

Trenton  
December 27, 1935

**Many thanks to Frank Pizzichillo and Steve Romeo  
for contributing this document to the LKH Public Forum.**

Dear mother:

Yesterday, on Christmas day, I received your dear letter of December 9. Your kind words made me very happy and I thank you, dear mother. I read the account regarding Paul with interest. My deepest thanks for everything he is doing for me. I would be very thankful to him if he continues to work for me and my just cause further in the same way/ I am very sorry that he had an automobile accident. I hope everything will be all right by the time this letter arrives.

I will speak later of my biography in discussing the points which Paul has proposed. In the newspapers here they have quite distorted it, so I have become rather careful about it. I will, therefore, write you particulars about it next time. Above all else, I am happy to know that the newspapers in Germany now take a different tone toward my affairs.- But as already said, all the newspapers were poisoned by propaganda in the beginning. Indeed, even now many do not yet have the honor courage to ~~xxxxxx~~ truth.

Dear mother, this letter will be somewhat long, for I want to go into some points regarding my trial. I will and must always, suitable to my situation, go according to the records. Also, a lie cannot help me, but would, rather, hurt me.

When I was arrested on the 19th of September, 1934, the police seized, among many things, all my shoes. At that time I could not imagine what for. Well, during my trial the day arrived when the State in possession of the footprints of the (feminine) [or the (maeculine)] person who, according to the opinion of the prosecutor's staff, went up the ladder in order to get the unfortunate child?? (How it is possible that only one footprint existed is a riddle to me; for, said the

More info about the history of this letter may be found in  
a NY Times article on March 28, 1977

Prosecutor, it was 70<sup>?</sup> feet and all soft earth from where the ladder was found up to the window.) Why did not the Prosecutor produce at the trial the impression of which they had cast a model? Why? They cannot say that my foot has become larger or smaller. The same may be repeated concerning the footprint which was found in the churchyard, from ~~where~~ Dr. Condon swore that he gave \$50,000 to a man by the name of John? Also here my shoe certainly did not fit. Why were all my shoes taken away from me so quickly. The prosecutor knew that they had a phonograph record repeating the conversation of Dr. Condon and the intermediary. This also was not submitted by the prosecutor to the jury. (In culmination the prosecutor hammered into the jury/<sup>that</sup> when he would show everything, that would make me guilty~~?)~~) To say such a <sup>base</sup> thing was a ~~simple~~ lie. Every person of sound mind says to himself that if my shoe had fit all the impressions, the prosecutor would have produced not one but twelve impressions so that each one of the jury could have convinced themselves that it was my footprint, for this would have been direct evidence that I must have been there. Or does anyone think that the prosecutor held back the plate through pity! O, no, the reasons were exactly reversed. They simply wanted to make me responsible for everything and this highly important material had nothing to do with me.

In every arrest it is customary to take fingerprints of the person~~s~~ arrested the first thing. So they did with me. A few days after this occurrence, two members of the N.J. State police came to me in the Bronx prison and requested further prints. I told them that the N.J. State Police had already taken my fingerprints a few days previously. I did not make this statement, perhaps, because I wanted to

refuse, but it seemed somewhat unusual to me. The men replied that the prints which they had were not clear enough, so they wanted to take them again. That evening they took my prints very firmly, -altogether about six sets. My astonishment was great when one or two days later they came again with the same statement that several spots were not yet plain enough. So! they worked anew on my prints. This time they made still more sets than before and also some of the sides (?) of the hand, which they did not take before, especially the joints of the fingers and the hollow part of the hand. Since they made these impressions even firmer than before, I began to be worried for I had a feeling that something queer was happening.

