

# Title: CONFESSIONS OF A NAZI SPY (1939)

(Sources: 'Five Came Back' by Mark Harris, 'Hitler in Los Angeles' by Steve Ross, 'The Nazi Spy Ring in America' by Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, 'Celluloid Soldiers' by Michael E. Birdwell, 'The Warner Brothers' by Chris Yogerst, 'Anatole Litvak' by Michelangelo Capua The Case & The Warner's Interest in the Story, 'Warner Brothers Crusade Against the Third Reich: A Study of Anti-Nazi activism & film production, 1933-1941' by Christine Ann Colgan, AFI Catalog listing)

## Background

- The Rumrich Nazi Spy Case
  - The Spies
    - i. Jessie Jordan
      - Scottish/German Hair dresser who was intercepted by the Abwehr (German Intelligence) who set up a cover in Dundee Scotland as a hair dresser where she engaged in her espionage activities
        - Acted as a Post Box point for communication, delivery of order and receipt of material for the Abwehr
        - Provided key information for potential bombing target
          - Found to have UK and Scottish maps with key bomb targets when detained by MI-5
    - ii. McAlpin Plot
      - Target: Col. Henry WT Eglin, Commander of military center Fort Totten (on east river approach of long island south) who had knowledge surrounding . Privy to East Coast defense plans
      - Goal was to get documents outlining those plans from Eglin , who would be lured in on the auspices of an official meeting that would get him into a room at hotel to then hatch the scheme to send to Berlin
      - US learned of the plot in part due to Jordan's Post Office
        - Letters to Jordan coming from US. One letter later translated was postmarked from Warwick Street Station, NY on 12/1/37- Signed RT to Mr. S that notified all letters would be delivered via Jordan
        - In Jan 38, Jordan received letters from an "Agent Crown"
          - Cried for fame, recognition, and financial assistance
          - One letter asked for small zeiss precision camera

- 1/19 asked for forged White House writing paper to request plans for USS ENTERPRISE and YORKTOWN air craft carriers
  - MI5 intercepted letters and made copies. Covered range of subject
  - Scrutinized letter from prague by Crown brother signed Hans Gustave Rumrich which offered his services as a spy and that his brother G was active for the matter in US.
    - MI5 missed lead to give to US
  - Another letter gives MI5 the urgency to notify US : 1/17/1938 to Sanders: Outlined plan for Crown plan for McAlpin hotel operation and how to execute plan to obtain plans and to frame the crime as if perpetrated by communist
  - No further details of severity but concluded plot may lead to murder
  - General Hesitancy from both UK & US , who are still by this time intent on keeping peace with the German government and not provoke.
  - 1/29/38, a copy of the letter was given to a US attache who then passed it along to the US army general staff which sent an alert to safe guard Col. Eglins life
  - MI-5 also gave attache a memorandum that outlined the nature of the plot and also noted that prospective suspect was a German espionage agent , possibly of any nationality, has good knowledge of english whose id is unknown. Added knowledge of aircraft. Us Army had listed three airspots as preferred station
- The Investigation
  - Army Delegated investigation to FBI as to distance the themselves from the matter as they were still intent on keeping peaceful relations with Germany
  - Hoover assigns Turrou to the case in Feb of 1938
    - i. Turrou was a favorite of Hoovers. Among the pre-Nazi cases he worked on was the Lindbergh Baby kidnapping case as part of a larger squad
    - ii. Thurrou's known compunction for publicity was a sore spot with Hoover, who let it go out of empathy and for the fact that anything that made the FBI look good was an advantage
  - Turrou examined letters to ascertain a focus on who could be CROWN such as Army affiliation, living space, family (wife kids)
    - i. Observations regarding the letters pointed to the letters being postmarked from a location in the Bronx. Trail ran cold
    - ii. Surmised relocation to first floor indicated family
  - Settled back to wait for break, which came as a result of an accidental police operation. Late afternoon Feb. 15,'38, Det. John S. Murray and Arthur J. Silk of

the NYPD arrested a man around the Kings Tavern on Hudson Street. While awaiting the return of a WU wire messenger who wandered into the pub and emerged with a package. The WU Boy approached the street corner and the sound of a whistle signaled him to hand over the package. Det. made arrest. Interrogation at a PO. The man confessed to be the man who was impersonating Secretary of State Cordell Hull. As "Hull", he called Ira F. Hoyt (New York Chief of the States Passport Division) he was working on obtaining 35 Passport Application forms be delivered to a Mr. Edward Weston (Who he proclaimed was Undersecretary)

