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To : Larry Schlossman and Rosemary Reed

From: Harold Weisberg HW

What you did is inexcusable. It is dishonest, unethical, indecent and unprofessional. If you did no worse than merely confuse your audience with what you conceived and aired, you can count that an achievement. You also were abusive personally and of the trust of your audience, and to top it all off you lied to me repeatedly during the shambles.

If you and Adler had set out to serve the interests of errant government agencies or to mislead and misinform, you could not have succeeded better.

A man who is not going to keep his word ought not give his word. A man who cannot keep his word ought not give it either. And a man who finds he is not keeping his word owes it, at least to his personal integrity, to make a meaningful effort, no matter how belatedly, to keep his word.

I told you when you first phoned me that I did not want to be part of any baseless and irresponsible conspiracy theorizing and you assured me this would not happen. In fact, nothing else did happen and the format, which you also were dishonest about, assured that this would happen.

As you knew, I regard the assassination of the president as the most subversive of possible crimes in a society like ours. My interest and my work are entirely divorced from whodunits. It is a large and serious study of the functioning and malfunctioning of our basic institutions in that time of great stress and thereafter. There is no way that I can go to the people in any other way and still consider myself responsible and honest. There also is no way in which I will bring myself to lending any credibility to those panderers of hard-backed penny dreadfuls on a matter that is so basic to the survival of representative society and meaningful freedom.

One of these basic institutions that failed 20 years ago and has continued to fail ever since is the press in all its forms. This is particularly true of the electronic media. Many stations, including WBAI and other Pacifica stations, have aired countless hours of the most monstrous irresponsibility. Strangely, the only element that has not failed is the commercial talk shows. Years ago they were a major means of bringing fact to the attention of the people. I had considerable experience with them and, although they went for the sensationalized nut stuff, they also sought out and aired responsible people who dealt with facts responsibly and truthfully.

Almost without exception what you aired last night was unfactual, irrelevant, misleading, deceptive, self-seeking and in other ways not honest or truthful and for those you reached it was a major disservice and disinformation. Some of it was absolutely incredible. Of what I could hear, and I could not hear all of it, Summers on Mexico City is an exception.

I told you when you identified some of the panel to me that this impended, but you assured me that by my representation of the opposite side something worthwhile would result. You said this is one of the reasons you wanted me. If you and Adler had ever had any intention of doing what you assured me you would do, it might have been that way. You must remember that when you said you had selected Powers, who knows nothing at all about the assassination and is an apologist for a man who authorized murders and has a long career of perjury, I warned you of this, with other illustrations. How in the world can you tell yourself that you ever intended to present information about the assassination and its consequences after 20 years when you begin by including Powers? Or when you added Moldea, who also knows nothing about the assassination, in the last minute? Neither one of these men has done any work in the field, has no factual knowledge, and both have their own pasts to justify, at the very least to themselves.

Even that fine man Donner, who has done so much truly worthwhile, even great things in his life, knows nothing at all about the assassination and, although he is quite correct to condemn conspiracy theorizing, has no right, as a responsible and mature man, or more, as the outstanding lawyer he is, to tell all he can reach that all of us who are concerned about the assassination and its consequences are idle conspiracy theorizers and that no legitimate interests are involved. (In common with the eastern intellectual community, he appears to have had his mind and his critical faculties castrated by Lyndon Johnson's cleverness in coercing and deceiving Earl Warren into heading the Commission, over the objections of his colleagues on the court. He ought to read the transcripts of the executive sessions, Warren in particular!)

As you knew, especially because you have some familiarity with my work and more because I was explicit on this, I wanted to address the corpus delicti. Not one of your panelists did, few could and not one could do so definitively. You wanted me to read and be prepared to address Davison's book and for that reason I did. At my age, with my impaired health and all the many things I want to do, I never read such trash unless I am asked to. I have never even looked at the Blakey/Billings abortion and to a large degree, although I have them, I have ignored the published record of the House assassins committee because it was intentionally dishonest, intended to put down all critics and criticism and to cover up all over again because it was both stupid and incompetent enough to permit the FBI to restrict it to only a fraction of the records I had already forced out of oblivion by FOIA actions and were actually available to the public in the FBI's reading room.

