

The Venlo Incident: A True Story of Double-Dealing, Captivity, and a Murderous Nazi Plot

S. Payne Best



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World War II seems to provide an endless supply of amazing true stories of heroism in the face of mortal danger. This true account of an MI6 agent's kidnapping and survival is a real-life spy thriller, and one worth knowing. On November 9, 1939, Captain Sigismund Payne Best and other members of Britain's ultra-secret Z service sat near a café in Venlo, The Netherlands, waiting to meet with whom supposedly-sound intelligence told them would be German resistance leaders. In reality, what they would meet at Venlo was an SS ambush—leading to the murder of Best's Z associate and the Nazis' seizure of a plain text list of British under-cover agents. It was a massive disaster for British intelligence and a crucial turning point of war-time espionage.

Best survived Venlo to tell of the shocking intelligence coups that precipitated the attack. His harrowing account of torture at the hands of the Nazis and five years in the infamous Sachenhausen and Dachau concentration camps offers unparalleled, first-hand details from inside the Third Reich. As a prisoner, he crossed paths with famous Nazi resistance fighters, including Georg Elser and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Best's explication of top-secret spy techniques and his depiction of how the incident played out to justify Nazi aggression is military history at its finest. His memoir of espionage, survival, and captivity is a riveting narrative that readers will not soon forget.



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