

# INSIDE OUT

A STUDY GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

WORLD PREMIERE

# RUBICON



Illustration by Kyle Malone

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# INSIDE OUT

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Contributing Writer Kristin Leahey  
Education Contributor David Saphier

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## ***Rubicon***

World Premiere

By **Kirsten Potter**

Directed by **Chris Coleman**

## **FEB 9 – MAR 10**

KILSTROM THEATRE

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# PLAYWRIGHT BIO

Kirsten Potter is an award-winning actress, narrator, and now playwright who has been telling stories and developing plays for nearly three decades. As an actress, she has premiered work with the Mark Taper Forum, South Coast Repertory, Arena Stage, Seattle Repertory Theater, ACT and Milwaukee Repertory Theater, among others. She has also been a proud member of the acting companies of Milwaukee Repertory, Antea Theater Company, and ACT. As a narrator, she has recorded hundreds of books ranging from the biographies of Sandra Day O'Connor and Warren Buffet to outer space vampire-alien adventure series, as well as numerous articles for the *New York Times* and *Apple News*. As a playwright her first play, *Rubicon*, was developed during the 2022 Colorado New Play Summit. Her latest work, *Unraveling*, received a workshop at ACT in Seattle.

## PLAY SETTING

Starting in the years leading up to World War II, the plot, based on a true story, follows Elizabeth "Betty" Pack as she transitions from society wife and mother to steely, seductive agent for British and American Intelligence. As missions take her from Madrid to Warsaw to Chile to Washington DC, Betty uses her charm, beauty, and intellect as tools of espionage, leveraging her sexuality to influence global affairs.

Overflowing with intrigue and wit, *Rubicon* is a portrait of an unsung heroine, omitted from history, and the sacrifices she makes to change the course of the war. It addresses the stigma attached to choosing professional determination and personal agency over traditional gender expectations and roles, during pre- and post-WWII.

## CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

**Betty Thorpe** – Also known as Betty Pack, Amy Elizabeth Thorpe, Elizabeth Pack, and Amy Brousse; (November 22, 1910 – December 1, 1963)

Thorpe (known as both "Amy" and "Betty" to her friends) traveled back and forth between Britain and France. She engaged in espionage, encouraging the enemies to divulge secrets. Thorpe would relay the German codes to her counterparts in British intelligence, fueling a massive codebreaking operation that ultimately helped the Allies win World War II.

She married one of her fellow spies, Charles-Emmanuel Brousse, and retired to a French manor. She said of her work: "Ashamed? Not in the least. My superiors told me that the results of my work saved thousands of British and American lives," she once said. "It involved me in situations from which 'respectable' women draw back."

**Source:** <https://awomantoknow.substack.com/p/a-woman-to-know-amy-elizabeth-thorpe>

**Sean** – Young artist, socialite.

**Cora Thorpe** – Betty's mother. She was the daughter of Harry Wells, a state senator from Morris, Minnesota. She had a BA from University of Michigan and post graduate work from Columbia.

**Arthur Pack** – Betty's first husband. English Secretary at the British Embassy (career diplomat) and 19 years her senior. They had an ill-fated marriage, but he gave her a secondary citizenship.

**Sir Henry Getty Chilton** – A British diplomat who was minister to the Vatican and ambassador to Chile, Argentina and Spain during the Spanish Civil War.

**Lady Katherine Chilton** – Henry's spouse. In 1906, the Chilton's met each other when Henry was serving in Copenhagen. Katherine was the daughter of Thomas J. O'Brien, the US ambassador to Denmark. They had two daughters. Katherine died in 1959.

**Carlos Sartorius y Diaz de Mendoza** – (surrogate for Antonio) – "A colonel in the Spanish Air Force, SARTORIUS was Air Attache in the Spanish Embassy in London during the Second World War and thought to be pro-German. A close watch on his contacts was made. As far as it was possible to do so, his reporting back to Madrid on wartime Britain was also monitored. Particular concern focused upon the reports which it became known he had sent on V-1 and V-2 bomb damage."

