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**\*\* Media Advisory \*\***

## **CAPITAL JEWISH MUSEUM ANNOUNCES UPCOMING EXHIBITION BLACKLISTED: AN AMERICAN STORY**

**Washington, DC: October 27, 2025** – The Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum is pleased to announce the upcoming special exhibition, *Blacklisted: An American Story*, on view from Friday, March 6 through Sunday, September 7, 2026.

*Blacklisted: An American Story* explores the intersections of politics, antisemitism, freedom of speech, and national security during the Red Scare of the 1940s and 50s. Based on the exhibition created by the Milwaukee Jewish Museum, the Capital Jewish Museum expands on the original presentation about the Hollywood Blacklist to include a look at the Red Scare’s impact on federal employees in the nation’s capital. Through powerful personal stories, rare artifacts, and film clips, the exhibition reveals how fear, politics, and identity collided—and what was lost when dissent was silenced

During the Cold War, with the rise of global communism, anxiety over Soviet infiltration fanned fears in the United States. Numerous industries, including Hollywood and the federal government, purged those suspected of being communists—and “Jewish” often served as a stand-in for “communist.”

In 1947, the House Committee on Un-American Activities called Hollywood figures to Washington, DC, to testify about communist propaganda in American films. Ten of the writers—six Jewish—were held in contempt of Congress, fined, and sentenced to prison. Hollywood executives—many of whom were Jewish—responded by creating a blacklist of the “Hollywood Ten” and others implicated in the proceedings. With that, the film industry became the first mass-employer to block suspected communist sympathizers from jobs.

Back in DC, all three branches of government—executive, legislative, and judicial—sacrificed First Amendment rights in the name of security. Freedoms of speech, association, and assembly — all protected by the US Constitution—came under fire. Loyalty oaths and purges of federal employees chilled dissent. Hundreds of people lost their jobs, thousands resigned under duress, and many more stood by quietly, afraid of repercussions for their real or imagined political participation.

### **KEY THEMES AND HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EXHIBITION:**

- The rise of the Hollywood Ten and the entertainment industry’s role in shaping public opinion.

- The federal employee loyalty program, which scrutinized and dismissed thousands of civil servants.
- Jewish Americans' experiences navigating accusation and identity during a time of fear and antisemitism.
- The courage of individuals who resisted conformity—from screenwriters and teachers to government clerks and lawyers.
- Archival materials, film clips, and oral histories that connect past debates about loyalty and dissent to those we face today.

*Blacklisted: An American Story* is a traveling exhibit created by the Jewish Museum Milwaukee and coordinated for the Capital Jewish Museum's presentation by Lauren Hoffman, Exhibition Coordination, with contributions from Sarah Leavitt, PhD, Director of Curatorial Affairs.

Museum hours are 10am-5pm, Wednesday through Sunday. Admission to *Blacklisted: An American Story* will require a fee (TBD) for adults and be free for ages 12 & under. Ongoing exhibitions are free with a suggested donation.

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The Lillian and Albert Small Capital Jewish Museum opened to the public in June 2023. The new Museum explores the Jewish experience in the national capital region and inspires visitors to connect personally and collectively, reflect on the relevance of the past to today, and act on behalf of their communities and values. With its experimental spirit, the Museum connects the past to the present through thought-provoking exhibitions, dynamic programming, and creative public experiences.

For more information about the Capital Jewish Museum, please visit: <https://capitaljewishmuseum.org>.

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**For additional information, please contact:**

Maura Scanlon, Communications Specialist  
mscanlon@capitaljewishmuseum.org | (o) 202-735-3522