

## SEEING RED

NEWSHOUR TRANSCRIPT: October 24, 1997



*In 1947, the House Un-American Activities Committee began its investigation of suspected communists in the film industry. The investigation ruined hundreds of careers. After excerpts from the PBS documentary "The Legacy of the Hollywood Blacklist", Elizabeth Farnsworth talks with writer/producer Paul Jarrico and actress Marsha Hunt about their experiences on the blacklist.*

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: On Monday in a gala hosted by the Writers Guild of America and three other entertainment guilds Hollywood will commemorate the opening of the House Un-American Activities Committee Investigation of Communist activity in the film industry. Our coverage begins with excerpts from the documentary "The Legacy of the Hollywood Blacklist," which first aired on PBS in 1987. The documentary is narrated by Burt Lancaster.



### The House Un-American Activities Committee and Hollywood



BURT LANCASTER: In 1947 the House Un-American Activities Committee, or HUAC as it was called, began its investigation of communism in the motion picture industry. The Committee, including Chairman J. Parnell Thomas and a young Congressman from California, Richard M. Nixon, gained instant publicity for itself by calling up celebrities to testify and capitalizing on the public's never-ending fascination with Hollywood.

*J. PARNELL THOMAS: This committee under its mandate from the House of Representatives had the responsibility of exposing and spotlighting subversive ailments wherever they may exist. It is only to be expected that Communists would strive desperately to gain entry to the motion picture industry simply because the industry offers such a tremendous weapon for education and propaganda.*



BURT LANCASTER: First to be called before HUAC were well known film stars: Men like Robert Taylor, Ronald Reagan, Robert Montgomery, men who would not only bring widespread publicity to the hearings, but would answer the committees questions in a friendly manner.

*SPOKESMAN: Do you believe as a prominent person in your field that it would be wise for us to, for the Congress, to pass legislation to outlaw the Communist Party of the United States?*

*GARY COOPER: I think it would be a good idea, although I don't know, I have never read Karl Marx, and I don't know the basis of Communism, beyond what I have picked up from hearsay--and what I have heard, I don't like it because it isn't on the level.*



**BURT LANCASTER:** Many studio moguls fearing a financial loss were also eager to cooperate with the committee, but the most damaging testimony was the actual naming of names.

*SPOKESMAN: Do you recall the names of any of the actors in the Guild who participate in such activities?*

*ROBERT TAYLOR, Actor: Well, the one chap I am thinking of currently is Mr. Howard DeSilva--that always has something to say at the wrong time. Karen Morley also usually appears at the guild meetings.*

*SPOKESMAN: That's K-a-r-e-n M-o-r--*

*ROBERT TAYLOR: I believe so, yes.*



## **The Hollywood Ten**

**BURT LANCASTER:** After the big stars and studio bosses made their appearance, seven writers two directors and one producer were called before HUAC. They were to be questioned about membership in the Communist Party. They challenged the committee's right to probe their personal beliefs. They became known as the "Hollywood ten."

*SPOKESMAN: Are you a member of the Screen Writers Guild?*

*SAM ORNITZ, Screenwriter: I wish to reply to that question by saying that this involves a serious question of conscience.*

*SPOKESMAN: Conscience?*

*SAM ORNITZ: Conscience. I say you do raise a serious question of conscience for me when you ask me to act in concert with you to override the Constitution--*

*SPOKESMAN: Mr. Chairman.*

*SAM ORNITZ: Wait a minute -- asking me to violate the constitutional guarantee of-*



*SPOKESMAN: The witness is through. stand away!*

**BURT LANCASTER:** While some left Hollywood the ten would not. They were engaged in an



uphill battle against the rising tide of anti-Communist sentiment. In 1950, their final options ran out. All ten said goodbye to their families and went to spend one year terms in the federal penitentiary. In 1951, while the ten were still in prison, HUAC began a second wave of hearings both in Washington and in Hollywood. Over 100 people were called to testify. Like the ten, many refused to cooperate with the committee. But some of those called to testify did cooperate with the committee, talking about themselves and incriminating others. Writers like Martin