**Beaverton** – Betty's espionage contact.

**Michal Lubienski** – Chief aide to Poland's foreign minister.

**Paul Fairley** – FBI agent.

**Senator Arthur Vandenberg** – On January 10, 1945, Senator Vandenberg of Michigan delivered a celebrated "speech heard round the world" in the Senate Chamber, announcing his conversion from isolationism to internationalism. In 1947, at the start of the Cold War, Vandenberg became chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Asserting that we must stop "partisan politics at the water's edge."

**Charles-Emmanuel Brousse** – Press attaché at the Vichy embassy.

**Monsieur Granville** – New clerk at French Embassy.

# SPANISH CIVIL WAR (1936–39)

The Spanish Civil War began as a military revolt against the Spanish Republican Government, supported by conservative learnings in Spain. A civil war commenced when an initial military coup failed to win control of the entire country. The Nationalists, “the rebels” and more liberal leaning, received aid from Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. The Republicans received aid from the Soviet Union, as well as from volunteers from Europe and the United States.

The Nationalists were predominantly Roman Catholics, who were members of the military, landowners, and in business. On the other side, the Republicans were made up of people from cities, mostly farmers, and many of the literate and educated middle class. In 1934, a major labor conflict and an uprising by miners in Asturias was suppressed by brigade led by General Francisco Franco. Several governmental crises resulted in elections on February 16, 1936, which brought to power a Popular Front government, supported mostly by the left and opposed by the right and the center.

On July 17, 1936, a well-executed military uprising began throughout areas of Spain. By July 21st, 1936, the rebels controlled Spanish Morocco, the Canary Islands, and the Balearic, and the Basque provinces along the north coast and the region of Catalonia. The Republican forces halted uprisings in other areas. The Nationalists and Republicans continued to organize their won territories and stifle opposition. The number of slain remains contentious; however, it is generally believed that the amount of Nationalist violence was higher. Regardless, there were rampant executions, torture, and assassinations on both sides.

The Nationalists were gradually assumed by General Franco. On October 1, 1936, Franco became head of state and established a government in Burgos. The Republican government, as of September 1936, was led by the socialist leader Francisco Largo Caballero. Following him, in May 1937, was Juan Negrín, also a socialist, who remained in power during the war and then served in exile until 1945. Manuel Azaña, the president of the Spanish Republic, remained in power until the end of the war.

By February 1939, 250,000 Republican soldiers, and the same number of civilians, fled to France. By March 28th, 1939, the Republican army surrendered, and Nationalist forces prevailed in Madrid.

There is only a rough estimate of the number killed in the Spanish Civil War: Nationalist forces figure at 1,000,000, which doesn't include those who died of starvation and rampant disease.

## Sources:

**Spanish Civil War** <https://www.britannica.com/event/Spanish-Civil-War>

**History of the Spanish Civil War:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yw-OxbtFIiY>

# THE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES (OSS)

The OSS was the intelligence agency of the United States during World War II. It formed to coordinate espionage activities behind enemy lines for all branches of the United States Armed Forces. Other OSS functions included the use of “propaganda, subversion, and post-war planning.”

The OSS was terminated at the culmination of the war, as intelligence efforts were taken up by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Before World War II, the armed services were charged with collecting intelligence but due to the failure of intelligence gathering to foresee Pearl Harbor, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was established on June 13th, 1942.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed an officer from World War I, William J. Donovan, as the Director of the OSS. Donovan organized the OSS to reflect the vision of an intelligence center, research, clandestine information, spying, counterintelligence, and mission development. This work made significant contributions to the Allied victory. Employing some of the greatest minds in the U.S., they made huge impacts overseas with espionage and the US and their allies winning the war. It also validated the need for a central intelligence office, which united the different branches.

The OSS formed American “Operational Groups” in the European Axis. These were military units connected to the OSS's findings, who fought overseas. For instance, they supported the Normandy landings. They also helped liberate Thailand from the Japanese front. Some of the OSS's best work was intercepting messages from Germans as well as the Japanese, which was an alliance with the British.

