

Statement of the man identified as Mills  
from the notes of William E. Barrett

I am the man who supplied the idea for the Lindbergh ransom note symbols and you can have your stuff about the Wop and the German origins if you want to swallow it. Uncle Sam's postoffice gave me the idea and I'll explain that before I'm through.

I know how the Lindbergh kidnapping was planned and I know who planned it and I can name names and give chapter and verse. They may dig the facts up yet and they should be able to if anybody ever gets on the job who doesn't give a damn who gets hurt. But most of them will be satisfied to give this Dutchman the juice and let it go at that. I'm giving you this story to use if the Dutchman hasn't any other chance and you wont be smart if you use it before you have to because there will be hell raised if it hits in the right place and a few lives wont make a bit of difference. There are even cops who would burn a man down to blanket the story and plenty of people who didn't do any kidnapping and who aren't cops.

Some of what I'm telling, about myself and how I learned things and what I did and where I was is wrong but the story is right. I'm a two time loser and I've got a Federal rap hanging over me and I'm no fish. I'm not stepping out into a spot to save the skin of a Dutchman who doesn't mean anything to me if I can help it. Still he didn't do the job or any part of it and there are a lot of human lice around who would look much more at home in that hot seat than he would. There's people who might spot me at that from the story but that's the chance I'm taking and I may not be around when you use the story - if you ever do.

They were talking about kidnapping Lindbergh's kid within easy walking distance of his Hopewell place before he had his house built. The joint isn't operating any more so it isn't important. It was about May, 1931. A bunch of smart wops had come in from Detroit with a line about how they had brightened up on the snatch racket out there and about business that they worked up for making a snatch work smoothly.

There were several of the boys from Brooklyn there and a fellow who used to fly booze for a Chicago outfit and who knew Lindbergh before he was big. They got to talking about Lindbergh coming to Jersey to live permanently and of course what a big time snatch it would be to get his kid. This flyer said Lindbergh was a heel and that he knew a girl that Lindbergh left with a kid in Iowa or some place who would admire being in on anything like that. The Wops said that there shouldn't be any woman in a high class snatch but that the big thing was to pick somebody outside the mob who would be "right" and yet clean if the cops got suspicious of him. They said that the two big problems in the Detroit kidnappings was getting mail to the guy who would have to pay the ransom and getting it to him so that he knew it was the right mail and not something that a crackpot thought up. The other thing tripped them a few times. The birds they picked as go-betweens couldn't stand up when the cops turned the light on them.

The writing of the notes, they said, was a cinch. Get a good scratch man and have him write some foreign script and bust the note up with pidgin English. Being Wops, they thought it was best to write like a German or a Bohunk. They even had a Canuck staked out for the next job who could write Russian characters.

I had a package that came to me in the mail that day and it was all stamped and cancelled. I had one of those red and blue pencils in my pocket that is one color on one end and the other color on the reverse. I like to scribble when I talk and I said - "How would this work for identifying a ransom letter?"

We were just talking, you know. "One of us had anything to do with the kidnapping when it did come off except in a sort of long distance way. Some of the ideas lived. The big wop's name was Marino and he was so smart that he was in stir before the Lindbergh snatch came off.

The postoffice was cancelling them a little differently then than they are now and they used an oval device besides the circles. Some times the circles overlapped and they slapped the oval right down on top of them. I drew a couple of circles in different colors on the envelope and reduced the size of the oval, putting it in where they overlapped and I made each ~~circle~~ circle a different color.

"That's simple and easy to remember." I said. "You can't boob it up."

This wop objected that the first chiseler who saw the symbol would be able to make a copy and that he wouldn't even trust a cop not to chisel in if there was enough money in it. He wanted something as hard to copy as a signature.

That's when I suggested that they write the first note on a pad and drive a hole through the oval inside the overlapping circles, so they could draw the other designs around the hole in the same way. The Wop kindof went for that, but it was all talk.

A long time later when I read about the Lindbergh ransom note, I got a jolt and I started wondering which of the birds that was there

when I made the suggestion had cut in on the snatch. Well, as I told you, none of them did. I found out all about that later.

