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THIN MAN FILMS 

Renen Schorr  
The Sam Spiegel Film & TV School,  
Yad Haruzim 4, floor 3,  
Talpiot Jerusalem  
Israel

12<sup>th</sup> October 2010

Dear Renen,

When, at our lunch on 6<sup>th</sup> April this year, I reluctantly agreed to come to Israel, you told me I was very brave.

Now the true calibre of my braveness is on the line. After a great deal of difficult and conscientious soul-searching, I have decided to cancel my forthcoming trip.

As you know, I have always had serious misgivings about coming, but I allowed myself to be persuaded by your sincerity and your commitment. And it is because of those special qualities of yours that I am especially sorry to have to let you down. But I have absolutely no choice. I cannot come, I do not want to come, and I am not coming.

On 31<sup>st</sup> May, 8 weeks after our lunch, the Israeli attack on the flotilla took place. As I watched the world very properly condemn this atrocity, I almost cancelled. I now wish I had, and blame my cowardice for not having done so.

Since then, your government has gone from bad to worse. I need not itemise all that has taken place, but I can tell you that I have become every-increasingly uncomfortable about what would unquestionably appear as my implicit support for Israel, were I to fulfill my promise and to come.

I had still not faced up to the prospect of pulling out until a few weeks ago, but the resumption of illegal building on the West Bank made me start to consider it seriously.

And now we have the Loyalty Oath. This is the last straw – quite apart from the ongoing criminal blockade of Gaza, not mention the endless shooting of innocent people there, including juveniles.

When you first proposed my visit some considerable time ago, it was to include public appearances, meetings with politicians, etc. But I made it clear to you that I wanted to come only to teach at the school. You persuaded me, very legitimately, that cinematheque appearances would be appropriate, and I agreed.

What I very stupidly and naively did not anticipate, and I regret this deeply, is how high-profile the whole event would turn out to be.

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But in any case, I am now in an untenable position, which I must confront according to my conscience.

I am very sorry, both to let you down, and to leave this so late. You and Dana have been most helpful, courteous and understanding throughout the preparations, and, on a personal level, I'm most disappointed that my sons and I will now not spend time with you.

It goes without saying, too, that, committed to film education as I am, I feel very bad about letting down your students.

But there are wider considerations, and I have to do what must be done.

If you and I should live long enough to see peace, a just solutions for Palestinians, and Gaza restored to humanity, I will be first in line to visit the school.

But for now, this is my position. It is, of course, non-negotiable, and I'm truly sorry.

Yours affectionately,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike", followed by a long, sweeping horizontal flourish that extends to the right.

Mike