The OSS employed nearly 13,000 men and women at its height and functioned from 1942 to 1945. Many of the OSS's legacy was remnant in the CIA.

## Source:

<https://www.cia.gov/legacy/museum/exhibit/the-office-of-strategic-services-n-americas-first-intelligence-agency/>



# MI6

Military Intelligence, Section 6 (MI6) is the central British government agency responsible for the collection, analysis, espionage, and appropriate dissemination of foreign intelligence. It has existed since 1569, under the inception of Sir Francis Walsingham, who became secretary of state for Queen Elizabeth I. It was considered the most effective intelligence organization in the 1930s and 1940s. It conducted operations throughout Europe, Asia, and Latin America. MI6 trained US OSS officers.

## Sources:

**MI6 British Government** <https://www.britannica.com/topic/MI6>

**MI6** <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MI6>

# LEND-LEASE ACT (1941)

Passed on March 11, 1941, this act set up a system that would allow the United States to lend or lease war supplies to any nation deemed "vital to the defense of the United States."

In July 1940, after Britain had sustained the loss of 11 destroyers to the German Navy over a 10-day period, newly elected British Prime Minister Winston Churchill requested help from President Roosevelt. Roosevelt responded by exchanging 50 destroyers for 99-year leases on British bases in the Caribbean and Newfoundland. As a result, a major foreign policy debate erupted over whether the United States should aid Great Britain or maintain strict neutrality.

-Lend Lease Act, National Archives

In the 1940 Presidential campaign, Roosevelt ensured the US people that he would keep the US out of the war. He stated, "I have said this before, but I shall say it again and again and again; your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars." But, he wanted to support Britain and believed America should be a "great arsenal of democracy." Churchill pleaded, "Give us the tools and we'll finish the job."

In January 1941, Roosevelt proposed to Congress a new military aid bill. The plan proposed by FDR was to "lend-lease or otherwise dispose of arms" and "other supplies needed by any country whose security was vital to the defense of the United States."

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, in support of Lend-Lease bill, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "We are buying...not lending. We are buying our own security while we prepare. By our delay during the past six years, while Germany was preparing, we find ourselves unprepared and unarmed, facing a thoroughly prepared and armed potential enemy."

Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act after two months of debate, meeting Great Britain's demands for supplies and allowing the United States remaining officially neutral and prepare for the possibility of war.

**Source: Lend Lease Act** <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/lend-lease-act>

# ENIGMA MACHINES

An Enigma machine is an encryption machine used by the Germans, French, and other nations during WWII to transmit coded messages. It allowed for multiple permutations to codes (representing messages), making it incredibly difficult to crack (especially German codes) during the WWII. Alan Turing, the famous British code breaker, and other researchers found weaknesses in the Enigma code, cracked it, and accessed the German codebooks. This was one of the greatest discoveries of the war. This prevented many attacks and saved multiple lives.

Enigma machines use substitution encryption. It's easy to see how to break these codes. For instance, a substitution encryption scheme is a Caesar cipher. "A Caesar cipher shifts each letter of the alphabet some number of places. A Caesar cipher with a shift of 111 would encode an A as a B, an M as an N, and a Z as an A," and so forth.

**Source: Enigma Machine** <https://brilliant.org/wiki/enigma-machine/>



Enigma Machine at the Imperial War Museum, London.

**Image Source:** <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:EnigmaMachineLabeled.jpg>

# CIPHER

In cryptography, a cipher is any method of transforming a message to conceal its meaning. In reference to an encrypted form of a message, the term “cipher” is used synonymously with “ciphertext” or “cryptogram.”

**Source:** Cipher <https://www.britannica.com/topic/cipher>

## VICHY FRANCE (10 JULY 1940 – 9 AUGUST 1944)

France declared war on Germany in September 1939 but the Western front didn't engage with the Germans for another 9 months, when the Nazis launched its assault. On June 1940, the French government collapsed, fled Paris for Bordeaux, and the city was under German control.

