

CARTON 1:40

THE GUARDIAN

ALLEN, PAMELA
(RESIGNATION)

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November 24, 1968

Dear Jack, Susan and Bill:

For the past several days we have been thinking over our relationship with the Guardian, and whether we should continue to have any relationship with the Guardian.

It appears that our activities here have become an "embarrassment" to the paper. We are speaking of course of the ill-fated Nov. 21st meeting which was originally to have been a celebration of the Guardian's 20th anniversary. The success of that planned meeting, as we had stressed in other communications, was based upon the fact that Bill would be able to spend at least a week in California. We were planning a number of events in the L.A. area and here which probably would have reaped substantial (although not fantastic) financial and political benefits. However, as we also stressed, no one event in itself was an assured success. Rather it was the sequence of events which would have made Bill's trip out here worthwhile.

When we received Bill's letter advising of Billy's situation and suggesting that Bill make two brief trips here, we were immediately concerned as to whether the necessary drastic revamping of our planned program would still prove profitable to the Guardian and would be of such political value as to merit Bill's temporary separation from Billy. It was our understanding that Billy's condition was very serious and definitely not a minor consideration. Furthermore, as recently as Nov. 5 we were again reminded by Jack that the paper was in serious financial trouble. The urgency of the financial situation made us reluctant to advise Bill to come out if we could not guarantee that the paper would realize substantial income.

We called our contact in Los Angeles and were advised that the teach-in event which would barely cover Bill's plane fare, had no guarantee of a substantial attendance. Our contact, Rosalie Abrams, advised that if Bill were not able to stay more than one day, it would be better to cancel the whole thing in L.A.

We called Bill and advised him of this fact. We also pointed out that we had no guarantee that the November 21st event of itself would be financially profitable. The response to our mailing to 1300 Guardian readers had been unenthusiastic. We therefore suggested that in view of Billy's condition and the fact that we could not guarantee substantial returns from the November 21st meeting, that consideration be given to the idea of cancelling and/or changing the nature of the event. Bob stressed, however, that the final decision in this matter should be left to the C.C. Bill felt that the matter should be left to our determination.

We pointed out to Bill that in view of the fact that Eldridge Cleaver was to be a featured speaker and that he was scheduled to return to jail on November 27th, it might be appropriate to change the proposed meeting into a fund raising event for the Eldridge Cleaver Defense Fund. If this were done, the Guardian would neither make nor lose money but it would reap political benefits from cosponsoring a meeting identified with a good cause.

2/2/2/2

Bill thought we should follow up on this possibility, and accordingly the next day we contacted the Defense Fund and inquired about their interest in arranging such an event. They expressed great interest and a preliminary meeting was held with them that day. That night we again telephoned Bill to advise him of their interest. Bill thought this was a politically viable alternative to simply cancelling his appearance. In fact he seemed relieved not to have to make a trip out here at that inopportune time.

We thought this was a more realistic alternative than trying to find a speaker to replace Bill. As we were well aware Cleaver's Defense Fund was in need of every bit of support it could muster and to cosponsor a meeting with the Defense Fund appeared to be the kind of act of solidarity with which the Guardian should be identified.

When Bill agreed to this arrangement we immediately began to make plans to restructure the meeting and advise Guardian readers and supporters accordingly. Our one request to the Guardian was that an announcement be run in the November 16th issue of the paper notifying readers of the change in plans. We stressed to both Bill and Susan Sutheim the necessity for this announcement being run in that issue because California readers would not receive the November 23rd issue until after the event. This announcement was not run in the paper and no one bothered to advise us of this fact.

When we received our copy of the November 16th issue and noticed the omission, we immediately called New York to find out what happened. We were especially pissed off because the omission meant that any readers who had planned to attend the meeting but not buy tickets in advance would not be aware of its changed nature or the fact that it would be held at a different hour. It seemed to us this was a poor way to begin building reader support in California. Pam spoke first with Susan who refused to clarify the matter and instead referred her to Jack. Jack acted as though he knew nothing about the whole business. Jack's excuse for the botch-up was that "Bill would have come out". Eventually we agreed that an apology to the California readership would be run in the next issue. (A notice was run but it was not an apology, and the last sentence in that notice was an outright lie.)

We assumed that this was another typical Guardian fuck-up, and tried to telephone as many key people as possible to advise them of the changed plans. As it later turned out the daily press here played a key role in letting readers know of the change.

On November 20th we received a letter from Bill Rose in which we were advised that we had acted in haste and had caused the Guardian embarrassment. It was implied that we were not sufficiently diligent in our efforts to organize the original November 21st event, despite the fact that Pam had advised Susan that our initial activities would have to be low-key because of the lack of interest in the Guardian out here.

This letter and the preceding events forced us to face the distasteful reality that the Guardian was dumping shit on us. If there was a question of embarrassment we should have been so advised. It was simply unconscionable that the Guardian should omit running a

3/3/3/3

crucial notice that we had requested without advising us. But the tone of Bill's letter and the strange reactions we got when we called New York strongly suggest that this omission was a conscious decision and not just a fuck-up. Put crudely, the Guardian decided to forget about the notice and simply leave us to take any rap that might result.

Part of the reason we left the office in New York was that we found it virtually impossible to work in the atmosphere of suspicion, distrust and hostility that prevailed there. Also, we could not repress what some might call our "bourgeois" or "liberal" hang-ups, and consequently objected to the thoughtless and inconsiderate manner in which some members of the staff were treated as a result of pressures felt by all. Rather than quit at that time, we decided to move to another city and try working with the Guardian from a distance. Both of us agreed that the Guardian was an important paper and we wanted to continue to support it, although we could no longer stomach working in the office.

But established patterns change slowly, if at all. The Guardian sacrificed us in order to preserve its image. It preferred to leave us in the lurch rather than run an imagined risk of being "embarrassed." Perhaps on some abstract principle this action can be justified. "The revolution justifies all," some may say. This is bullshit. The revolution is no more and no better than the people who make it. To the extent that they fail, then the revolution fails. Of course it is necessary to deal forcefully with obvious enemies, but we desire to have no part of a revolution, or of a paper committed to a revolution, which abuses comrades. We will not be sacrificed for the sake of expediency.

It is not our desire to harm the Guardian, but we are also determined that the Guardian will not arbitrarily abuse us. At this point the first draft of this letter concluded with both of us announcing our resignations. However, after more discussion, we decided that it would be unfair to both the Guardian and ourselves for both of us to resign at this time. Consequently we agreed that Pam should resign effective December 15th, and Bob will continue writing for the time being, but will handle only minimal business affairs. Whether a replacement for Pam should be found is up to you.

Bob Allen

Pam Allen