Well, what came out at the trial when my counsel asked about fingerprints:- Believe it or not, the prosecutor's staff said simply "O, well, there were no fingerprints in existence, not on the ladder or in any part of the room where the child was, nor on the window or windowsill???" But as though to fill the measure completely, the prosecutor staff came out with the fairy tale that they also did not find any prints of the father or mother of the unfortunate child, nor of the child's nurse or other house servants. So! they invented another story. They said, simply, that I had worked with gloves. O, what a worthless statement: for accordingly then, all the servants and the child's nurse must also have worked only with gloves. Good heavens! is it possible that when the father or mother go into the child's room in order to take joy in their child, they also put on gloves?: In that case, I would truly like to know why they twice came extra to New York for my fingerprints, when none were at hand with which to compare them. Why isn't the prosecutor's staff honest and why doesn't it say openly that the finger prints, as well as the footprints did not match with mine. That a distinguished fingerprint expert from N.Y. found hundreds of fingerprints on the ladder alone was laughingly not recognized. Even

when the State produced many photographs of the prints, still one contradiction after another. They could not ~~honor~~ honor the truth for nowhere was there an impression of mine. So everything which could point directly to me was simply choked off in the foregoing manner. But instead they built up indirect evidence, ~~on~~ which cries to heaven.

Among my carpenter's tools they found a chisel which looks in part similar to the one which was found at the Lindbergh home where the ladder lay. That my chisel ground differently, is a different size and has a quite different handle, made no difference to the prosecutor. He simply said the chisel which was found on the Lindbergh estate belonged to me. What kind of an answer did I receive when I said "no" and that my chisel set is an entirely different one than the one which they found on the Lindbergh estate. For my set was a Stanley set,  $\frac{1}{4}$  inches to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches. They simply said they did not find such a set among my tools. That is a plain lie, because a few weeks before my arrest, I used it when I made a cupboard for my child. Furthermore, the set did not leave my garage. In this set the  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch size chisel was missing. Still the chisel on the Lindbergh grounds was  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch and a quite different one. So they simply let my set disappear.

At my trial much weight was placed on my letters to Pinkus Fisch. (This is the brother of Isidore Fisch). To be exact, it is not precisely the letters which I wrote but a rough draft of them. The posted letters are somewhat different; still, the fundamental basis is the same. I retained the rough drafts of the letters which I sent to Pinkus Fisch; so I also carefully preserved the letters which I received from him. For already at that time I felt that something was not right. In my first letter I had written everything to Pinkus Fisch, as Isidore Fisch had told me, and I had always believed Isidore

entirely. I had never thought that he was lying to me. To be sure, I had been warned by my, and indeed, by his friends, to be careful with him, but I always defended him against such arrogance. When I received the first letter from Pinkus Fisch and commenced a superficial investigation, it turned out that something was not right with it. For this reason, and further because it was a case of death, I decided to preserve carefully all our exchange of letters; for, I thought, Pinkus Fisch will make me responsible for all the things which he should have and I, in my belief in Isidore Fisch, had advised him of. So, all the documents, six or seven letters, were in a large envelope (?) in my desk, from which the police took them. At my trial, when I said to the prosecutor that he should also bring the letters Pinkus Fisch had written me to the trial, I received the answer: "They (you?) have none". God in heaven! all the letters were together. One of these letters I could never get clear, for it said that shortly before Isidore Fisch died he always wanted to say something about me, but, so he wrote, he was too weak (or he did not want to). So he took something with him to his grave which would be of great help to me now. Also Pinkus Fisch wrote me to keep his death secret if it were necessary, but I did not do that for I saw no occasion for that. Now, for the sake of justice, why did the prosecutor say he did not have these letters, when my letters answering these were there. Why didn't the prosecutor let the jury who judged me see clearly!! no! These letters did not fit into his view- so they had to disappear. /But his conscience was not clear, so he took precaution and had the Fisch family and the nurse ? came to America. The prosecutor surely had expectations that I would insist more on these letters and say what was in them. But when I could only recall the contents in part and they simply would not have believed me, I said nothing. Would not assuredly the nurse and the Fisch family have said the opposite at the suggestion of the prosecutor. For what else was the family and the

nurse here? Thus Pinkus Fisch and the nurse were not called to the witness stand at all. Thus all direct evidence which would have freed me disappeared. But woe the person who is responsible for this sordid deal. (dirty deal ?).

