

11/5/95

Mrs. Brenda "hite  
Dean "hite's office  
Hood College  
Frederick, M D 21701

Dear Brenda,

Although I do not use the word, merely suggest it, going over the terrible mess Maisha made of the chapter that took her two months leaves no question in my mind, she is on some drug.

I do not know what the college's position is on such things but I believe I owe it to the college and to this promising young woman to let you know.

I have had no experience with such things but I understand they are not easy to cope with. But years ago a boy who lives near her, according to his parents, was able to bootstrap himself and they attributed that to me. He went on to earn a scholarship and has a successful professional life and is happy with his own family now.

I do believe that when she is herself Maisha is a fine and a bright person. She has a pleasant manner and a good intelligence.

I hope that in taking this extra time I have not done it the wrong way and that it may encourage her to make the effort.

I think, too, that her roommate is aware of this from the way Michelle told me she spoke to Michelle.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

Ms. Maisha Uzuri James  
Hood College  
Frederick, MD 21701

11/5/95

Dear Maisha,

In looking back of a long life some years ago I realized that when I was young many older people took much time with me and that that was helpful and informative to me. I have tried to pay that back by in turn taking what time others want of me, particularly younger people.

While this letter may represent a waste of time of which at this stage of my life I have less time that I want for my work, I believe you are the kind of person who is worth the time. I have seen you as two different people. The impression you made on me when we met lingers but I never saw it again. You have not since then reflected having full possession of your faculties and your behavior was not only as unconscionable as I said in the letter you resent-it was much worse. Taking the not inconsiderable time required to read and check the retyping it took you two months to do - and it was only a single chapter of 23 of your pages -leaves it without question that you should have told me at the outset that there are times when you are not in full possession of your faculties. Yet you went ahead and did this work knowing full well that what you would do would be as worse than useless as it is.

When you complained about my being in touch with Brenda White in the dean's office I told you I was because it is clear to me that you have a problem and need help. Your letter to "Dean Olivia" White is not honest, by the way. There now is absolutely no question about this. What you did to that chapter leaves that without any question at all.

I did take the time to go over all of it, meaning all that you returned, which is not all of it, even after the first less than three of your pages took two and a half hours of my time and made me wonder if I should spend any more time on it.

You began by putting insertions that were clearly marked in the wrong place, at the bottom of other pages, and you then omitted what made this apparent. When you later made the insertions correctly you did not go back and correct this mistake.

You took all sorts of liberties, including in the spelling of names. On your page 10, for example, you changed one name five times, making it incorrect all five times, when the copy was clear and included some printed copy. You also changed the spelling of other names, including mine.

But the more I got into what you did the worse all of this grew. You rewrote into gibberish what was clear and good copy. At one point you skipped almost three full pages of my copy and you did not do or return my copy for the end of this chapter. You skipped lines and parts of lines often. You changed words that were clear to make what emerged

senseless. The number of times you wrote what is not in the copy is quite large. Even larger is the number of times you made slight but significant changes in words that again made what you typed senseless. And I am talking about when my copy was clean, not where ~~the~~ my typing had to be corrected or my handwriting was not easy to read.

There is more but I do not write you to give you a catalogue of horrors. I cite these things among many in the hope that it may help get through to you that you have a serious problem and that you need and should seek help. If you do not I fear that in the end it may be very bad for you.

I am confident that when you are in full possession you are the person who made that very good impression on me.

I also fear that when you are not you are in what can be very serious trouble.

But before you can do anything, even think of doing anything, you must first be honest with yourself. You cannot do that with childish attempts at self-

justification as in your letter to me. You know very well that when quite some time ago I asked the immediate return of all you had that I was then breaking what you refer to as "our arrangement." You then had no reason to believe that you had done anything and in reading what you have done believe that as of then you had not. There was no "lack of our communication." The refusal to communicate was all yours. You were not "unable to communicate with" me. You just didn't. You say that in two months you phoned me only three times and the line was busy all those times. It is not busy far and away most of the time. Three attempts in two months is no effort to communicate. I phoned you often, left messages on your machine, with your roommate and with Michelle, who had the same problem with you.

What I am saying is stop kidding yourself and trying to kid others. That does you no good and it does you harm by excusing to yourself what you should face rather than try to explain away.

You are young, Maisha, and now is the time to take control of yourself. I think you have a real potential and I think, too, that you are wasting it and years that are precious to you with cannot but be very hurtful to you. You are endangering your future, your life than can be worthwhile.

If for one minute you think that what I say is not obvious you are welcome to do what I have done, compare what you did with what you got and see if you can come up with any other explanation for it. Believe me, it is ever so much worse that I reflect above.

I hope you will heed this and make the effort.

I return herewith some of your papers that you had mixed in with my rough draft.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg