

January 24, 1957

President Dwight D. Eisenhower  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

It has been suggested to me that I write a series of articles for certain (non-Communist and anti-Communist) publications in Britain and France, explaining how hundreds of American artists have been driven from their professions and deprived of their civil rights by the legislative, judicial and executive branches of the Federal government. It is hoped that such information will be of value to European intellectuals who wish to preserve in their own countries a tradition of cultural independence that in America has been suppressed.

I have the belief that injustices often occur simply because they are not known to persons in authority. Before consenting to write such a series as has been suggested, it seemed to me that I had the obligation first to apprise you of certain facts concerning the blacklist as it functions in the American motion picture industry.

The motion picture blacklist begins when the artist is summoned to appear before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. There, contrary to the First Amendment's clear intention, he is commanded to reveal his political thoughts, affiliations and associates.

If he refuses to answer he is cited for Contempt of Congress, indicted, arrested, tried in a Federal district court, convicted, fined and sent to a Federal prison. If he invokes his constitutional privileges in proper form he escapes criminal prosecution, but is very often publicly branded a liar, a subversive, and a traitor by the Committee or its counsel.

Whether he escapes indictment or not, he is instantly discharged from his employment in motion pictures and informed that he will not be re-employed until he appears before the

Committee and yields to its demands. The Committee maintains, at taxpayers' expense, a permanent investigator in Hollywood who advises with motion picture executives on whom they may employ and whom they may not.

If the blacklisted artist holds an employment contract with a motion picture producing firm, he may bring suit in Federal court to enforce its terms. In all suits thus far adjudicated, juries have found in favor of the blacklisted petitioner and against the blacklisting film company---and each jury verdict has been reversed by higher courts.

Having been blacklisted by the legislative arm of the government and denied relief by its judicial arm, the artist next turns to the executive for a passport which will permit him to engage in his profession abroad. Denial by the Department of State completes the chain of Federal authority, and with it the destruction of the artist's career.

I have been told by producers of motion pictures that they did not want the blacklist and do not want it now; that they maintain it only because they fear the influence of the Committee that instigated it.

You, Mr. President, have greater influence upon your countrymen than any living person. If you find what I have written here to be the truth, one public word from you will permit the motion picture industry to turn its back upon a practice that is hateful to the whole world.

Respectfully,