

AXIS SALLY

a story treatment by

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Based on the Book "Axis Sally" by
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FADE IN:

EXT. CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY - 1928

Officer WILLIAM BAISER of the Camden police department diligently patrols the great bridge that spans the Delaware River, connecting Camden with Philadelphia. He notices a figure moving in the morning mist. Knowing the bridge's history of suicides, the patrolman snaps into action, running towards the figure.

Baiser arrives at the scene and sees a WOMAN, tall, attractive, late 20's, dressed in her Sunday best. They both stand still not sure how to proceed.

The woman slowly removes her jacket and dangles her foot over the side rail, teasing the officer. Baiser steps forward and the woman counters his move, lunging towards the rail. She straddles the rail precariously, dangling delicately above the river.

Baiser grabs the woman's arm and she fights him off. Several other OFFICERS arrive on the scene and the woman continues to fight and lash out at her rescuers.

WOMAN

If I'm not allowed to jump off this bridge, I'll jump off another.

CAMDEN POLICE STATION - LATER THAT EVENING

The woman, with an audience of POLICEMEN and OFFICIALS, reveals herself to be BARBARA ELLIOT. She breaks down and tells the story of heartache that led to her attempted suicide jump...

Two weeks ago, Barbara discovered she was pregnant. But upon hearing the news, her husband, Charles Elliot, left town and had not been seen since. Feeling hopeless, Barbara decided to take the life of herself and her child.

The police, feeling for Barbara, enlist the help of the local press in an effort to find Charles Elliot. Several local news stories are picked up by the wire and the big New York newspapers. Barbara becomes a mini-celebrity overnight - millions supporting the search for her missing husband.

CAMDEN POLICE STATION - TWO WEEKS LATER

Barbara Elliot sits with a few DETECTIVES, checking in on the latest status of her husband. A man enters the station looking nervous and distraught - it's CHARLES ELLIOT.

Barbara rushes to his side and they embrace.

BARBARA
(under her breath)
You're not supposed to be here yet.

CHARLES
(quietly)
I can't keep this up any longer.

The entire police station cheers as the couple reunites. However, the elation quickly turns to suspicion, disappointment and shock when Charles, under heavy duress, admits that the entire attempted suicide and search was a hoax...

His real name is JOHN RAMSEY and his "wife" is MILDRED GILLARS, a struggling New York actress. Gillars and Ramsey are college friends, both former members of the dramatic arts fraternity at Ohio Wesleyan University.

The pair further admit that they were paid \$75 each to impersonate the abandoned mother-to-be and caddish husband by a motion picture producer. The hoax was designed to promote a new silent film entitled "Unwelcome Children."

The press has a field day with the hoax and the public turns on Gillars and Ramsey, seeing them as villains.

The Camden JUDGE places more blame with the film's producers and Gillars and Ramsey are freed but ordered to leave town. When leaving the police station, they are surrounded by a throng of reporters and photographers.

John Ramsey plows through the crowd with his head down. But Mildred Gillars relishes the moment, walking slowly and stopping to pose for the cameras. She flips her hair back, and lights up a cigarette, inhaling deeply and letting out a gentle trail of smoke.

AXIS SALLY

MEET MILDRED GILLARS: 1900 - 1918

Mildred Gillars is born in Portland, Maine, the daughter of VINCENT SISK and MAE HEWITSON. A strikingly lovely girl with porcelain skin, dark eyes and raven hair, Mildred's early childhood is marred by her father's alcoholism.

Mae takes Mildred from their Portland home. She meets and marries DR. ROBERT GILLARS, a dentist. They settle down in Conneaut, Ohio, and soon after, her stepsister, EDNA MAE is born.

Dr. Gillars is also plagued by alcoholism. He sexually abuses Mildred when he drinks and becomes unusually protective of her.

FROM OHIO TO BROADWAY: 1918 - 1928

After escaping the abusive ways of her stepfather, Mildred has dreams of becoming a movie star...

She enrolls in Ohio Wesleyan University as a drama major and receives welcomed praise and attention from her teacher, PROFESSOR NEWCOMB. During a dinner date, he encourages Mildred, to pursue an acting career full-time.

PROFESSOR NEWCOMB

Mildred, you're destined to be famous.