Berkeley and Leo Townsend named literally hundreds of people

*HOWARD RUSHMORE, JOURNALIST: Edward G. Robinson would fall in that category. Ten year ago or more he started joining one Communist front after another.*



**BURT LANCASTER:** Soon hundreds of people found their names appearing on lists as indiscriminate blacklisting became a full-time pursuit. Having completed its work the Un-American Activities Committee left Hollywood in



1952, leaving in its wake over 300 people condemned by blacklisting and unable to work in the motion picture industry. Barred from working in the studios, a small group of blacklisted Hollywood artists responded by forming their own production company and making an independent film "Salt of the Earth." (FILM SCENE)

**An interview with Paul Jarrico and Marsha Hunt.**

**ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH:** This year the Writers Guild of America has corrected the screen credits on many new prints and home videos of films written by blacklisted writers using pseudonyms. For more on all this we're joined now by Paul Jarrico, who has helped lead that effort. He co-wrote "Song of Russia" and produced "Salt of the Earth," and by Marsha Hunt, an actress who appeared in more than 50 films before she was blacklisted, including the 1940 version of "Pride and Prejudice." Thank you both for being with us.

Paul Jarrico, tell us how you came to be blacklisted.

**PAUL JARRICO, Blacklisted Writer/Producer:** Well, I was pretty well known as left of center, considerably left of center. There was no secret about my political orientation, and I, in fact, produced a film about the "Hollywood Ten," called the "Hollywood Ten" in the summer of 1950, on the eve of their going to prison. So I was not at all surprised when the committee began its new hearings in the spring of '51 as the ten were, in fact, coming up to be called.



ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: So you were called and then were you automatically blacklisted? How did you know? When was the moment you knew you'd been blacklisted?

PAUL JARRICO: Well, I knew I was blacklisted the moment I arrived at RKO Studio in my car and was barred from the lot, but that was before I testified. That was the morning after I had been served a subpoena and had said to some of the reporters who accompanied the marshal and who asked me what stand I would take, I had said I wasn't sure but if I had to choose between crawling in the mud with Larry Parks or going to prison like my courageous friends, the Hollywood Ten, you might--you could be sure I would choose the latter. And that was in the papers the following morning, and I was barred from the lot within an hour or two of that.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Marsha Hunt, tell us how you came to be blacklisted and how you first learned about it.

MARSHA HUNT, Blacklisted Actress: It was a gradual process with me, I think. I had been on that chartered plane that a number of us--close to 30 of us--film makers, actors, directors, writers, and even Ira Gershwin, to protest what was happening at the HUAC hearings in Washington.



ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: This was in 1947?

MARSHA HUNT: It was October 27, 1947, fifty years ago. And we went there to try to counter these terribly frightening headlines that were covering the country, scaring moviegoers about the safety of seeing movies, lest their loyalty be subverted with all this secret propoganda that was said to be in there, and we felt that the positive needed to be accented and to protest the treatment of those 19 who were being examined as witnesses.

We went back for two days of attending the hearings and on the return the climate in Hollywood had already changed, and I think in my own case I was told that this was years later, that the only way I might be able to work in films again would be to denounce that flight as a serious error that had been masterminded by Communists. I knew quite to the contrary, and of course I couldn't say or swear to such nonsense.



**"I didn't know or care about Communism. I was terribly worried about what we were doing to democracy."**

I had to declare my undying opposition to Communism. I didn't know or care about Communism. I was terribly worried about what we were doing to democracy. The actual blacklist in my case I think didn't come into force until a publication called "Red Channels." That was a private pamphlet issued in New York about the broadcast industries, radio and television, and it listed with activities under each name that were found to be suspect people who performed on broadcast media who the editors of "Red Channels" felt did not deserve to work because they

were either Communists or fellow travelers or pinkos. There were many ugly terms then. I was included in that list.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Okay. Ms. Hunt, I want to come back to you about that one second. Paul Jarrico, once you found out you were blacklisted, once you could no longer work in Hollywood, what did you do? How did you manage to produce "Salt of the Earth," which we just saw a little bit of?



PAUL JARRICO: The hard way. I and Herbert Biverman and Adrian Scott, both of whom were--had been members of the Hollywood Ten and were blacklisted, of course, formed a company to try to use the growing pool of talent of the blacklistees. And we had several projects underway with--that is to say being written and came across--I came across by coincidence--this strike and in New Mexico in which Mexican-American zinc miners were on strike, the company got an injunction, saying that company--that striking miners may not picket--the wives said the injunction doesn't say anything about their wives--we'll take over your picket line, and the men were reluctant to, as they put it hide behind women's skirts. But there really was no other alternative. The women found themselves on the picket line being attacked by force, arrested in droves--

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: And did people try to stop you from making this film?

PAUL JARRICO: Well, of course. There was a concerted effort to stop the making of the film after it became known that we were making the film. We had started the film in quite a normal fashion with contracts with Pate Lab to develop our film and rental of the equipment from Hollywood, people who supplied such things. A whistle was blown by Walter Pigeon, the then president of the Actors Guild, and the FBI swung into action and movie industries swung into action and we found ourselves barred from laboratories, barred from sound studios, barred from any of the normal facilities available to film makers, and we found ourselves hounded by all kinds of denunciations on the floor of Congress and in--by columnists--we were--the public was told that we were making a new weapon for Russia, that since we were shooting in New Mexico, where you find atom bombs, you find Communists, and every kind of scurrilous attack--vigilante attacks--on us while we were still shooting developed.



Our star, who had come up from Mexico to star in the film--LeSoro Regueltos--was arrested and deported before we were finished shooting her role. We had difficulty getting permission to shoot the remaining scenes with her in Mexico, which we absolutely had to have, and so on.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Okay. And Marsha Hunt, what happened to you in the years after you were blacklisted? What happened to your career?

MARSHA HUNT: Well, it really was ended. There were occasional film jobs but they came really in the mid 50's--Stanley Kramer engaged me for the "Happy Time," which was a major

film and should have been a happy time, but I was asked repeatedly, executive officers, to take out ads of my non-Communism in order to fend off the threats of picketing of the film if I remained in it. This was only done by little groups in the country. Generally, the public didn't know that I had a problem with work, and I think I made perhaps three films in all of the 1950's.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: But you were able to work in theater?

MARSHA HUNT: Theater, blessedly, was never touched by blacklisting, and I did plays all over the country. I've done six plays on Broadway, and there's never been any hint of a problem with who was able to work and who was not.



ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Are you angry now when you look back at this period? Is it hard to forgive people?

MARSHA HUNT: It was a terribly, terribly painful time. It was shameful. Well, it spread across the nation, as you know. It started with Hollywood, because that's an easy way to get headlines, but it spread to the broadcast media, to education, to even religion, and for well over a decade this was no longer the land of the free, nor the home of the brave.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: And Paul Jarrico, we don't have much time left. You've been so active in getting the screen credits restored for writers like yourself who had to write under a pseudonym once the blacklist got going. Does that--does that bring you any feeling that the past is past and does it end some of the anger you feel?

PAUL JARRICO: Well, of course. It's very rewarding to see how pleased people who are who get their names back on the screen or the right to have their names on the screen, or if they have gone how pleased their widows or their children are.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Does this somehow make you feel less angry?

PAUL JARRICO: Well, you're assuming that I felt angry.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Yes, I am. You didn't?

PAUL JARRICO: Yes. I felt righteous anger, but it was not--it was mostly a determination to try to fight back. It was not just they can't do this to me.

ELIZABETH FARNSWORTH: Okay. Well, thank you both very much for being with us.

MARSHA HUNT: Thank you for having us.

PAUL JARRICO: It was a pleasure to be here.