

Who Did It?

Anna and Bruno Hauptmann pose soon after their marriage. To her dying day, Anna insisted on his innocence.

If Bruno Hauptmann did not kill the Lindbergh infant, who did? Many people have different answers to that one.

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Anna Hauptmann died in October 1994, having outlived her husband by nearly six decades. Through all that time, she fought to clear his name.

A friend says that she was "a good Christian lady" who forgave the witnesses who, she was convinced, had lied about her husband. But she never forgave the justice system. To the end of her life, she refused to say "and liberty and justice for all" when reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

In 1981, she hired a well-known defense attorney, Robert R. Bryan, to pursue a pardon for her husband. By then, many people believed that some key evidence presented at the trial had been tampered with—and that other important evidence had been suppressed by the prosecution.

Attorney Bryan pulled all that information together. The resulting package, he said, proved that Bruno Richard Hauptmann was indeed innocent.

Several times, Mrs. Hauptmann presented the package to New Jersey officials and asked them to reopen the case. Each time, she was turned down on technicalities. In 1992, she asked then-Governor James Florio to pardon her husband. Her request went unanswered.

"I will never give up," said Mrs. Hauptmann. "My dream is that someday the truth will come out."

What is the truth? We'll probably never know for sure. Meanwhile, the fascination of the Lindbergh case has kept many people searching for the



Anne Lindbergh's sister Elizabeth

real story. Not surprisingly, different authors have come up with a number of "real" stories.

■ One author says that Isidor Fisch was deeply involved in the kidnapping and indeed gave Hauptmann the ransom money—but lied about where it had come from. Fisch was a shady character known to have collected investment money from innocent victims for a company that had long been out of business.

We know that Fisch tried to sell "hot money" to an ex-convict. That could have been the ransom money. We also know that while Fisch was deathly ill in Germany with tubercu-

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losis, he said he had an important message he wanted to give to Bruno Hauptmann. When he died, the message died with him.

■ Another author believes that a man named Jacob Nosovitsky was deeply involved in the kidnapping. Nosovitsky also had a shady background and was involved in international spying. He carried a grudge against Anne Lindbergh's father and according to several people, tried to recruit them for a "sure-fire kidnapping of a famous person's baby."

■ A more surprising theory points the finger at Anne Lindbergh's older sister, Elizabeth. Elizabeth was in love with Charles Lindbergh and had thought that he would marry her. When he married Anne instead, according to the theory, Elizabeth was devastated and became mentally unbalanced. She killed the baby in a fit of jealous rage, and Charles faked the kidnapping to spare Elizabeth and his family the embarrassment of a national scandal.

There is little hard evidence to support that idea.

■ The most surprising theory of all names Lindbergh himself as the culprit. The story is that he accidentally dropped his son in a practical joke gone horribly wrong and then staged the kidnapping scene as a cover-up.

Very few people believe that one.

That all those theories exist is not surprising. Famous mysteries always attract people who claim to know what *really* happened—witness the Kennedy assassination and the books that have poured forth since that shocking day in November 1963.

And so the Lindbergh kidnapping

lives on. Meanwhile, much has changed.

The death house in which Bruno Hauptmann died is gone, demolished as an outdated relic from an earlier era. The electric chair that held him can be viewed at a crime museum in New Jersey.

After Anna Hauptmann died, her ashes were returned to Germany and scattered over the town of her birth. The Hauptmanns' son, Manfred, is now in his 60s.

Anne Lindbergh is still alive, as are four of her children who were born after the kidnapping. The tragedy was never discussed in the family, and Scott Lindbergh did not even know he had a murdered brother until he read a book about the crime when he was 10 years old.

One juror still survives—Ethel Stockton, who lives in Florida. She says: "I remember the trial as if it were yesterday. With the evidence presented to us at the time, we were very convinced as to what the verdict should be. And we rendered that verdict."

Robert Bryan believes that if the jury had known the full story, it never would have convicted the carpenter from Germany. He says he will continue Anna Hauptmann's 60-year fight to clear her husband's name. ■



Ethel Stockton

What is *YOUR* theory?