

Press Release

For Immediate Release

CONTACT: Nancy Smith
Bright Shining City Productions
1824 E. Oltorf St., Suite 201
Austin, TX 78741
512.445.4133

SILENT SCREEN ICON POLA NEGRI SAID TO BE SPY

AUSTIN, Texas (Feb. 27, 2008) – Pola Negri, the Polish-born silent screen icon who literally transformed the role of women in movies as the silver screen's first "vamp," was once considered to be a German spy by the U.S. government, this according to documents recently discovered in the National Archives. According to Polish-born producer and director Mariusz Kotowski of Bright Shining City Productions, an Austin-based film company, the documents came to light in the aftermath of his production last year of "Pola Negri: Life is a Dream in Cinema." They reveal that in 1922 the U.S. Department of State had warned the Federal Investigation Service—then the precursor to the FBI and its assistant director J. Edgar Hoover, that Negri was a German espionage agent until long after World War I had ended. A similar letter was also sent to U.S. Army Intelligence. "This is a fantastic discovery," Kotowski said. "She was the lover of Rudolf Valentino, Charlie Chaplin and others, and she befriended some of the most powerful people in the United States and Europe, including Hearst, Einstein, and Hitler. If it is true, she could have been another Mata Hari...possibly, America's Mata Hari." Mata Hari, a woman with many similar attributes to those of Negri, was executed by the French in 1917 for allegedly spying for Germany. Negri died in San Antonio in 1987 at the age of 93, after decades of relative seclusion. So far, only two documents have been uncovered, but it is believed that many more exist in the archives of Hitler's Gestapo and the FBI. "She was adored by Hitler, and at one time there were unsubstantiated rumors of a liaison," Kotowski said. "The rumors were dispelled in a lawsuit in France, but Hitler's fascination with her allowed her to continue working in Germany even after the Gestapo claimed she had Jewish blood." Some investigators believe that she had been "flipped" by the FBI, and when the Gestapo found out and wanted to expel her. Hitler intervened, allowing her spying charade to continue until the outbreak of World War II, thus avoiding compromising Gestapo penetration of Western intelligence agencies, including the FBI. The possibility that she had "flipped" may be justified by the reported warm and cordial correspondence between Negri and Hoover following World War II. "We have not pursued the matter, but it is obvious that something very important and secretive was going on. There are many more documents out there that will clarify the story for history and Hollywood," Kotowski said.