapo hands.

In subsequent months, he betrayed British agents and his own comrades.

He even betrayed the men who set out to rescue him from a Gestapo hospital. He stepped to "liberty" over the bodies of 47 comrades.

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**I**N June, 1945, Lindemans, by my orders, was moved to the great prison in Scheveningen, near The Hague, into the grim, dreadful block of dungeons called "The Hotel of Orange."

Some of the Gestapo apparatus was still there—steel helmets to be screwed upon skull and eyeballs, then electrified. Devices weird, satanically vicious, beyond the invention of sane men.

We did not use these mechanisms. Lindemans was put in a cell and left to his thoughts.

When I visited him in his cell he started up, eyes protruding, and flung himself upon the iron floor at my feet.

"Is there no mercy?" he whispered.

I stood silently at the steel door of his cell, watching the scrawny betrayer, once so huge and arrogant, grovel on the bare floor.

I went back to my office, now with the Dutch Counter-Intelligence. I proposed to submit the Lindemans documents with an urgent request for his trial.

The Lindemans File was kept in the guarded record-room at Intelligence H.Q. with other important documents. The whole building was surrounded by a security cordon.

Yet, when I went to get the vital file, I found a blank space on the shelf. Even from the record index the name of Lindemans had been completely expunged.

The entire official dossier on Lindemans—had disappeared!

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**I** NEVER set eyes on the file again. The mystery of its disappearance seemed insoluble.

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For two years, due to one delay after another, Lindemans awaited trial.

I wanted this trial to take place so that Lindemans—whom so many Dutch youths and girls had worshipped as "The Scarlet Pimpernel of Holland"—might be publicly accused.

Many people in high places—among them Field-Marshal Montgomery—had already been

wrongly blamed for the disaster of Arnhem.

But in October, 1945, I had to leave the Security Service and was posted to duty in Germany, and officially there was no more I could do about Lindemans.

Then, one morning in May of 1946, articles began to reappear in the British and Continental newspapers, demanding to know what had happened to the "Dutch officer who had betrayed Arnhem."

Dutch Government officials, anxious as anybody to clear up the situation, answered this newspaper agitation in the only way they could—by promptly fixing the date for his trial:

"Christian Lindemans will answer charges of treason before a Special Tribunal to assemble at the end of June, 1946."

But behind the blank, windowless red walls of Scheveningen Prison, an unexpected development was apparently taking place.

The spy Christian Lindemans was having his last love affair!

One of the reticent, coldly efficient Netherlands nurses attached to the prison hospital had fallen in love with him, at the last!

Women nurses were not usually found in prison hospitals of Holland, or anywhere else.

There was only one formidable wing in Scheveningen that still held the suspected traitors, Nazi collaborationists, looters, spies. Among these was Lindemans.

Since his capture he had lost

**By COLONEL  
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weight very rapidly. Prison doctors, realising he had once had a better chance, his lung

ters, realising he had once had a bullet through his lung, suspected tuberculosis. He was removed for a time from his stark cell with its stone walls and bare floor to the locked wing of the prison hospital, for tests and treatment.

It must have been during this treatment that he met the nurse. They found some way of contacting each other and becoming intimate, without the knowledge of the prison authorities.

According to what was later told, this romance masked a daring last throw of the dice by the spy, a last bid to evade the retribution that he saw closing in on him.

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**L**INDEMANS, it will be realised, was being kept in a prison hospital room, with sound locks on its doors and heavy bars at its small window. The escape plan was not a very complicated one. The chief thing it involved was the actual getting out of that locked and barred room. And the simplest way to freedom lay through the window.

Which meant, of course, that the bars would have to be removed. Very well. That was the task the nurse set herself.

She had an accomplice. He was another prisoner whose identity was masked under the nickname of "The Singing Rat." He was apparently serving a sentence for a not-too-serious offence and through the efforts of the nurse was given the job of a cleaning orderly for sick prisoners like Lindemans.

Somehow or other—and the "how" was never afterwards satisfactorily explained—the nurse managed to get a steel-cutting file smuggled in. And with this she started to tackle the stout bars of King Kong's prison.

It must have been slow work. Only a little could be done each day, or night. But there was

**T**HIS is the story of the betrayal of Montgomery's plan for the airborne landing at Arnhem—a piece of treachery which cost 7,000 British casualties, killed and wounded.

The writer, Colonel Oreste Pinto, was Chief of the Dutch Counter-Espionage Service. It was he who caught the traitor, Christian Lindemans.

Lindemans — nicknamed King Kong — was a big wrestler who made a reputation as a "hero" of the Dutch Resistance Movement.

Another Dutch spy named Verloop, when questioned by Colonel Pinto in November, 1944, told him that Lindemans had told the Germans about the Arnhem plan. Lindemans

**Colonel Pinto in November, 1944, told him that Lindemans had told the Germans about the Arnhem plan. Lindemans, arrested wrote a confession.**

"The Singing Rat" to help, to take his turn up at the window while the nurse kept watch and remained close at hand with ready explanation should it become necessary.

At last bars were sawn through. Not right through, for they had to appear intact to any casual inspecting eye. But so that the little thrust of a determined hand would complete the severance and leave a bar-less gateway to freedom.

There was now a second part of the plan that had to be fixed. The room in which King Kong lay was a good distance from the ground. Some way had to be found of lowering him, once he had scrambled through the little window.

This was where "The Singing Rat" came in again. On the night chosen for the escape a rubber hose-pipe was, in apparent carelessness, left hanging out of a store-room window quite close to the window of the Lindemans room.

And it was down this hose-pipe that Lindemans, in the darkness, slithered and scrambled to the ground when the moment came.

But his luck was dead out. He made too much noise. He could not help making too much noise, and patrolling guards heard and investigated. Within a matter of minutes Lindemans was back behind bars.

Fate was now ready to write the final lines in the dramatic story of Christian Lindemans. The day of his trial had been

fixed. But two days before that day dawned he was found lying dead upon the mattress of his prison bed.

His body was nearly cold. The nurse was found lying unconscious across him. She was rushed to the operating theatre, strong antidotes to poison were applied. She recovered, the official report states, enough to confess that she had administered 80 aspirin tablets to Lindemans, and taken a similar number herself.

It was to have been a suicide pact.

The death of Lindemans was mentioned briefly in various newspapers.

newspapers.

I was not able to discover the name of the nurse, nor have my investigations since brought it to light.

I do not know if she was brought to trial for her share in the suicide pact, and for supplying Lindemans with 80 aspirin tablets.

Nor do I know what became of the traitor, Cornelis Verloop, the man nicknamed "Satan Face," whose confession to me had been my first proof that Lindemans was a paid spy of the Nazis, and had betrayed Arnhem to them.

The full details and effects of Lindemans' treachery may never be known. I have told all I know, from my own knowledge.

Many people prefer to doubt even the known facts. They want to believe that traitors are bred only in the enemy's camp. Happy the land which has no son or daughter prepared to betray his country.

**THE END**