

The Traitor Of Arnhem-4

King Kong Escapes Fate Through A Woman's Love

WHAT HAS HAPPENED—

By Col. Oreste Pinto

The story of Christian Lindemans, the Dutch traitor, who sold the Germans one of the most vital secrets of the Second World War, is approaching its bizarre end. Lindemans has been betrayed by another spy to Col. Pinto, head of the Dutch Counter-Espionage Service, and made a full confession. Within the grim walls of Scheveningen Prison he awaits his trial and (as it seems) certain execution.

I HAD been seriously ill that Christmas. In June of 1945 I reported back for duty, saw King Kong again.

He was still in Breda prison, waiting. He had gone slightly thinner. His hair was noticeably greying. He looked at me quietly.

"Sir, when I met you in Antwerp for the first time and looked into your eyes I knew it was the beginning of the end for me," he said.

"So did I, Lindemans," I replied coldly. On my orders he was moved to the great prison in Scheveningen, near The Hague, into the grim, dreadful block of dungeons called "The Hotel of Orange."

In a few months he melted pitifully. All his hulking bravado went. He had sustained himself through his life by the adoration of women, the worship of comrades, who thought him a fine, brave fellow.

Now, surrounded by Dutch gaolers who knew him for what he was, Lindemans broke down.

He hardly ate. His bones protruded where once those great wads of muscle had stirred. Knees and elbows became jagged probes that stuck out of his clothing. He looked like a large grey discarded garment flapping on a barbed-wire fence.

When I walked into his cell he lay huddled under a coarse grey blanket, his eyes shut. Then I spoke to him. He started up, eyes protruding, flung himself upon the iron floor at my feet. He wept. A froth like shaving soap bubbles spilled

from his lips and nostrils.

"Is there no mercy?" he whispered.

"If there is mercy," I said quietly, "it would not come from me, Lindemans. It would be from a court of justice."

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 HQ 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!

Trial Delayed

SO far as I was concerned, the mystery of the disappearance of the Christian Lindemans dossier from the files of Headquarters Counter-Intelligence was insoluble.

The file had vanished — I never set eyes on it again.

Meanwhile Lindemans was lying in a cell of the great, red-walled prison at Scheveningen.

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 Hol-

and girls had worshipped as "The Scarlet Pimpernel of Holland"—might be publicly accused of betraying to the Nazis the top-secret plans of "Operation Market Garden" — the air invasion of Arnhem.

But in the middle of my search for the Lindemans file I was posted to duty in Germany, and officially there was no more I could do about Lindemans.

He continued to wait in Scheveningen Prison, and the mud stayed unstirred for a little while longer.

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," and "the officer who had been imprisoned in the Tower of London."

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 wall of Scheveningen Prison, an unexpected development was apparently taking place.

The spy Christian Lindemans was having his last love affair!



WOMEN were not a novelty in Lindemans' experience. At the height of his reputation, when he was a six-foot giant of a man weighing 16 stone of hard-trained muscle, he had deserved his nickname of "King Kong" among the Resistance fighters. He had as many girls as there were days in the year.

The first time I had seen Lindemans he was surrounded like a film star by girls. Two years of prison had not improved his sensual handsomeness. I had watched him grow thin and morose. His bones protruded. Nevertheless, there must apparently have burned some remaining vital ember of virile appeal in his gaunt wrecked body.

For it was one of the reticent, coldly efficient Netherlands nurses attached to the prison hospital, who fell in love with him, at the last!

I should explain that women nurses were not usually found in prison hospitals of Holland, or anywhere else.

But Scheveningen Prison — perhaps the largest in the Netherlands — had been used for years by the Nazis during their occupation, to hold political prisoners. It was equipped with torture rooms. Thousands of Holland's most valiant patriots had been taken by the Gestapo

to Scheveningen to be broken until they confessed.

Some of these patriots were still there, in a specially equipped prison hospital, too ill to be moved. After the Nazis had been driven back, leaving their filthy damage behind them, Scheveningen became almost more of a hospital than a gaol.

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

Yet since his capture he had lost weight rapidly. Prison doctors, 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.

Escape Plan

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. It may have been that he had known her before he was arrested. I do not

know, for I was not there in Scheveningen when the amazing "romance" took place behind penitentiary walls.

It was a "romance" that might have made a great difference to the story of "King Kong," might even have given it a very different ending to the one Fate was eventually to write.

For, according to what was later told, it 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.

Organised by the nurse, an 11th-hour escape plan was thought out and tried. The girl must have been a cool worker, for as far as could be discovered none of the hospital guards ever suspected what she was really up to.

Lindemans, it will be realised, was being kept in a prison hospital room, with sound locks on its door 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 "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 the 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

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 storeroom window quite close to the window of 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 again.

Suicide Pact

FA TE was now ready to write the final lines in the dramatic story of Christian Lindemans. The date 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 headache 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.

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 for trial for her share in the suicide pact and for supplying Lindemans with the 80 tablets.

Nor do I know what became of the traitor Cornelis Verloop, the man nicknamed "Satan Face," whose confessions to me had been my first proof that





Lindemans, the traitor of Arnhem, at the time of his imprisonment.

Lindemans was a paid spy of the Nazis and had betrayed Arnhem to them.

Verloop may be alive today. If anything about the fate of Verloop or the anonymous nurse has ever been published it has escaped my notice. This is possible, despite the very deep interest I took in the case, as I was stationed in Germany at the time, searching for caches of loot stowed by Nazi leaders, and, incidentally, dealing with a most interesting murder case—but that is another story.

For this reason I have had to take my facts about the circumstances of Lindemans' death from the official version that a nurse smuggled 80 pills to him in Scheveningen prison. I must confess this has often given me food for thought.

But Lindemans was undeniably dead. And the special tribunal that was to have tried him dissolved before it ever assembled. The case of Christian Lindemans and the 7,000 dead men of Arnhem had to be officially closed.

All this disaster — for a woman, and a little money!

Such spies as the much over-rated Mata Hari (who, as a German agent was of no consequence whatsoever, but who did interesting work in her boudoir with certain of the crowned heads of Europe), such master spies as von Rintelen and that formidable woman Anna Maria Besserlein (Mademoiselle the Doctor) are famous in history.

Yet not all of these well-known names together in the whole of their dangerous scheming lives succeeded in wreaking as much actual destruction as did the man they called King Kong—bonafide, lecherous Christian Lindemans, son of a Rotterdam garage owner—who even in his final hour upon earth, apparently found a woman to get him out of his troubles.

The End.