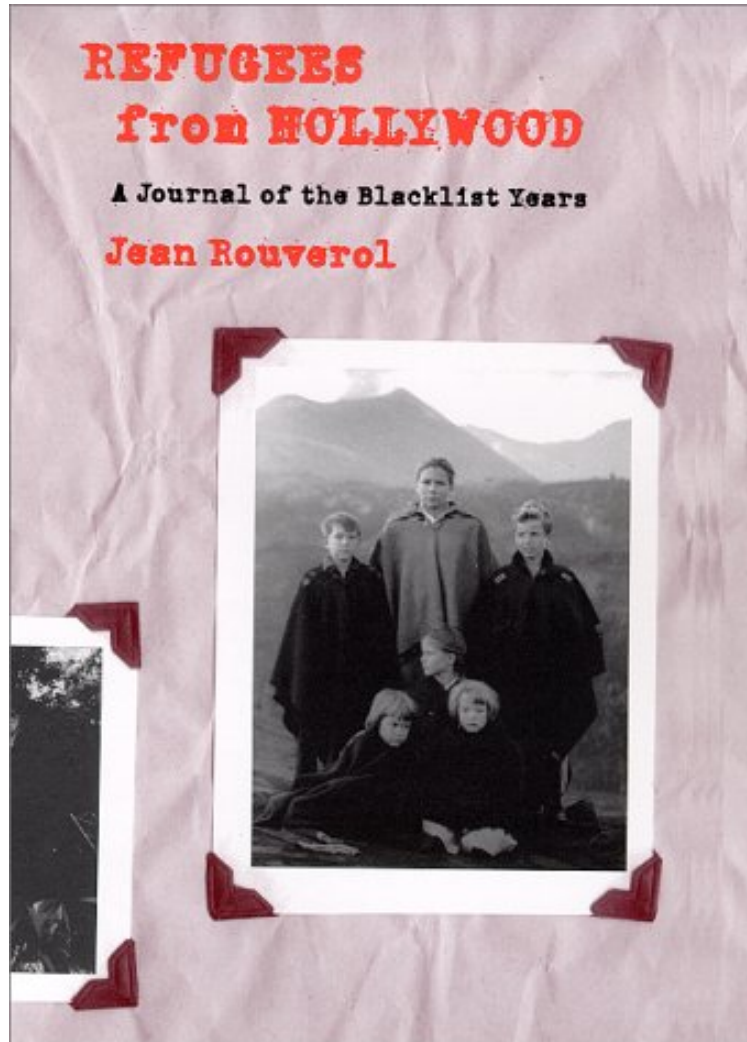


## Refugees from Hollywood: A Journal of the Blacklist Years

*Jean Rouverol*

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#1445005 in Books University of New Mexico Press 2000-10Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 1.09 x 6.55 x 9.111, #File Name: 0826322662278 pages | File size: 15.Mb

**Jean Rouverol : Refugees from Hollywood: A Journal of the Blacklist Years** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Refugees from Hollywood: A Journal of the Blacklist Years:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Just right.By drpspA wonderful book among a shelf full of similar tales of American lives in Mexico in the 1950s. My family lived outside Mexico City, in the mountains, in 1951-53 in a place that no longer exists. We were refugees from some kind of demon of my father's that was not Senator McC. and his committee, but our routines were not dissimilar. I was looking for references to classmates at The American School Foundation and am happy to have found a few here. But much more: Rouverol's daytime shows written for media back in the States must have been very good if her writing here is a sign. The book is well-ordered, lucid, amusing, detailed where one wants detail and not where not, an excellent beginning and a suitable ending wrapped