Now after they had let everything disappear, material of indirect evidence was built up and one which is an impossibility was used. A few days after my arrest, my dear Annie and the child could stand it no longer in our house, for the child could not sleep because of all the people who were ?(mixed)? present; so they went to relatives. It really was not the right thing to have done, for now the police could manage as they wished. I can now explain fully to myself how the address of Dr. Condon came to be on the door wainscoting. For they already had samples of my writing. When this address was shown to me at that time, I had no thought of any evil and since that piece of door wainscoting came from our dwelling and it looked similar to my writing, I thought that on reading a newspaper I had written it down. But I could never rightly comprehend why. I relied mainly on the fact that it came from our dwelling. (To be sure I could only read it through my glass, as it was so greatly obliterated.) Later, however, I became completely convinced that I did not write it. The peak of the indirect evidence which was built up was the ladder story. The prosecutor said at the trial that a part of the wood of which the ladder was made came from the house where we lived--and that was not enough--I was supposed to have torn up a board from the floor of the attic (only half of which was boarded) and to have used half of it for the ladder. This false assertion borders on the shameless. When I moved into the house, I went up into the attic and came up there (hardly to be wondered at ?) only two or three times in that year. Still, up to this hour, I can not say whether or not a piece of board was missing. But the most ridiculous thing about the ~~stax~~ whole ladder, is that it is alto-

gether no ladder. It is only a wooden rack and I do not believe even now that this rack was ever used as a ladder. Its construction shows too plainly that it never came from the hand of a carpenter, not even from a poor one. The prosecutor said, to wit, that I am not a good carpenter. I say, herewith, only that I have often worked for myself and as foreman. Every master could depend on me. Indeed, I often had to figure out the whole requirement of wood for a new construction and order the material and was also responsible for the whole job. If I wanted to make anything at home I almost always had enough wood lying in my garage, and if not, there is a lumber yard only a block away from my house. No, the prosecutor said I tore up the floor and used the wood for the ladder. No man who understands a little bit about wood, would ~~not~~ employ this piece of wood which was produced altogether, for it is much too weak and besides it had four large knots in it. But all this was not considered. It was, however, so clearly shown to the jury that this piece came from my dwelling and it was declared by experts, so that everything else was pushed aside.. Whether it really came from the house, I do not know, but if it did, then I make responsible the persons who were there after Annie left the house. There were, further, brought forth the tools with which I was supposed to have built it. In order to carry out this trick truly, the prosecutor did not need any expert from the school. An ordinary apprentice can show more plainly how it can be done. Even the saw itself which I was supposed to have used was shown- the easiest thing in the world, for I have 8 saws, for heavy work to the finest work; then one of them could fit the cut. What a fraud was perpetrated regarding the ladder in order to lay the blame on me, the State can never account for; for on this indirect piece of evidence the most weight was laid, for according to the contention of the prosecutor, I must then plainly have been at the Lindbergh house.

Right after my arrest I had to write. I did not know at the time why they wanted specimens of my writing. If I had had any idea then I would not have let them dictate to me so to write down the mistakes. Of course, I make mistakes in writing. Still, not such blunders as were dictated to me. Then they took out of all those specimens of writing several letters which looked similar to the ransom notes. Thus, in the first ransom note only the word "is". Naturally, the State spent nearly \$50,000 on the opinion of the experts. Here the saying fits: "Whose bread I eat, his song I sing". Naturally, the singing was vigorous for this amount. I had no money to spend for such people in order to kindle such a song. So it was also said that I wrote the ransom notes.

I was not believed when I said that I received the packet from Isidore Fisch without suspecting that it contained money. How could I make it clear to the people. Fisch knew that he had my fullest confidence; he also knew that I would never open the packet as long as he was away. To be sure, if he had told me what it actually contained, I would have reported it at once to the police. Now I must suffer for that trust with which I met him. That I did not know what kind of money it was, is indicated by the fact that I spent it like any other money.

Of the six people who came to my cell in Flemington, an 80-year-old gentleman said, after he was near me three quarters of an hour, that I was the man whom he saw near the Lindbergh house on the morning of March 1, 1932. He said on the witness stand that he saw me for several seconds as I pushed along in my green car. He said he saw a man with a very red face and eyes like a ghost looking out of the car window, and this description was supposed to fit me.



