

August 8, 1967

Mr. James A. Hudgens
Vice President, WTOP
Broadcast House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Hudgens,

In both his writing and his speaking, Charles Roberts refers to me when he speaks generally, as he did on your station. In addition, he made specific references to me that was deliberately inaccurate, as I have already shown you. There were two interviews on successive days, not the one you allude to, representing Mr. Eddie Gelliker a personal interest in presenting that side of the case alone and emphasizing his endorsement of Roberts and his beliefs.

Whether or not, those who have written critically of the report and other work of the President's Commission on the assassination did so honestly certainly is controversial, at least from the point of view and the only point of view WTOP presented. However, you presented but that single point of view and you are denying me the opportunity to present the other. Because I am the only local person among those mentioned I think it is additionally appropriate that I be the one provided with the opportunity of answering Roberts' falsehoods and defamations. I think there is little doubt this does entitle me to an opportunity to reply under the FCC's fairness doctrine. I would have preferred that it be under WTOP's own concept of fairness, for there may be little doubt in your mind that what you said is both wrong and not accidentally so.

Aside from this, I dispute your inference that if the wrongful reference is but a single one, with my name correctly given, that is neither unfair nor damaging. Perhaps my recollection is incorrect, but I think there were two specific references to me. If I had a transcript of these shows - and here I emphasize that they were entire shows - I could point this out with accuracy. If it is no burden to you, I would appreciate transcripts. May I also point out to you that my immediate and detailed letter went unanswered, even after we discussed the matter at that time?

Although I do not think it essential to invocation of the fairness doctrine, I do point out that by your course of conduct you have made the station a partisan in this matter? Gelliker's endorsement of Roberts was, I believe, inherent in the shows and his attitude and words. Your own repeated refusal to provide me an opportunity to respond to established factual error and misrepresentation is similar in character and is appropriate only in what is labelled editorial matter.

You also seek to divorce the support of Roberts and his book and contents from your presentation and endorsement of it, which I think is wrong and also not consistent with the fairness doctrine. The import of these shows was to tell the viewer to run out and buy the book that proves how wrong all these terrible people who say the government did less than it should and could really are, how they lie and distort, and above all not to buy the other books. Gelliker reflected his own attitude by his silence when I delivered a copy of my first book to him May 9, 1966.

I'd prefer that you reconsider your decision. Otherwise, I will not drop the matter here. And I deeply regret that WTOP has not been independent of the partisanship of its owner, the Washington Post on this subject.

Sincerely, Harold Weisberg