But I did prepare to do what you asked when I could not afford the time. I kept you informed throughout. You knew exactly what I planned to do and say and how, and with what proof, and you assured me of a format in which this would be possible and not appear to be irrelevant. It was a considerable effort, and for it you wasted that not inconsiderable amount of time in my waning life and work. And you did worse.

I told you that I had had previous experiences with being on the phone in panel shows with those in the studio having a vested interest in discriminating against and stifling the one on the phone. You assured me this would not happen.

It did happen and you made no meaningful effort to prevent or relieve it in any way.

My experience with this kind of situation goes back to 1966, from coast to coast and in most states, and in all this experience I do not recall a single instance in which it was rigged electronically to prevent those on the phone from participating except at the whim of the moderator. The only technical problem is preventing this. While I do not presume that you intended to lie in telling me only last night that it was technically impossible for me to be on the phone when you took calls from listeners, that, too, is not true unless it is rigged that way in advance, and your people did that. I have never, ever, done a show with call-ins without being connected, hearing and responding, the purpose of the whole thing. The number of instances is innumerable and without exception over the past 17 years and it includes a large number of small and poor stations.

If I were in your position, responsible and yet really innocent in any of this, I assuredly would want to know how and why your engineers contrived this and lied, for they did lie. There is not and for at least 17 years there has not been <u>any</u> problem in either panel participation or responding to call-in by the panelist on the phone.

In all of this extensive experience, which includes a rather large number of ignorant, crude, silly, sensationalizing and just plain stupid moderators, not one ever behaved as badly and as dishonestly as Adler did and not one moderator was as completely lacking in common decency, to say nothing of other considerations like responsibility and ethics.

The night before, when I expressed my concerns and apprehensions and accepted your assurances, I wound up telling you that, although I preferred to avoid it, I was quite capable of asserting a right to equality of opportunity and, if necessary, would. You did <u>not</u> tell me that this would be impossible - that it was <u>rigged</u> to be impossible. Had I known, I might well have bowed out then. I learned for the first time when I tried to say something and was not heard.

You changed the format on me in the last minute, with the show on the air. Each person was to speak without interruption and then there would be general discussion, a normal format. I told you your change would not work and that it would be used against me. You assured me otherwise.

You didn't even keep your word to phone me 15 minutes before the show began. You waited until it was on the air to tell me.

You were aware of my concerns the day before the show, as I was always aware of the possibility of what eventuated. I proceeded at all only on your word, and you know it. I phoned first and spoke to Rosemary Reed and told her what I had prepared to read. You phoned back that night. I had even timed each substantive matter I proposed addressing and asked that you tape it and listen to it and be satisfied or raise any questions you might have. I told you that I prepared to address Davison's book as I would a book review, told you the topics to which I limited this, told you how long each would take,

most as little as 30 seonds, and (although I agreed with you entirely) it is you who asked me to begin with the one long subject that was of most interest to you. You expressed complete satisfaction, gave me a sequence and I agreed to it. When I raised the question of nine uninterrupted minutes, you told me not to worry, it would be OK. I had arranged it to make sense, not to be conclusory or merely sensational, and until I completed it there was no way anyone could respond to it, as you knew.

I was upset first when you changed the format and more when you told me - after the show began - that I would be cut off after a half-hour into the already begun show because you would be going to the phones and that required cutting me off. Neither was true. I then told you that there would not possibly be time for just this one matter supposedly of great interest to you, to say nothing of the others or about what I preferred to do, address fact and their consequences, and even then you assured me falsely.

As soon as it became clear that I was being factual and citing sources precisely, Adler interrupted me and almost immediately cut me off entirely. Is it possible that you did not inform her that I had prepared to do what you had asked and exactly how long it would require? If not, how could you have kept or even intended to keep your word to me? How could you in decency and honesty not have told me? The truth is that you came back on the phone and repeated the same false assurances.

And when did this happen? As I told you, I had only a little more than a page to go, and that is little time, much less time than her interruptions took and much less than the uninterrupted time she gave those who dumped fantasies, irrelevancies, falsehood and misinformation on the audience you reached.

You knew in advance that I prepared to read this in order not to err or misspeak myself, to be precise and not be unfair, and you agreed wholeheartedly.

Do you really think that so significant a matter as an alleged presidential assassin having had extraordinarily high security clearances and having had a career in the Marines that was always in association with the CIA could be handled responsibly in any other way?

Can you possibly believe that it was proper for her to cut this off entirely while pretending otherwise? Did I not say that there was a prior agreement on which my participation was predicated and that if she did not intend to live up to it I would say goodnight and depart? Can you justify such conduct by anyone, more, one who is supposed to be an impartial moderator? Was it less than indecent for her to keep me on the line for more than another hour, totally cut off from any participation and without a word of her imperial intent from her imperial importance? How could you possibly have selected such a person as a "moderator" or tell yourself that a conspiracy-theory afficionado is competent to moderate such a show? Or if you had no control but knew, not warn me fully and honestly? Your behavior in this regard is not a bit better than hers.

Can you possibly believe that there was anything at all on your program that even approached this in significance or the interest of serious people?

Of course, there is always a liability in reading, and I know I was deeply upset by what you had just told me and the changes made at the last minute that foreclosed me, and I am without doubt that I read it less well than it could have been read. But you knew and agreed in advance and then, when you tried to justify your (plural) cutting off of the airing of fact that gives the alleged assassin this association with intelligence and all the official mendacity about it - and this is exactly what Adler did - you made demeaning and untruthful claims, like that it was technical, as it wasn't at all, and that people cannot understand what is what you called "technical." I have 17 years of experience that says exactly the opposite that people do understand fully and want this kind of factuality, precision and access to official information they have no other way. Although I was able to hear only intermittently (sometimes the sound to me just disappeared entirely), my wife was listening in the bedroom and she tells me that an early caller, a former Marine in Tennessee, comprehended fully and phoned to confirm what I said about one aspect of the security clearance from his own personal experience.

Larry, I have had stations phone and ask me to read documents for long periods of time, with a call-in audience, and this experience is uniformly contrary to your representation, even with hick stations and their audiences. You were merely making excuses and you were not truthful. If you had the experience required for a legitimate opinion, you were purposefully untruthful.

But if she and/or you did not like it read, what kept either of you from asking me not to read and just ad lib? Failure to do this, without all the rest, must be taken as your (plural) intent to cut all of that off entirely.

Remember, some of the things you wanted took only 30 seconds, and I don't recall any of the studio panelists speaking for so short a time.

What does all of this say for your panel, supposedly people of deep concern and responsibility? Did any one at any time or in any way for the well over an hour you and Adler kept me in limbo even suggest, leave alone demand, that I be permitted to finish with this entirely new, absolutely solid and extraordinarily significant information that you, personally, said you were so anxious to have on your program? Those in the studio, with the exception of Melanson, all had vested contrary interests and not one had the concern, the interest or the common decency to utter a peep.

What does it say of you, the one responsible, the producer? You tried to make yourself out as of less influence than the station messengerboy or janitor.

You knew in advance that I would never knowingly be irresponsible, you knew in advance that what I had prepared required that on the security clearance it be presented in full to be meaningful.

After Adler interrupted me, atop the other violations of your word that

was basic to my participation, you came back on the phone to assure me that I would be back on in just a few minutes. You denied saying five or six but you did. It is apparent that she had no such intention and that you knew it.

For well over an hour you had me just sitting there holding the phone. Not once in that long time did you have the common decency, the self respect or the consideration for one you knew is unwell and had just undergone oral surgery, to come back on the phone to tell me anything, even another reassuring lie.

Whether or not you knew Adler's intentions, as you must have, and quite aside from your personal assurances when you first came back on the phone, how can you possibly justify having me sit for more than an hour without a word, particularly because you know I have circulatory problems and should not sit that long?

It was well over an hour before I tried to hang up. If as you say you did try to phone me, it could not have been for more than an hour because for more than an hour you did not have to phone. All you had to do was throw a switch. I was on the line. It was only just before the call-ins that I tried, without success, to hang up and break the connection. It was not until after the call-ins that I succeeded in breaking the circuit. Moreover, you knew very well that I was where I was and if you had any problem at all, if you'd told the operator we'd been cut off, she'd have restored the connection promptly. (You did not know I'd hung up.) I had no trouble getting through your busy lines after I walked a bit to restore circulation and relieved the pressures from the diuretic I must take. I believed I should report the untoward development of my having an open line through the entire show and that from my prior experience and knowledge this most likely came from only an intrusion on my line. (Here in the country we are on an automated, unattended switchboard and it is a simple matter to tap by a patch. As long as that patch is in the circuit is open and will not break.)

You then told me you would call me back. A little more than ten minutes after the show signed off you hadn't, so I called to ask if you intended to because if you were not going to do it promptly I wanted to use my phone. I was told that you would call me back promptly. My phone was not in use for 20 minutes and you did not call.

In short, however you may seek to justify this to yourself, you were not truthful about anything, you did not keep your word about anything and, in addition to all the more serious consequences, you were personally abusive.

You pretended to be important, saying that you had passed Adler notes and that she ignored them. What kind of notes? Did you tell her that you had given me assurances, that I was doing exactly what you had asked and that as of the night before you had agreed to the manner in which I would do it? Did you even suggest that your personal integrity was involved, that the station's was, that there was any kind of obligation to your coast-to-coast audience? And why did you not inform me for all that time?

There were times my receiver was silent and times when the volume was too

low so I cannot pretend knowledge of all that was aired. But you are a mature man and you do know. So, I'd be interested in knowing if in your opinion there was anything at all of the significance of what you knew I prepared, and what you allowed to be suppressed.

If you cannot, then perhaps you can find some justification for what you did air? For all that nonsense about a disaffected Oswald, and all the gibberish about untenable theories without once addressing anything factual about the assassination, and with the presumption of guilt without addressing any fact or evidence.

Need I remind you that just the night before you asked me to prepare to go into the other than Warren Commission portrayal of the kind of person Oswald was from its own records? Or that to do what you asked I let other things of consequence to me go undone yesterday to prepare this for you at your request? Or perhaps more important was the "confirmation" of Alvaredo Ugarte, whose fabrication almost started a terrible war and required of the frightened CIA that it break him, which it did and got the admission that he fabricated the whole thing. (From the dates alone it was impossible and his story was inherently incredible.) Perhaps it was of great moment to your audience and so important to your professional performance (individually and collectively) to report that Oswald had significant connections with the Mafia because his uncle sold numbers on the side? Some connection, even if true!

Do you think for one moment, aside from all else, that I would have agreed to be on a show with a moderator unknown to me and panelists well known to me if you had let me know that I could be cut off entirely except by your grace or that of anyone else? You never told me that, and if you had, as I'm sure you knew, I would not have participated. I learned only when I tried to speak.

I have taken this time because I expect to hear from people before whom you (plural) made me look bad, because what you did was hurtful to me and my work, and because it will provide an explanation to any who may inquire. Also because, as you know, my work addresses the functioning of our basic institutions. Radio is one of these basic institutions. Rightly or wrongly, people expect more of public radio, and it is without the restraints imposed by advertisers and owners. The archive I will leave thus will have this reflection of public radio and of Pacifica in so indecent and outrageous a commemoration of the frightful crime which turned the country and the world around, which made possible all the evil that followed it and the great dangers we now face, which disillusioned and disenchanted so many young adults in particular when it happened and since, which nullified representative society.

I am truly sorry you called me. Not alone because you wasted so much time and effort for me. Not because of what is really significant, the possible cost to me and to others by means of possible precedent because I took time from that effort for you. Most of all because it is always disillusioning and so very painful to find that another of the few who pretend decency and concern lack both.