

Department of Investigation
Washington, D.C.
March 20, 1946
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The following information was obtained from the details of the activities of the German Government throughout the war have been fully known to the Bureau throughout the course of the investigation heretofore conducted. Briefly summarized they are as follows:

Richard E. Kilday, a native-born citizen of the United States residing in Germany at the outbreak of the war secured employment with the Rudiwerk German Government Propaganda Agency prior to the entry of the United States into the war. His duties were confined primarily to announcing and performing in Berlin various propaganda events of the Reich. With the entry of the United States into the war he was transferred to a propaganda program established in the United States by the German Government in North Africa. In late February of 1943 he was transferred to the Berlin office of the German Government in the United States. He was assigned to the office of the German Government in the United States by recording the activities of the German Government in the United States and to the United States by recording the activities of the German Government in the United States.

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It has been learned that the play was written by Dr. Otto Kischwitz (now deceased) with whom the subject Gillars was closely associated throughout her employment by the German Radio. It is believed that the radio play was recorded on a magnetic band through the facilities of the Drama Department of the German Short-Wave Radio Station in Berlin in a studio believed to have been located in the Dönhofsplatz, at 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100. It is understood that the play was rehearsed and recorded in the German Short-Wave Studios in the early part of May, 1944, and that on the day that the program was recorded the Director (Kischwitz), the cast and certain technicians assembled in the lobby of the Dönhofsplatz where copies of the manuscript were distributed to the members of the cast thereupon, following rehearsal, the cast went directly to the studio (believed to be Room No. 10) where several microphones were located at different places throughout the large studio room.

One of the German witnesses now in this country in connection with the Robert H. Best trial - Dr. [redacted] U.S.A. Short-Wave [redacted] states that he was present in the [redacted] at the time the radio play "Vision of Invasion" was phonographically recorded. [redacted] was unable to see into the broadcasting studio at the time, however, and thus is unable to state as an expert witness that the subject Gillars actually acted in the recording. [redacted] is present in this country, but only in the event that additional witnesses are obtained who actually testify to having seen Miss Gillars recording at the microphone. To the best of [redacted] recollection at the time the play was recorded, [redacted] were present in the studio.

Dr. Kischwitz (deceased), who directed the play, is believed to have written a few lines in the introductory portion. It is believed that in a [redacted] capacity [redacted] and that each spoke a few lines in the play. [redacted] is the wife of a ship's captain and is believed to have spoken several lines in the play.

The principal roles, however, were played by the subject Gillars, Dr. [redacted] Miss Gillars played the part of an American woman ("Evelyn"), residing somewhere in Ohio. [redacted] played the part of her husband ("Eliot") and [redacted] played the part of their son ("Alan"), in the role of a soldier who loses his life while participating in the Normandy invasion.

A reading of the attached transcript ("Exhibit A") readily demonstrates that this radio play constitutes a typical example of psychological warfare calculated to instill fear, doubt and disension among the allies, both civilian and military. It is believed that participation therein on the part of the subject Gillars constituted an overt act of treason and is sufficient to warrant her indictment, provided, that her participation in the play can be established beyond doubt by the testimony of the eye-witnesses. Such witnesses would have to be in a position to testify concerning the nature, purpose and character of the lines spoken by Gillars in the play, the fact that the play was phono-

approximately recorded for transmission by short-wave to the U.S.A., and such witnesses would have to be in agreement concerning the approximate date, time and place where the recording was made. It is believed that [redacted] could all testify to these facts and it is deemed therefore to be of the utmost importance that said persons be located and interrogated as soon as possible. The C.I.O., in Germany, is presently endeavoring to locate

[redacted] is described as a widower of German nationality who is presently approximately 70 years of age. He is known to be socially friendly with [redacted]. It is understood that both subsequent to the war, obtained employment as actors at the Renaissance Theatre, Charlottenberg, Berlin, Hardenbergstrasse.

[redacted] is described as approximately 5 feet in height—bushy type, weighing about 185 pounds, dark brown hair and eyes. It is believed that [redacted] is married. At one time [redacted] worked as an actor with one of the major State Theaters in Berlin (Staatliches Schauspielhaus).

In conducting the interview herein requested it is of extreme importance to establish [redacted] knowledge and recollection concerning the other persons who he actually observed appearing particularly in the recording of the play. Particular attention as to time, date, place, character of participation, the role played and all surrounding details. It is to be noted that in the copy of the written transcription enclosed ("Exhibit A") certain lines are attributed to certain specific actors. It is possible that in some instances [redacted] may be erroneous. [redacted] should be interrogated concerning his own recollection as to the played each role, etc. He should be asked to describe with greatest particularity the physical characteristics and lay-out of the studio in which the play was recorded—the position in the studio occupied by the several actors during the course of the recording, etc.

In addition to the written transcript of the play in question ("Exhibit A") attached hereto, we likewise forward herewith a duplicate phonograph recording of the play. This duplicate recording was dubbed-off from the original Federal Communications Commission recording, now in the custody of the National Archives. It will be found that the phonograph recording is most audible when heard through earphones, rather than through a loud speaker.

In conducting the interview herein requested, it is suggested that [redacted] be first thoroughly quizzed on the basis of his present independent recollection and that thereafter when his recollection has been exhausted he be shown the written transcript and listen to the phonograph recording for purposes of refreshment.

The progress of the investigation now going on in Germany is, in some measure, dependent upon our first securing all of the information in

possession and it is, therefore, requested that the interview hereinbefore outlined be had at the earliest possible moment. In addition to knowledge and recollection of the Radio Play "Vision of Invasion," it is desired that he be exhaustively interrogated concerning his entire knowledge of and acquaintanceship with the subject and all contacts which he had with her of whatever nature throughout the war. It also should be determined whether or not [redacted] has any knowledge of the present whereabouts of the other persons who participated in the Radio Play in question.

Independent of the interview hereinbefore requested, it is also desired that the Bureau make inquiries of the Immigration and Naturalization Service in order to determine fully the facts surrounding [redacted] entry into this country, his present status, citizenship, the duration of his period of stay, etc.

It is considered probable that [redacted] will be a willing witness for the Government in the prosecution of the subject which is now contemplated, and his attitude in this respect should be determined during the course of his interview. If it should appear that [redacted] contemplates departing the United States in the near future, it will be appreciated if that fact is communicated to the Criminal Division immediately, since in such case we would desire to take steps to insure his continued presence here until after the trial.

Noel E. Story, Esquire,
Department of Justice.
John M. Kelley, Jr., Special Assistant to
the Attorney General, Criminal Division.
MILDRED ELIZABETH GILLARS, was "AXIS SALLY,"
MILDRED E. SISK; TREASON.

March 22, 1948

JMK:ms

446-7-51-1708

The subject was born Mildred Elizabeth Sisk on November 29, 1900, at Portland, Maine. Her father and mother were divorced when she was about six years of age. Her mother in 1907 married a dentist by the name of Robert B. Gillars and shortly thereafter the family moved to Conneaut, Ohio. The subject attended grade and high schools in Conneaut, Ohio, and also was a student there of Wesleyan University. At the conclusion of her schooling, subject moved to New York and endeavored--evidently with little success--to secure employment as a dramatic actress. For a period of time she posed as an artist's model. Subject has one sister,

Subject was issued a passport on June 5, 1929, upon her application, in which she stated that she intended to make a six-month trip to France for the purpose of studying. It is believed that the subject has never returned to the United States since her departure in 1929. On April 20, 1933, subject registered as an American citizen with the consul at Algiers, Algeria. On June 12, 1934, a passport was issued by the American Consul at Algiers, authorizing her travel to Germany, and elsewhere, which passport was renewed on June 19, 1936, for two years by the American Consul at Berlin, Germany. At that time, she stated that she was residing in Berlin and taught English at the Berlitz School of Languages. An additional passport was issued on June 22, 1938 by the American Consul at Berlin. In applying for this passport subject stated that she was a secretary and teacher and had resided in Germany from 1934 to date. Said passport was validated on January 17, 1940 to extend to April 17, 1940 by the American Consul in Berlin. At the time of said last validation subject stated she was employed by one Briget Horney, a German citizen and film star. Subject's passport was again validated on May 11, 1940 to extend to June 22, 1940. Subject stated at that time that she was contacting friends in the U.S.A. through the American Embassy to assist her in returning to the United States. On October 6, 1943, a refusal notice was lodged against the subject in the U.S.A. for the reason that she was suspect of having done work on propaganda scripts for the German Radio. A refusal notice has the effect of requiring any subsequent passport application on the part of the subject to be forwarded to the Department of State for serious consideration before its issuance.

It is known that the subject obtained part-time work with the German Radio sometime in late 1941 or early 1942. Apparently she never was employed on a basis of a written contract. She was paid on a basis of the time con-

tributed (so many marks for a 1/2 hour program, etc.). It is evident that by the time the United States entered the war with Germany the subject was devoting her full time and energies to her work with the German Radio and that she ultimately became one of the highest paid collaborators. The subject has been held in military custody in Germany, at the request of the Department of Justice, since she was apprehended, from approximately July 1946.

