

Oscar-winning writer Ring Lardner Jr. to speak at UCSD

April 25, 1988

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OSCAR-WINNING WRITER RING LARDNER JR., ONE OF THE BLACKLISTED "HOLLYWOOD TEN," WILL SPEAK AT UCSD ON MAY 4

Two-time Academy Award winning screenwriter Ring Lardner Jr. is one of the most famous victims of the House Committee on Un-American Activities' Hollywood witchhunt of the late 1940s and early 1950s. He will appear at UCSD on Wednesday, May 4, at 8:00 p.m. in the Mandeville Auditorium.

Out of these hearings conducted by Chairman J. Parnell Thomas, came an "unofficial" Hollywood blacklist that destroyed the careers of many actors, writers and directors. Dashiell Hammett, Lillian Hellman, Dalton Trumbo, and Ring Lardner Jr. were among those who refused to testify. By the mid-1960s when the blacklist finally came to an end, the lives of more than 300 people (many of them innocent victims of "friendly" HUAC witnesses) had been destroyed in spite of the fact that neither membership in nor affiliation with the communist party has ever been illegal.

Lardner (son of the famous American short story writer) was cited for contempt of Congress and sentenced to a year in prison. With an ironic twist worthy of Lardner Jr. himself, he arrived at the federal prison in Danbury, Connecticut, to find that his nemesis J. Parnell Thomas (convicted for padding his payroll and receiving kickbacks) was already an inmate.

During the life of the blacklist, Lardner and several other screenwriters managed to make a precarious living by writing under pseudonyms or through "fronts." It wasn't until the early 1960s that he was finally able to call through a studio switchboard and use his real name. In 1970, Lardner won an Academy Award and a Golden Palm Award for his script for the film M*A*S*H.

Today, Ring Lardner Jr. remains an eloquent witness to one of the darkest chapters in domestic American history.

Tickets are \$8 for general admission, \$7 for senior citizens, \$4 for students, and are available at the UCSD Box Office and all TicketMaster outlets. An Evening with Ring Lardner Jr. is presented by the University Events and Student Activities Office.

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