

2/17/72

Mr. Bill Monroe
NBC News
4001 Nebraska Ave., NW
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Monroe,

Bravo for the testimony reported by UPI in today's Post and bco! for your own and NBC's practises, which amount to worse than government censorship but on taboo topics amount to self-censorship on behalf of government preconceptions and to hide the official suppressions of which you alleged to have no "atrocities" stories.

Back in 1966, when I invented the underground book (not in itself legit. news?) and delivered one of the first copies to your newsroom, Paul Duke said there would be undoubted interest. Silence followed. Yet it was the first serious analysis of the Warren Report (not news?), one that with the same official evidence used in that Report showed the Report to be untenable (not news?). Friends of Today staffers spoke to them in NYC. They said they would not touch the subject but would air me on any one of the others on which I qualify as an expert. This did not and does not interest me, as colleagues of yours can attest, for I have never had, have never sought, and have always avoided personal publicity per se.

Later, I filed one of the first Freedom of Information suits (not news?), won a summary judgement against the Department of Justice (how many have you reported, but to NBC it was not news), included it in what remains the only book on "the other side" of the story of the King assassination, which remains non-news. But the potboilers of the past, like Hue's and Bishop's, unspeakably poor works, both were widely reported. The difference: aside from the size of the publishing houses that produced them, they support the official line substituted for fact. I spoke to you about this. You sent me to the newsroom, where I bought and distributed copies. I know the personal reactions of the working reporters, but neither NBC News nor NBC's Today would touch the undoubted news there is in that book. Aside from the fact of the case, this includes lying by the man now nominated for Attorney General, his persistence in lying when caught at it, and the subject of his lying was the unheard of, the actual confiscation of the records of a foreign court in the trial of an American citizen - with the collaboration of that government. Of course, when I finally hauled him into court I learned that Kleindienst had three copies, having denied having any, one of which was this confiscated set delivered to him by the accommodating State Department and the British Home Office. And, they contain prima facie perjury suborned by our government. "one of this is news to your, NBC or Today?"

So, by all means cast notes, for it is always the time for the casting of notes. But please try to remember the injunction on where to begin.

Of course I know putting Kleindienst's written lies in camera once he is nominated to be the Attorney General cannot possibly be news.

Best wishes,
Harold Weisberg

Post 2/17/72

TV Newsmen Calls Press Complacent

United Press International

NBC newsmen Bill Monroe said yesterday that complacency by broadcasters and a "shameful and shortsighted" attitude by newspapers had allowed government censorship to erode press freedom for radio and television.

Monroe, Washington editor of NBC's "Today Show," said these twin failings have permitted the development of "a new doublestandard for the First Amendment." The print media are free to say and do as they please while, broadcasters are continually shadowed by government surveillance, he said at a hearing on press freedom before the Senate Constitutional Rights Subcommittee.

"If press freedom is to mean freedom for all the press, I believe the newspapers will have to become engaged in the struggle for broadcast freedom . . .," Monroe said.

Monroe said, "I have no atrocity story to tell about outright government censorship. I have never seen it happen. Perhaps it never has. But I know that what might be called indirect or unintended government censorship has happened . . ."

"We do know there are stations that don't do investigative reporting. There are stations that confine their documentaries to safe subjects. There are stations that do editorialize, but don't say anything. There are stations that do outspoken editorials but are scared to endorse candidates. My opinion is that much of this kind of caution, probably most of it, is due to a deep feeling that boldness equals trouble with government, blandness equals peace."