- i. The weakness of this effort stems from two key notes
  - Hull had a Tennessee accent
  - The actual Undersecretary of State was Sumner Wells.
- ii. Passport division notified NYPD upon hearing this ludicrous story
- After interrogation, Crown reveals he is Guenther Gustave Maria Rumrich
  - i. Held in the custody of Army for days on Gov. Island.
  - ii. Interrogated for days
  - iii. Briefcase held on him with low level public info, a draft to communicate with Eglin and what to say.
- Rumrich adjusted to being involved with McAlpin plot after being confronted with briefcase contents
- Rumrich demanded safety and no deportation, all charges dropped and asked for debt wiped out. Not wanting to be given but didn't want this to bring out conflict with Germany as a military or state matter. Keen for FBI to handle case
- Turrou learns of the arrest from garbled accounts in Newspapers. Hoover hesitated before on Feb 19 when NYPD told Rumrich he was being turned over to FBI.
  - i. Newspapers made the arrest public (and sensationalized). They did keep mum on the identity of the country to which the affair was affiliated, referring to it as a "foreign entity"
  - ii. By end of month, Turrou activities ran within American Newspapers
- Rumrich's confession and cooperation with Turrou led to the arrests of fellow conspirators within his specific strand of Nazi espionage
  - i. Among missions were: obtain info regarding the connection between Czech and USSR
  - ii. It's important to preface this with the note that there was distance kept between the multiple groups engaged in espionage (wherein one didn't have any knowledge of the other), which allowed for less incriminating knowledge or helpful information to be allocated from interrogation
  - iii. Among those arrested by Turrou were Johanna Hoffman (a Stylist aboard the SS EUROPA), Enrich Glaser (who aided Rumrich in obtaining information as a soldier at Mitchell Field)
  - iv. Following Rumrich's arrest, all espionage activity on various liner ships were halted

- v. Hoffman and main contact Karl Schlueter (who ran as a main contact with many parts of this specific ring) had a slight romantic attachment in tandem with their work
- vi. Hoffman mainly carried letters to the various agents in NY
  - Turrou inflated her influence slightly as building up his role in uncovering the plot and its potential ramifications to national security
  - Said she was integral to signing up a Czech spy (Rumrich)
- As this was happening in the US, British had to arrest Jordan so as to keep her from testifying in the US trial due to their own country's concerns with their espionage activity and their own attempts not to inflame Germany by detaining her but not pushing for any form of high trial
  - i. FBI giving the impression that they tipped off MI-5 about the spy ring kept MI5 from closer scrutiny via press
  - ii. Letter to Scotland secretary of state regarding a memoir could have upended secrecy that an agreement was made that she wouldn't publish until after any trial. The urgency for money for her lawyers accelerated publication. Sanitized version released following MI5 review
  - iii. Suppressing connection of Jordan to Rumrich case
- Communications from Hoffman to a man named Griebel led Turrou to the offices of a NY Physician named Ignatz Theodor Griebel. Days of interrogation at first led to nothing
  - i. claimed initially to only share info in regards to communists and Jewish peoples that he felt important for Germany to hear.
    - Protocols of Zion cited (forgery by Russian fraudsters)
    - Said Schlueter sent info regarding a real estate deal with a "Hebrew" in Germany. Revealed later that he and the Nazi authorities were working to swindle this person of their property
    - Found anti-Semitic materials
    - Hoffman used this tactic in front of Griebel (portrayed in film). Griebel still denied
    - Blackmailed into confession when coerced regarding another woman seen checking into a Hotel with Griebel. Squealed at length, revealing that the spy network was extensive and operated without impediment for quite some time. Background & History became of great interest to FBI.
      - Loss of a lawsuit with a wealthy woman who paid him lavishly for his affair with her.
      - Became Ambulance chaser
      - Debt would pave path to his espionage career
        - Brother had connection to Goebbels
      - Became leader of the pro-Nazi group 'Friends of the New Germany' in the wake of Hitler's ascension to chancellorship in Germany. Lost leadership

