

ARE YOU NOW OR
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN . . .

A DOCUMENTARY DRAMA

by
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ACT I

(GAVEL SOUNDS TWICE)

ASSISTANT COMMITTEE MAN 1.

The dialogue of ARE YOU KNOW OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN was taken from hearings before the Un-American activities committee, hence no resemblance between actual person and witness is coincidental. These characters wrote their own lines into the pages of history. No names have been changed, except the names of committee members vary throughout the course of the play, as did the actual committee in fact vary over the eleven years of history covered in the play. The image is of a single committee in session throughout: presided over by a chairman, assisted by an investigator, and a committeeman. Imagine, if you will, scores of correspondents covering the proceedings, dozens of microphones in place of our few, TV and Newsreel cameras lining either wall with blazing Klieg lights sending the temperatures soaring toward a hundred degrees. The room was not always the same and it was not always in Washington, D.C.; but for the imagination a small single room will suffice looking like a courtroom or any room in a government building. "Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?" In 1947 the Un-American Activities Committee put this question to the Hollywood Ten: a group of screenwriters and directors. These persons refused to testify, invoked the first amendment, and three years later landed in jail for contempt of congress. The committee's advisor in this field was the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals.

(GAVEL)

INVESTIGATOR.

Will you state your name?

MR. WOOD.

Sam G. Wood.

INVES.

Mr. Wood, are you a member of the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals?

WOOD.

I am. I was its first president.

INVES.

What is your present occupation?

WOOD.

Motion picture producer and director.

INVES.

Would you name to the committee some of the films you have produced and directed?

WOOD.

Goodbye Mr. Chips, Kitty Foyle, For Whom the Bell Tolls.

INVES.

Would you name individuals who were associated with you?

WOOD.

Yes, Gary Cooper, Clark Gable, Robert Taylor... Oh, Ginger Rogers.

INVES.

Will you tell the Committee why the Alliance was founded?

WOOD.

We felt that there was a definite effort by Communist Party members to take over the unions and guilds.

INVES.

Will you tell the Committee of the efforts of the Communists to infiltrate the Screen Directors Guild?

WOOD.

Our most serious time was when George Stevens, who was president, went into the service, and the Guild was turned over to John Cromwell. With the assistance of three or four others, Cromwell tried to steer us into the Red river.

INVES.

Will you name the others?

WOOD.

Irving Pichel, Frank Tuttle, Edward Dmytryk.

INVES.

Mr. Wood, do the Communists maintain schools or laboratories in Hollywood for the purpose of training actors or writers?

WOOD.

They have a laboratory theater there.

INVES.

What is the function of this?

WOOD.

The youngsters go to these schools, they get parts, they study, and we see them in theaters. The Laboratory Theater, I think, is definitely under the control of the Communist Party. Any kid that goes in there with American ideals hasn't a chance in the world. Then we have the Educational Center -

INVES.

Is that the People's Educational Center?

WOOD.

Yes. Eddie Dmytryk - I referred to him - is the instructor there.

CHAIRMAN.

Thank you, Mr. Wood. You're excused.

(GAVEL)

ASSISTANT COMMITTEEMAN 2.

Edward Dmytryk first appeared before the Committee on October 29, 1947.

INVES.

Mr. Dmytryk, when and where were you born?

MR. DMYTRYK.

I was born on September 4, 1908, in Grand Forks, British Columbia, Canada.

INVES.

When and how did you become a citizen of the United States?

DMYTRYK.

I was nationalized in 1939 in Los Angeles.

INVES.

Mr. Dmytryk, are you a member of the Screen Directors Guild?

DMYTRYK.

Mr. Chairman I have a statement here that I would like to make. May I please read my statement?

CHAIR.

Let me see the statement. (*Statement business*) This statement is typical of the other statements that we have inspected. Is not at all pertinent to this inquiry. Therefore, the Chair rules it cannot be read.

DMYTRYK.

Mr. Chairman, I feel that this statement

CHAIR.

The Chair has ruled that the statement is not pertinent at all. The Chief Investigator will ask questions, and you will please answer them.

DMYTRYK.

All right.

INVES.

Mr. Dmytryk, are you a member of the Screen Directors Guild?

DMYTRYK.

I feel these questions are designed...

CHAIR.

Just a minute. It is not up to you to feel what the design is. It is up to you to be responsive to the questions.

DMYTRYK.

Most other witnesses were given the right to answer as they pleased. Some went on at length.

INVES.

Pardon me, Mr. Dmytryk. About how long a time would you require to answer whether you were a member of the Screen Directors Guild? Would five minutes be long enough?

DMYTRYK.

It would take me a lot less than five minutes.

CHAIR.

It would take you five minutes to answer whether you are a member of the Screen Directors Guild?

DMYTRYK.

There aren't many questions that can be answered yes or no

CHAIR.

I am referring to this one question. Can you answer it yes or no?

DMYTRYK.

I would like to answer the question. I would like to answer it in my own way.

CHAIR.

Go ahead. .

DMYTRYK.

I think that this kind of questioning is designed to bring about a split in many of the guilds, among the members of the guilds, at a time when we have just succeeded in getting unity between the guilds.

INVES.

Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party, Mr. Dmytryk?

DMYTRYK.

Well, I feel there is a question of constitutional rights here.

CHAIR.

When did you first learn about the constitution?

DMYTRYK.

I will be glad to answer that question Mr. Chairman. I first learned about the constitution in high school.

INVES.

Let's have the answer to the first question.

DMYTRYK.

I was asked when I first learned about the constitution.

INVES.

I believe the first question Mr. Dmytryk was: Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of the Communist Party?

DMYTRYK.

I have been advised that there is a question of constitutional rights involved. The Constitution does not ask that such a question be answered in the way that you want it answered. I think that what organizations I belong to, what I think, and what I say cannot be questioned by this committee.

INVES.

Mr. Chairman, it is apparent that the witness is pursuing the same line as the other witnesses.

CHAIR.

The witness is excused.

(GAVEL)

LARDNER.

Mr. Chairman, I have a short statement I would like to make. (*Statement business*)

AC 2.

Ring Lardner, Jr. came before the Committee the following day.

INVES.

When and where were you born, Mr. Lardner?

LARDNER.

On August 19, 1915, in Chicago, Illinois.

INVES.

What is your occupation?

LARDNER.

A writer.

INVES.

How long have you been a writer?

LARDNER.

I have been a writer about ten years. Mr. Chairman, I have a short statement I would like to make.

CHAIR.

Mr. Lardner, the Committee is unanimous in the fact that after you testify you may read your statement.

LARDNER.

Thank you.

INVES.

Mr. Lardner, are you a member of the Screen Writers Guild?

LARDNER.

Mr. Stripling, I want to be cooperative about this but there are certain limits to my cooperation.

(MORE)

LARDNER. (CONT'D)

I don't want to help you divide or smash this particular guild, or to infiltrate the motion-picture business in any way for the purpose which seems to me to be to try to control that business, to control what the American people can see and hear in their motion-picture theaters.

CHAIR.

Now, Mr. Lardner, don't do like the others or you will never read your statement. I would suggest -

LARDNER.

Mr. Chairman, let me -

CHAIR.

-- be responsive to the question.

LARDNER.

I am--

CHAIR.

The question is: Are you a member of the Screen Writers Guild?

LARDNER.

I understood you to say that I *would* be permitted to read the statement, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIR.

Yes, after you finished with the questions and answers.

LARDNER.

Yes.

CHAIR.

But you certainly haven't answered the questions.

LARDNER.

Well, I am going to answer the questions, but I don't think you qualified in any way your statement that I would be able to read this statement.

CHAIR.

Then I will qualify it now. If you refuse to answer the questions, then you will not read your statement.

LARDNER.

Well, I know that is an indirect way of saying you don't want me to read my statement.

CHAIR.

Then you know right now you are not going to answer the question. Is that correct?

LARDNER.

No, I am going to answer the question.

CHAIR.

All right, then, answer that question.

LARDNER.

All right, sir. I think these points I am bringing out are relevant to the question, because I have to consider why the question is asked -

CHAIR.

We will determine why the question was asked. We want to know whether you are a member of the Screen Writers Guild.

LARDNER.

Yes --

CHAIR.

That is a very simple question. You can answer that yes or no. You don't have to go into a long harangue or speech. If you want to make a speech, you know where you can go out there.

LARDNER.

Well, I am not very good at haranguing, and I won't try it, but it seems to me that, if you can make me answer this question, tomorrow you could ask somebody whether he believed in spiritualism.

CHAIR.

Oh, no, there is no chance of our asking anyone whether they believe in spiritualism, and you know it. That is just plain silly.

LARDNER.

You might --

CHAIR.

Now, you haven't learned your lines very well.

LARDNER.

Well --

CHAIR.

I want to know whether you can answer the question yes or no.

LARDNER.

If you did, for instance, ask somebody about that you might ask him --

CHAIR.

Well, now, never mind what we might ask him. We are asking you now, are you a member of the Screen Writers Guild?

LARDNER.

But --

CHAIR.

You are an American --

LARDNER.

But that is a question

CHAIR.

-- and Americans should not be afraid to answer that.

LARDNER.

Yes, but I am also concerned as an American with the question of whether this Committee has the right to ask me.

CHAIR.

Well, we have the right, and until you prove that we haven't got the right, then you have to answer the question.

LARDNER.

Mr. Chairman --

CHAIR.

You are a witness, aren't you? Aren't you a witness?

LARDNER.

Mr. Chairman --

CHAIR.

Aren't you a witness here?

LARDNER.

Yes, I am.

CHAIR.

All right, then, a Congressional Committee is asking you: Are you a member of the Screen Writers Guild? Now, you answer it yes or no.

LARDNER.

Well, I am saying that in order to answer that --

CHAIR.

All right, put the next question. Go to the sixty-four-dollar question.

LARDNER.

I haven't --

CHAIR.

Go to the next question.

INVES.

Mr. Lardner are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?

LARDNER.

Well, I would like to answer that question, too.

INVES.

Mr. Lardner, the charge has been made before this Committee that the Screen Writers Guild which, according to the record, you are a member of, whether you admit it or not, has a number of individuals in it who are members of the Communist Party. This Committee is seeking to determine the extent of Communist infiltration in the Screen Writers Guild and in other guilds within the motion-picture industry.

LARDNER.

Yes.

INVES.

And certainly the question of whether or not you are a member of the Communist Party is very pertinent. Now, are you a member or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?

LARDNER.

It seems to me you are trying to discredit the Screen Writers Guild through me, the motion-picture industry through the Screen Writers Guild, and our whole practice of freedom of expression.

INVES.

If you and others are members of the Communist Party, you are the ones who are discrediting the Screen Writers Guild.

LARDNER.

I am trying to answer the question by stating, first, what I feel about the purpose of the question which, as I say, is to discredit the whole motion-picture industry.

CHAIR.

You won't say anything first. You are refusing to answer this question.

LARDNER.

I am saying my understanding is, as an American resident --

CHAIR.

Never mind your understanding. There is a question: are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?

LARDNER.

I could answer exactly the way you want, Mr. Chairman --

CHAIR.

No --

LARDNER.

-- but I think that is a --

CHAIR.

It is not a question of our wanting you to answer that. It is a very simple question. Anybody would be proud to answer it -- any real American would be proud to answer the question, "Are you or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?" -- any *real* American.

LARDNER.

It depends on the circumstances. I could answer it, but if I did, I would hate myself in the morning.

CHAIR.

Leave the witness chair.

LARDNER.

It was a question that would --

CHAIR.

Leave the witness chair.

LARDNER.

Because it is a question --

CHAIR.

(pounding gavel)

Leave the witness chair.

LARDNER.

I think I am leaving by force.

AC 1.

Dmytryk and Lardner and their eight colleagues went to jail, and so, as it happened, did the Chairman of the Committee at that time, J. Parnell Thomas, who had been stealing the taxpayers' money. Before the Grand Jury, Thomas invoked the Fifth Amendment. Eventually he would receive a presidential pardon from Truman. The first person in show business to testify to former party membership was Larry Parks, star of two then recent movies, THE JOLSON STORY and JOLSON SINGS AGAIN. Parks spent the entire day before the Committee, March 21, 1951.

INVES.

The Committee has succeeded in exposing Communists' infiltration into labor organizations, with the result that the Congress has been informed of important facts as the basis for legislative action. Many witnesses have told how they were duped into joining the Party, the activities they observed as members, and their reasons for breaking. They have performed a service of incalculable value to their country and should receive the plaudits of their fellow citizens. The hearing today is the first of a series designed to accomplish the same results in the entertainment field. It is hoped that any witness who made the mistake of associating himself with the Communist Party will have sufficient courage and loyalty to make an honest disclosure of all he knows. I would like to call, as the first witness, Mr. Larry Parks. Are you represented by counsel, Mr. Parks?

MR. PARKS

I am.

INVES.

Will counsel identify himself?

MR. MANDEL.

Louis Mandel. Mr. Parks has prepared a statement. It will be enlightening to the Committee as his testimony unfolds. May he read it?

CHAIR.

At the conclusion of the testimony. Proceed Counsel.

INVE.

Mr. Parks, when and where were you born?

PARKS

I was born on a farm in Kansas. The closest town would be Olathe.

INVE.

Will you relate the details regarding your educational background?

PARKS

I moved when quite small to Illinois, attended the high school in Joliet, graduated from the University of Illinois, where I majored in chemistry and minored in physics. I sometimes wonder how I got in my present line of work.

INVE.

Mr. Parks, there has been testimony regarding a number of organizations in Hollywood such as the Actors' Laboratory Theater. Have you been connected with any of those?

PARKS

I have.

INVE.

Will you state their names?

PARKS

(looking at paper received from Mandel)

Well, I'm familiar with the Actors' Laboratory.

INVES.

Did you hold any position in that organization?