When the Lindbergh kid was snatched, I was lamister and very hot and I didn't think it was a professional job. Like everybody else, I figured it a sure inside job from what the ~~Lindbergh~~ papers printed and I'd heard things off and on in Jersey that made it possible. They didn't release anything about the ransom ~~maxx~~ note at first and I didn't figure any angles on that until I heard about the symbol.

I'm a specialist and I haven't got too many competitors in my line. I don't have to pack a rod and never did. Every outfit that peddled booze during prohibition needed what I had to offer and if I'd laid off the sidelines, I'd have been okay. I got around.

I'd made a connection in Detroit about the time of the kidnapping and I got a trip to Norfolk out of it for what I knew. There was a rum fleet operating out of there but I only knew a few of the people. I had my ideas of who was behind them and some of my ideas were right; but I didn't go down there with ideas but for cash on the line.

I didn't see much of Norfolk. The boys were on an island and I got there just before the Curtis story made the headlines. I wasn't a bit happy about it. With something big like that almost anybody is likely to be dumped to the cops and the cops can just about convict anybody that they pinch - anytime. Lay bets on that if the sucker hasn't got dough or backing.

I didn't know but what some of the mob that I was with had been in on the snatch and that maybe the baby was down there someplace and the Curtis story on the level. It doesn't take me long to find out different. The other boys are worried, too, and it is damned bad for business. Being in our business down in Norfolk right then was like trying to pick a pocket on a stage.



The big fist landed of course. The Feds knocked over some of the mob in South Carolina and then picked off another bunch around Norfolk. Some of us were lucky and I was one of the lads that went north. What I did down south opened up an old connection of mine in Brooklyn that hadn't been so good since Legs Diamond went out. Like Legs or don't, he never was the heel that he's supposed to ~~be~~ have been when a man laid it level with him. Through jobs that I'd been steered into by Legs, I got to know Vannie Higgins.

AND VANNIE HIGGINS IS THE BOY WHO PLANNED THE LINDBERGH KIDNAPPING AND CARRIED IT OUT.

I learned the story, all of it, and it doesn't matter how. I told you that I'd scramble some of my personal story and I'll keep scrambling it. You can kiss the book on the main facts.

You hear about mobs and gangs running cities and it's a lot of newspaper hokey. Syndicates run them and not gangs. Gang leaders like Capone are a dime a dozen unless the syndicate behind them is satisfied. You'd be surprised at some of the people with votes, too.

Vannie Higgins was a pretty big shot. He knew his stuff and he had people who would back his plays and he was sitting all right over in Brooklyn as a lot of smart monkeys found out. But he wasn't going to get very far with the big syndicate and he knew it. His big chance was to hook up with a new outfit and take a long gamble for the blue chips. He waited a long time for the right combination. He didn't get where he was by making bets ~~without~~ where the percentage wasn't figured fine.

The bunch that was backing Ownie Madden had Jersey locked up tight and that was the liquor route into New York. ~~There~~ Their stuff came in royal, with practically an escort of State cops;

but letting stuff through only got a cop his regular see-no-evil pay. A bright cop could earn himself a bonus for knocking over stuff that anybody else tried to bring in. Those Jersey cops were signed, sealed and delivered and Vannie Higgins, who spent a lot of time in Jersey, knew just as much about that as anybody. A new syndicate didn't have a chance over there.

But nobody could sew up the water route into New York.

Murray Marks came in from St. Louis and he had ideas, too. He had a bunch of boys from Detroit and Chicago and St. Louis that he was doing an advance agent job for. The papers would call them Purple gangsters and cuckoo gangsters and all that stuff, but they were just boys who had experience and knew their way around. Murray Marks couldn't have got them together or held them together but somebody did. Murray Marks couldn't have walked in and talked about new connections to Vannie Higgins, either. But John Torrio was big enough for anything and he had a place on Jamaica Bay that Vannie Higgins used to visit. I don't know a damned thing about that. A man can just guess.

Murray Marks had his place on City Island and you've heard about that place in the Lindbergh case even if you never heard of Murray Marks.

