

527-5030

September 15, 1968

Mr. Donald Mathenson, Pres.
North Advertising
Merchandise Mart Plaza
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Mr. Mathenson,

The Chicago News Service story in today's Washington "Post" impels this letter, which must begin with the heartiest congratulations and sincerest thanks for what you have undertaken to do about gun controls. It is not often today that anyone undertakes a hazardous public service, less often when a business subject to reprisal does it. We are all in your debt. I regret I am in a better position than most to understand what can happen to you.

I have written more on the Kennedy assassinations than anyone else, had to be my own publisher, and have a number of unpublished but exciting manuscripts that may never be published.

Should you ever want to go further into the National Rifle Association, perhaps I can help you. I'd want to. Some years ago, as a young writer, I was interested in the native fascist organization. This was then even less popular than it is today. (Parenthetically, I tell you they also have a broad involvement in the recent assassinations, including the most anti-Semitic.) We have moved four times in the intervening 30 years, but somewhere I have a considerable amount on the NRA, its connection with such groups and, if I am not mistaken, a connection with one or more rightist Mexican revolutions or fascist groups.

I believe it will be impossible to do anything about meaningful gun controls without tackling American fascism, and I fear you cannot afford that. However, going along with this marketing of guns to the most irresponsible elements of our society, there is also a rather novel publishing enterprise that sell all the techniques of guerilla warfare. I have it in one of my unpublished manuscripts, a book on the three assassinations, with an enormous amount of the suppressed evidence, including tape-recorded, eye-witness accounts. One of these is of a blueprinting of the Dallas tragedy, by a leader of a vicious outfit with which the entrepreneur with the warfare techniques had an intimate relationship. He had personal knowledge of one of the four plots by this outfit to kill JFK of which I know, from official but suppressed evidence. Perhaps the unpublishability of books is, in this context, more easily understood.

Thanks for your effort. May it succeed.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

Post 9-15-68
**NRA Shoots
Back at Ad
Opposition**

By Charles Nicodemus

Chicago Daily News Service

Members of the powerful National Rifle Association have started shooting back at the advertising agency that is helping lead a drive for stiffer gun control laws, by pressuring clients to stop using the agency.

An article ridiculing the campaign and listing seven accounts held by the agency, North Advertising of Chicago, is carried in the current issue of the NRA magazine, American Rifleman.

Since the article's appearance, letters have started flowing in to all seven clients named in the article.

Generally, they either urge the firm to sever its connection with North, or warn that the writer is discontinuing use of the firm's product and will urge others to do so because it is one of North's clients.

Shortly after the assassination of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, North staffers prepared—as a public service—a set of six advertisements for use in all media, pressing for prompt passage of new Federal firearms legislation.

The key slogan urged readers to "Write your Senator . . . while you still have a Senator."

The industry's magazine, Advertising Age, volunteered to distribute the ads free. It has since met requests for the material from more than 700 newspapers, national maga-

See GUNS, F2, Col. 1

GUNS, From F1

zines, radio and TV stations and other interested parties.

Commenting on the counter-attack by the NRA, the leading lobby against gun controls, North President Donald Nathanson said:

"We will not be intimidated and I doubt that any of our accounts will be either, although these people have apparently written to every one of them."

Smacks of McCarthy

Nathanson said the poison pen approach "is exactly the same blacklist and boycott technique used in the witch-hunting era of (Sen. Joseph) McCarthy, back in the early 50s."

Nathanson, a director of the American Association of Advertising Agencies and chairman of its Ethics Committee, said "We believe firms in our industry have a right, a public responsibility, to take stands on issues facing the country.

"We're not namby-pamby and our clients know it," he said. "This kind of cheap retaliation will not deter us or any other agency, I'm sure."

The office of Ashley Halsey Jr., editor of the American Rifleman and author of its article on the ad campaign, said Halsey was out of town and unavailable to explain why a list of North's clients had been included in the story.

Vicious at Worst

But another official at NRA headquarters in Washington stated candidly:

"We consider those ads misleading at best and vicious at worst. One of them even says that guns are just for killing—which, of course, is ridiculous.

"By listing North's clients, we believe we provided a service to NRA members, identifying the companies that would retain an outfit like North.

One North client, a prominent penmaker, received one of its products in the mail, with a note saying the pen worked fine—but the writer would never use that brand again as long as its ad agency persisted in the gun law campaign.

North, known as one of the more innovative agencies in the trade, handles such mat-

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