

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0040834/trivia/>

[Claudette Colbert](#) was originally cast to play Mary Matthews. A few days before production began, Producer and Director [Frank Capra](#) fired her from this movie because she refused to work into the evening. Capra then hired [Katharine Hepburn](#) on [Spencer Tracy](#)'s suggestion.

At the time this movie was released, President [Harry Truman](#) had not made his political comeback and was considered a sure loser in the 1948 Presidential election by nearly everyone. This is why the Republican Presidential nomination is considered so valuable in the movie, and why [Van Johnson](#)'s character is amused when a young woman tells him that she thinks Truman will be elected President in his own right in November.

Producer and Director [Frank Capra](#) originally wanted [Clark Gable](#) to play Grant Mathews so that he and [Claudette Colbert](#) could be reunited after their enormous success in [It Happened One Night \(1934\)](#), also directed by Capra.

[Adolphe Menjou](#) was an ultra-right-wing political conservative who had eagerly co-operated with the House Un-American Activities Committee, named names of people he considered to be Communists, and was a strong proponent of blacklisting those whose political beliefs he didn't share. [Katharine Hepburn](#) was decidedly more liberal and had been an outspoken critic of the blacklist. Menjou had made several comments accusing Hepburn of being a Communist sympathizer, and possibly a Communist, which angered Hepburn and her co-star and romantic partner [Spencer Tracy](#). Producer and Director [Frank Capra](#) was so concerned about the tension that he closed the set to the press.

In the unedited version of this movie, where Grant Matthews (Spencer Tracy) is standing outside the White House and telling the little bookish fellow about all of the great people of history whose spirits live in the White House, he also lists Mohammad (founder of Islam). In the version broadcast on Turner Classic Movies (TCM), Mohammad's name was edited out, probably done when this movie was re-issued and new title and credit titles were printed (including three misspelled names). Note: When TCM aired this movie in 2019, Mohammad was included.

Originally distributed by MGM, rights later reverted to its production company, Liberty Films. The opening credits were altered to black out the MGM logo (although Leo the Lion's roar can still be heard), and then the movie continued with the "Liberty Films Presents" logo. The replacement credits misspelled the names of Katharine (as Katherine) Hepburn and Adolphe (as Adolph) Menjou. (Photographer [George J. Folsey](#)'s name was also misspelled as Falsey.)

[Angela Lansbury](#) was twenty-three-years-old at the time she portrayed the ruthless, domineering Kay Thorndyke, holding her own - and then some - in the company of such seasoned, high-voltage veterans as [Spencer Tracy](#), [Katharine Hepburn](#), [Adolphe Menjou](#), and [Lewis Stone](#).

There was tension on the set between the fiercely conservative [Adolphe Menjou](#) and liberal-thinking [Katharine Hepburn](#), who had recently made a public speech against America's "Red hysteria" and was facing a backlash from conservative circles as a result.

The unusually large (for the time) projection television seen at the Matthews's home for his televised speech was a rare Philco 48-2500. Most direct-view sets at the time were around ten inches, but this set had a fifteen by twenty-inch screen. It retailed for \$795 (roughly \$8,500 in 2019), not including tax and installation charges.

Called at the last minute to replace [Claudette Colbert](#), [Katharine Hepburn](#) recognized that she was essentially miscast in the role of Mary. She responded by playing down her well-known strength of character and wearing next to no make-up so that she could convincingly portray a repressed, put-upon housewife with no career or aspirations of her own, existing only in the shadow of her husband's glory - in short, the antithesis of [Katharine Hepburn](#)'s screen persona.

The first act of the play sets up the fact that Grant's marriage is in shambles and that his affair with Kay is sustaining him. For 1940s audiences, this was uncharted territory - building sympathy for "the other woman" before the character of the wife has even been introduced. The play's strength lies in its authors' refusal to pass judgment on any of their characters and Producer and Director Frank Capra's ability to maintain this structure for the movie version without censorship impeding the process. This was likely due to the fact that the script never clarified whether Grant and Kay's affair had been consummated. It was only after the screenplay had received the censors' stamp of approval that Capra began adding little touches that made the consummation crystal clear to viewers.

Along with [Keeper of the Flame \(1942\)](#), this is one of precious few [Spencer Tracy-Katharine Hepburn](#) vehicles that did not rely upon their screen chemistry. In fact, much of the plot's tension stems from the fact that Grant and Mary are dangerously out of sync with one another as they attempt to convey a happy marriage to the pollsters and constituents that surround them.

