GUilty by Suspicion
1990 Robert De Niro, Annette Bening  105Min.  PG-13
This film provides an opportunity to consider the constitutional and ethical issues surrounding the Red Scare of the 1950s. Because the film assumes an extensive knowledge of the early years of the Cold War, a careful examination of this period is necessary before viewing.


Director’s Credit.
5:00
David Merrill returns from Europe and witnesses the burning of blacklisted books.

11:00
Daryl Zanuck refers Merrill to a lawyer in order to clear his name.

16:00
Merrill meets with the lawyer but refuses to testify before the committee.

25:00
Merrill is blacklisted.

30:00
Blacklisted director gives reasons why he is leaving the country.

45:00
Merrill looks for work in New York; followed by the FBI.

1:08:00
Merrill is fired from directing job after being labeled a communist

1:12:00
Merrill meets with his lawyer to discuss his options.

1:24:00

The Seminar Sequence for this movie allows students to consider Freedom of Speech within the context national security. The research topics will provide a background to facilitate this discussion.

Seminar Questioning Sequence:

What would be examples of un-American activities? What would be examples of seditious activities?

When does the right to Freedom of Speech end and un-American and seditious behavior begin?

Why have two “red scares” occurred following world wars. Should sedition during war-time be treated differently from sedition during peace-time?

House Committee on Un-American Activities
Sedition
Communism
Capitalism/Free Enterprise
Alien and Sedition Act
Ex Parte Miligan
Schenk v. United States
Internal Security Act
Merrill testifies before the HUAC Hearing.