

The Traitor Of Arnhem-3 Lindemans Turned Spy To Save The One Woman He Loved

By Col. Oreste I

THERE were no handcuffs in Holland big enough to clamp around the mighty wrists of Christian Lindemans, when we had arrested him.

My security police lashed his arms with cord that contained a core of steel wire.

"Fasten his legs, too," I said as he was brought glowering on to the RAF airfield tarmac at Antwerp. His powerful legs could have smashed the plane's thin-walled cabin, and to perish so spectacularly in mid-air was the sort of farewell gesture that might appeal to Lindemans, whom the resistance fighters had nicknamed "King Kong."

I watched the plane rear away, dwindle into the grey morning sky towards England. Christian Lindemans, who had, by his spying, cost the Allies a bitter defeat at Arnhem and dragged out the war by eight months, was being taken now to a place in England where specialists would persuade a full confession out of him.

There was a country house outside London belonging to the British Intelligence Service where skilled psychologists and interrogators could "operate" on the mind of a traitor and extract full, detailed confessions without any need for using the clumsy torture implements of the Gestapo.

Here it was that I sent Lindemans. They kept him two weeks. When he was flown back to me, this time pinioned with a pair of Scotland Yard's special adjustable ratchet handcuffs, the great, obdurate King Kong had made a full and detailed confession that covered 24 pages of typed foolscap.

Appeal To Women

THERE was not a bruise or scar on his body, not a needle mark on his arm. His eyes, although more sub-

dued than they had been, did not show any undue strain from fear or sleeplessness. He had just been cross-examined by experts—that was all.

But I could not help thinking what a lesson it would have been to some of the Nazi torturers, Drexler and Himmler, who often kept frail youths and women strapped for hours to instruments for inflicting agony, without extracting more than groans!

I put Lindemans in a cell of Breda Prison and took the highly confidential confession to my office to study.

The tale of Lindemans's 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 women—not all of them young—to provide fighting funds for the underground "Escape Route" through Belgium and Holland into Portugal.

The wives and daughters of rich Flanders and Netherlands families, whose husbands were in many cases in Nazi concentration camps, their big houses taken for German Army billets, were only too glad to entrust their secreted diamonds and heirlooms to a fine, romantic warrior like Lindemans, for the Resistance.

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



IN February of 1944 the Gestapo had captured Lindemans's youngest brother during a raid on 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.

Lindemans had many girl admirers, yet if he loved anybody other than his own boastful self it was undoubtedly the girl Veronica.

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 made contact with two Dutchmen in Brussels whom he privately knew to be in Nazi pay. One was Anthony Damen. The other was Cornelis Verloop, known as "Satan Face," of whom I have already written.

He met them in the cafe of the Hotel des Grands Boulevards, on the Place Rogier, in Brussels.

Price Of Liberty

AS I read all this in Lindemans's confessions, I realised it checked absolutely with what Verloop had told me when I questioned him in Eindhoven.

I could even have pointed to the exact table where the three men sat on the day Lindemans took the first step that was to make him the most disastrous spy in the history of modern warfare.

Over a cup of coffee, Lindemans had offered his services to his country's enemies for:— (a) Worthwhile money re-

wards; and (b) the instant release of his youngest brother and sweetheart Veronica from Gestapo hands.

Cornelis Verloop went at once to Col. Kiesewetter, chief of the German Abwehr (Counter-Intelligence), and two days later Lindemans was taken to a house in the suburbs of Brus-

... house in the suburbs of Brussels, where he had a long, private talk with Kiesewetter.

Next day Lindemans' brother and the slender girl Veronica, their eyes dark and apprehensive faces already twisted by pain, were suddenly shaken awake in the dark dampness of their cells, made to sign certificates that they had been well treated, and thrust out into the fresh spring daylight on the streets of Rotterdam.

They did not know that before many months 25,000 citizens of Rotterdam would die on those same pavements from disease and starvation, because they were freed that morning!

For the result of Lindemans' betrayal of Arnhem was to be followed by the terrible "Black Winter" of Holland.



THEY did not know. Nor did King Kong. Nor do I suppose he would have much cared. He was back in the clubs and taverns, spending wads of new notes, hugely satisfied with his own astuteness.

Then the German Security Police (the dreaded Sicherheitsdienst) raided yet another Rotterdam resistance HQ. They burst suddenly into the cellar, guns levelled. Lindemans was among the Resistance men there!

It was an instant of hideous choice for Lindemans. Betray himself before his Dutch comrades as a traitor, or stay silent and risk being shot by the German SD Police, who would not know that he had just joined the ranks of the Abwehr.

Lindeman chose the coward's decision. He moved his hand in a certain secret gesture that caused the eyes of the SD Police leader to widen incredulously. Before he could rasp out:—"Don't shoot that man!"—one of his men, already nervous at the size and ferocious appearance of King Kong, had misinterpreted the movement and shot the resistance leader through the chest.

The bullet lodged in Lindemans' lung. The Germans bore him, with the care due to valuable property, to a Gestapo hospital. Within three weeks the jungle strength of King Kong had recovered from an injury probably fatal to most ordinary men.

He was visited in hospital by Col. Kiesewetter, who said:—"We must plan your escape as soon as possible."

... soon as possible."

Lindemans smiled cocksurely. "Let my own resistance men rescue me," he said. "You can let me escape, and shoot the lot of them with hidden machine-guns."

Col. Kiesewetter, marvelling slightly—for even to a Nazi Intelligence officer, such a suggestion came unexpectedly—agreed.

A few days later King Kong stepped to liberty over the bodies of 47 comrades.

"Secret" Prisoner

HE organised several such betrayals, during subsequent months. He betrayed a group of British agents—men and women—working in German-held parts of Belgium, before the Allies' spearheads could reach them. They had died indescribably, in Scheveningen prison, under such torments as Lindemans could not endure even to think

Lindemans, the lives of thousands on his hands, waves an assured greeting. He was arrested shortly afterwards, of his brother and girl friend suffering.

I read the list of names of Lindemans' victims, his comrades of the underground that he had betrayed and my own comrades of the British Intelligence.

My hands sweated. Some of them I knew. And I knew Scheveningen prison, too!

Then I was summoned to SHAEF headquarters by a Very Important Person. "Congratulations on your catch, Colonel," he said in a soft American voice. "Where is this Lindemans now?"

I explained that he had been in England only a fortnight and that he was now in my private wing of Breda prison awaiting trial.

But meanwhile the British newspapers had scented some story of a secret prisoner. The rumor was that he was a Dutch officer brought from the battlefield to be held in the Tower of London.

There arose a storm of questions in the British Press about January of 1945. "Who is the mysterious Dutch officer in the Tower?"

That was King Kong—Christian Lindemans, although he had never been in the Tower.

So many searching, uncomfortable questions were asked that the Dutch Prime Minister in London, Professor Gerbrandt, sent for me.

"How can we silence this publicity?" he demanded.

On my advice the British censor was approached and it was explained that Lindemans had not yet appeared before any court—therefore discussion as to his arrest was sub judice, illegal.

The subject was at once dropped by the British newspapers.

Tomorrow: King Kong's Lost Love Affair.



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