

Achter de Comedie 8

Servatius Ritzen

Shot at the Vrijthof

The Ritzen family lives in a street with a peculiar name: in a the backstreet of the city theatre, the Bonbonnière, they live at 'Achter de Comedie', number 2. It is a



convenient location for the father of the family, Servatius Ritzen, who is supervisor and caretaker at the Bonbonnière until the Germans occupy Maastricht. Extremely suspicious of Servatius, SIPO leader Max Ströbel decides to occupy the ground floor of the theatre to host meetings of the Nazi party.

As time passes by, Ströbel's suspicions about Servatius turn out to be correct: the supervisor of the Bonbonnière passes on information about those meetings to the resistance and allows his house to be used as a clearing house – right under the noses of Nazi officials. Yet, though Ströbel regularly invades the theatre's basement, he never finds any incriminating evidence against Servatius.

It turns out, however, that such evidence is not needed to do harm. On September 4th, 1944, when Max Ströbel drives past the Vrijthof in a cabriolet, he notes Servatius talking to an acquaintance. Ströbel stops in front of restaurant Monopole to ask Servatius how he is doing. Before Servatius has even answered, Ströbel shoots him in the abdomen.

After a stop at the police station, Servatius is brought to the Calvary hospital, where he, according to the stories of others, spent the remaining days of his life with an orange flower in his hand. On September 14th, 1944, the day of Maastricht's liberation, Servatius dies of blood poisoning at the age of 56. During his time in the hospital he never spoke of his involvement in the resistance.