Mildred heeds Professor Newcomb's advice and heads to Broadway. She attends many "cattle calls," but unfortunately hears the same disappointing refrain of rejection day after day.

Mildred finally catches a break landing a role in the traveling production of "My Girl." The production ends in 1927 and her money quickly runs out. Desperate, Mildred answers a newspaper ad searching for an actress to portray a pregnant woman abandoned by the father of her unborn child.

The next day, Mildred boards a bus for Camden, New Jersey to play the most notable role of her disappointing acting career - Barbara Elliot, the deserted bride.

HOPE IN EUROPE: 1929 - 1939

Although the fame of "Barbara Elliot" reaches far and wide, the acting career of Mildred Gillars fares less well and she finds herself penniless.

The endless cycle of audition and rejection finally begins to overwhelm the ambitious Gillars and she begins to look for hope abroad.

AN UNLIKELY PAIRING

Mildred meets BERNARD METZ, a thin Brit with curly brown hair. Metz is traveling with a new-age, spiritual dance troupe, whose strange display of rituals and dances capture the attention of New York's "smart set."

BERNARD METZ

You need to leave New York. It's corrupting your soul.

Mildred becomes romantically involved with Metz and follows him and the dance troupe on their tour of Europe. She and Metz travel to Algiers, a popular winter vacation spot for Europeans.

Mildred settles in Algiers for a few years but eventually becomes disenchanted with Metz when she finds him in bed with another woman. Mildred is sad and alone when she hears from her mother, Mae.

REUNION IN GERMANY

Mae, now several years widowed from Dr. Gillars, travels to Europe and meets up with Mildred in 1934. Mildred and Mae have a wonderful time traveling throughout Hamburg and Berlin.

Meanwhile... in Berlin, Hitler orders the execution of ERNST RÖHM and several hundred of storm troopers in the purge known as the Night of the Long Knives.

There is now a constant flow of "Heil Hitlers," clicking of heels and brown-shirted storm troopers or black-coated SS guards marching up and down the streets of Berlin.

While Mae is uncomfortable in the presence of the storm troopers, Mildred is enamored by them.

MAE

It's not safe here. You need to come back with me.

MILDRED

(staring at a handsome
brown-shirt marching
with his comrades)

Success has yet to pass me by in
Germany. I will give it one more
year.

Mae travels back to the states and Mildred stays behind to study music and find fame.

MILDRED & CLAIRE

After running out of funds, Mildred gives up her music study and looks for work in Berlin. She finds a job as an assistant and caretaker for CLAIRE TRASK, an American *Times* correspondent well connected to the Berlin drama and film scene.

Claire is recovering from a car accident that took her husband's life and left her badly injured. Mildred ingratiates herself to Claire and receives an introduction to the Germany film community in return.

Claire helps Mildred become fluent in German and gets her involved with UFA, the famous film studio, where she writes subtitles for films and witnesses actress BRIDGETTE HORNEY in a movie.

Claire also enlists Mildred's help in writing reviews of German films and theater for the *Times*.

Things become tricky for Mildred and Claire when JOSEPH GOEBBELS issues a decree forbidding art criticism of any kind that does not meet the requirements set by the Reich Chamber of Commerce.

Mildred is forced to write film reviews that are "prepared to the king's taste." Mildred, relishing her ability to reach millions, is fine to oblige; however, Nazi efforts escalate, and the US entertainment industry becomes skittish about accepting propagandist pieces. Mildred's writing work dries up.

MAE'S RETURN

Tensions in Germany escalate and, fearing the worst for her daughter, Mae returns to Berlin to bring Mildred back home. Mildred refuses Mae's emotional pleas to return. Tired of being broke, she does not want to pass up an opportunity to interview for a broadcasting job at Reichsradio.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

Reichsradio could be my biggest break
since "My Girl."

Mae is flabbergasted by Mildred's decision to stay and her ability to turn a blind eye to the Nazi surge and anti-Jewish laws.

She has no other choice but to leave Berlin alone, and is forced to board a train that is almost completely tied up with military movements. As Mae boards her train, with soldiers destined for combat, she embraces her daughter for the very last time.

THE REICHSRADIO OFFICE

DR. MARCUS TIMMLER, head of Germany's radio and culture section, addresses the broadcasting team in a smoky conference room. He commends the team for their efforts in duplicating the propaganda success of their European service in North America, using short-wave radio.

Dr. Timmler also acknowledges the work of popular radio personalities FREDERICK KALTENBACH and BOB BEST, two American expatriates already employed at the radio station. Kaltenbach is a tall, patrician American with a profound distaste for Jews. Best is a short, balding, vulgar anti-Semite from South Carolina.

But Timmler explains that their work is falling short. The team is not truly penetrating the psyche of Americans abroad. To do this, they need a female voice...

DR. TIMMLER

Ladies and gentleman, please extend a warm welcome to your newest radio broadcaster, straight from the great stages of Broadway - Ms. Mildred Gillars.

Mildred enters the crowded room to welcome applause and quickly warms to the glow of attention. Her decision to stay seemingly validated with a satisfied smile.

A STAR IS BORN: 1939 - 1943

Mildred starts as a shift announcer two nights a week. Her ease at the microphone is quickly recognized and she is promoted within three months to the first-ever female host of a musical variety program.

As a regular host, Mildred's income quickly rises and she enjoys the spoils of her newfound wealth, moving into a new apartment in an upscale Berlin neighborhood and having dinner in the city's posh restaurants.

WERNER BERGER, the Chief Director of Radio Programming, assigns Mildred more political broadcasts. Though she finds the political broadcasts dry at first, she quickly warms to the increased pay they deliver.

ENTER PROFESSOR KOISCHWITZ

JUNE, 1940. A prominent new broadcaster joins the Reichsradio fold - DR. OTTO KOISCHWITZ. Koischwitz is a German-born scholar who emigrated to the United States to teach German literature and drama courses at NYU and Columbia University.

He returns to Germany in a position of immediate prominence, leading several radio broadcasts and taking on a position as the Foreign Office's chief liaison to Reichsradio.

Although he is married with children, Mildred is smitten by Professor Koischwitz and purposefully drops an armful of jazz records to get his attention. Koischwitz helps Mildred with her records and they connect instantly, flirting playfully. Otto invites Mildred to one of his "fire side chats" and they begin an affair.

Koischwitz wastes no time introducing Mildred to the German political elite, preferring that she join him at stately affairs instead of his wife, ERNA.

Mildred joins Otto at a fancy affair at the HOTEL ALDON, where she is squired around and walked down the majestic staircase that leads to the lobby and ballroom. It is here, to Mildred's great surprise, that she is introduced to JOSEPH GOEBBELS, HEINRICH HIMMLER and the Fuhrer himself - ADOLF HITLER.

After Mildred's nerve-wracking but cordial introduction, Hitler places his teacup down on a servant tray. Acting on pure instinct, Mildred swipes the teacup and puts it into her purse. Her action goes unseen by all with the exception of Otto, who gives her a knowing nod.

The next day, Otto gives Mildred, a matching teacup as a token of their momentous evening together. Mildred sips from the teacups during all of her subsequent broadcasts.

DECEMBER, 1941. Mildred hosts a live broadcast when news of Japan's Pearl Harbor attack on the United States hits. She loudly denounces the attack on the air to the shock of her producers and colleagues at the station.

Mildred is whisked into Werner Berger's office.

WERNER BERGER

I hope you are aware of the
seriousness of your offense and the
repercussions. You could be arrested.

On her way home, Mildred is detained by two SS OFFICERS. They take her American passport and rough her up a bit.

Mildred sits alone in an SS detainment room, not sure what will happen, when Otto Koischwitz enters.

OTTO KOISCHWITZ

You need to trust me.

Otto escorts Mildred home and expresses the grave danger she is in due to her pro-American outburst.

But there is a solution - if Mildred agrees to sign a document pledging her allegiance to the Third Reich.

He tells Mildred that Germany is on the verge of declaring war against the United States.

OTTO KOISCHWITZ (CONT'D)

The war will present you with opportunity. You'll be able to speak directly to U.S. troops abroad and truly connect with them. A star will be born.

Mildred signs the document. The very next day, Germany declares war against the United States.

BACK IN THE STATES - NEW YORK

MAX ROSEN, a promising young, Jewish lawyer from Brighton Beach, New York sits at home listening to an FDR radio broadcast with his wife, BETSY. They both listen intently as President Roosevelt officially declares war on Germany and Italy and talks passionately about the challenge at hand.

