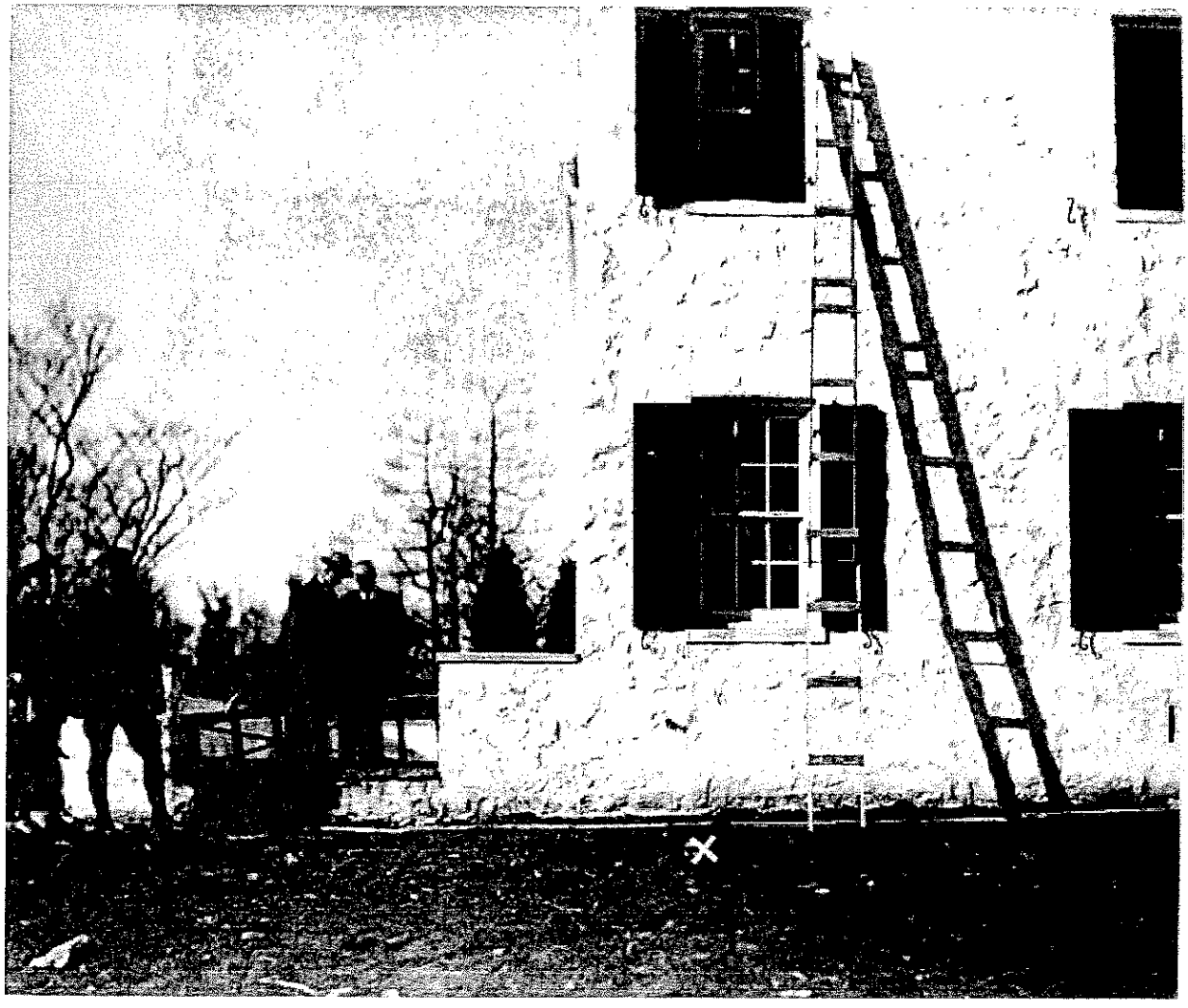
Summary of Events

&

Evidence Photos

Charles Lindbergh, Jr.

Sketch of suspect



Ladder to Baby Lindbergh's room

Dear Sir!

Here 50.000 $ ready 25.000 $ in
20 $ bills 15000 $ in 10 $ bills and
10000 $ in 5 $ bills. Offer 2-4 days
we will inform you where to deliver
the money.

We assure you the waiting
anything public or for notify the police
the child is in safe care.

Instructions for a follow are
ungraduate.

and 3 hours.

Ransom note

COMPARATIVE TEMPERATURES

San Francisco Chronicle
THE CITY'S ONLY HOME-OWNED NEWSPAPER

WEATHER FRIDAY

FOUNDED 1865—VOL. CXI, NO. 149 CCC[xx] SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., FRIDAY, MAY 13, 1932 DAILY 5 CENTS, SUNDAY 10 CENTS.