Prime minister Paul Reynaud was made to resign, replaced by Philippe Petain, a WWI vet and marshal of the army. An armistice was called in which France was divided into Zones.

As part of the armistice, France was divided into zones: Germany occupied three-fifths of the country, which included the coastline, cities and areas with factories, many farmlands, and Paris. The eastern border of Alsace-Lorraine was annexed.

The French government could choose its own seat; they decided Vichy. In central France, the city was in the unoccupied zone, a tourist destination for its spas, and lots of empty hotel spaces to accommodate the Vichy government. A conservative and authoritarian government, officially called the French State, but known as Vichy France was established. The term also referenced areas of France not initially occupied by the Germans.

**Source:** <https://www.historyextra.com/period/second-world-war/vichy-france-guide-facts/>



Parisians line the Champs-Élysées to cheer American troops as they march towards the Arc de Triomphe

**Image Source:** [https://en.m.wikivoyage.org/wiki/File:American\\_troops\\_march\\_down\\_Champs-Élysées\\_HD-SN-99-02719.JPG](https://en.m.wikivoyage.org/wiki/File:American_troops_march_down_Champs-Élysées_HD-SN-99-02719.JPG)

# CODE NAME CYNTHIA

## Timeline and Notes on Amy Elizabeth Thorpe (also known as Betty Pack, Betty Thorpe, Elizabeth Pack, and Amy Brousse)

Betty Pack was a spy from 1938 to 1944.

### 1910 to 1929:

Amy Elizabeth Thorpe (Betty Pack) was born in Minneapolis in November 22, 1910. She is of Irish and Scandinavian decent. Her father was a captain in the US Marines. He also had a law degree from NYU.

Cora Wells, her mother, was the daughter of Harry Wells, a state senator. She had a BA from U of Michigan and post graduate work from Columbia.

Her parents married a couple of months before Betty's birth. They lived in Portsmouth, Maine, where her father was stationed.

They had two more children; Jane (born in 1912) and George (born in 1914).

Betty often found hiding places as a child and desired solitude, which as an adult she found "comfort in her own company" (Lovell 5).

Her father was often absent and her mother was not loving. Betty was very independent and didn't have many friends, as a child.

The family lived all over the country, including Hawaii.

Betty had a proclivity for languages and learned some Spanish as a child, then French. Her secondary education in DC took place at Dana Hall, and she didn't go onto college but became a debutant.

She loved Europe. She had no interest in close friendships.

The family would summer in Newport. When she was 14, she had her first affair with a 21-year-old man from a well-established Irish American family, who was also a loner.

After the family's European tour, the family settled in Washington D.C.

The teenage Betty would have tea with Alberto Lais (who eventually became Director of Naval Intelligence during WWII) who enjoyed her company.

November 1929 Betty was presented to DC society. She was very mature and poised for her age.

She had her first child on October 2, 1930. It's believed to be Arthur Pack's (her first husband's).

### 1930 to 1935:

In November 1929, Betty waited for Arthur in his room with the intent to seduce him. He was interested in younger women, while she liked older men. He was 38, and she was 19. He was a diplomat, who spent above his means. He came from a modest family and needed connections to be promoted (and was doing it through hard work and testing in the service). He initially wanted to become an opera singer but was risk averse. Prior to Betty, Arthur had been in love with a British woman named Elenor, but that relationship never culminated in a proposal. Arthur proposed to Betty weeks after meeting her, likely not knowing she was pregnant, assuming she was an ideal person to marry. He fulfilled many of the emotional desires she lacked from her parents. Her parents approved of the match.

Arthur found out about the pregnancy in March, and as a staunch Catholic, encouraged her to try to provoke a miscarriage by horseback riding. By this point, Betty started to believe that Arthur was "cold, complex, and a little cruel." He then encouraged an abortion, as he was anxious about her age, the timeline of the marriage, and his position. Ultimately, the wedding date was moved to April 29, 1930. He gave her an inexpensive fur coat. They had one of the grandest weddings in DC in the Church of the Epiphany, many calling it the wedding of the year.

