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*Friday, 12 January 1996--14:57pm*

*Number of pages including this one: 3*

*To: Zuckerman residence*

*Copy to : Writers House*

**PLEASE GIVE THIS FAX TO AL**

Now I see exactly what you mean.

The thrust of the story is that Jeannie is uncovering Berisford's secret, and he tries to stop her. The clones' attacks on Jeannie do not happen *because* of what Jeannie is doing, or because of Berisford's attempts to stop her. They are tangential.

You want the attacks to be *intended* by Berisford as a means of obstructing Jeannie's investigation; and you want her to see them as such. Then they will be integral to the thrust of the main plot.

I think you raised a very similar point at outline stage, and I guess I hoped I could work it out in the writing; but I haven't.

I see three ways to deal with this, all of them flawed.

- 1) The rapes could be part of Berisford's attempt to shut Jeannie up. But--
  - a) It's a funny way to obstruct an investigation, to have the

investigator raped;

- b) The only thing that gives Berisford any humanity is his love for his "son" and his protective feelings toward the other clones; so would he expose them to danger in this way?
- c) For this to work as a threat Berisford would have to admit he is responsible for the rapes.

2) I could change attempted rape to attempted murder. This suffers from problems 1b and 1c above. More crucially, the whole idea of clones who are bred to be superefficient assassins is old-fashioned and hackneyed and frankly doesn't interest me enough.

3) I could drop the whole idea of threats from the clones, and concentrate on Berisford's legitimate attempts to shut Jeannie up by firing her, etc. Unfortunately the rape threat is fundamental to some of the most dramatic scenes in the book: the attack on Jeannie in her car, the scene in which she fears Steve is actually Harvey, and the scene in which Harvey pretends to be Steve.

On balance I'm inclined to try to find a way to make the rapes part of Berisford's strategy in some way.

I see as separate the issue of the "size of the stake": the implications of Berisford's crime and how world-shaking they are. It seems to me that what is at stake is Jeannie's whole life, in the sense of everything she has striven and sacrificed for; and I ought to be able to make that enough. Furthermore I'm reluctant to take this novel to a radically lower level of plausibility, which would

be the danger of giving any of the characters superduper powers. But once again I still have an open mind.

That's where I am at the end of today.

I have made plane and hotel reservations so I will see you on Monday 22 January, at whatever time suits you. No doubt we will talk/fax some more before then. By the way, I'm at our cottage in Stevenage until midday tomorrow: phone 01438 351 519, fax 01438 312 482.

Warmest regards,

Ken.