

April 19
1957

Dear Frank and Maury and Hymie---
and dear dear Mama King---!

Some time ago I wrote you an angry letter. I wish I had never written it. Yet in a way I'm glad I did write it, for the result of it was that we agreed never again to mention past points of difference between us. And neither of us ever shall.

However that letter, like all angry letters, was one-sided. I remembered everything I felt you had done to me, and I forgot everything you felt you had done for me. This is a common failing of angry men, and I displayed in my letter a full share of the failing.

I forgot that just before I went to jail you gave me an advance on a script; and that immediately thereafter the court decision went against me; and that I went to jail without writing the script I had agreed to write; and that you did not ask for your money back for non-performance as you had a right to do; and that when I got out of jail the commitment still stood with you, so I stepped out of jail into a job.

I also forgot that when I recently sold you a script the terms were \$7,000 plus \$3,000 when the script went into production--- but that you paid me the whole sum, and that the script has not gone into production until this day. It was an extra \$3,000 which you knew I needed, and which you were not obliged to give me, and which you did give me.

These are the things men forget when they're angry---but they really can't be forgotten forever. I apologize for having temporarily forgotten them.

I have worked with the biggest men in this business (at least, that was their billing). I have had contracts with them sixty and seventy pages long, arranged by the shrewdest agents and the shrewdest lawyers. Not one of those big men was capable of telling the truth, and not one of those contracts was worth the paper it was written on.

The other side of the coin is this: I have worked for you for ten years on the basis of a handshake here and a letter there. And I say to you, a handshake with the King Brothers has more honor behind it, more integrity, and more value than any legal document sworn under oath by any producer or production firm in the motion picture industry.

This blacklist is going to collapse because it is rotten, immoral and illegal. I am one day going to be working openly in the motion picture industry. When that day comes, I swear to you I will never sign a term contract with any major studio. I will, proudly and by preference, do at least one picture a year for King Brothers, and I will try to make it the best picture that I have it in me to do.

You and I have never finished college, and therefore we are considered low-brows; you and I have come up the hard way, and therefore we are considered roughnecks who have no right to be in this high-minded business. Yet I look forward with relish to the time when we shall prove to the industry and to the world that we know more about making motion pictures than the whole gang of publicly-known and convicted liars, rapists, tax-evaders, dope addicts and homosexuals who presently control this business and are busily engaged in destroying it and themselves.

With deep affection,

Old Doc Abbott