They were to honeymoon in Europe for five months, and Arthur then wanted to place the child in foster care for a few years and deny its existence. The baby, named Anthony George, was born two weeks early, in London. There was no announcement of the child's birth. And the baby was fostered by a Dr. and Mrs. Cassell for most of his life, with intermittent visits from the Packs. Betty claimed to be upset about giving away George, but this was not clear to the people around her, and many didn't know that she had had a baby.

The family lived well, in NY and Chile and in houses with servants. Betty was bored with embassy wives and took up riding. She had an affair with a polo player named Alfredo. Arthur received an OBE under George V. Betty only visited George once below the age of five. Betty's mother didn't know about the pregnancy at the time of the marriage, as Betty informed her parents on a trip in 1934. That same year Betty became pregnant with their second child in Chile – Denise Beresford, who was born on New Year's Eve – 1934. Arthur was appointed to the Madrid office.

### 1935 to 1936:

The family arrived in Madrid, and Arthur loved to show off his beautiful wife and daughter. Betty became reacquainted with Carlos Santorious, a man she was beguiled by and impressed with from her youth. This was



the first man she loved but because of his reputation, family's affiliation with the Catholic church, the relationship lasted only a year. The diplomatic community became aware of it though their respective partners didn't. During this time, Betty traveled to England to have undisclosed minor gynecological surgery and went to visit her son. Again, she didn't take Tony and the Cassell's assumed they could adopt him at this time. There were also questions about his paternity.

The tensions of the Spanish Civil War were growing. At the same time, Betty had decided to convert to Catholicism and the priest who was helping with the conversion fell in love with her and they had an affair (he was apparently a poor, good looking young man). He was arrested by the Republican Government, as they had an anticlerical policy and were burning many churches. Betty found out what prison he was in and secured his release. He then went into hiding; he wanted to give up the cloth and marry her. She said no, and he didn't relinquish the priesthood and traveled northeast of Madrid. She wanted to maintain her relationship with Carlos.

On July 13, 1936 (Spanish Civil War breaks out on July 18, 1936), Arthur and Betty fled north to France to Biarritz. They were some of the last to leave from the British Embassy. They eventually landed at The Continental Hotel with other British and Norwegian diplomats, including the Ambassador Chilton and his wife, Lady Chilton. Betty traveled to San Sebastián for information. Betty and Arthur sympathized with Franco, head of the Nationalist party, which many of their Spanish friends shared but not the US or British governments. She had helped 5 men across the French border. At the same time, she received a telegram her father died. Carlos had been arrested by the Republicans, as a Franco sympathizer, and his wife, Carmencita, made it to Betty and Arthur, who helped her find refuge in France.

#### **1936 to 1937:**

Betty drove into Spain stating that there was a shortage of medical supplies, and she was assisting the Red Cross, as a cover. She also made inquiries about Carlos. She indiscreetly also met with Vizconde de Santa Clara Avedillo, Franco's First Foreign Minister, trying to find any info about Carlos' whereabouts. He had no information but knew it was possible that he could have been executed, which everyone feared.

He also gave Betty a message that asked if the British Ambassador could recognize Franco formally. This was highly controversial and could have harmed Arthur's diplomatic relations, as he was charged to negotiate with Franco's administration on opening commercial and trade lines. Betty was reprimanded by Chilton. At this stage, Betty was hired by SIS in a freelance capacity as surveillance. She had an affair with another British official John Leche, as Arthur had an affair as well (a woman named Maude).

#### **1937 to 1938:**

The family was transferred to Poland. She had an affinity for the Irish (Arthur, first lover, own nationality). Arthur came later because of high blood pressure, possible diabetes, and eventually had a stroke. Betty took Arthur to London to recover and then embarked on an affair with Edward Kulikowski, a young Pole, who was also lonely and a diplomat, who was in the US Polish office in DC pre-1940. They would often talk about the war and impending invasion. Czechoslovakia was the next country Germany would invade. Cynthia made an agreement that she would seduce Polish contacts for information on behalf of the SIS. She began to report the information to Jack Shelley from Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), and cultivate other relationships like it with Poles (e.g., Count Lubinski). The Poles were working on an Enigma machine, which Betty may have helped provide information for.