PARKS

For a time I was sort of honorary treasurer, and I emphasize the word honorary.

INVES.

Proceed.

PARKS

I was a member of the Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences, and Professions.

INVES.

Now, referring back to the Actors' Laboratory, of which you were treasurer?

PARKS

My job was to sign a batch of checks and that was the extent of my knowledge of the money matters.

INVES.

Will you tell the Committee whether or not there were Communists in these various organizations?

PARKS

There were Communists attached to the Lab.

INVES.

Did those Party members endeavor to obtain control?

PARKS

No, the Lab was a school for acting and sort of a showcase for actors.

INVES.

Tell the Committee the circumstances under which you became a member of the Communist Party, and if you left the party, when you did and why.

PARKS

I was a member in '41. Being a member of the Party fulfilled certain needs of a young man who was liberal in thought, idealistic, who was for the underprivileged, the underdog. I felt it fulfilled these needs. Being a Communist in '51, in this situation, is a different kettle of fish. A great power is trying to take over the world.

INVES.

You didn't realize that the purpose of the Communist Party was to take over other segments of the world in '41, you do realize that in '51?

PARKS

This is in no way an apology for anything I've done, you see, because I feel I have done nothing wrong, ever. In '41 the purposes, as I knew them, simply fulfilled -- at least I thought they would fulfill -- a certain idealism, a certain feeling of being for the underdog, which I am today, this minute. This didn't work out . . . I attended very few meetings and petered out the same way I drifted in. I petered out in '44 or '45.

INVES.

Your Communist registration card for 1944 bore the number 46954 and for 1945 the number 47344. Does that refresh your recollection?

PARKS

No, sir, it doesn't. Because I never had a Party card.

INVES.

Now, do I infer that by '46 you had broken with the Party?

PARKS

Correct.

INVES.

Will you state where you first became a member of the Party?

PARKS

Hollywood, California.

INVES.

Who recruited you?

PARKS

A man by the name of Davidson.

INVES.

What was Davidson's first name and position?

PARKS

I don't remember. I haven't seen him for ten years.

INVES.

Where did he live?

PARKS

I have no idea.

INVES.

What was his occupation?

PARKS

I don't know.

INVES.

Can you give us some descriptive data?

PARKS

Average-looking, young, dark hair.

INVES.

Well, what were the circumstances under which you met?

PARKS

This is hard to recall.

INVES.

Was it in your home or where?

PARKS

I really don't remember. I'm being as honest as I know how!

INVES.

Did you seek this individual out, or did he seek you out?

PARKS

I certainly didn't seek him out. It's hard for me to say whether he sought me out.

INVES.

Were you assigned to a Party cell?

PARKS

I was.

INVES.

What was the name of that cell?

PARKS

Well, it had no name that I know of.

INVES.

Well now, you were a member of that group from '41 to '45?

PARKS

That's correct.

INVES.

Tell us about the organization of the Communist Party during that time.

PARKS

Well, I was a pretty bad member by their lights. I didn't attend too many meetings - maybe ten, twelve, fifteen.

INVES.

Who was the chairman of the group?

PARKS

It had no chairman that I know of.

INVES.

Well, who was the secretary?

PARKS

I don't know if there were any actual officers.

INVES.

Well, to whom did you pay your dues?

PARKS

The few times I paid dues were to different people.

INVES.

What was the total membership of this cell?

PARKS

I would say it went up to ten or twelve.

INVES.

Did Party organizers appear before your group from time to time--people from the East, let us say?

PARKS

No, I don't recall ever seeing any big shot.

INVES.

Are you acquainted with Lionel Stander?

PARKS

I've met him.

INVES.

Have you ever attended a meeting with him?

PARKS

I don't recall ever attending a meeting with Lionel Stander.

INVES.

Do you know whether he's a Party member?

PARKS

No.

INVES.

Are you acquainted with Karen Morley?

PARKS

I am.

INVES.

Is she a member of the Communist Party?

PARKS

Well, counsel, I would prefer not to mention names. I don't think it's fair to people. I've come to you at your request. I'll tell you everything I know about myself because I feel I've done nothing wrong and I'll answer any questions you'd like to put to me about myself. I would prefer not to mention names.

CHAIR.

Mr. Parks, do you take the same position with respect to the leaders of the Communist movement?

PARKS

I don't know the leaders of the Communist movement.

CHAIR.

Who directed the meetings you attended?

PARKS

The meetings consisted mainly of discussions of how the war was going, current events, problems of actors in their work. Does that answer your question?

CHAIR.

It's an answer.

PARKS

Sir?

CHAIR.

It's an answer.

PARKS

I'd like to answer your question

CHAIR.

Who directed the activities this group were engaged in?

