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July 10, 1995

Mr. Ken Follett
London ENGLAND
BY FAX: 011.44.71.352.5168

Dear Ken,

As I told you in my fax last week, this outline for **THE THIRD TWIN** works far better than any of your previous ones; and I'm happy that you've decided to make Berisford a point-of-view character. It's a crucial step towards generating the kind of cat-and-mouse action that this kind of thriller needs.

Your next step, it seems to me, is doing some work with your villainous characters, all of whom are at this stage shadowy to me (as I expect they are to you) and who will become more interesting once you develop them.

Most of my detailed notes are hand-written on the outline, which I am returning to you separately by courier; so this letter will deal with only a few major points.

I suggest that in lieu of your present first scene, you consider one in which Berisford might be grilling Proust about his background. Berisford would be doing this as a psychologist and intimate friend. Barck is about to commit huge expenditures to launch Proust's campaign; and Barck and his backers need to make sure that no mistresses, illegitimate kids or Whitewaters will creep out of the woodwork once Proust is out there and starting to solicit votes.

Such an interrogation could be done in a friendly and bantering way; and in the course of it, we could learn a fair bit about all three of these characters. What would emerge, of course, is that the only thing they have to worry about is their cloning experiment of twenty or so years ago. Barck might have all but forgotten about it; but now he might hesitate to commit to the campaign, since it could prove to be troublesome, especially since some of their support comes from the extreme religious right wing, who would be scandalized by such information. But then Berisford backed by Proust might succeed in dissuading Barck. Berisford's most persuasive argument might be what he has to say about his own son, how well he's turned out, etc.; so that there really is nothing to worry about with the other clones. And in the course of this scene, too, you might begin to work in some of the information about the merger.

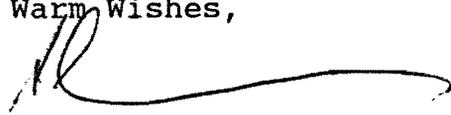
I'm a little concerned that Jeannie, who after all is your main character, does not come on until the third chapter. If you can work it out, I would prefer to see her scene or some version of her scene start the book, and then have this followed with the Berisford one.

Also, I still very much like the idea of starting the book with Jeannie and Berisford being lovers. I think that this would give a whole personal dimension and a kind of poignancy to their conflict which it now doesn't really have. What especially appeals to me would be a situation in which she has jettisoned him, but he, while still carrying a torch for her, has to work against her. He would then be conflicted, and it would make him, I think, much more interesting. If you were to accept this suggestion, then Budgen would be largely extraneous, except that you might combine his character with that of the provost.

As I suggested in my last letter, and also as a way of weaving the Lisa-rape subplot into the story, I suggest that you make Lisa into Jeannie's chief graduate assistant. In some scenes, then, Lisa could function as a confidante; and then it would make much more sense for Jeannie to become as involved as she is in what happens to Lisa.

Well, Ken, there's the tip of the iceberg; and the rest will be with you tomorrow. Call me please next week, or I'll call you, and I'll be eager to go over with you these thoughts and those on your outline and see what you've decided.

Warm Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'Al' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that tapers off to the right.

Al