- Local Nazi rivals started smear campaign against Griebel. Lost leadership position
    - Loss of leadership came with loss of stipend
  - Revealed start of espionage was 1933, Lonkowsky was the first to establish
  - Approached by Lonkowsky in '33. Declined but then became active in '35
  - Would get paid for acquired military secret. Military info came from Otto Voss, an Airplane mechanic at Seversky Plant
- ii. Griebel fled back to Germany
- iii. Not in contact with spy for bomb sight theft or with west coast agents.
- iv. Gave info on antagonist Pfister. That could lead a finger to Berlin
  - Pfister assured real estate deal would go through in exchange for spy services from Griebel. Wanted details of aircraft carrier Yorktown and USS Enterprise. Griebel offered Kate Moog as asset (had high standing in DC and had been reportedly a nurse for FDR in early stages of Polio). Asked Kate to smuggle papers from White House. Wanted concrete evidence of capabilities of US Navy. Kate would be set up for a salon business as a front and honeypot trap for info. Kate declined this plan probably. Torrou seemingly believed this to give acceleration to his Anti Nazi crusade.
    - House forced from owners who stayed in Germany in lieu of house elsewhere. Died in Auschwitz
- v. Questioning of Moog. Never charged despite being minor courier that gets inflated for the narrative of the spy ring
- vi. Pfister's importance inflated.
- Confessions and Witness statements allocated in the Spring of '38 were enough to justify the convening of a Grand Jury. Hearings over May before indictments issued that would be of political consequence
  - i. German shipping personnel came in for scrutiny.
    - Griebel Accused Cap. Grekel (Bremen) used position to organize secret transport of spies and spy material as well as safeguarding spies and couriers and liaison with NY Gestapo chief. Torrou arranged meeting on a pretext to apprehend. Griebel gave an account post meeting. Grekel asks of those involved, indicating his knowledge. Was enough to pull in for questioning
    - In questioning admitted partial responsibility in facilitating recruitment and supplying passes to the Gestapo chief. Took orders from Nazi officials. Served as liaison between shipping lines and Nazis. Tried to proclaim under pressure and tried to tell employer. Confirmed after Hoffman arrest that no spies were to set foot in America for time being (alluding to him having tipped them off).

- Drexel tries to mount defense and proclaiming company worried of loss of business and to investigate why Nazis were able to use company private code for anything other than company business
- party enforces aboard every ship as muscle proclaimed
  - defense mounted to protect citizenship prospects
- Escaped prosecution
- ii. ABWHER left unscathed but operatives were up the creek.
  - Voss an example. Investigation led to revelation that secrets were stolen for up to 3 years unnoticed
  - Turrou questioned those were not outright operatives
    - Stoyer principal inspector at Sperry that manufactured military equipment like a particular bombsight
    - Shed light on security arrangements (weaknesses found that allowed German delegations could see certain aspects. Security could potentially be thwarted by the need for international export)
      - This notion was at the forefront of neutrality supporters
      - speculation
    - Turrou worried of ABWHER grooming German Americans as operatives to return to Germany
- iii. Turrou wished to establish the narrative that all the espionage was intertwined to Nazi benefit, policy and directive. Looked for instances of intimidation on German Americans who feared reprisals taken against family back home
  - Lonkowsky did this
  - Gustave did.
  - Took interest in one operative (Herrman) the Gestapo chief in NY (under guise of waiter)
    - Griebel Job was ensure compliance
    - Confessed to knowledge of spies listed, proclaimed himself a proud Nazi, but for Political effect and not espionage
- Grand Jury Flight
  - Germany & ABWHER worked to remove any and all from US soil.
  - Drechsel plan: Have three agents with Hoffman to take the rap, thus minimizing publicity with sacrifice of a few agents rather than exposing whole operation. Plan was to be supported in Berlin. Berlin instead withheld, denial, and keeping un captured operative in US.
  - Griebel pushed Turrou on the line that his death warrant would be signed for all he was giving away. This prompts Turrou not to charge him but to keep him talking.
  - On May 10, Griebel fled on the Bremen. On May 11, Moog phoned Turrou to say that Griebel had been taken forcibly onto the Bremen to go back to Germany. In reality:
    - i. Stowaway status apart from DL, Gun permit, and 180