What did the Judge say in his charge to the twelve jurors: "Do you think that there is any reason, upon the whole, to doubt the truth of the old man's testimony?" What a scandal this was for the State--now it turns out that the good man is almost blind. But he, like every other State witness, was believed. But my five witnesses who saw me in New York in the bakery with Annie at the hour that the crime was committed were not believed. These people were no friends of mine. No, they were all strangers to me. Of the witness, Whised, whom the State presented, I would rather not talk, for it would place the prosecutor's staff in a light which is hardly believable. Perhaps you have also read about it in Germany. The State's witness, Dr. Condon, when he visited me in Flemington, said to the prosecutor that he could ~~not~~ say anything against me. But why he changed his opinion up to the time of the trial is a riddle to me. Dear mother, to write down here his phantastic statements would only be wasting paper. But he, too, was believed at the trial. Now the gentleman referred to sits in the shopwindow with a ladder in his hand for advertisement. Now this 70-year-old man can still sleep with peaceful conscience, I truly cannot understand. One more occurrence before I close. On the witness stand appeared the two women who worked at the Lindbergh's house and said that on the first of April, therefore one month after the terrible deed, they found a support from the child's sleeping garment in the middle of the only narrow road which leads to the Lindbergh house. This was to attest, just as the Judge made it clear, that at this place the sleeping garment was taken from the little unfortunate child. But God in heaven, is there a person in the world who believes that this support, from the sleeping garment, which is made of wire, lay in this place in no way damaged, after one month of exposure to the weather, in the middle of the road where a thousand people footed it and autos upon autos rode by. Still, also these two women were believed. If someone put a \$10 bill in the middle

of Broadway in N.Y. and wanted to fetch it after a month, would he find it! According to the opinion of the Court, yes !!

Mother, I could write on, but it makes me sick when I think of it. For so it went through the whole trial. State's witnesses could swear away (?) the blue of the heavens--it was all believed. Also they were protected by the State and this even when they contradicted themselves 200%. All that played no part.--The circus was on. What may the symbol of justice have thought when it had to behold all that. For the band was removed from her eyes, so that her person could see all. Well, I was a German carpenter.

How my chief counsel at the trial acted or how he could act so, I can not comprehend. According to my opinion, I believe that I am 100% certain when I say that he worked together with the prosecutor. I had an opportunity to explain my case to him only five minutes. He simply did not come to me, or if he came for three to five minutes, he was often drunk. How could I talk with him then.

I have heard people talk in different situations, still I have never heard such a hateful summation as the prosecutor gave. This speech was not made in a glitter of Justice--no, here something else played the driving force. My counsel would indeed have been justified to carry on in such a manner of speaking. Did he not have a right thereto, after the feeble <sup>(manner)</sup> tune of the State which caused all the direct evidence in the case to disappear, (and the evidence which would have placed me in another light). If all that had come up, then the verdict would have been the opposite. But the State was not out for justice in this case, but only wanted to convict someone in this horrible case. Since I am a foreigner and besides an irregular immigrant (entrant), I was a person on whom they could vent everything. The newspapers and the radio had already laid the basis for it before the trial. I was