The new outfit had the boats and the liquor but they had to know that they could get the business after they got the stuff in. New York in those days drank up a lot of liquor and in spite of all the movie pineapple throwing, a man had to have liquor to serve and no matter how hard a cookie was who sold to him, he'd have to get his booze from somebody else if the hard cookie didn't have any. Play that any way you want to and it adds.

The new syndicate couldn't get to first base as long as the stuff kept flowing into New York through Jersey. Stopping it from flowing looked impossible -- till Vannie Higgins remembered - maybe - about one of ~~his~~ his boys telling him about the crazy scheme to snatch the Lindbergh kid.

If Lindbergh's baby was kidnapped, the country would be on its ear. There would be so much heat in Jersey ~~that~~ <sup>suspicious</sup> no cop would dare let ~~xxxxxxx~~ traffic run through and nobody would feel tough enough to want to drive it through. It would mean gee men and private sleuths and all hell. Just a few weeks of that would crack the market wide open for a new smart mob that had the boats and the stuff and the right people in it. Handled right, the break would make Vannie Higgins the biggest shot in New York.

I'm guessing, of course, about what Higgins thought and figured but it is good guessing because I know what he did.

Just about the time that Higgins could use a break like that, a Swede named Red Johnson started coming into one of Vannie's places with a jane named Thompson and sounding off about being a guy that could practically walk into Lindbergh's home any time he wanted....a guy just bursting with dope about what the Lindbergh's ate and where they slept and all that. Bragging....

Vannie heard about him and two of the boys; a Swede named Anderson and a lad named Stark took him over one night. They go to work on him and he knows that these boys mean their questions when they ask them. He spills a lot that might have done some good and he tells them that he knows because he's got a girl named Gow who is the baby's nurse.

And you can have all the Lindberghs say and all that anybody else tells you. The Gow girl is ~~xxxxxxx~~ a girl that Bob Stark

knew in Detroit -- and she'd been around with some people. She couldn't pull any of the stuff that any ordinary girl could pull on these cookies. And she didn't.

They had Johnson bring her where they could talk to her and they told her that they wanted to borrow the Lindbergh baby to stir up a little excitement that would blow some people over. There wasn't going to be anything messy about it and the kid would be taken good care of for the few weeks that he was away and she could be a heroine and get a lot of play from people and keep her own nose clean; but if she didn't play ball, she knew what would happen then, too - she and the Swede friend both.

She stalled for a couple of weeks and she didn't want any part of it, but she didn't kid herself. She knew that she didn't have an out and she got plenty of proof that the baby wouldn't be hurt and that he wouldn't even be held for ransom. (That was straight up. Vannie Higgins knew that the snatch was easy. It usually is. It's getting the money that's tough and that's where they trip. He didn't want any money at the cost of the risk it would mean. He'd play for it to keep the pot boiling but he wouldn't try to collect it).

When Betty Gow said okay, she insisted they would have to pull it at the Morrow place and not Hopewell because she'd be suspected if they pulled it at Hopewell and there were a couple of screwy angles at the Morrow place. There was a crackpot son who didn't like Lindbergh or any part of him and there was a girl, she said, who'd been blackmailing Lindbergh. If the snatch was pulled there, there would be plenty of people to suspect besides Gow.

That was okay, too, and the boys told Johnson that the cops would probably work on him but that if he kept his yap buttoned in spite of hell, there was a limit to what they could do to him and they would

stir up something to help him out, something to pull the cops off. But that if he squawked, they'd see that he carried most of the evidence around his own neck and he'd find that that wasn't funny in Jersey. Gow saw it that way, too.

Everything was set for March first and Gow wanted out when she found out that the Lindberghs were going to stay at Hopewell. She got hold of Johnson and he got hold of ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ one of the boys but Vannie wouldn't okay a change. He was set.

There were four men in the car that went out on the snatch and they were waiting close by and had been. They'd been building up a good excuse for being where they were and doing the things they were doing for weeks and people were used to seeing them.

(Q- It's pretty important to name them. A- I know it. Two of them are dead, one of them is in stir and only one of them is loose. Why name them? They just worked for somebody and did a job. They didn't kill any kid and they didn't intend to kill any. They figured the kid was going back. The ~~max~~ people that ought to be fried will be named before I'm through.)

(Q - What about the ladder? Who made it? A - I don't know. I never heard. It wasn't important at all at the time. It was the trial that made it important. The pictures ~~xxxxxx~~ always reminded me of a house painter's ladder. Maybe they swiped it somewhere and maybe Johnson made it. He was handy with tools and he knew the length of ladder needed.)

The main thing about the ladder is that the baby never came down it. That's why I say that maybe Johnson made it or somebody - though I didn't know a handy man with tools in the mob - because it wasn't the right length at all for Hopewell and maybe it was built for the

Morrow place.

The boys had a cokie all steamed up for the job of going up after the baby. They had him primed with the idea that he'd be the biggest thing in the U.S. in tough society. You can only prime a punk like that once.

The Gow dame was supposed to stick a flashlight in a jug or some thing in the nursery window when it was okay and leave the button pressed down - then get herself an alibi. They moved in when they got the light but the ladder was all wrong and the cokie busted it trying to get it up. He never got as far as the window sill. All he did was make a lot of noise that didn't bother anybody and they had to wait a half an hour and Gow, who'd been scared to death when she heard the noise because she'd probably been afraid of that, came down and they made her bring the baby out.

She took the note back up, too, and from what I heard, she damned near forgot to unload it. It was a stall anyway but it used my idea of the postmark symbol.

That kid went to Brooklyn in a boat and there wasn't a bit of trouble. The kid was doped, of course, and couldn't yip but it wasn't hurt. They gave it a hair cut and took it to an old Irish woman that Vannie had all steamed up with a story about the parents being lamister from the cops and the cops trying to use their love for the kid to trap them. She kept that kid plenty out of sight and if she suspected anything before Vannie told her later, she knew how to keep her mouth shut, too..

( A to Q - No. I don't know her name and never did. If I did, I might tell you or I might have just seen that somebody found out during that trial)

As I said at the start, a smart cop could backtrack the story even know if he had guts and if he didn't care who got hurt and if he was big enough to get cooperation. But there aren't any cops like that and it's easier to cook a Dutchman who happened to have some dough he couldn't explain.

Q -- Do you think Hauptmann was one the men who got Lindbergh's money, one of the fellows you called 'dummies' ? A - No. He wasn't the kind of guy that would have connections. The best kind of a dummy is one who has a bad rap hanging over him. He'll be afraid to squawk even if the cops grab him.

Q - Why not name the men who planned the ransom stunt ? A - I don't know. I just have ideas. I've told you what I know about it.

Q - Do you think Condon told Higgins the truth ? A- Maybe he did. Maybe he didn't know who was working with him but he knew darned well that if they were pinched, they'd turn out to be people he knew.

Q- How about Hauptmann's handwriting ? A- They couldn't even make that Dutchman write like the ransom notes in a New York police station. If I could keep you writing all night, I'd get enough that I could cut out and paste on paper letter by letter to prove you wrote the notes. A handwriting expert can't be honest. If he hires out to the side that loses the jury verdict, it ruins the value of his testimony next time. The Hauptman verdict was a cinch before they ever swore in a jury.

Q - And you don't think Hauptman wrote any of the notes. A- I know he didn't. I know plenty about handwriting myself, but if I didn't, I know he didn't write the first one. The man who wrote that was going by the name of Cohen when he wrote it and he isn't going by the name of Cohen now but he's written funny paper since and he's not claiming credit for any of his jobs. Why should he ?



Q - What about Isidor Fisch ? A - Nerts. He was a sidewalk fence. That kind of Jewboy will take on hot money to peddle but he won't stick his neck into a jam. That ransom dough was unloaded fast and the Dutchman may be telling the truth. When Fisch found out how hot it was, he probably didn't want any of it on him. And if he had anybody keep it, he wouldn't be dumb enough to tell them it was money or dumb enough to deliver it in a package that looked like money. But maybe he sold a parcel of it to Hauptman. I wouldn't know.

Q - Have you got any ideas on the Violet Sharpe angle ? A - How could I unless the Gow woman told the truth. If there was a woman at Morrow's with something on Lindbergh, maybe she was the woman. Maybe she didn't suicide, too. If she did, what happened to the note. Women leave them.

Q - What did Johnson and Gow get out of it ? A - Cash where they could get it. Not much, but cash. No ransom dough and no funny payoffs. Cash in a bank where it would keep. They also got the or-else. Nothing happened to them.

Q - It doesn't seem reasonable that Johnson could keep from cracking when the cops went after him the way they did at first A - It isn't reasonable that he would. He was tough and he'd get 'everything' once he cracked. He knew the suspicion would be lifted off him quick if he held off. It was.

Things worked out just about the way they figured at first, but the first big bust was Lindbergh's - when he let that ransom note get around. Vannie got plenty fretted up when he found out that some two bitters were going after cash because he wanted things hot in Jersey and not any place else -- and when it percolated to him later that somebody had mailed one of the things from Brooklyn, that was too close to home and he figured the double cross.

What he didn't figure - at least, I don't think he did - was that a couple of monkeys with no particular brains might have hit on an idea that was pretty close to the truth and were shadow boxing till they found out.

But the big noise was the dough that the Lindbergh blowoff was costing the syndicate. Owney Madden went over to Hopewell several times himself and he talked to a lot of super-sleuths over there who'd been on his payroll for years and who did everything but call him sir when people weren't around. When he came back, he either had the idea of just why the Lindbergh baby was snatched or he had some information that gave somebody brighter than Owney in the syndicate the idea.

Anyway, the Curtis stuff started and that was the same kind of a stall as the Lindbergh kidnapping. I don't know why the cops didn't spot that or why even Lindbergh couldn't see it. Curtis was on the level as far as he went. He thought he had something and he really talked to people. ~~Eventually~~ THE WHOLE IDEA, OF COURSE, was TO GET THE COAST GUARD AND EVERYBODY ELSE TO WATCHING THE WATER ROUTE AS CAREFULLY AS THE COPS WERE WATCHING OUT IN JERSEY.

And it worked out even better because the new syndicate didn't have the big payroll that the other outfit had. As I told you, the Feds busted them wide open.

Before that happened, Vannie Higgins was trying to get from under. He wanted to stop what he'd started. There were three angles - the bunch that stalled around down at Norfolk just long enough to get a lot of attention, the bunch that was two biting for the fifty grand and Higgins.

When that ransom dough was actually paid, the muggs that got it tipped their hands that they were side-lining under the gun with Madden's bunch. They sent Lindbergh and the investigation out on the water. Higgins was no fool and he knew what the Norfolk smoke was started for - and he knew that Madden and the boys behind him felt just the same as he did about ransom money. The percentage wasn't there for the risk. But some small shots down the line might take a crack at it.

I think that Vannie Higgins slipped up in not figuring the two guys that I'm sure now were the ones who planned the money shakedown that Lindbergh fell for. He might still be alive if he figured it. I don't know.

But Vannie Higgins talked to cops and to the boys in the big syndicate and a lot of other people about the Lindbergh kidnapping and if you don't think he was smart, just try and find a single line that shows that anybody ever put the finger on him as having anything to do with it.

When that dough was passed, he was wild. And he figured it was the time to smoke out the guys that chiseled in and put the heat on them. He had to move carefully himself and not attract attention but there was a chance that the cops would grab the boys that got that money if the pressure went on.

That's when he decided that there had to be a dead baby to fog the detail, stop all the Norfolk smoke and send the chase down some

alley that wouldn't lead to him but that might have a bunch of chiselers at the end of it.

But Vannie Higgins wasn't a baby killer.

He'd played Condon even before the ransom was paid. He could do it without looking bad because he knew Condon well. They were both Catholics and neither of them worked at it as hard as they pretended. Vannie Higgins had used Condon on several plays where a smart-stupid front was needed and he wasn't kidded at all about the guy.

Condon was an old fruiter who was willing to go into anything where his skin was safe and there was something on the line - the kind of Irishman who doesn't give a damn how crooked a thing is if he can put a respectable name on it. There's a lot like him and a man like that isn't fit to associate with pimps. But he had his uses.

Several of those mystery trips he made before the dough was passed and several after that, including one out on the sound, were made because Vannie Higgins wanted to see him and insisted on it. Condon was just a little bit scared of Higgins.

But Condon swore that he was on the level in this case. He said that he knew that some of the boys who knew him from other jobs were on the other end of the line but that he didn't know who they were and he had to move very carefully because he didn't know what they knew about him nor who they were working for. He wasn't kidding himself that he was picked because an ad in the Home News. He put that in as a gesture maybe and maybe because he hoped that it would be a reminder to some people, if there was professional talent in the game, that he was a good front.

Maybe Condon told Vannie Higgins the truth and maybe Condon doesn't know yet who was in the deal -- but if that's true, he knows that he'd know them from last experience if they were ever pinched. He knows

that the shake~~ed~~own crowd knew just who they were dealing with....

And that's why he shadow-boxed so much. He was afraid that if he made a mistake and the boys were pinched because he made a mistake, they'd just swear he was in on it all the time and take him right along with him if they got the rap. And when he did all his stalling about identifying Hauptmann, he was advert~~/~~sising again and asking the boys to let him know for God's sake what the angle was....

And the boys decided that the Dutchman would do and the thing might as well be wrapped up. So Condon delivered the milk again and probably threw in a prayer for good measure. Nobody can say that he hasn't played his part respectably. He's so respectable that he stinks to heaven.

After the dough went over the fence, Higgins didn't believe that ~~Condon~~ Condon was still dumb about who got it and Condon told him about the box to square himself. Nobody was sap enough to wait in a cemetery for money that hot and figure on taking it out. Nobody that was such a sap would carry it out in a box that the first cop that came along would want a look at. A crumb that makes his living by rolling drunks has more brains than that - and the punks that planned that shakedown were standing away wide and pulling the strings through a couple of dummies.

One of those guys that was clean as a whistle and that wouldn't have looked bad if he'd been grabbed, a guy that had a good reason for being where he was, went through the cemetery that night and gave Condon the all clear and then the old man stalled long enough to let that guy get clean to hell away from there before any money was passed and he shadowboxed Lindbergh and finally he went in with the box -- when there wasn't a soul in that cemetery to be jammed up or to jam him up.

AND HE DID WHAT THE DUMBEST COPPER IN NEW YORK - OR EVEN JERSEY - SHOULD HAVE FIGURED WHEN SOME LAME BRAIN THOUGHT UP THAT BOX IDEA. HE BURIED THAT BOX IN A SPOT THAT HAD BEEN PICKED OUT BEFORE HAND AND THAT WAS ALL READY FOR HIM.

And he walked out of there with all that line of stuff that every body has been going for ever since - except the guys who don't make their living by being either bright or smart, but by figuring angles. He didn't put his story over with Vannie Higgins till he came clean on that box stuff -- and that added up.

He still swore that he didn't know who got it and that he wasn't getting any of the money himself. Higgins believed that about half-way. Maybe Condon didn't - but if he didn't, he knew when he was going to get it and how. And the way he finally did get it was so crude that even now a cop with a day off on his hands ought to be able to come up with a couple of questions that the old gaffer couldn't answer in a million years.,.....

The whole thing was crude on the ransom end because the guys behind it didn't know much and never did - except the double cross.

About the end of April, two Brooklyn dicks came close to cracking the thing wide open. They had it in their hands for a few hours and they just weren't big enough dicks to get anybody with brains to listen and they didn't have brains enough themselves to appreciate the fact that what they had was true. It was too damned big for them.

And the day after they got on the line that was hot, one of the lads that was in on the Lindbergh snatch had an April Fool joke played on him and the Brooklyn cops didn't do any more masterminding. Another of the lads got his talking and his listening mixed less than a week after that and he isn't around any more either. Vannie had the decks pretty clean on his end and he knew where he stood with

the boys who were left and who knew anything. For the most part, he knew how to make it safer for a man to go along with him than to do anything else. And he was sick of being horsed. He wanted the heat on the muggs who copped off the ransom dough.

