

Mssrs. Mark Lane and Mort Sahl

Dear Mark,

On Tuesday, November 14, 1967, in a broadcast over WNBC-AM radio New York, Mort Sahl said with reference to my book Accessories After The Fact:

"...first they printed Mark Lane's testimonial on the back of the jacket, and then they changed the text of the book. And he has written a letter of protest to them..."

On Wednesday, November 15, 1967, Mr. Sahl, in a further broadcast over the same facilities, addressed himself to Mr. Robert Ockene of The Bobbs-Merrill Company, as follows:

"...I want you to know that I talked to Mark Lane before I made that statement, and when he comes into town we'll both call you..."

More than seven weeks has now elapsed but Bob Ockene informs me that he has received no letter from you nor any telephone call from you and/or Mr. Sahl. Meanwhile, I have learned from sources of the highest reliability that you have stated your intention of requesting my publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, to remove your name and your quoted remarks about Accessories After The Fact from the jacket of the book on the next printing.

I have been informed, in response to my request
~~You will understand, of course,~~ that Bobbs-Merrill ~~cannot~~ *will not* take any action to alter the contents of the jacket without your express directive. As the situation now stands, you have made a very serious charge against me and my publishers--a charge that you were "tricked" into providing a jacket quotation which you would have refused to give if you had known that several paragraphs of the epilogue of the book ~~had been~~ *were to be* revised. However, you have failed to pursue the charge by communicating, in written or verbal form, as ~~was~~ you publicly committed yourself to do through Mort Sahl, with my publishers. While you have neither retracted your

accusation nor taken the consequent and promised steps to have your name deleted from the book jacket, the listening public has been left under the impression that the publishers and/or author of Accessories After The Fact engaged in deliberate deception and trickery in order to obtain a commendation for the book. Although my publishers sought to reach Mort ~~Sahl~~ Sahl before his broadcast of November 15, 1967, by telephone and telegram, he refused to inform the NBC-AM radio audience of the facts which the accused parties sought to bring to his attention, in the wake of a wholly unfounded and damaging public accusation of bad faith. This was a malicious and unfair act which constitutes an abuse of the public airwaves and verges upon slander.

I would have thought that mere self-respect, and an elementary sense of fair play, would by now have compelled you and Mr. Sahl either to press or to withdraw publicly the serious and damaging charges publicly broadcast by Mr. Sahl, upon what he described as your express authorization, while arbitrarily denying the parties concerned access to the audience.

May I now request that you either withdraw the charges in question, or that you make good your intention to communicate with my publishers to obtain the deletion of your name from the jacket of my book. If you do not reply to this letter on or before January 31, 1968, I will take it as proven that by default you and Mr. Sahl acknowledge your broadcast defamatory remarks to be unfounded and indefensible. I will take immediate steps, in that case, on February 1, 1968, to place this matter in the hands of my attorneys, and to send copies of this letter to the National Broadcasting Company, the Federal Communications Commission, and such other authorities as may have jurisdiction in this matter or who may enable me to obtain public redress by making the facts accessible to the radio audience.

I have already had some experience with your hit-and-run technique in respect of your letter of July 1967 regarding The National Guardian, which was also wholly unfounded and laughable as well. In the present instance, you have made Mr. Sahl the spokesman for charges which you have not as yet ~~had the temerity~~ ^{had the temerity} to make personally. (Of course, Mr. Sahl may have misrepresented your position, but in that event it was incumbent upon you to issue a correction, through the same facilities. This you have not done.) I will therefore have to utilize all legal and other avenues of redress with respect to your unfair, malicious, and defamatory charges.