- ii. Told Capt Adolph Arens he was fleeing because of the case. Bought Tourist ticket
  - iii. Assured Maria he would return for trial.
  - iv. US Ambassador failed to have him taken off ship
    - Joe Kennedy didnt even try
  - v. Pfifer welcomed him back. No recriminations per Pfifer account.
  - vi. Griebly decamped to Vienna where he practiced as a physician
- Amid his investigation and preparation for the grand jury, Turrou notified operatives that they would have to testify before the grand jury.
- This fact prompted a mass majority of those detained and questioned into fleeing, leaving a scant few to hold responsible at trial
- Spy Guttenberg was to testify again for Grand Jury when he dissapeared. Was found to have hopped aboard a steamship. He was kept lock and key and to be handed over to the Gestapo. Nazis arranged to smokescreen in event the British and French tried to inquire. All orchestrated by ABWHER
- 18 Indictments listed upon conclusion of testimony.
  - i. No indictment for Admiral Kanaras
  - ii. Many of those indicted were out of FBI reach. Indictment of those unreachable showed depth of investigation
  - iii. Sanders & Schmitt was never identified as independent entity
  - iv. Hoffman, Glaser, Rumrich, Voss, and Jordan all in custody between US & Britain
  - v. Guttenberg escaped while witness and before indictment
  - vi. Trust in Griebel by Torrou proved a fault
    - this was used by critics to allege Turrou bungled the case despite the fact that the leaks to the outside were not his fault
      - accused him of the self serving leaks
      - leaks alerted ABWHER
- Escape damaged counter espionage
- Material witnesses absent who either returned or were persuaded to. Many escaped undetected via ship
- German
  - To Quote Shultz : We see nothing, we know nothing
  - No nothing silence
  - Official Nazi paper never mentions it
- The Trial
  - Overseen by John C. Knox as judge.
  - Multiple attempts to paint Torrou as merely an opportunistic and self serving agent who coached witnesses
    - i. Allegations surrounding Griebel being coached to give a false confession
  - Sentence laid down
    - i. Rumrich plead guilty, others plead not guilty
    - ii. Johanna Hoffman sentenced to 4 years imprisonment at Federal Prison Camp for Women of Alderson, West Virginia

- iii. Rumrich & Glaser received 2 year sentences
  - iv. Otto Voss, being more instrumental from his position within aircraft engineering and seen as most consequential (at least when compared to the other defendants) received a 6 year sentence
  - v. Judge Knox followed the verdicts with a proclamation that their treatment here in America was far better than what they would have received in Germany. He stated "Had these defendants been apprehended within the confines of Germany, their fate would have been much more fearful. We have no Sawdust sprinkled on our prison yard"
- Attention
  - Following Johanna Hoffman's arrest, Hoover issued a press release relaying the fact that a "massive" espionage operation had been uncovered
  - Newspapers follow suit
    - i. Time magazine not sympathetic with Johannas arrest while others news papers expressed sympathy
  - The unwanted developments had the press finger pointing which led to staunch defense from pro-FBI advocates within the senate and at large
  - Leaks:
    - i. came in three key phases
      - publicity surrounding Rumrich arrest
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- Aftermath
  - i. Turrou saw that, regardless of the damages, that knowledge if the threat faced was the ultimate reward of the effort
  - ii. Leon Turrou's articles on the trials in New York experienced a 5-month delay as their publication was blocked due to a restraining order
  - iii. Turrou left the Bureau after the sale of his articles to the New York Post.
- Warner Brothers
  - Following Hitler's rise to power and already recognizing how severe his antisemitic speech and enforcement was, the studio shuttered its German offices in 1934
    - i. The first major Hollywood studio to do so
    - ii. Jack Warner autobiography points to the murder of Philip Kauffman (head of sales for WB Germany) in 1936.
    - iii. Jack Warner reflecting on the period as it pertained to lost income from German market and how his fellow studio heads were behaving: "Hurt what? Their pocketbooks? Listen, these murdering bastards killed our own man in Germany because he wouldn't heil Hitler, The Silver Shirts and the Bundists and all the rest of these hoods are marching in Los Angeles right now. There are high school kids with swastikas on their sleeves a few blocks from our studio. Is that what you want in exchange for some crummy film royalties out of Germany? I'm going to finish this picture. and Hitler and Goebbels can scream all they want. And so can guys like you"