Max turns off the radio and tells Betsy that he's planning on enlisting to join the fight for American and European Jews. He leaves his budding law practice and family behind.

ON THE BATTLE FIELD - NORTH AFRICA

1943. Max is part of a British-American troop deployment under the command of Field Marshall BERNARD MONTGOMERY. They defeat the Germans in this early battle but many are killed and wounded in the brutal clash. Max suffers several gunshot wounds, including one to his knee.

Max wakes up in a crowded sanitarium in Morocco. His leg raised high in a sling.

Bored, Max and his fellow soldiers turn to the comforts of a rather large radio planted firmly in the corner of the room. The radio provides a respite from the war, treating the men to some good, old-fashioned American SWING MUSIC. The men perk up immediately, enjoying the familiar tunes.

When the music fades, the soldiers are introduced to the sultry voice of the radio host "Midge." Max is immediately enthralled by her smooth, sexy delivery. But his enamor quickly turns to hatred when he hears Mildred's anti-American, defeatist message.

MILDRED (V.O.)
 (speaking to her
 bandleader, Dick)
 Gee, Dick, I'm afraid you'll be giving
 the American troops some very bad
 news. They'll just get all kind of
 woozy and would like to throw down
 those little old guns and toddle off
 home. Well, that would be the right
 thing to do after all, because they're
 certainly not making any headway
 right now.

One of the soldiers mentions that he's heard the woman before.
 She's known as "Axis Sally" or the "Berlin Bitch," a U.S.
 traitor working for the Nazi's.

But they have no choice to put up with her - it's the only
 station that plays swing music so the soldiers tolerate the
 propaganda.

MILDRED (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Boys, I guess all of you have felt
 something special about some girl.
 Well, you've parted now and you may
 dislike my repeating this to you,
 but it's the truth, especially if
 you boys get all mutilated and do
 not return in one piece. I think
 then you'll have a pretty tough time
 with your girl. Any girl likes to
 have her man in one piece, so I think
 you've got a pretty hard future ahead
 of you.

Max is shocked, listening to Mildred's broadcast.

MAX
 (to himself)
 How could an American turn against
 their country in such a blatant way?

He stares down at his shattered kneecap, which will never
 allow him to walk properly again.

MAX (CONT'D)
 Don't pay any mind to her, boys.

LOVE, WAR & FAME: 1943 - 1945

Mildred's resistance to anti-Ally political broadcasting is
 now completely weakened because of her infatuation with
 Koischwitz.

She becomes the undisputed star of Reichsradio with her shows *Home Sweet Home* and *Midge at the Mike*. She basks in her success and power, becoming difficult and egotistical to her fellow radio co-workers.

BACK IN THE STATES - NEW YORK

Max Rosen returns home and can't get the "Axis Sally" broadcasts out of his mind. He sells his law practice and takes a low-level position working for the US Counterintelligence Corps in Washington, D.C.

He's quickly promoted to a lead agent and convinces his superiors to begin the process of assembling evidence against pro-Nazi Americans, including Axis Sally.

IN BERLIN - A RIFT WITH OTTO

The "honeymoon" phase of Mildred's affair with Otto comes crashing to a halt when she arrives to the studio and finds him to be unexpectedly missing. Frederick Kaltenbach breaks the news of his whereabouts.

FREDERICK KALTENBACH

The Professor is at the hospital.
Didn't you know? Erna is having a
baby.

Mildred is shocked and despondent about the news that only she was not aware of. She does not like that Otto's focus will now be on Erna and his fourth child. Mildred also worries about the impact the birth will have on her budding relationship with Otto's older daughters, RENATA, HELENE and SOPHIE.

Otto repairs his relationship with Mildred but she remains distraught, especially during Otto's frequent visits to the hospital to visit Erna and his new daughter, GAIL, as they both recover from a distressed pregnancy.

THE WAR CLOSES IN

The war takes a toll on Mildred when her apartment is damaged heavily in an AIR RAID, further adding to her fragile state. Arriving home from work at 3AM, she finds her place in ruins.

The continued ATTACKS on Berlin leave many shaken.

Seeking a respite from the hospital and the attacks, Otto takes Mildred and his daughters to the theater to see a film.

As the credits roll, the lights go off and the building SHAKES. The AIR RAID SIRENS go off and the audience files out into the street and the public bomb shelters.

Outside - Otto, Mildred and his daughters watch in horror as the Berlin hospital burns in the distance. The hospital is destroyed before their eyes. Otto's wife, Erna, his baby Gail and everyone in it perishes.

POW INTERVIEW TOUR

Mildred and Otto leave the perilous conditions of Berlin and embark on a POW interview tour across prison camps in Holland, Belgium and France. Otto leaves his daughters with trusted family members who have a private bomb shelter.

On their POW tour, Mildred and Otto interview various American prisoners of war for Reichsradio. During the interviews, Mildred quickly realizes the anger and resentment of the men she entertains. She is also made aware of her various nicknames.

AMERICAN PRISONER

(speaking to another
prisoner)

That's Axis Sally - the Berlin Bitch.
When I was on the battlefield, her
smooth voice and demoralizing words
were like a worm stuck inside my
head.

Despite the hatred she receives on the road, Sally feels a strange comfort - she's famous and everyone knows her name.

Mildred realizes that "Axis Sally" has become more than a radio personality. She is now a figure of almost mythic proportions and endless fascination to the servicemen.

The notoriety and scorn she receives from US soldiers does not take the cruelty and cynicism out of her broadcasts. Instead, it fuels them.

MILDRED

How many very mutilated boys I've
seen and they've said to me, "I don't
care how I get back, just so I get
back." You see, that's the way they
think now. What do you suppose
they'll think in later years when
there are no jobs for cripples?
That's the question.

Mildred also continues to rail against America.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

I'd rather die for Germany than live
for one hundred years on milk and
honey in the Jewish America today.

Fame and success always leads to imitators and Mildred becomes incensed when she discovers that another female broadcaster for the German government, named RITA ZUCCA, has co-opted the "Axis Sally" name.

Broadcasting from Rome, the soft voice of Zucca teamed up with an older man, repeating the successful formula that Mildred had created.

BACK IN THE STATES - WASHINGTON, D.C.

A January, 1944 article in the *Saturday Evening Post* brings the name "Axis Sally" to the attention of millions of American civilians...

The article entitled "No Other Gal Like Axis Sal," is written by an Air Force weather observer named Corporal Edward Van Dyne, describes the nightmarish effect that her voice had on himself and his fellow servicemen.

Max Rosen storms into the office of JOHN HARKINS, his boss at the Counterintelligence Corps. He proudly and defiantly slaps down a copy of the *Saturday Evening Post*.

MAX

We've captured dozens of American traitors but the biggest one is still out there and we still don't know who she is.

Given the national exposure, Harkins gives Max approval to make capturing Axis Sally his top priority.

IN BERLIN

A frail and coughing Otto Koischwitz returns to Berlin to see a doctor. A day later, Mildred dials his office at the radio building to check on him. A strange voice answers the phone.

RADIO VOICE

I'm sorry Miss Gillars. Dr. Koishwitz is dead.

Mildred drops the phone and collapses. (Koischwitz died of tuberculosis and heart failure.)

Mildred's lover - the man who convinced her to betray her nation, who protected her and gave her access to the highest echelons of German society is now gone.

Mildred returns to Berlin on a retreating troop train. Central Berlin is heavily damaged by the continued bombing.

Otto's service is held in a church adorned with the Nazi flag. Mildred stands on one side of the coffin and Otto's daughters, Renata, Helene and Sophie stand on the other. The girls avoid making eye contact with Mildred.

APRIL, 1945. The unconditional surrender of all German forces officially turns Mildred and her fellow Reichsradio broadcasters into fugitives.

Mildred is now on the run.

With Soviet forces entering Berlin, Mildred sits underneath a table, wearing a beret and shakily smoking the butt of a cigarette.

MOTOR FIRE approaches and she hears POUNDING on the front entrance of her studio. She slips out the back door and burrows herself under DEAD BODIES until nightfall.

Max Rosen and his team from the Counterintelligence Corps (CIC) arrive in Berlin to locate more individuals suspected of collusion with the enemy, including all Americans who have made pro-Nazi broadcasts.

Axis Sally is the CIC's prized target but Mildred proves challenging to find, despite Max receiving numerous tips about possible suspects.