#### **1938 to 1940:**

Betty was expelled from Poland for lack of discretion with Michael. Arthur was convalescing in France and eventually posted in Chile, where the children joined the couple. Betty was miserable, as he wouldn't grant her a divorce. They eventually separated, and she moved on without her children.

#### **1940 to 1941:**

Betty took on espionage work and this is the period she met Lt. Paul Fairley at the Ritz in New York. In 1940, Betty assisted Lend-Lease Bill, where British could ask for supplies from Washington, by helping to convince senators. The US wasn't interested in being involved at that point. She converted senator Vandenberg's to support the bill.

She had an affair with General Alberto Lais (who she knew from her youth), 30 years her senior, for possible ciphers also at this time.

Betty is assigned Charles Brousse (a 49-year-old, Frenchman), who was the attaché of the French Ambassador, of the Vichy Government and had an allegiance to France, not Britain or Germany. His wife is the American Catherine Calhoun Graves of Rome, Georgia. Betty starts a tumultuous affair with him, as she is giving information to the British government and OSS. Eventually, Brousse shares her allegiance and is converted as a spy.

#### **1942:**

She began to work for the OSS – Office of Strategic Services – US branch, after bombing of Pearl Harbor. She attained the Vichy navel cipher.

She seduced Court Jean de la Grandville, who would not give her the ciphers. Charles came upon them and beat

her. She was concerned that Grandville would expose her.

In June 1942, she and Charles made several attempts to infiltrate the French Embassy to access the Vichy naval ciphers, successfully unlocking a safe in the process. They posed as lovers if ever a guard was in sight. She intentionally undressed to heels and to a pearl necklace. From 4 to 4:40 AM they attained the cipher books. It benefited the Americans most.

Paul Fairley only sporadically comes up in Betty's memories, as when their romantic relationship ended it became purely professional.

The OSS was subsequently going to put Betty in Catherine (Kay's) and Charles home as their daughter but needed to recruit Kay. She agreed as she didn't know about the affair. The OSS (J. Edgar Hoover) was following Betty and became suspicious of her working with the British. The US began interning members of the Vichy Government, such as Charles, despite him being a double agent. She also miscarried Charles child at this time. She was 32.

#### **1943 to 1944:**

She was interned in Hersey, Pennsylvania, with the couple, as members of the Vichy.

#### **1945 to 1946:**

From 1946-1962, she became the mother to Denise and the wife to Charles. Her now adult son Tony died in 1952 in Korean War.

Betty died of throat cancer.

Betty referred to her espionage years as her "vagabond years." And she often went by the nickname "golden girl."

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# QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

## Pre-Performance Questions

1. Who is a historical figure that you admire? Explain why their experience might make for a historical fiction.
2. How do historical fictions frame historical moments in a new way? How do historical fictions reveal facets of a historic character that we may not have considered before?
3. What are the qualities that makes a good spy? How do gender expectations influence your classification?

## Post-Performance Questions

1. How do the scenic elements of set design, costuming, lighting, and sound help tell the story? Which are the most effective and why?
2. How do the scenic elements provide a sense of place and transform where the story takes place?
3. How does the character, Betty, change your perception about the qualities that make a spy? What personal sacrifices did Betty make to excel at her field?
4. Explain if Betty is a sympathetic or unsympathetic protagonist? What contradictions present themselves?
5. How does the play challenge gender expectations in espionage?
6. How would you describe Betty's relationship to the men in her life? Are these relationships based on love or convenience?
7. How would you describe Betty's relationship to her mother? How does this influence Betty's family choices?
8. In what ways is Betty's status in society used to her advantage? Does her advantage also have some drawbacks?
9. How do the male characters perceive Betty? As a sex object? As a mother? As a peer? How does this perception change, if it does, over the course of the play?

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