## Pre-Production

- Following the articles; Turrou's subsequent book, 'Nazi Spies In America' was published. The rights to this and the articles were acquired by Warner Brothers for \$25,000
- Although a deal was finalized in June of 1938, Warner Bros. had to guarantee the federal government that it would not release the movie until after the spy trials ended. (Quoted from "Celluloid Soldiers" by Birdwell (pg. 70))
- Harry Warner announced his intention to produce the film during an address to the Ancient Order of Hibernians on Saint Patrick's Day, 1939.
  - Quote from Speech: "You are not presenting yourselves as Irish-American... You are Americans. I am not accepting your hospitality as a Jewish-American. I am here as an American." Like-wise, Christians and Jews should put away their grievances in the face of a common enemy Nazi Germany: In such a tempestuous climate, Hollywood should make a concerted effort to use film as a means of "exposing the plots against the United States, and of glorifying and sustaining our love of country and pride in its institutions."
    - Swore that there would be more films in this vein to come
  - Quote from Colgan study: Warners had committed itself heart, body, soul, and money to the project and had begun rolling cameras on 1 February 1939, before the dissolution of Czechoslovakia (14 March 1939); before Madrid surrendered to Franco (24 March 1939), before Mussolini began his attack on Albania (April, 1939), before Japan occupied the Spratly Islands (March 1939); and before Roosevelt sought a modification of the Neutrality Act (September 1939) The Warners did not need their events to be persuaded to break the silence?
- Upon the announcement of the project, Edward G. Robinson immediately expressed his desire to be involved in the project
  - Heavily involved in anti-Nazi activism
  - Member of Anti-Nazi League
  - Wrote to Hal Wallis specifically for request: "I want again to express a strong desire to appear in the International Spy Ring story you are going to do. I want to do that for my people."
- By Dec. 19, 1938, Motion Picture Daily reports that WB will proceed despite objections from LA German counsel Dr. George Gyssling.
  - Full Item: Ignore Nazi Protest Hollywood, Dec. 19—War-preparations on "Confessions of a Nazi Spy," despite protest by Dr. George Gyssling, German consul at Los Angeles. Gyssling protested to Warners and the Hays office, with the warning that "there may be trouble ahead" if the picture is made. The Hays office said the consul's letter had been acknowledged without comment.
- Script
  - Hollywood Reporter stated that in late Oct. 1938 ( per AFI could be the 12/6 or 12/8 HR) stated that WB sent Milton Krims to New York to cover the trial as prep for the script.
  - Per Box Office Magazine (12/10/38), Warners had writer Milton Krims working on the script . Litvak set as director.

- Coincided with a film scripted by Vincent Sherman called "Concentration Camp" and a third untitled script being developed by Casey Robinson that concerned "Espionage Activities"
- Warner Brothers actively waited until the actual trial of the Nazi Spies had concluded before submitting the script to the PCA on December 30th, 1938
- Despite the initial script having violated a section of the code regarding "National Feelings", Breen stated that since script was "based on fact and sworn testimony presented in the New York trial, it did not as such represent Germany, its institutions, or Prominent individuals unfairly"
- Characters Adapted
  - Griebel & German American Bund leader Fritz Kuhn were combined into one character
- Original Title
  - Per Yogerst book, the original title was "Storm Over America" before the title was changed to "Confessions of a Nazi Spy" on a draft dated 1/27/1939 (Pg. 126)
- Desires for Anti Communism themes to be included
  - (Yogerst, Pg. 126-127): Screenwriter John Mexiey recalled Texas congressman Martin Dies coming to the Warner lot. Dies was running HUAC and investigating radicals on both the right and the left. The congressman attempted to convince Jack Warner to rewrite the script to include anticommunism in addition to anti-Nazism. After Dies left Warners office. Wexley asked Jack, "Are you knuckling under to that pipsqueak congressman from Texas?" "Oh no, replied Warner, "but if you could work in something about the pinkos...." Wexley left the script as it was.
    - Fell in line with the Warner sentiment of "no other '-ism' except 'American-ism'"
- Attempts to Shut Down before the Camera Rolled
  - German Consul to LA, Dr. Georg Gyssling, began active campaigns to halt the production
    - Prevailed upon Joseph Breen to keep him up to date on production status
    - Actively threatened actors, technicians, and even Warner big wigs like Jack, Harry, and Hal Wallis.
      - Wallis purportedly (Sourced by Birdwell (PG. 71)) that Gyssling's efforts to sabotage were given to him by Hitler himself.
  - To cover themselves, Warners provided Breen with extensive documentation surrounding the true case (bio's, research documents, etc..) to assure that they planned to portray the case as it actually occurred (Zach note: It looks more as if they wanted to assure authenticity at large if not in specificity)
  - Other Studios still had markets in Germany and protest production
    - Paramount German rep, Luigi Laraschi, wrote to Breen in objection.
      - From Birdwell, Pg. 72: Paramount's liaison, Luigi Laraschi, complained bitterly to Breen. In an exercise in incredibly twisted logic, he wrote, "Warners will have on their hands the blood of a great many Jews in Germany" if they go through with the project."

