

To Jim Garrison from Harold Weisberg

3/27/68

TV availability

Busy as you are and stay, you have little time for TV appearances. However, I have been offered for you two opportunities you might want to consider. Each is in a place where you might want to reach people, New Orleans and Washington.

When I taped the first of the two "Hot Seat" shows I did for WNOJ-TV, Dave Fitzgerald said he'd like to give you the chance to tell the people of New Orleans whatever you might want to say and to give them a chance to understand you and what you seek better. To this end he is willing to give you an entire night, which he would advertise in advance, and you could use as much or as little of it as you want, broadcasting from wherever you want, the studios or elsewhere. He asked me to explain this and our discussion of it to you.

I pointed out some of the considerations that might make this undesirable or impossible. One was the effect of spontaneous questions that might be inappropriate or the kind that, in refusing to answer, might make it look as though you were avoiding. He said they would screen all questions. I asked if you could have a staff member do this and he agreed, saying that you could do whatever you want.

I told him I would convey his offer, if I may offer unsolicited public-relations advice, if it is within your physical capacity and not something you should not at this juncture do, it could have a quite beneficial effect.

However, I also told him that to my knowledge you had turned down large, syndicated shows, with vast audiences, now your nose wore away at the grindstone, and that there might be legal problems for you. I asked him to consider two alternatives if you feel you cannot do this:

If you feel you can make a statement and not answer questions, you make that statement and I stay as long as he wants or as long as the questions come in and answer them;

If you feel you cannot do either, Dave have me just sit there and answer questions as they come in, as I think I can, on the New Orleans aspect and all others, and as I think no other writer can. In either of the latter contingencies, the questions could or could not be screened. I often decline to answer questions and have no problem doing it.

One thing I said I'd do if I did such a show with him he seemed to like very much, and that is put on the screen dozens or more of the appropriate suppressed documents, thousands of pages of which I have, relating to New Orleans and to other aspects. I have done this elsewhere, and the results are impressive. It just has never been done before and people feel like they are being taken into the inside of things that have been denied them, and all of these are my own, none are from your files, which keeps you clear of it.

For your consideration, let me remind you that while Dymond alleged you and I were conspirators to deny his client his rights, and when he subpoenaed a large number of people, he carefully avoided subpoenaing me.

If I do it, you have all of the benefit and none of the liability. Remember, I do not carry your credentials in my pocket. If you do it, I think you'll wow 'em as no performer ever did. On the other hand, there are some hazards to you in

ed libbing that do not exist for me, and I have hundred of hours of doing it on this subject to draw upon.

If you do not think you should do it or if you do not want to, then I ask that you encourage him to have me do it. He did not say he would, only that he'd consider it. I think we could accomplish much by way of getting information out that would not endanger your case and that it would be a rare chance to try some of the verbal mind expansion on a mass scale that might just turn up some new and interesting witnesses and information.

In this connection, I'd like to be able to do what I always do in California - have someone there to take names and addresses and phone numbers that are not broadcast. This need not be a member of your staff but could be. I can make my own arrangements. I know someone there who would do it and could do it well and diplomatically. He would also be able to carry on after I leave by interviewing those I could not for you and I think he would do it better than the investigators.

Since Dave spoke to me I have thought much about this. We didn't talk afterward because you stayed busy. I really believe it offers us a rare opportunity we should accept, that it can do much good and might lead to all sorts of new and valuable information and witnesses.

I hope you can and will regard it favorably.

If I do it alone, I'd like to invite Raymond or a member of his staff to be there and object to any questions they do not want answered - and I wouldn't. The more they object to the worse they look, and if they oppose the show they ruin their image and really make it look as though they and their client cannot stand any discussion of a vital national issue. People will ask "Why?" and will reach the pretty obvious conclusion.

The second offer is from the UHF TV station in Washington, a small one but for this it would have an audience. I did a three-hour show there a while back that had such good results they asked me to do six more, the first this past Monday. Mac auditioned part of it. The fellow who does the show knows nothing about the subject but he was fair and is on our side. He would air you by phone, saying as little or as much as you want, or live, when you speak in Washington. If you can or are willing to do this, I suggest you do it in advance of your college speech, for it will then focus even more attention on that, which will have much wider coverage, I am sure. I am doing these Mondays to begin with, then switching to Wednesday, one a week for five more weeks.