Adapted from the Broadway play by [Howard Lindsay](#) and [Russel Crouse](#). *State of the Union*, starring [Ralph Bellamy](#) and [Ruth Hussey](#), which opened at the Hudson Theater in New York City, New York on November 14, 1945 and ran for seven hundred sixty-five performances (about two years).

The cocktail Lulubelle Alexander (Maidel Turner) likes is called a "Sazerac". Originated in New Orleans, Louisiana, it is made with cognac, absinthe, sugar, and Peychard's bitters.

When Adolphe Menjou says, quoting the state proverb, "I'm from Missouri--show me," he is told, "If you were from Missouri, you'd have a job in Washington." The explanation for this is not only that Truman, who was then President, was from Missouri, but that he came out of a strong political machine that openly dealt in patronage.

Producer and Director [Frank Capra](#) had helmed the screen versions of two other Broadway hits prior to this movie. In both cases - [You Can't Take It with You \(1938\)](#) and [Arsenic and Old Lace \(1944\)](#) - he had made significant alterations to the original material (adding an entire layer of social consciousness to the former, and lopsiding the latter into a star vehicle for [Cary Grant's](#) exaggerated performance). However, there are few if any Capra

touches in this movie, and he added only one significant scene to the play - the admittedly riotous in-flight drag race in which [Spencer Tracy](#) takes the controls of the aircraft while [Van Johnson](#) loses his lunch and [Katharine Hepburn](#) merely continues her knitting.

Jim Conover (Adolphe Menjou) mentions the 1946 election results to Mary Matthews (Katharine Hepburn) - this was the Congressional elections where the Republicans took control of Congress for the first time in sixteen years, gaining fifty-five seats in the House and twelve in the Senate.

Reading congratulatory telegrams, Katharine Hepburn asks, "Who's Madman Muntz?" This was a radio and television used-car salesman who was famous for his advertising antics. Muntz would remain active in automobile and electronics sales and innovation until the mid-1980s.

The character of Matthews is based on Wendell Wilkie, mentioned in passing, the Republican candidate in 1940. Like Matthews, Wilkie was married but had a long-time affair with a woman who, unlike his wife, was politically active and culturally sophisticated.

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Originally to be released by R.K.O. Pictures under a deal Liberty Films had at the time, R.K.O. pulled out when the budget soared to more than \$2.8 million.

It is rather ironic that, in this movie, Katharine Hepburn plays the put-upon wife of a cheating husband ([Spencer Tracy](#)) who is

keeping a mistress (Angela Lansbury), when in real life, Katharine Hepburn was the one who played the other woman for almost three decades, in her well-known romantic affair with the married Spencer Tracy.

Pundits were so sure that Harry Truman would lose the presidential election that a major newspaper, the Chicago Tribune, infamously jumped the gun and published their newspaper with the headline "Dewey Beats Truman", which proved very embarrassing after Truman defeated Thomas Dewey by almost 3,000,000 votes. (A well-known photograph shows president-elect Harry Truman gleefully holding up a copy of that very newspaper with the erroneous headline.)

In the airplane stunt scene, Spike asks why Grant, if needing a hobby, can't play the piano like any normal president. Harry Truman, who was president at the time of this film, played the piano.

Jim Conover's (Adolphe Menjou's) company plane, named "Maizie", registration NC19933, is a Lockheed Model 12A "Electra Junior". Only one hundred thirty model 12s were built from 1936 to 1941. Intended for commercial passenger service, many were purchased by corporations for executive business purposes. During World War II, most saw service as government or military transports as the C-40 (Army) or JO (Navy). This particular aircraft was a C-40A for the U.S.A.A.C. in World War II and was sold to Braniff Airlines after the war, then to a private owner at the time of this movie. This plane also appeared in [Donovan's Brain \(1953\)](#) and [Flight to Nowhere \(1946\)](#). It was last certified in 1969, which was cancelled in 1970.

The other plane in the aerial acrobatic sequence is a North American AT-6A "Texan", registration NC90639. Used primarily as a training aircraft, over fifteen thousand were built. At the time of this movie, this particular aircraft was owned by a private individual in Beverly Hills, California. Soon afterward, it was sold to the Philippine Air Force in February, 1948.