- From Birdwell (pg .72): "Leon Turrou was surprised by the various studio heads attempts to warn Warner Bros, off the picture, He noted, how ever, that the "Warner executives were fearless and willing to risk their own lives and property" to warn the world about Nazi aggression. Never-theless, MGM. Twentieth Century-Fox, and Paramount could somenow, in good conscience, rationalize continued business with the Third Reich as it carried out routine discrimination of the Jews. Likewise, they blamed the Warner brothers' expression of righteous rage as being somehow responsible for the fate of European Jewry."

## Production

- Docu-Drama Flair
  - Anatole Litvak actively sought for the film to achieve an authenticity by the use of newsreel intertwined into the films narrative. This went up against Harry Warners own objection to the utilization of such footage.
    - Birdwell (Pg. 72): " the studio had to eat some crow because of its inclusion of newsreel footage in the montage sequences. Harry Warner's campaign against newsreels depicting Nazis came home to roost when he attempted to get permission to use those very clips. To heighten the drama, Litvak incorporated footage of Goebbels and other Nazis, as well as clips from the German-American Bund's rally at New York's Madison Square Garden and from Leni Riefenstahl's Triumph of the Will."
- Production Accuracy
  - From Birdwell (pg. 75) : "The set crew faithfully reproduced the New York courtroom where the trial occurred. The research depart ment scoured hundreds of photos, which were passed on to the crews to reproduce authentic costumes and makeup and to assist in the lighting design."
- Secrecy and Security
  - from Celluloid Soldier (pg. 71): "The studio beefed up security and kept the names of the cast secret as a precaution for those with families in Europe, Some cast members' names were altered in the film credits as an added precaution. Pages of script were meted out on a daily basis to prevent their being leaked to unfriendly third parties. For a time, the studio considered releasing the film without any credits whatsoever, but a compromise was reached, and the credits ran at the end of the film."
- Behind the Scenes as told by Press Book
  - (The Following below come from Page 17 of the Official Press Book. As this is publicity material, taking this with a grain of salt is a necessity, no matter how much wants to believe it).
    - When Edward G. Robinson's contract with Warner Bros, was last renewed, one of the conditions he made before consenting to sign it, was that he be allowed to play the role of a G-Man in "Confessions of a Nazi Spy." P.S. He got the job!

- Because Lya Lys, exotic German-born actress, refused to make pictures under the Nazi regime, she had all her funds confiscated before she was allowed to leave the country. Miss Lys is now doing nicely, thank you, in Warner Bros. production "Confessions of a Nazi Spy."
- Leon G. Turrou, former F.B.I. man who cracked the Nazi spy ring and who acted as technical advisor on "Confessions of a Nazi Spy," worked on most of the cases which brought the G-Men to their present fame. He found the Lindbergh ransom money and helped convict Hauptmann; headed the Akron sabotage investigation.
- Many players in "Confessions of a Nazi Spy" are listed under fictitious names in the credit titles, the actors preferring to keep their real identities hidden because of the possibilities of retaliatory measures against relatives still living in Nazi Germany.
- Bill O'Donnell, Warner Bros. dance director, was recently handed the strangest assignment of his career as a tutor of terpsichore. He was put in charge of 350 men, boys and girls and directed to whip them into shape for sequences of "Confessions of a Nazi Spy" depicting military activities within a bund camp... Swish!
- The script of "Confessions of a Nazi Spy" weighs three-quarters of a pound. Around the Warner Bros. lot it was referred to as "three-quarters of a pound of dynamite."
- More than fifty percent of the principals of Warner Bros. "Confessions of a Nazi Spy" are naturalized American citizens, their birthplaces now under or threatened by dictator rule. Edward G. Robinson was born in Roumania, Paul Lukas in Hungary, Lya Lys in Germany.
- One of the extra players on "Confessions of a Nazi Spy" walked off the set rather than give the Nazi salute. Badly as he needed the job, he explained, he just couldn't force himself to make the sign which was such a hateful symbol to him. He later returned to the set when he was promised that he would not be required to give the salute.
- During production of "Confessions of a Nazi Spy" at the Warner Bros. studio, a giant "boom" which was holding one of the cameras snapped in half, and narrowly missed hitting Director Anatole Litvak as it fell. Such an accident being almost unprecedented, sabotage was suspected, and subsequent investigation showed that the boom had been cut.
- Recently a doctor who lives in the same apartment that Leon G. Turrou does, was the victim of an attack by an unidentified assailant, as he stepped out of the house one night. The attack was obviously meant for Turrou (who is similar in appearance and build to the doctor) in reprisal for his work in breaking up the Nazi spy ring.
- Page 19: ROBINSON CIGARS FREE- Edward G. Robinson, as per contract, bought his own wardrobe for his role in Warner Bros. 'Confessions of a Nazi Spy', but the studio, as per his contract, paid for

