

1/6/72

Mr. Ted Epstein
Bookazine, Inc.
303 W. 10th St.,
New York, N.Y. 10014

Dear Mr. Epstein,

During our friendly chat at ABA in June, I mentioned to you that you have for years owed us money, on several occasions said that you would pay it, but hadn't. You asked me to send you a bill and I said we had, that you have several. I presume this slipped your mind so, at this period in which I go over our books, another reminder. According to our books, the amount is \$4641.45.

There has been much correspondence on this, many bills rendered, but never a meaningful response. To illustrate part of the problem, I enclose a copy of your undated speed-letter and my wife's 5/29/68 response; and a carbon of my letter of 5/8/68, to which I also find no response. The promise that on the sending of a statement "I will remit" was not kept. If you want a copy of the entire file I will provide it, but that would waste time for both of us.

Our books have always been returnable for full credit, authorization was always immediately forthcoming, and the sole stipulation, as you will find added to some of the file, was that we receive the books in salable condition or that this be covered by insurance. Authorization was absolutely necessary so that, with our limited facilities, we could be ready.

However, your people did not seek authorization and shipped the books to the wrong address, to the printer rather than to us. There is correspondence on this and I am pretty certain that I phoned on learning of it. How and why this happened, I can't imagine because you have always had our correct address and when we moved we sent notification in advance. This mistake was repeated after notification!

We will still give you credit for all those books if they are salable and you get them delivered to us. I have no truck and can't pick them up, couldn't then, and our financial condition is such that we can't have it done commercially. A large truck can't get in to our present location but local truckers, using other than tractor-trailers, can and do, as does United Parcel. Assuming the printer has not disposed of these books - and if he has he has neither asked nor notified me - I will then go over the books immediately and send you a receipt for all that can be sold and, if you desire, those not in this condition as proof that they are not. I hope will agree that after all this time, I am making you a fair offer. It is my recollection that someone in your organization agreed after my call to have these books trucked here, where they should have been sent to begin with. (The strange thing is that after this you did send several small orders to us, all to the wrong address, and each time we sent notice of the new address without effect. Again, I can't explain it.)

Meanwhile, ^{pending} my receipt of these returns, I'd appreciate it if you would send me a check for the difference because our needs right now are urgent. This would help us greatly, as it would help clear this entire matter up. We would ask only that I be notified of the shipment so I could have help on hand, for which I will pay to avoid running the trucking charges up, and so I can be sure to be here to receive them, otherwise there would be an added trucking charge for a second delivery. If whoever does the trucking will merely phone me, I will do everything else to get sincerely, him.

Harold Weisberg

Although I said that having illustrated, I'd send no other of the bitter reminders of a distressing history, I include this one for a different kind of illumination of the pervading crookedness. This is an exceptional case. This guy is a cousin by marriage to an old friend of mine, a man I took to Washington in WWII and got well located and with whom I stayed when I went to NY to seek a publisher for WW. He made the arrangements that led to the original contract that was broken and tried to help in many ways thereafter. When he saw the problem, the nature and apparent causes, he decided that perhaps marketing pressure would help a publisher overcome his policy decision. This company is by far the largest in New York and can make or break a book if it wants to. They controlled such outlets as subway stations, besides their vast wholesaling. So, he called this man and immediately arrangements were made for consideration by New American Library. Again (as later with Lane's book), staff and editorial approval and excitement but policy negative. So, here is a stereotype business-man willing to go out on a limb to push a book he knows is controversial and will be frowned upon by officialdom, but won't pay his bills. After one of my early TV appearances, an unusually dramatic thing, the book went crazy, although there were only 100 copies in New York at the time, and in about two weeks bombed Epstein's book, which was immediately remaindered. Despite the handicap of no copies in the stores at the time of the airing, by the end of that week it was the best-selling book in New York. Any number of stores sold more than 100 in a single day, several reported over 300 and sellouts. We shopped this guy three times in a single week in June or July 1966, and that meant I had to stay up all night to package and have ready for the truck in the a.m. But in all of the rest of 1966 he paid for nothing, owing us over \$6,000 at year's end! We had no choice but to ship. Another interesting thing is that the largest part of his returns is of a book on which he had sold out. Those were copies Dell got from us and never paid for, so in giving him credit for them, I am still out 100% on them! Moreover, because of the use they were making of them, - gave Dell a special price that was not profitable. And Dell never made th use. Atop that, to do what Dell wanted, I had to order a special printing on which all the time was at time-and-a-half and double-time rates. That TV show is the one that also made its host, Alan Burke. They had contrived a rotten thing and I took it away from them, although I was entirely unaware until it happened. They made some arrangement with Holt's p.r. man because Holt wanted to eliminate all books before Mark's was out, and had four erudite and well-prepared lawyers in the audience waiting to tear me up. The impact was beyond description. I taped much of it as people starting phoning me about 2:30 a.m. on a Sunday morning. I never got back to bed. Even New American Library almost went for it. They decided to end their net