

5/1/72

Mr. Steve Elman  
WBZ Radio  
1170 Soldiers Field Road  
Boston, Mass. 02134

Dear Steve,

Thanks for the tapes, which came today. If only they had come in the previous mail, Saturday's! I spent Saturday and most of yesterday dubbing excerpts of Frank on various sides of various alleged facts and opinions from your show and another, yours from a very poor tape made where reception was bad. It was possible only because a young friend in New Jersey taped it and brought it here. However, I am glad to have a clear tape as a matter of historical record and if I have use for dubs after this coming weekend, I can now make clear ones. Frank has agreed to a face-to-face confrontation. I do not expect him, but it will not be as it was when the spellbinder Percy Foreman fled a TV studio when he learned he was to face me. This time there will be more than an empty chair. An indetifiable voice.

There is no need to feel apologetic. We all have bad days, and Jerry's not giving me a fair shake on time is not typical of Jerry. Frank's is persuasive writing. And so smooth that even those who know much of the fact miss his permeating error because of his skill. His error is not and cannot be accidental. He knows he is a whore and for him it is profitable. I gave you and Jerry but a bit of the specification, enough for Jerry to understand that he was conned. But he can't stop and worry about that or he'd never air a show. He and others like him, inevitably, become the creatures of those they air. They can't know all there is to know about everything. They can't spend their lives assuring their guests lie/for pay. So, they are stuck with the impression they form, as Jerry did, in reading the book. However, if he had read FRANK-UP when I sent it to him he'd have known Frank is a liar and his book the ultimate product of the literary bordello.

What surprises me is that Jerry didn't catch things on the show. I have now listened to it, or almost all of it, but the fading was not enough to make much difference. Frank was never responsive, never talked about fact of the assassination, never said anything not well known and well publicized. This is not represented as a book on the life and times of Martin Luther King but as the definitive one on his assassination and the only one telling the truth about it. Little of it deals with the crime, and what little does is a polish, persuasive rehash of the prosecution's fiction, with departures only where his reading of my work told him it was essential. But that a Jerry Williams would not detect this does surprise me. That Jerry, knowing from the book itself that there were no eyewitnesses, would not perk up at the fiction about Ray running back and forth to the bathroom and ask himself "How the hell could anyone know that?" is not what I'd expect. And that a man planning an assassination with such care would have his rifle entirely unloaded with such a long wait?

Don't bug Jerry about this. If he was not great that night, I have never, ever, heard him before when he wasn't. You know what I said when you first called. I didn't have to. I meant it and he earned it. I don't say what I don't think, and Jerry has spent enough hours with me to know that I am not enticed by expediency. In this case I was the unintended victim, with truth, and since I am so broke I can't get to Boston (and I have no book to sell), there is nothing that can be done. But what a show it could have been if Jerry had stopped that pointless wandering at such great length, said, "let's talk about the fact", and I assure you your guest and his flack would have fled in panic. This is not that I am so much. It is that he is so little and he knows it. And so unscrupulous he uses everybody's stuff and calls it his own. I read you Huie's letter to me giving me the schedule for Frank to return it. Not once in the book does he acknowledge this, but if you want his voice from another show saying it is all his original work, his own investigation, and that everything in it on Ray is new, I'll send it to you. But as my integrity is involved, I wrote as I did, sent what I did, and if Jerry has any question, I'll send the documentation. I don't think he can

relive the past. But if he wants to straighten out his own head and doubts what I wrote, and if neither of you wants to take the time to check with a gun store, and if neither of you wants to check that jazz about surgical enlargement of the wound (which never happened anyway for the autopsy was after death and it shows two wounds, in charts and in words), I'll sned the page of the autopsy saying there are two wounds. What more, after the exchange, would Jerry want, or you, to know the smoothie is a deliberate faker?

There is nothing in this for me, nothing in my taking the time to write this letter. Jerry didn't air me when FRAME-UP came out. The curse on me in publishing is so strong I can't expect commercial publication again. I'm so deep in debt I can't again print my own stuff. I intend this in your (pl.) interest. These assassinations are part of a turning point in history. They can't be separated from the rest of what Jerry finds wrong with the country.

If I appreciate the wish that you could mollify me in some way, there is no need to. What is done can't be undone. I kept my part of it. You and Jerry asked me to restrain myself (something new for Jerry) and I did. Having listened to the poor tape I have learned my lesson. Next time, if there is a next time, regardless of whose show it is, after an opening fifteen minutes like those I'll be insistent, and since I don't give a damn if I get cut off, at least I won't, even if involuntarily, be part of a deception and misrepresentation.

It is not alone that Frank has read my book and I suspect rewritten much of his to make it an unofficial answer to it that made him ask you to ask me to take it easy. In the course of making the dubs for the show I do not expect him to appear on, I got out the tapes of my confrontation with "Aie and Dwyer, one of the prosecution team that fed Frank his predigested pablum. Frank was travelling with them. He tried to pull some of that crap to my face, pontificating as he did with you. He actually thinks he wrote the bible. You should have heard him with a claque on the Long John Nabel Show. Anyway, he asked me a silly question to the effect, was I aware that a surveyor had measured and angled from that window to where King was killed? I said sure, I have it with me. It is all conjecture. Want to see it? His response was to say "We won't go into that now" and to ask me what he described as a question but it was a speech and an utter irrelevancy straight from the official apologists from the Warren Commission, that everyone in the world, including the charwomen, had to be part of a conspiracy for the prosecution to have been wrong. What the hell do we have appeals courts for, because the prosecution is never wrong? Why have any courts? And every error, dirty or innocent, is a conspiracy? No wonder the audience laughed at him. And that and being considered anything less than God is what he can't abide. He should stick to such comparatively socially-useful stuff as lurid accounts of broomsticks forced into the vaginas of corpses.

You are a young man. Perhaps you are busy. But I think you could get some professional benefit from listening to the tape of this show with a critical mind. It did not and could not "give people a feel of the entire issues involved." Few of them were touched on and none adequately or fairly. (I was also correct about the interpretation of the judge's words. I'd had no earlier occasion to, so I checked this with a lawyer.)

Anyway, don't hold this against Jerry. There is not, to my knowledge, anyone left in the business with more right to have an occasional bad night and I suspect not a single one who ~~is~~ <sup>has fewer</sup>. He is a principled man. We can all be wrong. I don't doubt he was sincere, and he was conned by a master. There is no need to respond, unless you have a question, or want something. And thanks.

Best wishes,

Harold Weisberg

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April 25, 1972

Harold Weisberg  
Route 8  
Frederick, Maryland 21701

Dear Hal:

There has been a delay in getting these tapes to you---but that's my fault, and not Jerry's. It's my responsibility to get these things out, and they really fall very low on my priority list---my desk is presently piled high with stuff I haven't even looked at,

Jerry has seen and read both of your letters, and left them with me with no comment. So I really am not going to make any assumptions about anything. All I can tell you is that he was powerfully impressed with Frank's book, and he told me the same. Jerry and I don't really discuss things that are done---simply because there is so much little stuff to accomplish that theory doesn't enter into it very much. I remember when we first set up the show, and Jerry had not read Frank's book, he said that to get you on the phone would make a good show. As he progressed through the book, he expressed more and more how solidly Frank put it together. And that's all I know or could say.

But look---I wish I could mollify you in some way. The show was disorganized ---there was so little time in which to express anything. And I'm sure you mistake Jerry's intentions. He wanted to give people a feel for the entire issues involved. I just don't think there was any attempt to muzzle you. Jerry simply wanted to keep the discussion general and without vitriol.

Anyhow, here are the tapes. If there's anything more I can do for you ---and that does not include getting Jerry to sit down and write to you, I'm afraid---write me. Also give me a couple of weeks to find spare time in which to act or answer.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Steve Elman