

## **The rise and fall of Charles A. Lindbergh by Tony Mastandrea**

We all know of the great feat of being the first man to fly solo, across the Atlantic, from Roosevelt Field, L.I. to Paris in 1927 - May 20-21. Young, handsome, and of seemingly impeccable character, Lindbergh became the most popular figure of his day (first person to appear on the cover of Time magazine, January 2, 1928, as "Man of the Year").

A romantic symbol for the new aviation age and all its possibilities. (Unfortunately, another Lindbergh, the baby Charles Jr. - kidnapped and murdered, will appear on another edition of the magazine on May 2, 1932.). Lindbergh's marriage to Ambassador Dwight Morrow's daughter, Anne, enthralled people around the world, transforming them both into larger-than-life characters.

And then one windy night - and the weather that night played a major role in this horrible event - their charmed lives turned tragic, when their twenty-month-old son, Charles Jr. was kidnapped. After ten anguishing weeks of rescue efforts, the body of the Lindbergh baby was found half buried in a ditch off a New Jersey roadside. Eventually this "Crime of the Century" was turned into the "Trial of the Century" with the prosecution and execution of Bruno Richard Hauptmann.

We also discussed Lindbergh's fascination with German technology and know-how. His political remarks, which could be construed as anti-Semitic; his leadership in the isolationist "let's stay out of any potential wars" American First Movement; his talents as an inventor - the beginning stages of an "artificial heart," and his endless work as an environmentalist in his later years of life. For a "fair and balanced" account of his life, resources such as - A. Scott Berg's Pulitzer Prize biography, "Lindbergh" - a basically favorable explanation of his life; as well as Max Wallace's anti-Lindbergh account, in his fascinating work "The American Axis - Henry Ford and Charles Lindbergh" were quoted from. The main purpose being "let the reader make up his own mind" as to the character of Charles A. Lindbergh.

Also discussed was Charles A. Lindbergh's "double life." - that is fathering 7 children in Germany with three different mistresses and, as a civilian, flying 50 combat missions over Japan in his 40s with the USMC.

The man was a complex, enigmatic individual - certainly one of the more important American Figures of the 20th century.