President Harry S. Truman wrote a letter to Roman Bohnen, an actor who was cast as President Truman in the film The Beginning or the End, an MGM docu-drama about the atomic bomb. After a private screening in late 1946, Truman let it be known that he disapproved of his portrayal regarding the decision to drop atomic bombs on Japan. On December 2, 1946, Bohnen wrote Truman that he should portray himself. On December 12, Truman responded to Bohnen’s letter, but declined the chance to portray himself, and said that he was “sure you (Bohnen) will do the part creditably”. Ultimately, the scenes were re-shot with actor Art Baker re-cast as Truman. (Wikipedia, 2011)

December 12, 1946

My Dear Mr. Bohnen,

I appreciate very much our letter of December second and thank you for suggesting to Mr. Mayer of MGM that I become a movie star. In the first place I haven’t the talent to be a movie star and, in the second place, I am sure you will do the part creditably.

The only objection to the film, as it was, was that it appeared to have been a snap judgement program. It was anything but that—the use of the atomic bomb was deliberated for long hours and many days and weeks, and it was discussed with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy and the General Staff of the Allied Armies, as well as with Mr. Churchill and Mr. Atlee.

When it was finally demonstrated in New Mexico that the operation of the bomb was a successful one, it was decided to give the Japanese ample warning before the bomb was dropped. I have no qualms about it whatever for the simple reason that it was believed the dropping of not more than two of these bombs would bring the war to a close. The Japanese in their conduct of the war had been vicious and cruel savages and I came to the conclusion that if two hundred and fifty thousand young Americans could be saved from slaughter the bomb should be dropped, and it was.

A survey was made and the cities on which the bombs were dropped were those which were devoted almost exclusively to the manufacture of ammunition and weapons of destruction.
As I said before, the only objection to the film was that I was made to appear as if no consideration had been given to the effects or result of dropping the bomb—that is an absolutely wrong impression.

Sincerely yours,

Harry S. Truman

Mr. Roman Bohnen
10537 Valley Spring Lane
North Hollywood, California