LINDY BABY FOUND SLAIN IN WOODS NEAR HOME: KIDNAP ENVOYS GRILLED

Abductors Beat Child To Death, Body Hidden In Grave at Roadside

Special to The Chronicle

NEW YORK, May 12—The baby son of Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh was found dead this afternoon. The child had been murdered. Two tremendous blows on the head ended the life of the child, the official autopsy by Dr. Charles A. Mitchell, county physician, disclosed tonight.

The autopsy showed that the skull had been fractured on the left side, the fracture extending from the

VICTIM—AND EMPTY CRIB!

Akron Soars Over S.F., Welcomed by Midnight Crowds

The navy dirigible Akron soared over San Francisco at 12:40 o'clock this morning and headed toward Sunnyvale, where it is given a installation welcome by assembled thousands.

Like a great silver fish or a giant, tapered, rain-proofed bowl, the world's greatest ship of the air made her bow to San Francisco, the rays of the searchlights beating overhead like giant fingers also.

And San Francisco, despite the hour, greeted the great ship as its own.

Thousands crowded the heights of the city to witness her passing. Inside Land, Twin Peaks, Telegraph Hill, the Cliff House and other points of vantage were crowded with enthusiastic thousands.

The roofs of the city's tall buildings held watchers, and area streets by the thousands.

The narrative of the few days before the crime is well documented by Scott Berg. As had become their custom, during the afternoon of Saturday, February 27, 1932, the Lindberghs left Next Day Hill and drove from Englewood to Hopewell to spend the weekend at the nearly completed house. But by Sunday, little Charlie, now twenty months old, had developed a cold, which left him sneezing, stuffy, and feeling ill. On Monday, February 29, the baby was still sick, and after lunch Anne called Betty Gow at Next Day Hill and said they'd stay in the Hopewell house until Charlie was feeling better. That evening, Lindbergh called from New York to say that he'd be spending the night in town and planned to return the next night. He had been pursuing his interest in biological research at the Rockefeller Institute.

On Tuesday morning, the baby seemed to be a little better, but Anne herself had come down with the cold. She called Betty Gow again and asked her to come to Hopewell. Gow arrived early in the afternoon and spelled Anne so she could get some rest. A little before 3 P.M., according to Berg, the two women went into the nursery together and found Charlie much improved. He played in the living room until around 5:30, then Gow took him back upstairs to the nursery, which, as you approach the house, was the room in the far left rear of the second floor. Gow fed him some cereal, then around 6:15 Anne came in and they prepared him for bed.

They rubbed his chest with Vicks VapoRub, then Gow quickly made a simple undershirt for him out of some leftover cream-colored cotton flannel. They put on his diapers, a woolen vest-style shirt, and a gray, size-2 Dr. Denton's sleeping suit. Lindbergh did not want him to suck his thumb, so he'd outfitted his son with wire thumb guards at night that clipped onto his sleeves. Betty laid him down in the dark wooden four-poster crib and pulled up the blankets.

Anne tried to close the shutters but found the ones on the corner window too warped. She left the room around 7:30, and Betty Gow stayed another few minutes, opening one window about halfway for some circulation before turning out the light and leaving to wash the baby's clothes. After that, she went in again to check on him and safety-pinned

the blanket to the mattress to keep him warm. She then went to the basement to hang up the things she had washed and joined Elsie Whateley for dinner in their sitting room at about 8 P.M.

Twenty-five minutes later, Lindbergh arrived home. Actually, he was supposed to be at a dinner hosted by New York University at the Waldorf-Astoria hotel, but there had been a scheduling mix-up, so he had driven home to Hopewell. He came from the garage through the kitchen. He and Anne sat down for dinner together around 8:35. After dinner, they went into the living room, which occupied the central area of the ground floor on the back side of the house.

Just after 9 P.M., Lindbergh thought he heard a strange sound, which he later described as similar to a wooden orange crate breaking. He thought maybe it had come from the kitchen on the right front side of the house, in line with the dining room in the back. Anne recalled that about fifteen minutes before Charles drove up to the garage, she thought she'd heard the sound of car wheels crunching the gravel of the driveway. But no one had been there. The Lindberghs' dog, Wahgoosh, had not barked at any point, and so Anne had paid little attention.

During this time, Betty Gow got a call from her boyfriend, Henry "Red" Johnson, a Norwegian sailor who was currently working as a deckhand on a yacht. They were supposed to have gone out that evening, but had to cancel the date when Gow was called to Hopewell. Instead, Johnson told her, he was going to drive up to Hartford, Connecticut, to see his brother.

After sitting in the living room for a little while, Anne and Charles went upstairs to their bedroom, which was just above the living room at the rear of the house and connected to the nursery by a short hallway that led past their bathroom. Charles bathed, then dressed again and went downstairs to read in the library, which was next to the living room at the left back corner of the house and directly under Charlie's nursery. Meanwhile, Anne bathed and went to bed around 10 P.M.

At around the same time, Gow went back to the nursery to check on Charlie. She didn't want to disturb his sleeping so she only turned on the light in the bathroom. It was now cold enough outside that she closed the half-open window and plugged in an electric heater.

But as she approached the crib, she was alarmed that she couldn't hear the baby breathing. In the dim light, he didn't look to be in the crib, but she felt all over with her hands to make sure.

She went through the connecting door to the Lindberghs' bedroom and found Anne as she was coming out of the bathroom. "Do you have the baby, Mrs. Lindbergh?" Gow asked anxiously.

"No," Anne replied, confused. Perhaps Colonel Lindbergh had him, she suggested, then went into the nursery while Gow ran downstairs to the library.

"Colonel Lindbergh, have you got the baby?" Gow asked. Then, since Lindbergh was known as a notorious practical jokester, she added, "Please don't fool me."

Lindbergh expressed surprise that Charlie wouldn't be in his crib, getting up quickly to examine the nursery for himself. He strode into his and Anne's bedroom, went to the closet, grabbed his rifle, and loaded it. Then, with Anne, he went back to the nursery.

The crib was empty and the room was surprisingly cold. Lindbergh glanced over and realized the corner window—the one with the warped shutter—was unlatched and slightly open. On top of a radiator enclosure just under the window, Lindbergh noticed a small white envelope. He had the restraint and presence of mind not to touch it before authorities arrived.

"Anne," he said, "they have stolen our baby."

"MY SON HAS JUST BEEN KIDNAPPED"

At about 10:25 P.M., Olly Whateley called the Hopewell Sheriff's Office to report the crime. Lindbergh himself called his attorney and close friend, Henry Breckinridge, in New York City. Then he called the New Jersey State Police in Trenton, where he spoke to Lieutenant Daniel J. Dunn. "This is Charles Lindbergh," he said. "My son has just been kidnapped."

Dunn asked him when it had happened and for a description of the baby and what he was wearing. After hanging up, Dunn described the call to Detective Lewis J. Bornmann. They discussed the matter briefly and, to make sure it wasn't a prank, decided Dunn should call the Lindbergh house to confirm that the voice he had spoken to was, in fact, the colonel's. When Lindbergh answered the phone, Dunn reported that the police were on their way. Meanwhile, Lindbergh went outside, hunting for signs of the intruder, but found nothing.

The first officers on scene, local sheriff's deputies, arrived at 10:40. They looked inside the nursery and outside the corner window, where they noticed impressions in the ground. From there they followed a set of footprints seventy-five feet away from the house toward the southwest, where they found a wooden ladder, obviously homemade, lying on the ground. Light in weight, it was rather crudely constructed in two sections

that folded together with the rungs seemingly inconveniently far apart, and the side rail of the upper section had split. About ten feet beyond, they discovered a third section of ladder, designed to fit on top of the other two. When fully unfolded and assembled, the ladder measured about twenty feet but could be collapsed down to six and a half feet.

At 10:46, a Teletype alarm was sent across the state instructing police to stop any car that might be carrying a child dressed in a sleeping suit. By 11:00, the statewide roadblock was in place, and the state police of Delaware, New Jersey, and Connecticut had also been notified.

The first state trooper to arrive at the house was Corporal Joseph A. Wolf from Lambertville, who reached the house at 10:55. A number of other officers and officials followed, including Colonel H. Norman Schwarzkopf, the thirty-seven-year-old chief of the New Jersey State Police, West Point graduate, and World War I army veteran (and father of the commanding general of the Desert Storm campaign against Iraq). He was accompanied by his second-in-command, Major Charles Schoeffel.

Betty Gow searched the house from cellar to attic on her own, opening every closet. Anne went back to her bedroom, opened a window, and leaned out. She heard what sounded like a cry, but Elsie Whateley assured her it was just a cat.

Corporal Wolf noted yellow clumps of mud or clay on a suitcase beneath the corner window of the nursery. He then went outside to investigate and saw footprints in the wet ground below the window. He didn't have a ruler or tape measure, so he compared the impressions to his own size-9 shoe and found the prints larger. No plaster casts were ever made.

