

August 14, 1967

Manager
Radio Station WCAU
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dear Sir:

If I were asked, on the basis of my own experience, to name a station that, as a matter of station policy, has leaned over backwards to be fair and unbiased on the subject of the Kennedy assassination and its official investigation, I would have to name yours. Jack McKinney has consciously sought to present to his audience what he can of all points of view.

However, your station is on the air around the clock and has more than a single audience. This fairness has stopped with the McKinney show.

Ten days ago I wrote Ed Harvey, when there was no response to my phone call of some time earlier. I knew I was going to be in Philadelphia and I requested the opportunity, under the FCC's fairness doctrine if not WCAU's, to respond to a particularly dishonest and disreputable campaign against others and me. I do not have Charles Roberts' sponsorship and financial support, hence it is not easy for me to seek, let alone get, a fair opportunity to expose his slanders. Roberts, stalwart character, devoted as undeviatingly to the truth as he says, will not face me, in person or in writing. Instead, he and his sponsors have sought out partisans such as Mr. Harvey and have exploited them and their facilities.

This formula is a success, for it is hard always for the truth to catch up with the lie, more so on this subject where there are so few willing to allow the presentation of the truth, or at least of the other side, so that the people may make up their own minds. Your Messrs. Harvey and Menefee are in this camp.

I do not make a point or a request based on Mr. Menefee's personal and entirely ill-informed attacks on the few of us who have written on this subject and what we say because his show is back-to-back with McKinney's and can, in part, share the same audience. At the same time, I have no doubt that the show about which I wrote Mr. Menefee (and received a non-responsive reply) would fall within the meaning of the fairness-doctrine decision.

With the afternoon Harvey show, this is different on two other counts: First, he aired the author of a book and publicized a book which is dedicated to denying an audience to the opposing view; second, he refused to allow contrary expression on the air during the show or to phone me for a chance to defend myself. This I know from people who called in then and asked this, while the show was on the air (and then phoned their indignation to me) and from people who later spoke to him in person.

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If I do not challenge Mr. Harvey's right to be a partisan, I do challenge his right to be so entirely unfair and to damage me.

Nor can it be that Mr. Harvey was earlier unaware of me. His producer last September asked if I would confront Arlen Specter on the show. I agreed. Mr. Specter, as I had predicted, would not. Neither he nor any other member of the former Commission staff will debate me. If Mr. Specter would not appear, Mr. Harvey would not have me. The same is true of a TV show your sister station then had. This provides a simple mechanism for the total stifling of those who want to be heard on major issues, especially criticism of the government. The government need but be silent.

Mr. Harvey has not responded by phone or by mail. I am, therefore, writing you to ask for an equal opportunity, to the same audience, to respond to Charles Roberts. I will be in Philadelphia to make a speech the night of Tuesday, September 19, and I would appreciate it if you could make this time available that day, with as much advance billing as Roberts got. Earlier I asked the Harvey Show for this same time.

While I believe the personal beliefs and the conduct of their shows by Messrs. Harvey and Menefee are biased without factual basis, I must acknowledge that, because he is so decent, Jack McKinney is a genuine credit to your station, as he is to the human race. If you saw the letters your listeners have written me about him, you would know how widespread is appreciation of him and the good it does your station throughout the eastern half of the continent.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg