

Mr. TAHA. I will say the statements and those figures are complete fabrication and have no truth whatsoever in them as far as I am concerned—my operation is concerned—and my customers are not only two or three public assistance people. I have as customers judges; I have customers from the Congress and the Senate, their staffs. I have some ex-Presidential aides and they shop weekly in my store. I have known them for 10 and 12 years, and I have been managing this store since 1955.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Do you cash many checks on the first of the month?

Mr. TAHA. I do cash, I would say, about, roughly, a hundred checks, but I will say I believe they won't bring—the value of the checks, they do not have any effect on the volume of the business. But, from the value of the check, they are, on the average, I will say, out of 110 checks, maybe, which I may receive—and I made a survey, as a matter of fact, last month—some spend about a dollar, which averages about 2 percent, maybe, or 3 percent.

Except for a few people, when Mr. Miley mentioned that they ride from different areas and come to your store, I have some customers who come in every month from a very far distance to shop, and I say they are the best spenders out of all the public-assistance people.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Do you ever sell any products above the book price?

Mr. TAHA. Never.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Never have?

Mr. TAHA. Never. I would not work for any human being or any company for one single minute if I had to do that. I would not—my reputation and my company's, I believe, is of much integrity and businesslike with everybody involved.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. It is against Safeway's rules to sell—

Mr. TAHA. Absolutely.

Mr. ROSENTHAL (continuing). Above the book price?

Mr. TAHA. Absolutely.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. But, if on the first of the month you had a flurry of customers, you raised prices, you could increase your net profit that way; is that correct?

Mr. TAHA. I wouldn't do it.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. But, if there was a manager in a store who was so inclined, he could do it?

Mr. TAHA. It could happen; yes.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. Have you ever heard any manager—

Mr. TAHA. I never heard—

Mr. ROSENTHAL (continuing). In any other store besides Safeway—

Mr. TAHA. I never heard of it; never.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. How much food-stamp money do you take in a month?

Mr. TAHA. I told you a while ago it's about \$2,500 to \$3,000.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. And do you get that at the end of the month?

Mr. TAHA. During the month, for instance, you can deposit—like yesterday, we deposited \$103, and every day you deposit the receipts of the food stamps and that will show exactly how much you get.

Mr. ROSENTHAL. You are allowed to reduce prices if you want.