around them. The book should be allowed to stay in print for being both interesting and part of the historical record.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Thoughtful bio of Black List experienceBy Joy HartThis is a wonderful first-hand account of the Butler family's experience during the Black List period. Jean is an excellent writer and brings so much personal insight into the story and follows up on what happened to various of those she write about at the end of the book. Recommend it as both a good read and thought provoking journal of what has happened and what can happen again.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Jean Rouverol critiqued my writing.By Michael Thomas AngeloI was a senior at the University of Southern California in 1996. Having majored in Print Journalism with an emphasis on Cinema-TV, I was free to fill up my schedule with whatever I thought sounded interesting. When I saw Soap Opera Writing was open to less than 12 students, I was one of the first to register much to my mother's chagrin. "Is that what I'm paying for?" she repeated. The class sat around a table with the instructor at the head. I had no idea who Jean Rouverol was except for the older lady that seemed pleasant enough. At the time, I hadn't yet seen what became some of my favorite examples of classical Hollywood cinema, i.e. Stage Door and Autumn Leaves. In the former, Jean plays one of the chorines in the boarding house but goes largely unnoticed next to the stage presence of Ginger Rogers and Katherine Hepburn chewing up the scenery. She actually co-wrote Joan Crawford's Autumn Leaves but left her name off the credits because she and her husband Hugo had been blacklisted by the House of Un-American Activities Committee or HUAC, a product of McCarthyism. I was barely 22 and although I thought myself more mature than my peers, when I realize how clueless I was back then to have missed the opportunity to appreciate being in her class, I shudder. Jean assigned us to write several scenes and as a Journalism major, I was not in the habit of writing for film or television. She critiqued my scene as "much too expository". I spelled everything out without any hint of nuance, I laugh when I think how totally out-of-place I was in that class and admit I took it for the glamour factor of writing for soap operas. Jean took us on a field trip to the set of General Hospital which was a self-contained industry in its own building. Each floor devoted its own purpose to developing the show. The writers sat around conference tables behind closed doors on the 5th floor. Rouverol explained that storylines typically take six weeks to run themselves out but the writers must have a dozen or more subplots at the ready to veer off of. The story department was intense due to the need to remember the vast arcs from the show's history and how each character related to whom. The actual set was mini-stage on wheels that opened according to whatever scene was needed. A living room could be scrunched together while a cafe was being used on the other side as it all revolved around. I saw Tony Geary, the oldest original character as Luke Spencer frolicking on set. The show sent limousines to pick the cast up for work every morning. I was star struck and honored to be shepherded by Jean Rouverol, who knew everyone in the building by name. I understood that she had been one of the first writers of the soap medium with Guiding Light but had yet to realize the grasp of her influence.

It is the early spring of 1951 in Hollywood. Jean Rouverol and her husband, Hugo Butler, are juggling the demands of raising four young children and furthering their careers as screenwriters. They are at work on a 'little domestic comedy' for Columbia Studios to star Bob Cummings and Barbara Hale, a forgettable piece intended to offer a bit of escapist romance and humour to a country in the grip of the Cold War and the Korean Conflict. But thanks to their well-known 1940s leftist affiliations, Rouverol and Butler cannot fly under the radar of those larger events. To avoid prison sentences like those imposed in 1950 on their friends among the Hollywood Ten, they flee to Mexico rather than accept a subpoena from the House of Representatives Un-American Affairs Committee. After taking refuge in Mexico City, Rouverol slowly re-creates new routines of family and professional life while her husband re-establishes himself as a screenwriter and director, most notably in collaboration on films with Luis Bunuel (in exile from Franco's Spain). Rouverol offers a compelling and candid eyewitness account that takes us into her life and thoughts during her dozen years of exile: simultaneously coping with the needs of four -- then five, then six -- growing and inquisitive children and keeping a watchful eye out for signs that the political winds in Mexico might shift against them as they did for a few others deported on often arbitrary charges.

"Rouverol's clean prose and unsparing eye will draw readers into recollections of her family's life on the run and the work they scared up to support their nearly decade-long stint underground. Poignant and unapologetic, Rouverol's memoir juxtaposes the support they found south of the border with the unrelenting weight of living as fugitives."About the AuthorJean Rouverol