

901 Garay Building
927 - 15th St. N.W.
Washington.....D.C
January 25, 1935

Mrs Adele Rogers St. John
c/o Hunterdon County Courthouse

My dear Mrs. St. John;

I have been a newspaper reporter, publicity writer and free-lance fictioneer through the greater part of my life and I can certainly make allowances for anyone who has to write on assignment to an "angle"; but I can't go far enough to justify the kind of stuff that you have been writing on the Hauptmann trial. It might amaze you, too, to learn how it is going over with people who are not writers, not pro-Hauptmann - nor pro-anything except pro-American in the sense of believing that any man is innocent until proven guilty.

No one is more revolted at the Lindbergh crime than I. I flew for nearly two years off the same airport as Lindbergh in the days before the Paris hop. If Hauptmann is guilty, then no punishment is too severe when weighed against what those parents suffered; but let us report what happens and leave the verdict to the courts.

The pen that drips sweetness and light for any celluloid ham has been crucifying this man on trial for his life. You couldn't take the stand and back up any of the statement that you make so glibly; but you can sit back there and snipe in complete safety. The target can't snipe back.

You say today "Hauptmann is a weak man." By what standards? Physical? He was a machine gunner (suicide detail and usually a volunteer job for infantry rookies) at 17. (And what a sob song you'd make of that if he were American and a great screen lover). He stowed away three times to come over here and finally made it by getting under the coal on the bunkers and breathing through a pipe. Regular sissy, isn't he? He worked night and day as a carpenter and was a light heavyweight in build till he ran up against the rigors of applied fair-play.

Okay. You must mean that he was weak morally since the state is maintaining that he was a mastermind mentally. Look at the record. He saved, and denied himself to save. He helped his friends in trouble. He took any and every job that came along, learned a strange language and strange customs - and established himself as a thrifty, substantial citizen with money in the bank while millions of native born Americans with better advantages were going on relief. Under police beating and police third degree (ever sit in on a session, Madame?) he refused to break after 19 hours. Weak? I wonder.

I'll take nothing from Lindbergh; but his strenght wouldn't have stood the onslaughts of pens like yours in the days before the big hop, not as well as Hauptmann's can stand the onslaught today. There were few of his flying-mates in those days who would have rallied around him in a jam and there were many of them who were openly scornful of several things in his record; notably two parachute hops that he made because, according to hangar theorists, he lacked the guts to land his ship. They were undoubtedly wrong and, given time, Lindbergh gave the lie to any quest on of his courage. Nobody questions it today. But until the Paris hop, all the evidence was on the side of his critics.....and couldn't you be wrong about Hauptmann? /

We were few, the flying crowd, and we talked in hangars; talk that corrected itself in its own circle. You are talking to millions and you'll never get them together again. If you find out some day that you dipped your pen in this man's blood, what can you do about it ?

I've got no ease for Hauptmann, no personal dislike of Lindbergh - but I would like to see a little fairplay and a little tolerance. One man is not a tin god with all the gifts of angels; neither is the other an arch-fiend, lacking even in the strenght and endurance credited popularly to fiends. You can write Lindbergh without ~~the~~ his weaknesses and that is just good clean slop; but when you strip Hauptmann of all humanity, it is poison pen work at its dirtiest.

A jury is asked to spend six weeks making its decision. By what Divine right do you pass judgment ? Get down to earth on this. In the long run of years, you are hurting yourself a lot more than you are hurting Hauptmann.

Very truly yours,