PARKS

No one.

CHAIR.

Who would call the meetings together?

PARKS

I really don't know.

CHAIR.

Did you have a set, scheduled meeting once every week, or was it upon the call of some individual?

PARKS

I don't believe there was any set -

CHAIR.

Certainly it wasn't run by mental telepathy!

PARKS

No, I didn't say that. Certain individuals would call.

CHAIR.

Somebody had to issue a call?

PARKS

That's correct.

CHAIR.

Did you ever issue a call?

PARKS

No.

CHAIR.

Then, somebody would have to tell you when and where the meetings would take place. Is that true?

PARKS

I would get a call from a member of the group and they would say, "Let's have a meeting tonight, tomorrow night."

CHAIR.

Were the meetings always held at the same place?

PARKS

No.

CHAIR.

Were they held in halls or in homes?

PARKS

These were held at homes.

CHAIR.

Did you ever have meetings at your home?

PARKS

Never.

CHAIR.

Where were some of the meetings held?

PARKS

These were people like myself, small-type people, no different than you or I.

CHAIR.

Where were some of the meetings held?

PARKS

In various homes.

CHAIR.

Can you name some?

PARKS

Well, if you will allow this, I would prefer not to mention names. These were people - like myself - who have done nothing wrong, ever.

CHAIR.

Just a moment, do you entertain the feeling that these parties you were associated with are guiltless of any wrong?

PARKS

This is my opinion.

CHAIR.

In what way then, Mr.Parks, would it be injurious to them to divulge their identities when at no time did they do wrong?

(pause)

PARKS

If you think it's easy - I've worked hard in my profession, climbed up the ladder a bit - if you think it's easy for me to appear before this committee, you're mistaken. This is difficult. One of the reasons is that, as an actor, my activity depends on the public. To be called before this committee has a certain inference, a certain innuendo that you're not loyal to this country. This is not true. I am speaking for myself. This is not true. But the inference, the innuendo is there as far as the public is concerned. Also, as a representative of a great industry - as an actor who is fairly well known, in that respect I am a representative ...this is a great industry!! At this time it is being investigated for Communist influence --

CHAIR.

Don't you think the public is entitled to know about it?

PARKS

Sir?

CHAIR.

Don't you feel, the public is entitled to know about it?

PARKS

I certainly do, and I'm opening myself wide to any question that you can ask me. I'll answer as honestly as I know how. And at this time, as I say, the industry is--it's like taking a pot shot at a wounded animal, because the industry is not in as good a shape as it has been economically, it's been pretty tough. This is a great industry! And I don't say this only because it has been kind to me.

(MORE)

PARKS (CONT'D)

It has a very important job to do, to entertain people, in certain respects to call attention to certain evils, but mainly to entertain, and I feel they've done a great job. When our country has needed help, the industry has been in the forefront of that help!

INVES.

You are basing your reluctance to testify on the great job that the moving-picture industry is doing?

PARKS

No sir, no. On naming names, it is my opinion that the few people I could name, these names would not be of service to the Committee: I am sure you know who they are. These people are like myself, and I have done nothing wrong. I also feel that to be asked to name names like this is not American justice. We as Americans have all been brought up to believe it's a bad thing to force a man to do this.

CHAIR.

Well, I'm glad to give considerable leeway to the range of your statement, because I'm curious to understand what your reasons are for declining to answer the question.

PARKS

I'm not declining. I'm asking you if you would not press me on this.

CHAIR.

Are any of the members of your cell still active in the Communist Party?

PARKS

I can't say. I divorced myself completely. I know what I think: that ninety-nine percent of them are not.

CHAIR.

If you knew people in Hollywood that were identified with the Party then, would you be reluctant to cite their names if they were active members at, the present time?

PARKS

I would be reluctant on one score. I don't think its good for an American to be forced to do this. But I feel that the people I knew are not members of the Communist Party at the present time. If they are, they shouldn't be.

CHAIR.

If you had knowledge of a man who committed murder, you wouldn't be hesitant to give that information to the authorities?

PARKS

That is correct.

CHAIR.

I assume you share our belief that a member of the Communist Party believes in overthrowing our government by force and violence. Now, if you would give information concerning a man you know has committed murder, wouldn't you give information of a man you knew to be working to overthrow our government by force and violence?

PARKS

If I knew a man who committed murder, which is against the law of our land, I would name him immediately. The other thing - well, even now it is not against the law of our land. You understand the difference.

CHAIR.

So when we are drafting men to fight Communist aggression, you feel it is not your duty to give the Committee the benefit of what knowledge you might have?

PARKS

I think there is a difference, between people who would harm our country and people like myself, who, as I feel, did nothing wrong --

CHAIR.

