

November 11, 1971

Dear Ned:

There is little point in continuing this correspondence which can only waste time for both of us. As of your letter of November 9, although it repeats concern for your integrity, you have yet to show any awareness that I might have a concern for mine. This was true of all of our lengthy discussion.

As I made explicit to you, my purpose in length in writing you was so that you would do some thinking. You say this interests you little, so I wasted my time, not for the first time and I fear not for the last.

Your intent includes changing the doctrine of my work, and that I find intolerable. In the face of your omission of such things as your insistence upon conducting your own interviews and by not addressing the God knows how long a delay in the appearance of this work in any form, I really don't think your letter of the 9th is of serious intent, and I leave to whoever so desires the ascribing of motive.

Among other things that make this very clear is seeming to seriously propose that Howard do any of this work when he is a full-time college student who must maintain a high average to keep his scholarship. The only problems that arose arose because you unilaterally changed that to which I had agreed. Everything I have ever written commercially has always been edited without any problems. There was no problem on editing between Outherdridge & Dienstfrey and me on FRAME-UP, not one, no argument.

I recognize this may mean that the work may never appear in any form, but as I told you, I long ago realized that I may be restricted to the role of the man who makes the record, and if that is it, I will live with it. But there is nothing I can be persuaded to do for any reason, including money, if I consider it in any aspect wrong, and this is what you are demanding. There are other things in your letter that are really irrelevant and except for two I will ignore them. I use those two as examples.

One is the irrelevancy of the unassembled hi-fi set. This is obviously true. Why else consider making changes in the book? Why else ~~think~~ would I have been interested in what you originally proposed? How can it be otherwise when part of it was completed in the summer of 1967, more than four years ago?

I might take offense at your crack, "I know of no man, even presidents of corporations, who claim to have as little time as you..." This is probably correct and it has two causes. One is the magnitude of the task I have undertaken, something entirely lost upon you even if you measure it from what you have of my work, which is but a fraction of it, and part is because I do take time to write long letters of two characters: one to those for whom I have some regard and designed to make them think; two, as aimed at our opposition, designed to make a record. Corporation presidents have others to do their work. I have to do all of mine except that which Lil does, and this ranges from filing to wrapping and mailing packages to research and investigation to the writing, and to the preparation and filing of lawsuits. If all of the letters of the kind to which you allude were totaled, the percentage

of my total time that they have taken is minuscule.

Unfortunately, and the record is tragically clear on this, of that small percentage, a rather large percentage is required by the ignorance and stupidity of others and the hazard they present to what so many of us have worked so hard for.

I recognize that in your alternative No. 1, you have met one of my major objections, and I tell you frankly at the time you made your original proposal I wondered why you insisted on any delay in the appearance of the work in any form. The attached condition, however, I cannot accept, that I allow you "to use the documents and material to write my own book". In this I would be cast in a dishonorable role I have already addressed at sufficient length. My work says what I think, not what anybody else does. I cannot accept some of your interpretations and evaluations as you know, and the committee you propose is an unwieldy and, in fact, impossible arrangement. Aside from the fact that the knowledge and understanding of all except Howard is too far in the past, not one has the time.

I am sorry it turned out this way. I am sorry for all of the consequences. And I am sorry that you offer no alternative I can accept. That of a normal editor-author relationship was ~~was~~ quite acceptable to me and, as you know, my sole ~~stipulation~~ stipulation in this arrangement was faithfulness to my work.

Perfection, as you will learn if you haven't, is not a state of man in his personal life or in his professional activity. This addresses one of the reasons I had to recast my role into the least welcome one. Immediate social good immediately needed cannot be accomplished years hence when it is but historical. Knowledge that people need today on vital issues of public concern ought not, in my view, be delayed for years for the crossing of t's and dotting of i's, and the estimate of the number of fairies gambling with a needle.

In writing you earlier I asked for the return of what I had given you for the purpose of a joint project, and I fear I may have expressed myself loosely. You bought the Xeroxes of the two earlier parts from me subject to the restrictions of no use and no use to be permitted; under these conditions, they are your property, and of course you bought COUP. It is for everything else that I ask the return, the keeping of no copies and the making of no use. I depend upon this. In the course of time, I think you will come to understand some of the use you intended is misuse.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

cc: Gary
Howard
Jerry