

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 17, 1999

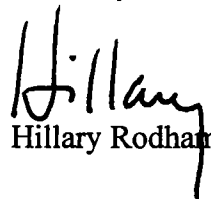
Peter Yarrow
PY Productions
27 West 67th Street
New York, NY 10023

Dear Peter:

I had the opportunity to view your moving video, "Don't Laugh At Me," last weekend. What an effective way to reach into the hearts of young people and teach them the lessons of tolerance and kindness. I was pleased to hear of your plans to distribute the video through children's and education organizations, and hope that it will receive the wide audience that it deserves. If you send another copy, I will share it with the new nonprofit organization being formed to address the problem of youth violence which the President will announce August 27th.

As always, you have found a way to use music to teach us all important lessons about our times, and how we can make a difference. Thank you for this piece, and for all you have done and will continue to do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hillary", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Hillary Rodham Clinton

*Shirley*

PY Productions
27 West 67th Street
New York, NY 10023
(212) 580-5308
(212) 874-1973 fax

DATE: August 11, 1999
TO: Melanne Verveer, Shirley Sigawa
COMPANY: Office of the First Lady
FAX: 202-456-6244
FROM: Salome Brant (assistant to Peter Yarrow)
RE: "Don't Laugh At Me"

Total Pages To Follow: 0

Please contact (212) 580-5308 if there are any problems with this transmission

Dear Melanne and Shirley,

I cannot tell you how appreciative I am of your efforts to present the "Don't Laugh At Me" video to the First Lady. I know that her support in this effort could make a huge difference in the ongoing attempt to sensitize children to the damaging effects of ridicule, name calling and shaming. I truly believe that the First Lady's involvement and support of this effort can have a powerful effect on it's potential for success.

I particularly want to thank you for being heartfelt and persistent in bringing the video to Mrs. Clinton's attention and thank you for enduring my endless phone calls. You've both been wonderfully supportive.

My enormous thanks to both of you.

Warmest personal regards.

Peter Yarrow

PY/sb (dictated but not read)



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New York, NY 10023
(212) 580-5308
(212) 874-1973 fax

*Copy for
Ruby*

DATE: July 30, 1999
TO: Shirley Sigawa
COMPANY: The White House
FAX: 202-456-6244
FROM: Salome Brant (assistant to Peter Yarrow)
RE: Letter To Hillary Clinton

Total Pages To Follow: 2

Please contact (212) 580-5308 if there are any problems with this transmission

Dear Ms. Sigawa,

Here is the letter that Peter wrote to the First Lady. Please call us if you need anything at all.

Yours,

Salome Brant
(assistant to Peter Yarrow)



PETER YARROW
27 W. 67 ST.
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10023

July 12, 1999

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton
The White House
Old Executive Office Building
Attn: Melanne Verveer

Via Fascimile: 202-456-6244

Dear Mrs. Clinton

Sometimes a song like "Blowing In The Wind" or "If I Had A Hammer" can strike a chord in the national consciousness that encourages a sea change in social awareness or political action. I believe that this can happen again and I'm writing to request your support to help make sure that it does.

I am sending on to you a remarkable three and one half minute video of a song, "Don't Laugh At Me" that, I believe, if distributed throughout America's schools accompanied by a teaching guide, can profoundly diminish the epidemic of ridicule, shaming and disrespect among our children that leads to depression, suicide (the #1 cause of death among teenagers) and violence, such as we've tragically witnessed in Littleton. The message of "Don't Laugh At Me" encourages some of the best traditions of America; compassion, generosity and respect. Please watch it and I think you'll understand.

You will note that the video includes the logos of Special Olympics, Save The Children, Children's Defense Fund and Variety Clubs, all of whom are honored to be named and connected to the song, it's message, the video and the advocacy it promotes.

I have contacted Linda Lantieri, the head of Resolving Conflict Creatively (you may be familiar with her book, "Waging Peace In Our Schools" with a preface by Marian Wright Edelman), who will help create a teacher's guide that will allow teachers to engage students in a several week-long project of discussion and sensitization, using the video as a point of departure. A

gifted elementary school teacher and friend of mine, Marna Biederman, has already done so on her own, and reports that it has been one of the most remarkable projects she's ever shared with her students. The response was amazing! Linda Lantieri feels, after showing the video to numerous colleagues in her field, that it's really important to have follow up by the teacher to channel and guide the emotional responses the video elicits in adults and children alike.

