

March 14, 1975

President, ABC-TV  
1330 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, New York 100\_\_\_

Dear Sir:

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A member of your production staff phoned me this past Tuesday to ask if I would be willing to appear opposite Arlen Specter in the Rivers show to be taped next Wednesday. I said I am more than willing. I was then also told that my appearance would be unlikely because you have already agreed to Dick Gregory's demand that his former (and reportedly future) running mate in the Presidential campaign, Mark Lane, present a viewpoint other than Mr. Specter's. When I responded that you had already aired Mr. Gregory's viewpoint and that I was uniquely qualified by work I alone have done to be opposite Mr. Specter, I was told I'd be phoned back that day. Since then I have heard nothing.

It is my understanding that law and regulation as embodied in the "Fairness Doctrine" specify that selections for appearances may not be to accomplish partisan presentation on the air and that on controversial issues of public interest all responsible viewpoints be aired.

I alone among those who have spoken and published facts in disagreement with the Warren Report have devoted the past 11 years to this. While contrary representation was made to your audience, it simply is not true. I published the first book disagreeing with that Report and have published more than any other on any side of this subject. Those without factual knowledge may not agree, but I believe it is no exaggeration to say that I have published more than all those who can be considered "responsible" critics of the official account of the assassination combined.

Because your people have not again been in touch with me, my information on the others you considered after my protest is secondhand. But I know the field and know those who can be considered. Among all, I am unique in being the only one who has persistently and successfully sued to require the government to end suppressions and to live within the Freedom of Information law. Others have laced paid-for public appearances and self-promotional publicity with big talk about alleged plans but in all these years they have done none of this.

After extensive preparations over the past five years, I have sued the government five times to force production of suppressed evidence. The one case in which I was not successful went to the Supreme Court. The Congress was so influenced by what happened in that case that it is the first of four cited in the debates as requiring amending of the law. You may recall that the law was amended and enacted over Mr. Ford's veto. (The other cases were on other subjects.)

I am the writer who, of all in the country, has made most extensive use of this law. In fact, today I conferred with three FBI officials pursuant to the first suit filed under the amended law, my most recent suit. Although until the suit was filed the government was not responsive, all promises made today are for full compliance and disclosure to me of vital evidence suppressed for more than 11 years.

While I am not a doctor or a lawyer whose practice can be benefited by appearances, which provide advertising otherwise denied in those professions, I have done what those of these professions under your consideration have not done and in fields of their alleged expertise..

In itself this kind of work and this approach represent an entirely different viewpoint and an entirely different approach, limited to me. In a sense it can be described as "Establishmentarian" because I seek to work and to force the government to live within the framework of the law.

(In the last of these actions that reached judicial determination, I obtained a suppressed and illegally classified TOP SECRET transcript that is included verbatim in the fourth of my Whitewash series of books. I offered it exclusively to ABC. Your people lingered so long in deciding against it that they wasted all opportunity for prepublication uses. On publication, despite the fact that this book is a private printing, it received extensive, often page-one, treatment throughout the world. Aside from its content on the JFK assassination, it is sui generis in its CIA content. That is now quite topical. But I know of no mention on ABC.)

Others talk about "opening the National Archives." Instead of talking about it to sell myself, I have been doing it. I obtained, studied and published so many countless thousands of pages that I have more than 2,000 pages of this once-withheld evidence I have not yet had time to read. The others have neither duplicated this effort nor obtained this knowledge.

In short, I represent a responsible viewpoint you have never aired and a method and extent of work not equaled by any others. I alone continued this work from the first. Mr. Lane's book appeared in 1966. Those of two others followed his. Since then all these people have been following other full-time occupations, except for talking, which is not qualification as an expert.

It is not only the nature of my full-time work that is different. By my standards almost all the current talk and talkers are not what can be considered "responsible."

My professional experience also is not duplicated. I have been a Senate investigator, an investigative reporter and an intelligence analyst. These experiences also mean a different viewpoint.

ABC has given adequate airing to Mr. Gregory's viewpoint. I believe it therefore is wrong under FCC regulations and doctrine to air any of his associates or any recommended by any of them, more so when there are viewpoints, specifically mine, never aired by ABC. Particularly since I have been critical of what they have been saying,

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again a unique viewpoint among those not in agreement with the official explanation of the JFK assassination.

With regard to Mr. Specter (and not him alone), my printed work in those areas of evidence in which he worked is more extensive than that of any other, whether a writer or of any other discipline. My unprinted work is even more extensive. This relates to the medical evidence, which he handled, and to other areas. But even on the medical evidence alone, my work exceeds in volume and content that of all lawyers, doctors and professors who claim to be experts.

I have been informed that your people have expressed a preference based on presumptions of "charisma." I do not believe the Fairness Doctrine envisions "charisma" as a proper broadcast standard on controversial questions of public interest.

However, there is nobody else on any side in this field who has worked on this subject full-time, without resources or subsidy, for years averaging 20 hours a day and at 62 still close to that; who became a publisher to open the subject and does all work on his books except the actual printing; who moved the subject into the courts, from acting as his own attorney to winning a summary judgment against the Department of Justice (ask your counsel how common they are!); and who, aside from ending more suppression than all others put together, influenced the Congress to amend the law so that the prospect of freedom of information would be enhanced for all Americans.

While I do not believe human-interest factors should be involved, at 5 a.m. today I began addressing and wrapping books for mailing and, despite the weather, at 10:30 was 60 miles away negotiating the end of suppression with the FBI, on its invitation and in its headquarters. When I was writing news, this kind of life and work for more than a decade would have been considered out-of-the-ordinary and feature material.

This is a time in our national life when people have lost faith in the media. I do not believe it is healthy, for ABC or the media in general, to let considerations of showmanship (where I nonetheless allege legitimate credentials if not exceptional political influence) influence or control what you will present to the people on a controversial issue of more than normal public interest.

You have never aired the point of view I represent. That it is responsible is certified by its having been repeatedly subjected to testing in courts of a number of jurisdictions. In no court has anyone attributed factual error to me. And when I have printed at least a million words on this subject, no single person has written me to protest that I have dealt with him or his evidence unfairly or in error. On so controversial a subject and with such explicit writing on it, this, too, is a measure of responsibility I know is without equal.

I do hope you will honor this repeated request under the Fairness Doctrine and that you will have me presenting the viewpoint I represent in opposition to Mr. Specter.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

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