

RIDE SALLY RIDE TREATMENT

Written by

Nick Crayne

Based on, "Sally Ride First American Woman In Space" by Lynn Sherr

TITLE: RIDE SALLY RIDE

Logline: In a time where a woman being a physicist was questionable, Sally Ride dared to be an astronaut. She faces NASA's intensive training and personal strife to become America's first woman in space. And during NASA's darkest days following the Challenger disaster, she has to investigate the very organization that made her.

1983, at the Kennedy Space Center SALLY RIDE (32) walks past cameras snapping away. Reporters eager to capture the astronaut about to become America's first woman in space. She lets her guard down once she enters the waiting van, anxiety apparent through her fidgeting. Her eyes stare out the window up at the launch pad, the rocket only seems to loom larger as they approach it.

The elevator rumbles as she slowly climbs 195 feet to reach the shuttle. The open-air batters Sally as she tries to keep her composure and stop herself from looking down. Workers tediously work to fit on her helmet. They look her over, she scares them for a moment when she jokes "I think I forgot my purse".

In the cockpit, the screens flash, the countdown calls out T minus 35 seconds. The chatter and pre-flight preparations seem to all blur together until T minus 5,4,3,2,1.

1966, we cut back to Sally (late teens) watching Star Trek TOS with TAM O'Shaughnessy (late teens) at Sally's home. Sally's eyes laser-focused on Spock as he delivers a monologue about science. Tam starts to break away at her tough outer shell by chatting her up. They have a long discussion about abstract concepts like what happened at the beginning of the universe, what is out there, about God. We flashback to a memory Sally relates from her childhood.

We meet a young Sally watching her favorite cartoon Crusader Rabbit. A small little rabbit that wasn't as strong as the knight he saw himself as, but who used teamwork to solve problems. JOYCE RIDE tells her daughter it's time for Sunday school and to turn off the TV. Sally ponders if she is capable of challenging God to watch a cartoon. Sally sneaks into her mother's office to retrieve an ink pen. MEASLES OUTBREAK: CLASS CANCELLED the sign reads on the church door and a victorious Sally goes back to watch her favorite cartoon.

DALE RIDE, Sally's father interrupts their laughter at the story and encourages them to prepare for their next Tennis match. Sally laments about how her forearm sucks, Tam pulls out a handwritten reference manual with tennis tips.

Sally suggests they add hand signals to the book so they can secretly communicate on the court.

We cut to Sally sitting in class at Westlake an all-girls school, an ENGLISH TEACHER goes around the room brutally detailing the girl's perceived faults. He stops at Sally's desk "Far too science-oriented. No Creativity." She chokes back tears, with Sally's mind clearly distracted she plays doubles with Tam. Their teamwork breaks down and they lose the match.

Sally attends physiology with DR. Elizabeth MOMMAERETS one of a few female PhDs in science at the time. A woman resentful of the limited career opportunities available for women but who sees something in Sally. She lambasts Sally over her last test where she couldn't remember what a nephron was so she doodled one. Sally jokes she thought she'd appreciate the visual representation. Mommaerets mentors her telling her that to succeed in science you need to question not only the nature of the universe but yourself.

At the championship match Dale mentors Sally, he tells her how she needs to learn self-control. If you are winning or losing or someone else is talking shit about you; it doesn't matter just focus on moving forward. Dale hands her a college acceptance letter, Sally has to struggle to subdue her excitement. Tam looks at Sally in a moment of uncertainty. Sally seems to be in her own head also uncertain then she signals a play to Tam. They masterfully outplay the other team and score, we cut to the pair being presented a trophy.

1972, Tam (mid-20s) and Sally (mid-20s) work as camp counselors at TennisAmerica in Nevada. Billy Jean King visits the camp and has an exhibition match with Sally. Tam watches and starts to feel she's falling into Sally's shadow. But when Sally and King talk we realize that Sally has dedicated herself towards pursuing physics.

Sally and Tam share a night together as Sally shows off her lab at Stanford. We realize the two are in a romantic relationship at this point. They share their thoughts with each other, Sally talks about her work with physics. But Tam confesses the secrecy of their relationship has taken a toll on her. She wants a normal life that she doesn't have to hide from her family so they break up.

Sally sits at her desk distraught reading the Stanford Daily, the headline reads "NASA to Recruit women". Sally scrambles for a piece of paper and fills out an application. We cut to Sally at the NASA interview. Sally undergoes an arduous interview process designed to test her physical and psychological limits. From running on a treadmill, being isolated in a rescue sphere, to an arduous hour-long interview.

Sally is invited with other potential candidates to watch the test landing of the shuttle Enterprise. Unusually bumpy with three heart-stopping unplanned bounces. Sally has to accept the risk she's about to undertake to achieve her dreams.

Sally gets a call from Tam, her mentor Dr. Mommaerts had been struggling with manic depression and took her own life. Sally's crushed and wallows away at home she forces herself out of bed to answer the damn phone which just keeps ringing. Halfway through the conversation, she realizes she's been selected to train to be a mission specialist at NASA.

1978, we follow the NASA candidates through their training, a group of 35 aspiring astronauts. In one lesson the group realizes it's a 101 class filled with stuff they already know and suffer in boredom. Sally knows this is b.s. and walks out the door. Her mind focused on the only test that matters, flying. On the runway, she stares at the T-38, a streamlined silver training jet. She learns how to fly and handle complex maneuvers like barrel rolls. As well as how to eject in full survival gear straight into miserable mosquito infested-waters off of Miami.

Some time later Sally serves as a Capcom for Columbia. The first time in history the "Huston" that radioed back was female. Afterwards, they call her in to meet with top NASA officials. She's been selected to be America's first woman in space.

1983, We follow Sally as she goes through a blistering series of interviews and watches press coverage. They ask questions like "will you cry during the flight?" She puts on a tough face and pushes forward using her wit to disarm the reporters looking to provoke her.

Sally retreats into solitude training extensively with the shuttle's arm designed to position satellites. Mission Commander BOB Crippen trains with Sally on the arm. He invites her to watch the solar eclipse a boondoggle disguised as science. She co-pilots backseat to STEVE Hawley, a lanky redhead who becomes Sally's husband. The group flies their t-38s over to Montana to watch the eclipse from the edge of the atmosphere.

The 5 person crew of STS-7 trains extensively for their mission. We see them build each other up when Fred the pilot of the crew kills them in simulation Sally jokes to keep them moving forward. We see her becoming one of the guys when they play a prank on her. They plant a rubber rat that flies into Sally's face scaring her senseless.

Sally watches the news coverage of her flight and paces around Nasa's famous Beach House, a small cottage along the beach.

Steve brings Tam to see Sally in order to help calm her nerves before the flight. They reconnect but there is a distance between them now. In a moment of rare candor, she tells Tam how she is aware she could die. She grabs her hand and offers her some encouragement. Sally takes up the slow 195-foot long elevator to reach the shuttle's entry hatch.

We cut back to the countdown, 1... BOOM, CHALLENGER ACHIEVES LIFTOFF!

Sally battles turbulence to call out the flight checklist "LVLH" a reminder that the switches should reflect their position. Under 3g forces she battles just to turn her head in order to turn the pages of her checklist and make callouts. They did it they're 184 miles high, traveling 17,500 miles an hour above the earth. She poses the mechanical arm to pose for a photo as they celebrate.

1986, a few years have passed on a flight home to Houston we learn Sally and Tam are having an affair. The pilot announces startling news, Challenger has been destroyed. Sally rushes to the cockpit flashing her Nasa badge eager to listen to the air traffic. Sally sits at home distraught, Steve tries to comfort her but her guilt pushes her into solitude. Sally receives a call from former Secretary of State WILLIAM Rogers.

He invites her a chance to join the commission to find answers, she accepts. The organization that brought her fame had now been responsible for 7 deaths, she needs answers. In a Washington, DC hotel room Sally calls Tam lamenting their lack of progress. A piece of paper is slipped under the door. The paper contains measurements of the resilience of the rockets O-rings. Sally tells Tam the implications, Nasa management knew the risks.

Sally works with a fellow commission member General KUTYNA to bring it up without exposing the source. A friend of Kutyna presents a demonstration of the problem at the meeting. The man dunks a sample of the O-ring into a glass of water, it doesn't snap back to its intended shape for several seconds. She works with the committee to gather evidence and testimonies.

The pictures become clearer, NASA management put success before safety. She confronts Steve about how she has been questioning herself. At first he thinks she is talking about her career at NASA, but he realizes their marriage is ending.

2011-2012, Tam and Sally (59) are at a conference promoting Sally Ride Science when Sally complains about feeling exhausted. Tam notices her skin turning Yellow, a doctor's visit reveals she has pancreatic cancer.

We witness Sally's decline and the couples efforts to lift the mood by registering as domestic partners. They debate whether they should go public with the news as it could impact their efforts at Sally Ride Science. Sally's barriers break down she becomes more open with Tam. In her final moments, her sister BEAR plays Crusader Rabbit on her iPhone while Tam holds Sally's hand. A title scroll covers Tam and Sally's efforts at Sally Ride Science to promote STEM careers to young girls and boys.