You don't believe that anyone can be naive enough to be an active member of the Communist Party today and not know what he's doing?

PARKS

That's correct.

CHAIR.

For that reason I can't see your consistency in saying you won't name someone you know, today, who is an active member of the Party.

PARKS

But I don't know anyone today who is an active member of the Party.

CHAIR.

If you did know, you would tell?

PARKS

Yes, I think I would.

INVES.

Mr. Parks, your argument is that this Committee should investigate Communism but should not find out who is a Communist.

PARKS

No, this is not my argument.

INVES.

You are taking the position that it is not important to find out who may be in Communism in Hollywood --

PARKS

No.

INVES.

-- rather than for this Committee to determine what its obligations are under the statute which created it to investigate Communism?

PARKS

No, counsel, I didn't say *this*!

INVES.

But isn't it the result of your argument?

PARKS

No, counsel, what I say is that the few people I knew are as loyal to his country as you.

CHAIR.

And if every witness were permitted to take that position the extent of the investigation would be limited by the attitude of the witness, wouldn't it?

PARKS

These people were like me, and the most you can accuse them of is a lack of judgment. If you make a mistake in judgment like this, I don't believe it is serious!

CHAIR.

Yes, but if every witness would be the final judge of when a thing is serious and when it was not, how could the Committee carry out its statutory duty?

PARKS

I'm asking that -

CHAIR.

And I'm asking that you see the other side.

PARKS

I do see the other side.

INVES.

Now Mr. Parks, you have placed Hollywood on a very high pedestal here.

PARKS

Yes, I have.

INVES.

But there has been testimony here involving the scientific professions, persons in Government, persons in numerous industries, and I take it that there is no preference of any kind that should be allowed to your profession over that of the scientific professions or any other calling.

PARKS

That is true. But I have told you and, as I say, opened myself as wide as I know how. What little I knew ...I was probably the poorest member of the Communist Party that has ever existed, and the few people I know, you probably know their names. I can see no way that this would be of additional help to this committee. And, Counsel, I am sure that you realize that if this was really consequential, I would ... do it, but you must realize this position.

INVES.

Pardon me?

PARKS

I say you must realize that, as inconsequential as I was in it, the few people I knew, that this is very distasteful to me to be forced into this position.

INVES.

It is a very distasteful position to be in. You understand the purposes of this organization. If you would be frank with regard to other people who are connected with this organization, the Committee -- would be permitted to function. And, therefore, I am going to ask you who acted as secretary of this group.

PARKS

And I can honestly say I do not know.

INVES.

Do you know Elizabeth Lecch?

PARKS

I don't recall.

INVES.

Do you know Elizabeth Glenn?

PARKS

To the best of my knowledge, I do not.

INVES.

Do you know Marjorie Potts?

PARKS

I do not.

INVES.

Now, do you know Karen Morley?

PARKS

I do.

INVES.

Was Karen Morley a member of this group?

PARKS

And I ask you again, counsel, to reconsider forcing me to name names. I don't think this is American justice, to force me to do this, when I have come three thousand miles --

COMMITTEEMAN.

Mr. Chairman, may I ask counsel a question?

CHAIR.

Yes.

CMM.

By insisting that this man testify as to names, aren't we overlooking that we want to know what the organization did, how it attempted to influence the thinking of the American people through the arts?

PARKS

May I answer your question?

CMM.

No.

INVES.

Some of these individuals have evaded service of process, so we cannot bring them here. That is one point. Another is that this Committee ought to receive proof of information which it has in its files.

CMM.

But isn't it more important to learn the purpose of the organization, than to get a list of names of bleeding hearts and fools and suckers?

INVES.

As to organizations, that was the subject of much testimony.

CMM.

Mr. Parks, were you instructed to influence the thinking of the American people through stage or screen?

PARKS

I was never instructed to do this, this was not done.

CMM.

Was it the purpose of the Communist organization to set up a hard core in Hollywood that would slant pictures and performances?

PARKS

First of all, it's impossible to do this as an actor.

CHAIR.

Wouldn't the writer be in a position to very decidedly slant--

PARKS

A script passes through too many hands. It is my opinion that this is an impossibility.

CHAIR.

And didn't happen?

PARKS

I don't believe that this ever happened.

CHAIR.

You're leaving an impression there was nothing off-color about your group. How then could it reflect against this group for the names to be known - any more than if they belonged to the YMCA?

PARKS

I myself I am a good example. It is doubtful whether, after appearing before this Committee, my career will continue. It is extremely doubtful.

CMM.

Mr. Parks, have you any knowledge of the efforts of the movie industry to clean out subversive influence?

PARKS

This is common knowledge.

CMM.

Is it your knowledge?

PARKS

Mine, yours, everybody's.

