



# BLACKLIST AND HUAC



## CONTEXT: THE LATE 1940S

- Cold War with Russia (July 1947: Russia refused aid)
- Ideological disagreement (Capitalism/Communism)
- Fear of Communist threat. The RED SCARE.
- Fear of atomic espionage. THE BOMB.
- Film Noir revealed a dark, gritty, anarchic side to the US.



# HUAC

- House Committee on Un-American Activities began investigating “communism in motion pictures” in 1946/47.
- Hollywood had made pro-Russian films during World War II.
- Social consciousness films and Film Noir were more liberal: anti-American?
- Some Hollywood workers had been members of the communist party.



# HEARINGS

- 1947: FRIENDLY witnesses gave up names of left-leaning people.
  - Eg: Walt Disney, Gary Cooper
- Unfriendly witnesses refused to answer questions about themselves.
- 11 “Unfriendly” witnesses called back to Congress.
- One fled the US. 10 refused to talk.



# THE HOLLYWOOD 10

- The Hollywood 10 were a group of screenwriters and directors who refused to talk in 1947.
- Up to 1 year in jail for contempt of Congress.
- Humphrey Bogart, Billy Wilder, and others back off criticism of Congress.



# BLACKLISTING

- Studio Executives immediately produced the Waldorf Statement.
- Blacklisted any worker with Communist affiliations.
- Screen Actors Guild and other organizations supported it (led by Ronald Reagan).
- A second round of HUAC hearings took down several hundred more people in 1951.



# IMPACT

Negatives (until the early 1960s):

- Ghost writers and fake names (Dalton Trumbo).
- Unemployment or exile
- Suicide and death
- The number of films focusing on social issues declined almost 20% over 7 years.
- Creativity and cinematic intelligence decreased.

Positives (for friendlies):

- Work
- Support from entertainment organizations



# THE RED SCARE ON TV

- *The Twilight Zone: The Monsters are Due on Maple Street*
- How does this episode address the Red Scare?
  - People begin to point out connections: Witnesses were asked to point out “Communists”
  - Human or Alien: American or Communist
  - Steve wouldn’t let people investigate him: unfriendlies wouldn’t share information
  - Anything suspicious becomes something to investigate





# HOMEWORK

- Brief History of Television
- Notepage
- *Taxi Driver* 4:30-6:30PM

