

CC David

3/21/71

Dear Dolores and Shep,

I've just returned, still haven't had time to think or attack the accumulation of my absence, so I write you in haste, as I would have anyway, to thank you and Michele for your personal kindnesses, which I do appreciate.

When we spoke on Friday I agree to your offering a presentation to the other side represented by government. I've been thinking of this since. I still think you should, not only because your lawyers want it, but I think you should adhere to the format of which I was the victim and have me present to confront them.

I have never appeared on your station without an opposition to louse up any orderly presentation of my work, and in every case it was loused up. Your director can, I am sure, fill you in (and on what I would have done with Hanes there and Foreman absent) had you not asked me to restrain myself, which I did at some cost to myself.

This is the first time I've taken the kind of insult Foreman made possible for Bandy's inadequate presentation to cause, and he refused me the opportunity to rectify it. I did it for you and to prevent any embarrassment to your station, but I paid for it. I should not have to. And as you know (and if you do not know, it is against my disposition and character), I accept every one of Bandy's cutting-offs. I sat and accepted Hanes' presentation of the contents of my book as his. So, your audience got relatively little of the contents of my book and of me, and they were told that a world-famous man considers it unfit to be in the same room with me.

You did not present me or my book and you did present opposition to me, even if I had to remain silent about the things about which I would not have been silent, ~~shsh~~ had Shep not requested it.

I don't care who you present on the government side, federal, local or both, but whatever you do, I should be there to defend myself and my work and should be permitted to do this without being cut off in mid-sentence. I am willing to accept a defensive position, as long as there is adequate opportunity for defense.

You realize that this began with an offer for me to be the lone guest, that I accepted each subsequent change in format, even when I was not consulted about them. I think it not unfair to ask the same in return. Whatever happens, you will have a really memorable show and you will be "safe".

I say "whatever happens" because I think it not likely that you will find any gangup of federal, Memphis or both sides willing to face me. If they do not, then all you need say is that you extended such and such offers (exactly what you did on "The Minority Report") and present me as you first promised, thus the truly sensational content of the book.

Before your time at WNEW, when the Minority show was aired and all the Warren Commission bigwigs refused to appear on it, they asked for a "Majority Report" show and got it. When I was accepted to oppose them, as they had been invited to oppose, they surrendered their show instead of facing me alone, in a gangup. Your station failed to notify me, and I appeared. There was an agonizing night in Mel Baily's office (one of your vice presidents, a very nice guy, joined us). We worked out a new deal and a new format: I would oppose Louis Nizer, as Commission champion, with a symbolic Commission representation of at least one lawyer. Meanwhile, I debated Nizer on a Martha Dean show on WOR. It grew from a planned two hours to four and expanded from a one-shot to three repeats. They had a show that was worth pre-empting 16 commercial hours to do,

and they did give up all that commercial time and did advertise each show in the Times at least, for those ads I saw. Meanwhile, back at the WNEW ranch, there was some kind of dirty work, and I was unceremoniously dumped and my competitor, for whom I had already cut Bizer off at the teats, was hand-delivered this set-up. Having taken the WNEW word, I had set the appearance of my second book (of which I was publisher), to coincide with what you had promised me and, as your director (whose name, after three years, I regret forgetting) I think will recall I more than earned. Need I say what your station's not keeping its word cost me? And what you took from me and gave to my competition?

So, I think from the past and from the inhibitions under which you presented me last night, you do owe me either of two things: confrontation with the other side if it is presented (otherwise I'll be defamed again, misrepresented and otherwise damaged) or the fair opportunity to appear as is normal with a new book, presenting its contents and the statement of extended invitations to whomever they are extended and their refusal.

Either way, you will have a real show.

The way we did it before is, I think, a fair one. We got together the night before the taping, in Mel's office, after your staff had reached a preliminary determination of what it preferred going into, and we agreed in advance on who would open each aspect. The other side then got a chance to respond. Even with an incompetent moderator, this worked well, you syndicated the show, made <sup>money</sup> ~~money~~ on it (and to this day have never paid me what you promised if syndicated).

I hope you will agree, and that you will see it as I do, that what Shap asked of me and I did and what Bandy did to me without need, do entitle me to some such opportunity.

If you do agree, sometime soon after I am to do the Mid-Day Show, which I would expect to be a rather quite one (not knowing their format) might be a good time, and that might make a good promo for it.

In any event, all three of you were personally kind, and I do appreciate that.

One other thing: by the time you can do this, I will have slides of most of the things you could want. I do have pictures to set the stage for the telling of what happened (which can be very brief), and I do have Canale and Foreman on tape and you can get Foreman on film or videotape from several sources. And Clark, saying "no conspiracy".

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg