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ACLU-IA Hosts Exclusive Iowa Film Premiere of Latest Robert Greenwald Documentary

by R. Ben Stone, ACLU-IA Executive Director
9/3/2004

Unconstitutional Examines Civil Liberties Violations Since 9/11

Des Moines--The American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa will host the Iowa premiere of *Unconstitutional*, the latest groundbreaking documentary produced by acclaimed filmmaker Robert Greenwald, at the Vaudeville Mews, 212 4th ST in Des Moines on Tuesday, September 14 at 7:00 pm. (Another screening is set for the same time the next evening, Wednesday, September 15.) The premier is also a benefit for the American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa.

"*Unconstitutional* is a chilling exposé of the ways in which the 'war on terror' has been used to infringe upon and roll back basic civil liberties and constitutional rights since 9/11," said Ben Stone, Executive Director of the ACLU-IA. "The ACLU is excited to team up with Robert Greenwald to bring *Unconstitutional* to Iowa"

Unconstitutional explores how the Patriot Act, which was passed just 45 days after September 11 with virtually no debate, has taken away checks on law enforcement and endangers the civil liberties of all Americans. This expansion of government powers has also resulted in a significant grassroots groundswell from across the political spectrum. Resolutions opposing the Patriot Act have passed in 350 communities in 41 states, including four statewide resolutions. The Des Moines City Council passed such a resolution in July. These communities represent over 53.5 million people who believe that the Patriot Act goes too far.

Unconstitutional will be the third Greenwald film screened at the Vaudeville Mews in the past month. Between Aug. 27 and September 4, the films *Uncovered* and *Outfoxed* were shown to packed audiences. The ACLU and ACLU-IA have only sponsored or endorsed *Unconstitutional*.

By focusing on the personal stories of real people, Greenwald aims to reveal how paranoia, fear and racial profiling have led to gross infringements on freedom and

democracy without strengthening national security. In addition to interviews with ACLU Executive Director Anthony Romero and ACLU Legislative Director Laura Murphy, *Unconstitutional* features a diverse cross-section of people, including:

- Vincent Cannistraro, former director of the CIA's counter-terrorism operations
- Sam Hamoui, whose parents and sister were detained under Attorney General John Ashcroft's "Absconder Apprehension Initiative"
- Anne Turner, Librarian, Santa Cruz Public Library
- Bob Barr, former Republican Congressman from Georgia
- Major Michael Mori, U.S. military lawyer appointed to Guantanamo detainee David Hicks

In creating *Unconstitutional*, Greenwald teamed up with filmmaker and investigative journalist Nonny de la Peña, who wrote and directed the documentary. De la Peña's first film, *Death on the Job*, was nominated for an Academy Award.

Greenwald has brought more than 45 films to audiences worldwide. In the last three years alone, Greenwald has produced and/or directed more than 30 hours of television movies and miniseries, a feature film and a feature documentary. The films have won numerous awards including 25 Emmy nominations, two Golden Globe nominations and a Peabody Award.

A question and answer session with Ben Stone of the ACLU-IA will follow the film premiere.

Admission to the film on both Tuesday and Wednesday is \$5.00; one hundred percent of which goes to the ACLU-IA Foundation.

The world premiere of *Unconstitutional* will be at University of Texas at Austin on September 13 and will feature a panel discussion with Greenwald, Romero and Hamoui.

To view a trailer of the film, go to
http://http.dvlabs.com/carolina/UnConst/UnConstTeaser_Av2.wmv

To learn more about the Patriot Act and the erosion of civil liberties, go to
<http://www.aclu.org/safeandfree/>