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**Contact:** UM Professor Clemens Work, 406-243-2160, [HYPERLINK "mailto:clem.work@umontana.edu" clem.work@umontana.edu](#); Gita Saedi Kiely, director, 406-243-2237, [HYPERLINK "mailto:gita@saedi.com" gita@saedi.com](#).

## **‘JAILED FOR THEIR WORDS’ DEBUTS ON MONTANA PBS**

### **MISSOULA—**

“Jailed for Their Words,” the much-anticipated documentary film about Montana’s World War I sedition convictions of war critics, makes its television premiere at 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 23, on Montana PBS.

The powerful, hour-long film, produced by West of Kin Productions and The University of Montana School of Journalism, also will air on Montana PBS at 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 25; 10 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 26; and noon Thursday, Oct. 30.

Directed by filmmaker Gita Saedi Kiely and narrated by actor J.K. Simmons, the documentary traces the dramatic story of Montana’s draconian World War I sedition law, the harshest of its kind in the nation and the model for a U.S. law passed shortly after.

Through interviews with free speech experts, historians and descendants of the prisoners, the film shows how war hysteria and super-patriotism led to broken lives. Creative re-enactments help show the human drama, while contemporary footage covers the dramatic ceremony in May 2006, when Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer pardoned 78 sedition convicts.

Subtitled “When Free Speech Died in Wartime America,” the film is framed in the context of our First Amendment guarantees. It is a cautionary tale that demonstrates what

can happen when Americans give up their liberties in return for the promise of greater security.

University of Montana journalism Professor Clemens Work was a co-producer of the film, which is based in part on his 2005 book, “Darkest Before Dawn: Sedition and Free Speech in the American West.”

Saedi Kiely is an award-winning producer, director and editor with more than 15 years’ experience in documentary film. She was the series producer and story editor for Kartemquin Films’ nationally acclaimed PBS series “The New Americans” – a three-part, seven-hour series following five immigrant families’ journey to and their first year in the United States.

“Jailed for Their Words” was funded with a donation from Grant and Debbie Schermer and by additional financial support from the UM School of Journalism and Friends of Montana PBS.

The film was edited by Saedi Kiely and by Greg Snider, an award-winning documentary and commercial filmmaker and editor who lives in Portland, Ore.

UM Department of Music Professor Nancy Cooper was music supervisor for the film. Cooper selected and recorded American popular music from the early 20th century.

For more information, go online to HYPERLINK "<http://seditionproject.net/jailed.html>" <http://seditionproject.net/jailed.html>. Information also is available by e-mailing Work at HYPERLINK "<mailto:clem.work@umontana.edu>" [clem.work@umontana.edu](mailto:clem.work@umontana.edu) or

Saedi Kiely at HYPERLINK "mailto:gita@saedi.com" [gita@saedi.com](mailto:gita@saedi.com).

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