

3/21/71

Mr. Barry Farber
WOR

Dear Barry,

Doing your show was so gratifying I had intended writing you as soon as I could. If you realize that I work a 19-hour day, still, after all these years, I think you will understand that I do not write letters needlessly or without feeling I must. With the experiences I have had in the past, where a media so admirably suited for conveying information to the people, information without which a representative society simply cannot work as it should, is usually converted into showmanship and entertainment only on serious issues, I must repeat, not on the air, so you can believe I mean it, how indebted I feel that you conducted the show on so high and proper a level, eschewing all the tricks of the trade of which you, too, must be master.

Particularly do I respect the straight line you took, neither pandering to me or what you might anticipate I might want to say nor using your position to provoke or ridicule me, or to belittle me and my work. I did and do mean every word of appreciation I said on the show. It is one of those about which I feel I can be most satisfied.

It was with both surprise and some shock that I heard part of this when I returned that night to do the Frankling show, for I had anticipated that yours would be aired later. This confusion came to pass because I was involved in none of the arrangements and because two different people made them. I hope it was no embarrassment to Mr. Frankling or the station. Fortunately, he also had a man with whom I worked during World War II when we were both in OSS, and most of what I said was reminiscences of that period. When I discovered that he had another guest, I offered to withdraw, but he or others apparently thought I should be on because it was announced. We were able to avoid any duplication.

The fragment of your show that I heard before I suddenly realized from my earlier radio experience that it is not good programming to have the same guest on successive shows made me want to have a dub of your show. It is one of the few I'd like to keep, to have for the day when my files end in an archive at some university, for my wife to hear, and in the event that the nets are ever willing to consider the possibility that I do not have two heads, that it is not snakes but short hair that tops my head, and that what is in my pockets is not bombs but facts. I would like for my publisher to be able to use it as an audition tape, not for airing or any other purpose. An inexpensive cassette dub would be adequate, and I will pay whatever it costs.

What makes the integrity of your show and your approach more meaningful to me is what happened at WNEW-TV. First I was to do Bandy, doing the book only. Then I was asked to confront and I agreed. I made a number of recommendations, including Percy Foreman. He agreed, was sent a copy of the book and still agreed, and the station turned out a release about this "controversial confrontation". He apparently did not read the book until he was on the plane. He appeared at the station after I was made up, apparently threatened them and gave them a threat to relay to me, and returned to Texas. Although the production staff was visibly frightened, then proceeded with the show, on which Ray's first attorney, Arthur Hanes, appeared (agreeing with everything I said, including his own mercenary record, saying of it that I understated it by \$5,000 and that I must be crazy or stupid not to be that way). There was an empty chair for Foreman, Hanes and I were told we could each answer audience questions addressed to him, and we did.

Because it was obvious Foreman had threatened the station and because they asked me to be circumspect, I restricted myself entirely to court and under-oath official records, from which I attempted to quote him verbatim. I think Bandy didn't let me finish a single quote and that even this was edited out. I haven't seen the show, of course, and know only what concerned young people in the audience have told me by phone after viewing it. This is to the effect that almost every reference to Foreman has been edited out, that questions and answers seem to have been juxtaposed, and that all the aired show says about his refusal to appear is that he refused to be in the same studio with me. ~~Waxler~~ Considering his reputation, this amounts to defaming me. And to gild the lily, the show ended for a plug for next week's show, which will give "the other side", presumably from some official. I have written and asked for reciprocal courtesies, having been confronted by "the other side" myself, and to be present to prevent misrepresentation and distortion, of the fact or of me and my writing. I wish I felt I could expect it.

But do you see how much more this makes me appreciate the fact that while you asked pertinent and penetrating questions, you did it honestly and without bias in either direction?

You said you'd like to be informed at further efforts at suppression. In the large stack of mail awaiting me on my return are three from Deputy Attorney General Kleindienst or an assistant. These are in "response" to my inquiries dating back to December 2, 1970, the most recent being of January 4, whereas the law requires "promptness". When I can answer them, which I hope will be soon, I'll send you copies so you can judge for yourself whether or not the government is being honest and open, even complying with the law.

From the foregoing, I think you can understand that my thanks are sincere.

Best wishes,

Harold Weisberg