CMM.

Mr. Parks, A few minutes ago, you said your duty was to sign a batch of checks. To whom were those checks written?

PARKS

Well, these were to pay the office help, the clean-up man, the electric company . . .

CMM.

Was this cell limited to the actors' profession?

PARKS

I believe it was.

CMM.

Did you have refreshments?

PARKS

Yes, Coffee. Coffee and doughnuts.

CMM.

How much were the dues?

PARKS

Well, I don't think of myself as a stingy man, but I am a close man with a dollar and I couldn't have contributed more than sixty dollars.

CHAIR.

You were connected with this cell from '41 to '45, yet you only paid a total of sixty dollars.

PARKS

Well, the dues, when you weren't working, were about seventy-five cents a month, if you were working you paid some percentage. I didn't.

CMM.

Didn't that cell make efforts to increase its own membership?

PARKS

I never made such an effort.

CMM.

You notice, Parks, at this time I'm avoiding asking you names?

PARKS

Yes.

CMM.

I am assuming you want to be helpful to the committee.

PARKS

That's correct.

CMM.

Tell us what activities the cell participated in to increase its membership.

PARKS

Well, I think certain members of the group approached people about becoming a member of the Communist Party.

CMM.

Was any difference in philosophy between Communism and our form of government ever discussed in the cell?

(Silence)

What did you discuss, besides drinking coffee?

PARKS

We didn't discuss drinking coffee. The war was going on and this was the major topic. The discussions also had to do with actors, how we could get more money ...

CHAIR.

Was it discussed among you that you could get more money as a member of the Communist Party than as a plain Democrat or Republican? Why did you join? What was membership in this cell going to do for you in Hollywood?

PARKS

As a man of twenty-five, with ideals and a feeling for the underdog, I felt this was the most liberal of the parties ... I was a registered Democrat. From that time and before, I've voted the straight Democratic ticket. This was the practical thing to do. The other was an idealistic thing.

CMM.

How many years were you in that cell before you began to be disillusioned?

PARKS

Well, "disillusioned" is not the word I would choose.

CHAIR.

Do I understand, sir, that you are not yet disillusioned?

PARKS

No, no. Don't bend it! It was a question of lack of interest, of not finding, the things that I thought I would find.

CMM.

Did it come clearly to you that the Communist Party was part of an international conspiracy against our form of government?

PARKS

No.

CMM.

Did you come to the conclusion that the Communist program was aimed at world domination?

PARKS

Not at that time.

CMM.

When did you come to that conclusion, if at all?

PARKS

With recent events in history.

CHAIR.

Were there members of the Communist Party who spoke to your group?

PARKS

There was one instance.

CHAIR.

Can you give his name?

PARKS

Again I wish you would not press me.

INVE.

Mr. Parks, you are no doubt acquainted with Sam G. Wood, producer and director?

(Parks nods)

Sam G. Wood testified, "The Laboratory Theater is under the control of the Communist Party. Any kid that goes in there with American ideals hasn't a chance in the world." Do you agree?

PARKS

I disagree.

CHAIR.

Do you agree that Mr. Wood is a man of honor?

PARKS

Yes, but I don't agree with that.

INVE.

But, in light of that testimony, do you still feel you should be the judge?

MANDEL.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Parks would like to talk about naming names.

CHAIR.

Counsel has a few more questions. Maybe they will bring out what he wants to say.

MANDEL.

What he has to say is very pertinent at this point. I don't think we can judge it till he says it. It will take him three minutes.

CHAIR.

Make it as brief as you can Mr. Parks.

PARKS

I will.

(Pause)

Mr. Chairman, to be a good actor, you must experience from the top of your head to the tip of your toes what you are doing. As I told you, this is probably the most difficult morning and afternoon I have ever spent, and I wish that, if it were at all possible... You see, it's a little different to sit there and to sit here and if you could put yourself in my place . . . My people have a long heritage in this country. They fought in the Revolutionary War to make this country, to create the government of which this Committee is a part I have two boys, one thirteen months, one two weeks. Is this the kind of heritage I must hand down to them? Is this the kind of heritage you would like to hand down to your children? For what purpose? I don't think I would be here today if I weren't a star, because you know as well as I, even better, that I know nothing that would be of great service to this country. I think my career has been ruined because of this, and I would appreciate not having to -- Don't present me with the choice of either being in contempt of this Committee and going to jail or being forced to crawl through the mud and be an informer! For what purpose? I don't think this is a choice. I don't think this is American justice for an innocent mistake in judgment, if it was that, with the intention of making this country a better place to live ... This is probably the most difficult thing I have ever done, and it seems to me it would impair the usefulness of this committee ... God knows it is difficult enough to come before this Committee ... If you do this to me, it will make it almost impossible for a person to come to you and tell the truth. I beg you not to force me to do this!

INVES.

Mr. Parks, there was a statement you made earlier which interested me. You said, "This a great industry. It has a job to do: to call attention to certain evils but mainly to entertain." Now do you believe that persons who "call attention to certain evils" ought to be dedicated to the principles of democracy?

PARKS

I certainly agree!

INVES.

Mr. Parks, you have said you were subpoenaed because you were a star. You were subpoenaed because you had knowledge about Communist activities.

PARKS

My point was that, if I were working in a drugstore, I doubt whether I would be here.

INVES.

We have had many people before this committee who have been engaged in very menial forms of making a livelihood.

PARKS

Please don't take that in the wrong spirit.

INVES.

I didn't understand your reference to the possible destruction of your career. You didn't mean to infer that this Committee was bringing you here because of any effect it might have on your career?

PARKS

No. What I said was that, because of this, I have no career left.

INVES.

Don't you think that question might be influenced by the fullness of the cooperation you give the Committee?

PARKS

I have tried to cooperate. I think the damage has been done.

CHAIR.

Don't you think the damage occurred when you became a member of an organization which advocates the overthrow of every constitutional form of government in the world? Is this Committee more to blame than your own act in affiliating with that organization? This Committee is an expression of the will of the American people.

PARKS

As I told you, Mr. Chairman, when I was younger, I felt a certain way about things. I felt strongly, and I still do, about the underdog, and it was for these reasons that ... this organization appealed to me. I later found it would not fulfill my needs. At that time, I don't even believe this was a mistake in judgment. But my two boys, I would rather have them make the same mistake I did then not feel like making any mistake at all and be a cow in the pasture!

CHAIR.

Mr. Parks, upon what do you base the opinion that the people whose names you have in your possession have probably severed their relations with the Communist Party?

PARKS

The few people I knew are people like myself and feel the way I do.

CHAIR.

Have you discussed Party affiliations with those with whom you were affiliated in the Party?

PARKS

I have not. This is my honest opinion. And you know these people as well as I do. You know who these people are. I don't think this is American justice, to make me choose whether to be in contempt of this Committee or crawl through the mud for no purpose.

CHAIR.

That is problematic, Mr. Parks. I "know who they are." Maybe, maybe you are right. But I still think it's within the province of this Committee to determine how far they will go.

PARKS

I have told you of my activities to the best of my ability.

CHAIR.

We will make a break in the testimony. After we resume, the witness will be advised what the disposition of this Committee is with reference to his apparent disinclination to answer questions.

(GAVEL)

AC 1.

The audience present during the morning and afternoon sessions is now absent. Present are only the Committee, the Investigator, Parks, and Parks' attorney.

CHAIR.

Mr. Parks, we are going to seek your cooperation in a closed session for testimony that will not be publicized until such time, if at all, as the Committee itself may deem expedient. Counsel will now propound additional questions.

MANDEL.

Is it the intention of the Committee, unless he answers these questions in private, to cite him for contempt?

CHAIR.

The Committee makes no threats.

MANDEL.

Just to clear his thinking, so he is fully informed of the consequences...

CHAIR.

If Mr. Parks placed himself in the position of being in contempt of Congress, it is possible that the Committee may request a citation. On the other hand, it may not. Does that answer your question?

MANDEL.

I would like to spend another minute on it. In view of Mr. Parks' cooperative attitude - and everyone here understands what is motivating him - he feels so bad about what he has to do, and if he thought there were any chance you would elicit information that was important, he would give it to you. It is only saving that little bit of something that you live with. You have to see and walk in Hollywood with that. You have to meet your children and your wife with it, your friends. It is that little bit that you want to save. Although I don't ask the Committee to commit itself, in fairness to Mr. Parks . . . he may have to sacrifice the arm with gangrene in order to save the body! He will walk around the rest of his life without an arm! I realize the purposes of this Committee, and our attitude has been one of cooperation: we want to go right through with that. Now, if this is the penalty he will have to pay, I have to urge him a different way His opinion is that what he is going to give you will only eat up his insides and you will get nothing.

CHAIR.

Mr. Attorney, the Committee is not responsible for the position he finds himself in, we are responsible for the position we find ourselves in. Proceed.

(Short pause)

INVE.

Mr. Parks, who were the members of the cell of the Communist Party to which you were assigned?

(Pause)

PARKS

This is what I've been talking about. This is the thing. I am no longer fighting for myself I tell you frankly, I am probably the most completely ruined man you have ever seen. I am fighting for a principle, I think, if Americanism is involved in this case

INVE.

Mr. Chairman, if the witness refuses to answer the question, I see very little use in my asking him about other individuals.