

NEW ADDRESS: Rt. 7, Frederick, Md. 21701::301/473-8186

January 29, 1968

Mr. Thomas Dougherty, Asst. Sec.
and Asst. Gen. Counsel
Metromedia, Inc.
5151 Wisconsin Ave.,
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Mr. Dougherty,

Thank you for your letter of January fifth and the enclosed tape, which I will listen to as soon as I can but I fear will not be able to for several weeks because I am about to leave on a trip.

Frankly, especially because we have met, I am surprised at your letter. In mine, which I sent to the manager because I was not making a big deal out of it, I said these things: that I had not heard the program myself but had been told of its content by listeners in Baltimore; that I'd like a tape of the program; and that I was surprised that WCHM-not Metromedia-was boycotting me. If you will reread this letter, which I presume you will have, you will find this is true.

In any event, I think from this you can see why I did not get in touch with you. I regard it as a local-matter and a local matter that also involves local programming. Whether or not you realize it, I was on WCHM but once, quite some time ago. On that occasion, John Sterling's third anniversary, he repeated a number of times that it was an excellent anniversary observation because it was, in his opinion, the best show held ever done. From this I think you can see my surprise when thereafter John had me on his TV show at least three times, and on one occasion drove to my home to film it when I could not go to Baltimore, and never thereafter had me on his radio show, even after I published three additional books on other aspects of the same subject. I regarded this as policy, not John.

If there is anything defamatory in Thompson's appearance, I will freely acknowledge I was misinformed. It is because I had not heard the program and didn't know from personal knowledge that I asked for a tape.

However, your phrasing of an answer to my implied question, why had not WCHM used their local author, the man known in their territory, is interesting. You say Metromedia "sought Dr. Thompson out" to get another analysis. Aside from the fact that what Thompson does is retail what he has lifted from others, to which he has added merely irresponsible conjecture and knowing error, there would seem to be another reason for having an author on your shows: that is for fact. I think you will find, if you do not know, that it is I who have brought to light most of the fact that has been published before anyone else, and much more than anyone else and that no one else subsequently found on his own or took from me.

Because you raise the other points about my appearances on Metromedia, I will address myself to that. WTTU never once sought me out, for any reason. It did air me twice, as you say, once in a panel that originated elsewhere. Now it happens that your New York station played what I regard as a very important part in really opening the subject, back in the summer of 1966. On that occasion, without telling me what they were really doing, they invited me to what they represented as an ordinary

book-and-author show. Not until we were on camera did I discover that they had booby-trapped it with four prepared lawyers. They later told me, when I raised a question about the propriety of this procedure, that they had obtained these lawyers from the Trial Lawyers' Association (the next winter Joshua Fuchsberg, who had then been president, told me the request had come to him and he had turned it down-that there was no representation of the trial-lawyers association on that show). Thereafter I was also informed that one of these lawyers was connected with the publisher of a then-unissued competitive book.

In any event, as I am confident you know, despite what it did to my guts, that was a very dramatic show that gave Metromedia ideas that grew into The "Minority Report". This was one way of rewarding me: to invite my competition to get on my back. At that time I was promised that if the projected show ~~was~~ syndicated, shown anywhere except WNEW-TV, I would be compensated at the usual rates. This has never happened. I was also promised that because I was my own publisher, and my book was not generally available, my address would be given. When this was not worked into the show by your moderator I raised the point toward the end and he gracelessly did it. It, together with much of me, wound up on the cutting-room floor. The editing of that show, whether or not so designed, was grossly unfair and discriminatory. So, I got no credit, which I was promised, and I never got the promised fees from syndication. Will you tell me how it helped me to promote my competition without fee?

Thereafter there was to have been a Majority Report. As the senior member of the minority I asked and was given a place on that show, in opposition to the Commission lawyers, who were by then accepted in sufficient number to assure a show. I alone appeared at the station at the appointed time-no one even told me the lawyers had refused to appear in opposition to me. Reached a very firm agreement on this. Because of this agreement I did what I thought would benefit you and what was important to me, I scheduled the publication of my second book, the first to come from the once-secret documents I dug up (and you apparently just credited Thompson with), to coincide with this show. Your people knew of this for they were the only media people aside from Harrison Salisbury to have a copy of the manuscript in advance (and they lost it for a while when I needed it). So, my plans for my book were wrecked, by Metromedia. I don't think I have to tell you what this cost me.