By 11:15 other troopers had arrived. They reported seeing two sets of footprints, made by two different people, but later changed their story to say they had only seen one. This is somewhat ambiguous—only one of many ambiguous aspects of this highly troubling case. One explanation is that they concluded the smaller set of prints were actually Anne's. She said she had been outside the nursery earlier in the day and had thrown pebbles up to the window to try to attract the baby's attention. But as reported by Berg and others, beneath the window, near where the ladder had evidently stood, was a clear shoe print with a textile design, suggesting that socks or a bag of some sort had been worn over the shoe. Near the ladder impressions, officers found another potential piece of evidence: a nine-and-a-half-inch-long, wood-handled, three-quarter-inch carpenter's chisel manufactured by Buck Brothers Company.

The investigators wondered why the dog had not alerted the house-

hold to a potential intruder, but Lindbergh explained that Wahgoosh had been on the far side of the house, where he slept, and would not have heard anything that far away above the wind noise.

By this time, Lindbergh's lawyer, Henry Breckinridge, had arrived. He accompanied his friend and client and Schwarzkopf and other officers into the nursery. Corporal Frank A. Kelly from the Morristown Barracks, the crime scene technician, dusted for fingerprints. With the exception of one inconclusive smudge, no prints were discovered—not even those of Anne Lindbergh or Betty Gow—a fact that continues to confound and attract controversy to this day. Kelly took photographs and collected samples of the mud on the leather suitcase and the hardwood floor around the window.

Breckinridge called FBI director J. Edgar Hoover. They had met and become friends while Breckinridge served as assistant secretary of war during the Harding administration. Ironically, Hoover had been among the Lindberghs' distinguished houseguests at Hopewell, along with the likes of Amelia Earhart, Will Rogers, Wiley Post, and Albert Einstein. Hoover assured Breckinridge of full cooperation.

The ladder was brought inside before Kelly had a chance to photograph it in a preserved crime scene. He dusted for prints, but found none of any use. Soil on the rungs appeared to be of the same consistency as that found in the nursery. He also dusted the chisel, but found no prints there, either.

Kelly turned his attention to the white envelope in the nursery, carefully slitting it open with his penknife. He removed a single folded sheet of white paper. The note was written in blue ink in a shaky hand. He handed it over to Lindbergh:

Dear Sir!
Have 50.000 $ redy 25 000 $ in
20 $ bills 1.5000 $ in 10 $ bills and
10000 $ in 5 $ bills. After 2–4 days
we will inform you were to deliver
the Mony.
We warn you for making
anyding public or for notify the Police
the child is in gut care.
Indication for all letters are
singnature
and 3 holes.

This last statement referred to the bottom right-hand corner of the sheet. There were two interlocking blue-circle outlines, each a little more than an inch in diameter. The area where the two overlapped had been colored red, and three small holes had been punched into the design about an inch apart at the left, center and right. No prints were on the letter.

By the time it was light, scores of reporters had found their way to the estate, tramping over the property. Schwarzkopf had established a police command post in the three-car garage on the side of the house opposite the nursery, but he found it impossible to protect the area from contamination.

Stories began surfacing of strange people in the area. Olly Whateley said he had seen a man and a woman in a green automobile drive up to the estate to take photographs. He had sent them away, but later saw the woman behind a bush taking photos and focusing on the nursery window.

Two men in a blue-black sedan were reportedly asking around on Tuesday how to find the Lindbergh estate. The car was traced to a resident of Brooklyn, who said it had been stolen that day.

In Trenton, police were told that at midnight, railroad brakemen had seen two men and a woman with a child on the platform, waiting for the New York–bound train and appearing nervous and agitated. These people were never identified.

Schwarzkopf requested a list of everyone who had worked on the house, all to be checked out. He also asked for the names of all servants both in Hopewell and at Next Day Hill, to follow up the possibility of an inside job. No one could understand why the kidnapper or kidnappers had taken such risks rather than wait until everyone in the house would likely be asleep and the child's disappearance would go unnoticed longer. That, and the fact that the dog had not barked, helped focus the chief's attention on the domestic staff.

Yet at the same time, he had to acknowledge that the Lindbergh home was far from unknown outside the family. Its construction had been featured in magazines all over the country, with elaborate photos and floor plans. The house sat on one of the highest points in the state and would have been fairly visible, especially at night, to anyone secluded in the woods. And with only one road leading in and out, the family's movements were easily monitored. That the offender had brought a chisel with him suggested he didn't know the shutter could not be completely closed. Since the baby's blanket was still essentially in place in the crib, it appeared that he had been pulled out by the head and therefore possibly handled roughly. There were no odors of chloroform, but that did not rule out the use of some chemical or drug to quiet or neutralize the child.