After much searching, Max is informed of the good news: they've found Axis Sally and will be bringing her in for a deposition.

Max deposes Sally and thinks something is not quite right, and there is - sitting before him is RITA ZUCCA, the copycat Sally who had been broadcasting out of Italy. Zucca, an attractive brunette around 30, is very pregnant.

Remembering the voice he heard when at the military hospital and on various recordings, he asks Rita how her bandleader, Dick, is doing.

RITA ZUCCA

Mr. Rosen, I'm prepared to confess
to a lot of things but having a
bandleader is not one of them.

Rita's response convinces Max. He tells his CIC team to keep looking - they still don't have the real Axis Sally.

THE CHASE, BERLIN - 1946

Max receives a breakthrough in his search for Axis Sally. RAYMOND KURTZ, a B-17 pilot, who had been shot down and captured by the Germans, recalls that he was told the woman who had visited him in the prison camp was Midge of *Midge at*

the Mike. Kurtz remembers that the woman used an alias: Barbara Elliot.

Max and his CIC team place wanted posters for Barbara Elliot throughout all occupied sectors of Berlin.

Max has a plan: as a fugitive without identification papers, Axis Sally would have to purchase food through the black market and would likely have to sell her property to consignment shops to obtain hard currency.

MAX

(to his CIC team)

We'll stakeout every consignment shop in Berlin. She'll have to turn up eventually to collect money or reclaim her property.

After weeks of waiting and watching, Max receives a tip from a former neighbor that Axis Sally had left some belongings in a basement cellar adjacent from her former apartment. The CIC walk down the cavernous cellar and pry evidence.

Max finds seven acetate records containing full programs featuring the voice of Axis Sally - a treasure-trove of evidence against her.

Max's investigation picks up further momentum when he finds a small table that belonged to Axis Sally at a shop hidden away on an isolated side street.

The STORE OWNER, gives up the name of the person who had sold the table to the shop. After some intense interrogation, the TABLE SELLER, admits having sold the item and provides the most important bit of information yet - the name of Axis Sally: Mildred Gillars.

Mildred sits in her apartment, quietly sipping tea from her beloved German teacup set.

There is a loud bang at the door. Unfazed, Mildred continues to sip her tea. The door BURSTS open and several German policeman and CIC corps officers storm into the apartment. Max Rosen trails them into the apartment.

MAX ROSEN

Mildred Gillars, you are under arrest.

Mildred is dragged off to prison. Max allows her to take only her tea cups and a photograph of the man she called her "destiny" - Otto Koischwitz.

THE TRIAL: 1946 - 1948

A swarm of correspondents and photographers surround Mildred as she approaches the C-54 transport taking her to Washington, DC for her trial. She drinks in the attention that has eluded her, posing for photos. One of the reporters asks about her wartime activities.

MILDRED

When in Germany, do as the Germans do.

Mildred bids adieu to the press and climbs the stairs into the waiting plane.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Max Rosen works closely with JOHN KELLEY, a cool and methodical Department of Justice prosecutor, to assemble a case against Mildred. They are pitted against Mildred's lawyer, JAMES LAUGHLIN, an energetic, fearless and brazen defense attorney, known for manipulating the media to his client's advantage.

The trial begins. Mildred strides into the courtroom, guided by eight US marshals. She takes her position at the defense table alongside James Laughlin. Mildred slips off a black fur-trimmed coat and smiles at her stepsister, EDNA MAE, her last surviving family member, sitting in the front row.

Mildred's skin is caked with heavy makeup, giving her an orange tone. She looks like a forty-eight year old woman, desperately trying to be twenty-four.

In his opening statement, John Kelley tells the jury that it will be Mildred's own words that will convict her. He points out a stack of 29 acetate recordings, found by Max Rosen, sitting near a waiting phonograph.

James Laughlin argues vigorously on Mildred's behalf, presenting the case of a helpless prisoner, held behind enemy lines, acting against her own will in order to survive.

A hard-fought trial ensues filled with many witnesses, including POW's who met Mildred during her prison tour with Otto Koischwitz.

The trial is not without its theatrics and when the jury listens to a particularly damaging broadcast where she refers to American pilots as "murderers," Mildred falls to the floor unconscious.

The trial hinges on a key point: Did Mildred sign her oath of allegiance to Germany to save her life or to simply "live?"

In her testimony, Mildred does not help her case.

MILDRED (CONT'D)

It is obvious that one has to live somehow, and after all...

LAUGHLIN

So, did you sign (the allegiance to Germany) To save your life?

MILDRED

Well, I signed it in order to live.

On March 25, 1949, Mildred Gillars is sentenced to serve 10 - 30 years in prison for broadcasting Nazi propaganda in World War II.

Surprisingly, the jury throws out seven of the eight counts in the government's indictment and convicts Mildred on the single count of engaging in a broadcast entitled "Vision of Invasion."

The melodramatic "Vision," written by Otto Koischwitz, was broadcast to American troops in May, 1944, just a month before they sailed across the English Channel and stormed the German-held coast of France in the Normandy invasion, June 6.

In the broadcast, played during the trial, Mildred luridly and in gruesome detail depicts the horrors that awaited any Allied attempt to attack Hitler's "Festung Europa" (translation: Fortress Europe). "Festung Europa" is a Nazi propaganda term referring to Hitler's plan to fortify all of Europe under Nazi rule.

When JUDGE EDWARD CURRAN finishes his brief words of judgment, Mildred throws back her head and is ushered out of the courtroom, walking in short, swift steps.

Max Rosen stands gratifyingly relieved as Mildred walks past him, on her way to jail.

WELCOME TO ALDERSON, WEST VIRGINIA: 1948 - 1961

Mildred arrives at the Alderson Federal Reformatory for Women, the first Federal prison dedicated to housing female inmates.

Mildred immediately establishes a reputation as a difficult diva with an air of superiority. She is also left alone by fellow prisoners as rumors swirl about the frightening traitor who made lampshades out of the skins of U.S. soldiers.

She eventually adjusts to prison life and leads the Catholic choir. A Catholic priest, FATHER KERRIGAN, takes an interest in the embittered prisoner.

Mildred develops admiration and respect for Father Kerrigan and eventually converts to Roman Catholicism.

1961. Father Kerrigan serves as a key character witness in Mildred's parole hearing and she is released into the hands of "Our Lady of Bethlehem Convent" in Columbus, Ohio.

THE CONVENT: 1961...

Emerging from prison and greeting a smattering of reporters, Mildred exudes the grace of an aging, forgotten actress rediscovered.

For a moment, she is once again basking in the glow of attention but she is different. As the reporters FIGHT to get an interview on a foggy West Virginia morning, she does not yield to their requests, gets into a car and rides away into the mist.

Mildred settles into a teaching position at the convent's school and becomes a liked and valued member of the teaching staff.

THE VISIT

After several years out of the public eye, Mildred receives a visitor - it's Max Rosen. Max enters the convent visiting area, walking gingerly with a cane - his WW II injury now feeling worse in his old age.

Max is greeted politely by Mildred, who prepares them both tea. Max has a simple request - he wants to know the truth about Axis Sally. Did she broadcast anti-American atrocities to save her life or was she truly a Nazi supporter?

MAX

Were you working against your will?
Did you believe those atrocious things
you were saying? About Americans?
About the Jews? Please tell me.
After all these years, I have to
know the truth.

MILDRED

Mr. Rosen, I was simply a
professional broadcaster in Germany
when the U.S. entered the war. It
was my job. Besides, I was very
much in love with a German and hoped
to marry him. At the time, I felt I
could love the United States and
still work for the Berlin Broadcasting
Corporation.

Mildred sits back in her chair and takes a sip of tea.

MILDRED (CONT'D)
(letting out a sigh)
I never thought he would die.

MAX
Who?

MILDRED
Otto.

Max sits back in his chair, a bit exasperated. He sips from his teacup, starring at Mildred as she nonchalantly does the same.

Max looks more closely at Mildred's tea cup as she sips. It is the same teacup she took from Hitler years ago.

Staring further at the BOTTOM of the teacup, Max notices the words "Festung Europa" written in cursive. Below the writing is a small Nazi swastika.

Max's eyes open widely. His teacup slightly spills as his hand starts to shake.

Mildred continues to sip her tea calmly and quietly. She stares knowingly back at Max.

FADE OUT.

THE END