

23 March 1988

Mr. Preston Kirk
Kirk Public Relations
1511 Jennifer Street
Richardson, Texas 75081

Dear Preston:

I have been advised not to sign the papers you sent me last week by certified letter, since they would allow me no latitude for argument should you initiate legal action against me. I hope when you read this letter that you can see there are at least two points of view to this whole problem, the ambiguities of which might have to be decided through some kind of arbitration.

First, let me say that I have the highest personal regard for you and that this problem between us gives me no small amount of pain. You have always performed your services well, and, as I have already told you, I do not deny that you completed the work for which I am presently charged.

The problem as I see it lies in the fact that you did not honor our original agreement which was clearly understood by both of us at those first meetings at my gallery in early May of 1987. I told you then that, inspite of all the recent publicity surrounding our project, we did not have a lot of money to spend on public relations, since most of our funds had to be allocated to pay our huge remaining debt at the bank. I remember telling you that you were a necessity that I couldn't afford. I then told you that I could set aside \$5,000 to work with you on a campaign following up the Dallas Life article and highlighting the forthcoming Sotheby's sale of our Audubon painting. I clearly told you that once those original funds were exhausted, you and I had to sit down face to face and discuss a definite amount — whatever might be available — to be used for further public relations. When Scott and I returned from New York you called me and told me that \$700 remained in our budget and we then discussed about what to do as a follow-up to the CNN and forthcoming People Magazine publicity. I told you to proceed but to call and tell me when we should meet to set a new budget as I was extremely busy with so many other important aspects of our huge project.

We never did meet for this purpose, and that is where subsequent problems arose. I certainly was shocked when you billed me for such a large amount and called to ask for payment. At that time you told me that you were trying to keep your charges under \$2,500 per month! Preston, we never discussed expenditures of this magnitude. You never called me to tell me that your monthly work

would cost this much, because, if you had done so, I would have halted all your efforts on our behalf then and there. We simply did not have that kind of money to spend.

Preston, I think you made the mistake of believing your own press releases about the success of our project. Although I was very "up front" with you about our other financial obligations and the huge cost overruns of our publication, I now think that you really didn't believe me. I have not checked my records, but I doubt that we sold more than a dozen books because of the CNN and People Magazine articles, and your subsequent efforts for which you are currently billing me produced no sales whatsoever. In fact they may have cost me a \$2,500 book — the copy I sent on your advice to Bryan Johnson, critic for Book Arts Review in Virginia.

I realize that when you and Dale honored us with your presence at our art show last November, you checked out our painting sales. No doubt you concluded that the Gentlings were really cleaning up. Of the \$70,000 in sales (\$50,000 of which came from two special pictures) Scott and I were allowed to keep only \$10,000. Of that amount I had to pay \$7,000 immediately to my warehouse landlord for back rent. Scott and I were left with a little less than \$3,000 for all our efforts! And we are still paying off the bank.

Although we sold more art at that show than all the other Fort Worth galleries showing that night put together, our exhibition-sale was in many ways a failure. We sold barely half the paintings offered for sale, the worst such sales record we have ever had. It was a clear indication of the very hard times of the Fort Worth economy.

I know that you are suffering these same hard times, and I want to do the best by you that I can. The truth of the matter, whether you believe me or not, is that my brother and I are currently living very close to the line. I simply do not have the money to pay you at this time, and I don't know when I'll be able to get it. I would very much like us to remain friends and even work together in the future, because I genuinely like you and respect and need your talents. Perhaps we could make a trade-out for something — a painting, books or prints that would resolve this painful episode and set things right between us. I would certainly like to discuss this FACE TO FACE and put our relationship on a smoother course. The obligation that I recognize here is a personal and moral one. That this should be a legal obligation is, I think, a matter for dispute.

Sincerely,