the eight boxes of 50-cent cigars which Eddie smoked during the making of the picture

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#### Post-Production/Release

- The Reluctant Breen
  - Upon a final cut of the film being wrapped, it was presented to Breen & the PCA. Breen's own hesitancy of the film was ultimately pushed aside when, after numerous PCA requested cuts and trims, the film was granted the PCA seal
    - Breen reportedly called it questionable entertainment (Birdwell Pg. 76)
- Release and Outrage
  - The film opened wide on April 28, 1939 and became the first major Hollywood film to address and denounce Nazism
  - Backlash from German Officials, Nazi Sympathizers, and citizens rages
    - Germany outright bans the film in all occupied territories and tries its damndest to ban it in other territories like Latin America
      - Warner Brothers products of any kind are officially banned period.
      - Angry German Americans in Milwaukee burned down a local Warner theater following the films release
      - Film prohibited in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Switzerland, Hungary, Iraq, South Africa, Chile, Argentina, and Ireland.
      - Brazil refused to show the film as to not agitate their business relationship with Germany, which was still fairly healthy.
  - Father Coughlin, noted radio priest and bigoted idiot, railed against the film and Warners.
    - Birdwell (pg 76): "Father Coughlin attacked it as an example of the Communist-lewish conspiracy run amok. Fulminating against the Warner brothers and Edward G. Robinson, Coughlin reminded readers of Social Justice that all three were Jews, unworthy of trust. "The sponsors of Confessions of a Nazi Spy." he harangued, "need not wrap themselves in the American tag and pose as patriots. Their patriotism is only as deep as their hatred of Hitler."
  - Theaters were picketed and exhibitors personally threatened which led to a hesitancy to show the film
  - Complaints from German charge d'affaires in DC complained directly to Sec. of State Cordell Hull
  - Theater owners in Poland who exhibited the film were hanged in their own movie houses.
    - Per AFI sourcing a news item, 7 owners in Warsaw were hung upon German occupation later in the year.
    - AFI cites at Hollywood Reporter item (8/1939) that said five citizens in Danzig were arrested by Nazi authorities after traveling to Gdynia, Poland to see the film.

- One escape noted per Birdwell (pg. 77): The Warner Bros, managing director in Poland, Boris Jankolwice, escaped the terror by walking more than three hundred miles to evade Nazi reprisals for showing the film.
  - Poland had not yet been occupied, which would come later in the year in September.
- According to Jack Warner's memoirs, the film, after having been seen by high ranking officials (up into Hitler himself), had put him personally on an extermination list.
- Box Office
  - Birdwell's book suggests that the film did poorly
- Accolades
  - Film was recognized by the National Board of Review as one of the top 10 films of 1939
- A Halt on Anti-Nazi Films
  - From Celluloid Soldiers, Pg. 78: "The desire of Warner Bros, to create more anti-Nazi pictures ran afoul of MPPDA director Will Hays, who declared that in keeping with America's officially neutral stance, no studio could produce any more anti-Nazi films and receive the PCA seal. From September 15, 1932, until January of 1940. American studios were forbidden to develop films with an obvious anti-Nazi bias. The ban was imposed in part in reaction to an editorial by Nashville Banner editor and American Newspaper Association president James G. Stahlman. Another factor was the fear of external censorship and government intervention. On September 29, 1939 Senator Elmer Thomas (D-Oklahoma) urged Congress to prohibit the manufacture or distribution of any films, newsreels, or radio broadcasts dealing with the European war in order to ensure American neutrality. "