

Victor Lustig: The Con Man Who Sold the Eiffel Tower... Twice!



EVENING PUBLIC LEDGER—PHILADELPHIA,

In the annals of con artistry, few names shine as brightly as Victor Lustig, the man who achieved the unthinkable: selling the **Eiffel Tower**. Not just once, but twice!

Born in Austria-Hungary in 1890, Lustig was a genius swindler who operated in interwar Europe. His most audacious con took place in 1925, when the Eiffel Tower, built for the 1889 World's Fair, was beginning to show signs of aging.

Posing as a high-ranking French government official, Lustig summoned a group of Parisian scrap metal dealers for a secret meeting. He announced that the Eiffel Tower was to be demolished and put up for auction. André Poisson, a naive dealer, took the bait and paid a considerable sum to acquire the monument.

The con was so well executed that Poisson, embarrassed at being duped, never filed a complaint. Emboldened by his success, Lustig attempted to repeat the operation a month later, but this time the police were alerted, and he had to flee to the United States.

Lustig's career didn't end there. He continued his cons across the Atlantic, even managing to swindle Al Capone himself. Finally arrested in 1935 for counterfeiting, he was sentenced to 20 years in prison. He briefly escaped before being recaptured and spending his final days behind bars, dying in 1947.

The story of Victor Lustig, a blend of audacity, cunning, and charisma, continues to fascinate. It reminds us that sometimes truth is stranger than fiction, and that even the most iconic landmarks can become the subject of spectacular

scams.

Sources

- fr.wikipedia.org

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