pictured only as a wild animal and it was hammered into the hearts of the people that I was a German machine gunner. My duty to my Fatherland during the time of war was pictured in the newspapers more as disgrace, - and that now 16 years after the war. Yes, I fulfilled my duty to my Fatherland as becomes a man. A man who does not do the same for the nation to which he belongs is, in my eyes, no man. But why do they cry of me "the German machine gunner", and that even yet. They even wanted to besmirch our dear ones, and this also came from the prosecutor. But here, in spite of their attempts, they could effect nothing with indirect evidence, for our dear one is holy to us. Annie and I are one. The prosecutor (Attorney-General David Wilentz) addressed me, it is a shame, - mostly with the name wild animal, snake, tiger, lowest being of the animal kingdom. You can hardly conceive how I felt to let that be said by a person who, I know, is responsible for the disappearance of the evidence. In my life I have met with many people and worked in coal mines, in offices, on buildings, on boats, in restaurants and at other occupations with people of all nations. Still, nowhere, even in the places where things are rough, have I heard a man who used such vile language, as the Attorney General, Mr. David Wilentz. This man cannot say that he carried on this base form of speech in the name of justice. O, no, Another question played a part here. - "In his speech one can recognize what <sup>Geisteskind</sup> spiritual child he is", so says a German proverb. That the court permitted the use of such language, is inexplicable to me. Even that the prosecutor proffered the twelve jurymen the greatest untruths was calmly submitted to. Whether or not it was as in the records, played no part. Thus, the prosecutor in his final speech changed the whole view (opinion ?) of the death of the poor child. But why he did it is easily explainable, for he, himself, could not believe

the story of the ladder, for it had become in itself too threadbare, so he simply changed the whole discussion at the culmination. For it was the assumption of the State that the ladder broke when the ostensible man climbed down with the child, and for six weeks it was discussed thus that the ladder broke in this manner. But all that meant nothing to the prosecutor. So when the hearing of everyone was over and my counsel had also spoken, so that there was no more opportunity to refute it, the prosecutor changed the whole view. I hardly believe that such a thing has ever been in history before. So much sand was thrown in the eyes of the jury and their minds so inflamed through the speech of the prosecutor that they hardly knew longer what was in or out (were at wit's end!)

The packet with the money I found again in the middle of August, 1934, and since I did not know what money it was, I spent it the same as any other money. I never tried to hide my identity in so doing. I also told the police immediately that I had spent 12 to 15 bills. That is all, and this was after the 15th of August, 1934. The police tried everything possible to prove that I passed a \$5 bill on November 26, 1933 in a movie. It was fortunate that this day happens to be my birthday, so I knew where I was, for on that day and at this same hour, I celebrated my birthday with friends at our house. This my witnesses swore to also.

Among other things, it was counted out to the jury that I had \$49,986 differently placed, thus say and write just \$14 less than \$50,000. But what happened when I was in my cell, one half hour after the sentence! The prosecutor sent an officer of the State police to me, who said to me on his order: That the prosecutor had no interest in my death, but that I should tell him where the other \$35,000 or \$30,000 were. Truly, I no longer knew whether I was lying down or standing up. Thus, I was condemned without having the slightest idea of the crime. Also, I have

never in my life yet seen the unfortunate child and if anyone should ask me where the Lindbergh house is, I could not give him any information, even with the best of intentions.

Dear mother, you can hardly conceive how I feel when I think about the whole "built-up" affair. I must be here in this place and suffer for something of which I know nothing, and people who laugh outside and hold festivals amuse themselves at my expense. I cannot see my child, in whom my whole heart is placed, in this place. My God, my God! Where is justice in this world!

Where I was arrested, they almost crippled me by beating in order to apprehend something which is not in me. There are, indeed, societies for prevention of cruelty to animals, but, unfortunately, not for men. Where is the humanity steering, which is in this world in Christ's name?

Dear mother, I have written you only a small part. If I wanted to write down everything, it would comprise volumes. What was done to me, was especially by the Attorney General, David Wilentz. This shame will always remain clinging to him. If I were guilty, I would submit to my verdict, for I would only receive what my deeds were worth. But as I know nothing of the deed, I can not be silent and must defend myself, and this I do with a clear conscience. In my dangerous situation I have not let my courage sink, and will not in the future. I simply cannot believe that this State, in order only to cancel a case, will break the life of an innocent man in such a way. This would be not only more than ordinary murder, but also murder of justice.

Dear mother, please do not be so angry when you think of the person who accomplished such a thing in the name of justice. There are, at the same time, many people who work for me and understand. Also the general view about the case is now quite different than before. I only wish that the world will recognize me as I am and not as they have painted me. If there is any shame in this case, then it lies on the shoulders of the prosecutor, for I have carried on in this case with a clear conscience.

In the hope that justice will conquer, I greet you most affectionately,

Your dear son,

Richard