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July 13, 1989

Mr. Stuart Tooredman
World Service Office, Inc.
P.O. Box 9999
Van Nuys, Cal. 91409-9999

Re: Alleged Copyright/Trademark Infringement

Dear Stuart:

This is in response to your letter of July 10, 1990, as well as to the certified letter of July 2, 1990 from Wagner & Middlebrook regarding duplication of the revised 3rd edition of the basic text of Narcotics Anonymous.

When I received the Wagner & Middlebrook letter, I was extremely troubled by three points. First, the fact that I had never even heard about, let alone seen, the subject text meant that the letter was being sent in a shotgun approach to every conceivable trusted servant in N.A.; this was confirmed the following day at the North Dade A.S.C. when it was determined that not only I as Chair, but also the Vice Chair and A.S.R. had received certified letters. The use of this procedure, at a hard cost of \$2.75 together with whatever legal fees were incurred, supports the perception held by much of the Fellowship that the W.S.O. has no concept of fiscal responsibility whatsoever. This perception was supported by the receipt several days later, by DHL overnight mail, of your letter apologizing for the first letter. In my experience, overnight delivery costs a minimum of \$7.00, meaning that this whole exercise cost the Fellowship thousands of dollars which could clearly have been better spent.

The second point that troubled me even more is the fact that at least in this instance, little if any consideration was given by the W.S.O. to the Traditions. Clearly, if some law firm in Glendale is writing me as a member of Narcotics Anonymous, my anonymity doesn't count for much. The 12th Tradition does not state that anonymity can be broken to the W.S.O.'s "agents". The fact that the W.S.O. apparently gave no thought to the principle that anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions likewise supports the perception at the group level that service at the world level operates more on the basis of money, property, and prestige than on the primary purpose of carrying the message.

This brings me to the final point, the document which is the basis of this controversy. Without knowing exactly the manner in which the various trademarks and copyrights mentioned in the Wagner & Middlebrook letter are held, I am not able to determine if their statement of the law and facts is correct. It was always my impression that the W.S.O. held these rights in trust for the entire Fellowship. While I am not an intellectual property attorney, if this is the case, it would seem that duplication of materials by a member of the Fellowship for free distribution within the Fellowship would not be illegal. While I have not personally been engaged in such duplication of materials, it again seems to me that questions of money, property, and prestige may be playing a more important role in this dispute than the primary purpose of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

I find the tone of Atty. Middlebrook's letter to be threatening and insulting. I do not intend to respond to or with the questionnaire accompanying the letter, nor does the prospect of litigation cause me any great fear. However, the fact that members of our world service committees are threatening institution of legal action against other members of Narcotics Anonymous to restrain them from distributing free literature which, contrary to Mrs. Middlebrook's statement, was in fact the last edition of the basic text to be "Fellowship Approved", causes me a tremendous amount of pain. Had this matter been allowed to resolve itself according to the spiritual principles and traditions of this Fellowship, my guess is it would have shortly died of its own weight. By your actions, overkill, and threats, it appears you have now converted the relatively minor matter of an unorthodox group or area into a controversy which may in fact create permanent schisms in Narcotics Anonymous.

It may be that such is God's will in this situation. It has been my experience that controversy, while painful, is often healthy. At the very least, the argument has caused a great many addicts to go back to their literature and review it for the first time in a long time. It is my hope that the Fellowship will grow from all of this. In any event, you have certainly given us much to discuss around our homes, business meetings, and service conferences.

With my thanks for that, I remain,

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'J. J. ...', written over the typed words 'Very truly yours,'.

cc: Theresa Wagner Middlebrook, Esq.