That night we agreed on a new format: I would meet Louis Nizer and say Commission lawyers who would accept him as champion with a) a competent moderator and an equal division of time and b) whatever compensation Nizer got. WR asked me to appear on a radio show with him. I phoned your New York people and waited more than a day for the return call, which never came. I then debated Nizer in such a spectacular special that WR let it run to four hours and then pre-empted a total of 16 commercial hours to repeat it three times, with no commercials. Your people again "rewarded" me for ruining this man who is so unfaithful to his honorable and essential calling: they threw me off the show and put a competitor (for whom I had already set Nizer up) in my place. At that time they promised me that as a consolation prize they would use me when the Alen Burke Show went nightly, live, and as an opener when he was syndicated. These things never happened. Every time I planned to go to New York, I phoned in advance. They aired others on this subject but told me there would do nothing more on it. Privately, they told me monuments should be raised to what I had done. So, for what I did for the Burke Show, and I think you know what this show did, this is how Metromedia treated me. Had they truthfully told me either that they would boycott me or that they were afraid of me, whatever was in their minds, they would have hurt me less. Because I expected them to keep the commitments they voluntarily made- I had no club over them- they hurt me as they otherwise would not have. I took them at their words.

Because you mention the press party, I will refresh your recollection on that. It was my idea, and your Washington people spent some time with me and I on it. Most of the people who were there were there because I arranged it. There were certain things they were going to do, not one of which they ever did. Then, instead of this being my press party, and without telling me they had changed this, they invited a competitor down from New York to "share" it. Not only did they not tell me in advance of what they had done with "my" press party, "my" interview, but they greeted me at the elevator with, "Yorfix ~~is~~ going to like this, but..." and for the first time let me know. Now Mr. Sauvage does not in any way represent my thinking. He insists the President was shot as the consequence of a racist conspiracy. What kind of press conference could I have had when first it was no longer mine and second, to express myself I had to create a fight on your premises.

On that occasion Mr. Evans let it be known that he was interviewing Mr. Sauvage on his show. I presume he did, bringing him down from New York and ignoring the local author and the one who by then on TV, at least in New York, has established a reputation. Not until after the Pyne Show- you didn't mention that- did WPTZ call me. Even when the manager suggested that ~~Funome~~ might want me before the Pyne Show, to draw attention to it, they refused to. I was in touch three times. At his request, each time without response. So, when the Pyne Show was aired, there was not a single copy of the book on sale in Washington, where no attention had been attracted to it. Had the local show presented me first, the wholesaler might have been inspired to have the book in stock.

I leave it to you to decide whether this history warrants the last word in your letter, "fairness", if not the one before it, "respect".

You are aware that I never raised these things with you before. If I can do nothing else, aside from publishing what I develop, I can and will leave a record as accurate as I can. I think the local stations in my area have deliberately avoided me, and I think the record proves it. I do not say it is not their right. I do say it is not normal and not justified by my record. I don't know whether you have any idea of the audience you had, for example, with that Pyne Show, but I do. It did me not a bit of good. In fact, it again attracted attention to my competitors.

Because we are into this and because you are assistant general counsel, I direct your attention to my reporting above of the promise to pay me for the Minority Report Special, on which you can plainly make a profit to justify it whether or not, as you did through Paul Noble, promise to pay me. On a number of occasions I have mentioned this in letters to him and Mel Baily. They have never in any way, by word of mouth or in writing, responded.

I would very much appreciate it if you would now see to it that I did get this overdue payment. I am now so deep in debt I hesitate going further in to publish my fifth book, which has been written for about five months. That might make it possible. I labor under the belief that I am serving an important national purpose in presenting what the government suppressed. You can in this way not only meet your obligation but help in that.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Weisberg