

Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701  
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Mr. Roger Feinman  
CBS News- Radio  
524 W 57 Street  
New York, N.Y. 10019

Dear Roger,

I've been wanting to write you since last week but have been busy. This is a busted-up morning. I'll have to leave to pick<sup>up</sup> someone who is coming here for me to interview him for a change. So, hoping to be comprehensible in the hasty —

I don't know if you've been giving CBS any more advice on how to handle its coming special but my chief purpose is a friendly caution to stay out unless asked because from the readings I have if you do not the corporate meat-grinder will get you.

The researchers who were here came across to me a fine human beings and quite competent in their work. They were not partisan, not my way, either. Straight.

Ernie Leiser was here last Thursday. He is something else and I'm not even sure he is aware of it. The stereotype is that these kinds of people always are aware and they get ulcers from it. I don't know if Ernie is, I'm not accusing him of deliberate bias, but it doesn't make any difference. He is on a different level and from and through his policy shows.

I have still another reading on the JFK people from whom I've heard nothing.

Leiser's bias was as obvious as any I've ever seen. He even argued. He kept misinterpreting things I said. This made me more concerned because I began by telling him I'd prefer that we tape, that I was prepared to provide him with one (I had two machines in the open but not connected) and that I'd be willing to tell him more off the record if he had a way of distinguishing between <sup>what</sup> was and was not off the record. He did not want this.

Martin Waldron was here. He was supposed to talk to me about other things after Leiser left but he found the whole thing so dull he couldn't take it. He left only about 15 minutes before Leiser did, telling my wife he'd be back in about two weeks. With the extra travel and time this means, you can guess how he reacted.

Leiser kept putting me and the defense in the wrong role and I could not persuade him (judging from his persistence) that the role of the defense is to solve the crime but to defend the accused.

He even argued that we should have done the legally improper, offer evidence that was not appropriate to the nature of the hearing, evidence that would have given away part of a very solid defense and they have been thrown out on objection.

He argued in defense of the prosecution even when it was unreasonable and irrational. When I boxed him in one one of these adventures into the unreal he said he'd take the same approach if someone were talking about me. (That would be the day!)

In all of this he didn't take a single note. He didn't even have paper in hand. He did not ask any of the questions I would have asked if I had been in his position. Even assuming Esther's extreme competence. She is that. So, what it amounts to is that he came all the way here perhaps to get the feel of me for scripting for Rather. I don't think it was to convert me.

Before he left, when the line this special is going to take was even more clear, I tried to suggest to him that there can be developments that will mean all CBS has in the can will be largely useless. His bland reply is that this is par. (It wouldn't be if I were a boss or stockholder.)

He pulled things like this: "How did Fensterwald get you into all of this?" When I said "it was the other way around" he asked nothing further on that.

He is supposed to be scripting and he asked me no single color question. None on fact about how we work, either, if I can leave some of that to what he gets from Esther. None about my past experience (I offered some).

This man is a pro, not a cub. So, after he left and I had time to think about it I wondered about a previous experience, when Walter Sheridan came to see me. When Sheridan left I had the distinct impression that he was wearing an FM bug and taping everything in his car. No, I'm not accusing Leiser. I'm describing my feeling. A pro comes with this ostensibel purpose and takes no notes? In almost two hours?

There were developments before he was here and there have been some since. I do not think another whitewash is in CBS' interest, I am confident that anything like this will hurt CBS and I am confident that enough is going to break so that this will be the result of what is pretty clearly forecast as the CBS plan. It is kind of like most of the media when Watergate first broke.

He knew about the ABC and NBC plans of which I told you long ago. He must have confidence that the competition will not be any better.

But this is not all that is in the future. I do hear from others and I do think the entire situation has changed and besides what can become public in the media there are other possibilities, some court some Congressional. Not the Gonzalez kick.

I've got to run. This is just a little explanation of some avuncular advice. Keep out. You've been a more than loyal CBS employee and if you go farthur you'll be hurt. Meanwhile, if they do a shlock job with the record you've made maybe someone will tell himself, "Gee, we've got an asset here."

Best regards,