So on the night of April fourth or fifth, he got a kid out of a Brooklyn cemetery and that was the kid they found over a month later. It went in on the grounds of the Lindbergh estate on the sixth or seventh and plenty of people saw it - and nobody tumbled. They didn't even tumble when Higgins tried to make sure they'd find it. He did almost everything except go over there and lead them to it -- and that's just about what you have to do with a Jersey cop.

I'll say this for the Jersey cops, though. They didn't have their hearts in their work. None of them knew when he might turn something over and find a guy under the chip who'd been paying him dough. What they were looking for from the start was a sucker that they could fit the rap to --- and if Hauptman had turned up in 1932, they couldn't have rapped him like they did when they did get him. People were still remembering things and they would have seen where no lone Dutchman could fit neatly into a spot as big as the one they ~~xxxxxxx~~ finally put him on.

But while the body was lying over in Jersey with nobody discovering it, the real Lindbergh kid was on his way out of town. And Vannie Higgins handled that personally. He let the old Irishwoman get fond of the kid first and then he broke down and told her the truth. She was a Catholic, too, from a tough Irish neighborhood where some of the boys grew up into hoods but tried to get a priest around when they cashed in their numbers. And she'd never believe that there was anything wrong about Vannie as long as he was a good Catholic - and maybe she was right. There are points of view. I've been wrong



myself for twenty years as far as the law is concerned but I can walk down a street today and figure that I'm a damned sight better than most of the people who will never smell a jail. Whether a guy risks ~~mixx~~ falling into a big ocean to ~~mixx~~ put himself in the big money or whether he risks falling into the can for it depends on how his mind works. A lot of minds didn't get the oil changed every five hundred miles when they were new .

Anyway, Vannie told this woman that the Lindberghs weren't the kind of people who could give that kid anything but money and the kind of fame that would turn his head. He told her that Lindbergh was a complete heel net and she already had her own ideas about parents that would leave a little kid for months while they banged around in an airplane in foreign places. And his ace was that the Lindberghs didn't have any religion and that the kid deserved to be brought up as a Catholic. That got her and she took the kid out of town for two grand on the line and an arrangement.

Maybe she was like Condon and maybe the Irish are like that. She got a good pious reason for doing what she wanted to do and she did it. And she'll probably let the Dutchman cook and tell herself that he must have killed some baby because a baby was found and they proved it on him. I don't know - but I'll bet she doesn't open her mouth until she tells a priest about it on her death bed.

Vannie Higgins' luck was out. Madden and the others had been crowding in on him and the stuff that he pulled didn't work out quite right. The baby's body wasn't found fast enough and ~~thaxxx~~ Lindbergh had pulled an awful bull when he let it get out that he had the numbers of the bills before he let some of them get spent first. The muggs behind the shakedown fenced that dough fast and got out from under, so Vannie's backfire with the kid's body didn't do what

he figured. It didn't sand a fast chase back along the trail of the ransom.

The trail got pretty cold before there was any chase and Lindbergh was to blame for that,too. He was too busy trying to keep the hush hush on things at Englewood - and he was almost as bad as a Jersey cop. He wanted to see each chip before anybody turned it over because he was afraid that there'd be something under it that would prove he wasn't a hero.....but just a cheap mugg that came out of the overalls on a stroke of luck and then got suddenly too good for overalls.

Vannie was still a plenty big shot and a lot of people knew that there was a blowoff coming. Madden got out from under and took a trip up the river that he didn't have to take. He was a good tough front but he wasn't missed a lot. The Syndicate could use him better on ice for a while.

Murray Marks got caught on his way into town from City Island and he got the works. And Vannie got his.

Spitale and Bitz were with Vannie Higgins when he went to the K of C thing that night just a little over three months after the Lindbergh snatch. And they had to leave early which some people might figure was a lucky break for them. The papers said that they were on the spot,too.

Well, maybe. If they were, why didn't it ever catch up with them? Legs Diamond put a lot of trust in those muggs,too. Higgins didn't go as far as he did with them and he may have been trying to think ahead of them. Maybe,too, they were two young men trying to get along.

Anyway, the best part of the Lindbergh snatch story was rubbed out with Vannie Higgins and he never touched a dime of ransom dough.