I am presently raising the money (approximately \$60,000) in the hopes of distributing the video to every school in the nation. To facilitate such distribution, I'll be contacting the National Associations of Elementary School Principals and Secondary School Principals, The National Education Association, Educators for Social Responsibility and the Southern Poverty Law Center, among others. I've had contact with all of these organizations in the past, or performed for them. In fact, Peter, Paul & Mary recently performed for the National Association of Elementary School Principals and when we sang "Don't Laugh At Me" they stopped the show with a prolonged standing ovation. Later we were inundated with requests for copies of the song for use in the classroom.

Please do watch the video and consider any and all of the following: could you please consider supporting this project by sending a letter encouraging our efforts, putting us in touch with various people or organizations who might advance or underwrite the effort and/or allow us to make a video of you speaking about the importance of the effort from your perspective, as you so wonderfully did with Representative Rosa DeLauro for the Connecticut Hospice, of which I am an Honorary (and very active) Board Member?

Thank you enormously in advance for your consideration of this worthy project. Your Chief of Staff, Melanne Verveer, and her associate Shirley Sigawa, have been particularly helpful. I'm most grateful to them.

I can be reached at 970-728-6284 until July 15, and through my office in New York at any time, at 212-580-5308.

Sincerely,

Peter Yarrow

PY/sb

Format
→ MV → HEC
to day



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New York, NY 10023
(212) 580-5308
(212) 874-1973 fax

DATE: August 10, 1999
TO: Melanne Verveer, Shirley Sigawa
COMPANY: Office of the First Lady
FAX: 202-456-6244
FROM: Salome Brant (assistant to Peter Yarrow)
RE: "Don't Laugh At Me"

Total Pages To Follow: 5

Please contact (212) 580-5308 if there are any problems with this transmission

Dear Melanne and Shirley,

We hope thatr soon the First Lady will be able to review the video. The following will update you on the most current activity. It's becoming a very broad spectrum network and we're all very excited. .

My thanks and all the best,

Peter

PY/sb (dictated but not read)



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August 10, 1999

UPDATE: "Don't Laugh At Me" PSA/Teacher's Guide Project

Note: Conversations and developments occur each day and progress in each of the areas listed below is very rapid at this point.

Southern Poverty Law Center

Joe Levin, President and CEO, has viewed the tape with top staff.

They are extremely enthusiastic about pursuing the "Don't Laugh At Me" project. They have offered the following help:

- **Feature articles in their publication "Teaching Tolerance"**
- **Help in any way to create the teacher's guide (they have researched the work of Linda Lantieri and are very impressed with her achievements in her organization, "Resolving Conflict Creatively". They are anxious to work alongside and help her, in any way).**
- **Post info on the project on their website. Possibly post video and Teacher's Guide for free downloading from the net.**
- **Help estimate project costs.**
- **Encourage teacher network of 600,000 to order the package (free).**

Opinions Expressed:

- **Very excited about the possibility of using music as a means for spreading the message.**

- They feel that lower and middle school students will respond very strongly. High School students may be harder to reach, but a worthwhile effort nevertheless.
- They advise to not send out the package (free) without a specific request by a teacher, school, principal, etc. Otherwise, it may not be used.
- They propose to explore the possibility of downloading the video and the Teacher's Guide from their website by schools with appropriate technology (small number now, but will grow over time).
- They advise deleting the logos at the end for school distribution and possibly deleting the bookends of Eunice Shriver's statements (subject to discussion).

Others in the Southern Poverty Law Center who are enthusiastic about the project.

- Jim Carnes, Director of "Teaching Tolerance" project
- Jim Carrier, Acting Director of Tolerance USA
- Richard Cohen, Veep of Programs, Legal Director

McGraw Hill Publishing Company

Peter had meetings and phone conversations with:

Charlotte K. Frank (former Director of Curriculum at the New York City Board of Education), Vice President in charge of Research and Development, Educational & Professional Publishing Group.

Vince Lawrence (Manager for Music Products, School Publishing Unit of School Marketing department).

Both have viewed the video and discussed possible plans of action with Peter.

- Resolving Conflict Creatively (Linda Lantieri) will work with input from McGraw Hill (and possibly from the Southern Poverty Law Center) to develop a Teacher's Guide to accompany the video.
- McGraw Hill to help distribute to their vast network of educators. Further conversations as to how to facilitate such distribution will take place.
- Plan to have Peter make a presentation on October 22, 1999 to the Urban Music Educators Conference, made up of approximately 150 supervisors, administrators and policy makers from all over the United States.
- Vince will be the "hands on" interface between McGraw Hill, Peter and the project and have special input in helping create the Teacher's Guide.

- Charlotte Frank points out that the "Don't Laugh At Me" project dovetails with the "Character Education" project, a national priority initiative involving McGraw Hill.
- Charlotte and Vince are in the process of reviewing the Southern Poverty Law Center's "Teaching Tolerance" material and Southern Poverty Law Center has received McGraw Hill's materials in preparation for possible interface on the project.

National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)

Marguerite Leishman is Director of Conventions for the NAESP, which has 28,500 members.

- Possible areas of linkage/support include the following:

NAESP Newsletter articles and information on the project and how members/principals can obtain the video and Teacher's Guide.

Peter to possibly perform and present the project at NAESP Convention March 18-21, 2000.

Mailings to members could possibly include a project flier/order form.

- Marguerite played the video for her 5-year old daughter who now asks to see it daily. Meaningful mother-daughter conversations have taken place which demonstrates the great potential of the video as a launching point for sensitization, even for one so young as Marguerite's daughter.
- Possible inclusion of information about "Don't Laugh At Me" project in NAESP's "Report To Parents" newsletter which is sent to members, then duplicated by members and given to parents and is avidly read, according to Marguerite.
- Marguerite mentioned that Linda Lantieri (Resolving Conflict Creatively) who will take a lead role in the creation of the Teacher's Guide has been a frequent speaker at past NAESP Conventions.
- Brainstorming for further outreach to other principals' associations and educational organizations may follow.
- Peter to possibly perform, and present the "Don't Laugh At Me" project, at the VSDA Convention in Atlantic City, October 5th, 1999. Production and interface of Peter's participation to be supervised by Dawn Weiner.

Video Software Dealer's Association (VSDA)

The VSDA represents 35,000 software dealers/distributors worldwide and all major and independent motion picture studios.

Dawn Weiner is former Chairman of the VSDA with 12 years in executive positions at VSDA. Dawn is presently Chairman of the Board of Enchanted Rock Films in Austin, Texas. Dawn has testified in Congressional hearings resulting in VSDA "Pledge To Parents"; responsible TV watching for children.

Linkage/support:

- Include the video in "loops" playing on TVs at the entrance of video stores throughout America
- Provide the video and Teacher's guide free, or at an at-cost basis, to those requesting it in video stores.
- Outreach to major and independent studios to include the video at the head (or tail) of all video and film releases (Dawn was an organizer of "Fast Forward", a video included in this fashion, linked with Jeff Bridges' project relating to hunger in America).

Attorney General Janet Reno

Peter spoke to the Attorney General about the "Don't Laugh At Me" project after Peter, Paul & Mary's August 7th Wolfrap performance. Ms. Reno noted the relevance of the song and video and the relationships between shootings in Columbine, the tragedy of Mathew Sheperd's killing - and the relationship between the song's message and ridiculing, depression, suicide, violent acting out by children as opposed to respect, tolerance, acceptance and community.

Peter looks forward to shortly discussing linkage/support to the Justice Department network and related efforts with Janet after she reviews the video and project conception material.

John Garamendi / Discovery Channels

John Garamendi is a Partner in The Yucaipa Companies, formerly second in Command under Bruce Babbitt at the United States State Department, Department of the Interior.

Through John's daughter, Genet Garamendi, Publicity Director for "The Learning Channel" (TLC), a sister network of the Discovery Channel, exploration will be made for use of the video and Teaching Guide in TLC's programming. Peter will shortly be conferencing with Carol Blymire, point person for the Discovery

Channel's "Hate & Violence, No Simple Answers" national initiative. Peter will also be speaking to Jonathon Rogers, President of Discovery Networks, which includes the Discovery Channel, The Learning Channel and a nationwide network interface among schools for tele-teaching and distribution of video educational material.

Linkages are to be explored.

Ad Council of America

Ad Council endorsement provides the Advertising Industry's "seal of approval" for PSAs and virtually assures a PSA of most serious consideration for play by radio and TV stations.

Peter, Paul & Mary have worked with the Ad Council on a video and radio PSA campaign relating to gun violence against children, "Where Have All The Children Gone", which received remarkable play and garnered a Mobius Award, one of the advertising field's most distinguished honors.

Endorsement by the Ad Council of the "Don't Laugh At Me" PSA video and radio broadcast campaign is being sought. Murray Gaylord (Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the Ad Council) is very encouraging about possible endorsement of the project by the Ad Council. The application is currently being completed.

Helpful suggestions by Murray Gaylord are being implemented, including the optical removal of "corporate signage" in one shot of the video, extension of the logos at the videos end 3-1/2 or 4 seconds and possible inclusion of a theme phrase characterizing the campaign.