

Complaint

IN THE MATTER OF

BALLANTINE BOOKS, INC.

CONSENT ORDER, ETC., IN REGARD TO THE ALLEGED VIOLATION OF SEC. 2(d)
OF THE CLAYTON ACT*Docket C-161. Complaint, July 11, 1962—Decision, July 11, 1962*

Consent order requiring a New York City publisher of paperback books to cease discriminating in price in violation of Sec. 2(d) of the Clayton Act by paying promotional allowances to certain retail customers—some of whom operated chain retail outlets in railroad, airport, and bus terminals, and outlets in hotels and office buildings, and others of whom furnished services in connection with the handling of respondent's publications such as taking purchase orders and distributing, billing, and collecting—while not making such payments available on proportionally equal terms to their competitors, including drug chains, grocery chains, and other newsstands.

COMPLAINT

The Federal Trade Commission, having reason to believe that the party respondent named in the caption hereof and hereinafter more particularly designated and described, has violated and is now violating the provisions of subsection (d) of Section 2 of the Clayton Act (U.S.C. Title 15, Sec. 13), as amended by the Robinson-Patman Act, hereby issues its complaint stating its charges with respect thereto as follows:

PARAGRAPH 1. Respondent Ballantine Books, Inc., is a corporation organized and doing business under the laws of the State of New York with its office and principal place of business located at 101 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. Said respondent, among other things, has been engaged and is presently engaged in the business of publishing and distributing various publications including paperback books under copyrighted titles. Respondent's sales of publications average four hundred fifty thousand copies per month.

PAR. 2. Publications published by respondent are distributed by said respondent to customers through its national distributor, Kable News Company, hereinafter referred to as Kable.

Kable has acted and is now acting as national distributor for the publications of several independent publishers including said respondent. Kable, as a national distributor of publications published by said respondent and other independent publishers, has performed and is now performing various services for these publishers. Among the services performed and still being performed by Kable for the benefit of these publishers are the taking of purchase orders and the distributing, billing and collecting for such publications from customers.

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Kable has also negotiated promotional arrangements with the retail customers of the publishers it represents, on behalf of and with the knowledge and approval of said publishers, including respondent.

In its capacity as national distributor for said respondent, in dealing with the customers of said respondent, Kable served and is now serving as a conduit or intermediary for the sale, distribution and promotion of publications published by said respondent.

PAR. 3. Respondent Ballantine Books, Inc., through its conduit or intermediary, Kable, has sold and distributed and now sells and distributes its publications in substantial quantities in commerce, as "commerce" is defined in the Clayton Act, as amended, to competing customers located throughout various States of the United States and in the District of Columbia.

PAR. 4. In the course and conduct of its business in commerce, respondent Ballantine Books, Inc., has paid or contracted for the payment of something of value to or for the benefit of some of its customers as compensation or in consideration for services or facilities furnished, or contracted to be furnished, by or through such customers in connection with the handling, sale, or offering for sale of publications sold to them by said respondent. Such payments or allowances were not made available on proportionally equal terms to all other customers of said respondent competing in the distribution of such publications.

PAR. 5. As an example of the practices alleged herein, respondent Ballantine Books, Inc., has made payments or allowances to certain retail customers who operate chain retail outlets in railroad, airport and bus terminals, as well as outlets located in hotels and office buildings. Said respondent has also made payments or allowances to retail customers who operate drug chains and grocery chains. Such payments or allowances were not offered or otherwise made available on proportionally equal terms to all other customers of respondent competing with the favored customers in the sale and distribution of publications of said respondent. Among the favored customers receiving payments in 1960, and during the first six months of 1961, which were not offered to other competing customers in connection with the purchase and sale of respondent's publications were:

Customer:	<i>Approximate Amount Received</i>	
	<i>1960</i>	<i>1961 (Jan.-June)</i>
Interstate Hosts, Los Angeles, Calif.-----	\$930.00	\$1,050.00
Fred Harvey, Chicago, Ill.-----	708.00	303.00
Greyhound Post Houses, Forest Park, Ill.-----	208.00	97.00
Drug Fair, Washington, D.C.-----	1,032.00	706.00

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Respondent made said payments to its favored customers on the basis of individual negotiations. Among said favored customers such payments were not made on proportionally equal terms.

PAR. 6. The acts and practices of respondent as alleged above are in violation of the provisions of subsection (d) of Section 2 of the Clayton Act, as amended.

DECISION AND ORDER

The Commission having heretofore determined to issue its complaint charging the respondent named in the caption hereof with violation of subsection (d) of Section 2 of the Clayton Act, as amended, and the respondent having been served with notice of said determination and with a copy of the complaint the Commission intended to issue, together with a proposed form of order; and

The respondent and counsel for the Commission having thereafter executed an agreement containing a consent order, an admission by the respondent of all the jurisdictional facts set forth in the complaint to issue herein, a statement that the signing of said agreement is for settlement purposes only and does not constitute an admission by respondent that the law has been violated as set forth in such complaint, and waivers and provisions as required by the Commission's rules; and

The Commission, having considered the agreement, hereby accepts same, issues its complaint in the form contemplated by said agreement, makes the following jurisdictional findings, and enters the following order:

1. Respondent, Ballantine Books, Inc., is a corporation organized, existing and doing business under and by virtue of the laws of the State of New York, with its office and principal place of business located at 101 Fifth Avenue, in the city of New York, State of New York.

2. The Federal Trade Commission has jurisdiction of the subject matter of this proceeding and of the respondent.

ORDER

It is ordered, That respondent Ballantine Books, Inc., a corporation, its officers, employees, agents and representatives, directly or through any corporate or other device, in connection with the distribution, sale or offering for sale of publications including paperback books in commerce, as "commerce" is defined in the amended Clayton Act, do forthwith cease and desist from:

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Paying or contracting for the payment of an allowance or anything of value to, or for the benefit of, any customer as compensation or in consideration for any services or facilities furnished by or through such customer in connection with the handling, offering for sale, sale or distribution of publications including paperback books published, sold or offered for sale by respondent, unless such payment or consideration is affirmatively offered and otherwise made available on proportionally equal terms to all of its other customers competing with such favored customer in the distribution of such publications including paperback books.

The word "customer" as used above shall be deemed to mean anyone who purchases from Ballantine Books, Inc., acting either as principal or agent, or from a distributor or wholesaler where such transaction with such purchaser is essentially a sale by such respondent, acting either as principal or agent.

It is further ordered, That the respondent herein shall, within sixty (60) days after service upon it of this order, file with the Commission a report in writing setting forth in detail the manner and form in