Attached to this folder you will find a copy of a memorandum from Mr. Elliff to Mr. Caudle, dated January 23, 1947 ("Exhibit A," herein), a memorandum from Mr. Woerheide to Mr. Elliff, dated February 6, 1947 ("Exhibit B", herein), and I am enclosing these memoranda solely to fill out your general understanding concerning the subject's activities and to indicate the nature of the early efforts to develop this case. I suggest, however, that you pay no attention to the proposed overt acts considered in the said memoranda since the theories and expectations therein expressed have been substantially abandoned and the overt acts which the Government presently seeks to establish are those hereinafter enumerated, to wit:

- I. Overt act relating to the subject's participation in the radio drama entitled "Vision of Invasion." (On or about May 11, 1944.)
- II. Overt acts relating to the subject's participation in the regular Thursday night program entitled "Home Sweet Home." (December 25, 1942--to--end of war.)
- III. Overt acts relating to the subject's participation in the regular program entitled "Midge-at-the-Mike." (May 1943--to--October 1943.)
- IV. Overt acts relating to the subject's participation in radio programs consisting of spoken messages from prisoners of war to their families in the U.S.A., in connection with which the subject visited POW camps, solicited and persuaded prisoners to record messages and, in the preparation of a series of special programs delivered in connection with each program an introduction implementing and expressing the established German propaganda line. (October 1943--to--December 1944.)
- V. Overt acts relating to the subject's participation in regular radio programs consisting of the reading of written messages from prisoners of war to their families in the U.S.A., in connection with which the subject delivered introductory and closing comment as well as interspersed remarks all of which implemented and expressed the established German propaganda line. (April 1943--to--end of war.)

- VI. Overt acts relating to the subject's participation in regular radio programs consisting of the reading of medical reports relating to wounded American airmen in prisoner-of-war hospitals in connection with which the subject delivered introductory and closing comment as well as interspersed remarks all of which implemented and expressed the established German propaganda line. (Summer of 1943--to--end of war.)
- VII. Evidence not specifically relating to the establishment of an overt act which nevertheless tends to establish the subject's adherence to the enemy and her activities by which she gave aid and comfort to the enemy's war effort.

I am attaching also to this folder copy of the memorandum prepared by the writer and forwarded to the Counter Intelligence Corps under date of November 7, 1947, with covering letter to the Under Secretary of the Army of the same date ("Exhibit C" herein) as well as a copy of the second and last memorandum which the writer forwarded to the Counter Intelligence Corps, which memorandum is dated February 9, 1948, as well as a copy of the covering letter to the Under Secretary of the Army of the same date ("Exhibit D" herein). You are aware that the instant investigation is not now lodged with C.I.C., but is being handled by Lt. Moller, G.D.D.I., HQ. EUCOM. Also attached to this folder you will find a copy of each of the three cables which have been forwarded to the writer to date (HQ--EUCOM) in connection with the investigation being conducted in Europe ("Exhibit E," herein).

I have prepared separate folders each of which deals with one of the various types of overt acts presently considered potential proof in the investigation and each type of prospective overt act is separately developed therein.

The following persons (whose names are mentioned in various memoranda which will be furnished to you and whose identities may be made known to you during the course of your investigation) are presently in the United States as witnesses in the Best case.

Ex. F
R

There is also enclosed herewith a copy of a memorandum which the writer recently forwarded to the F.B.I. outlining the character and scope of the interrogation to be made of _____ who is now in _____ concerning his participation in the Radio drama "Vision of Invasion". This is furnished simply to indicate the writer's views concerning the thoroughness with which participants in this play ought to be interrogated. ("Exhibit F," herein.)

There is also attached to this folder ("Exhibit G," herein) copy of a printed "Wanted Notice," which was circulated in Germany following the war and which led to her ultimate apprehension. The Exhibit bears her picture which is believed to be a good likeness as of the time she was connected with the German Radio. Since her incarceration it has become evident that she dyed her hair and it is reported that her hair is now snow-white.

There are also furnished to you (Folder No. VIII) copies of memoranda reciting the substance of interviews had by the writer with several of the German witnesses who were brought to this country in connection with the

- 5 -

Chandler and Best trials; and, (Folder No. IX), transcriptions of the testimony given by several of said German witnesses during the course of the trial of Douglas Chandler.