

# Writers House

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Mr. Ken Follett  
London

*by fax*

Dear Ken,

I was sorry to learn about the death of your mother. My clearest memory of her was at the dinner the night before your wedding, and she struck me as being poised and most gracious and very proud of you. In recent years, I heard about what great difficulties she was causing your dad, and I suppose that her going must be a pain and also a relief. I've been through that with both my parents, and you have my sympathy.

The good news is that **THE HAMMER OF EDEN** is terrific. You have outdone yourself with this draft. The plot shoots ahead like a locomotive gathering more and more momentum. The background of the commune is now richly and believably filled in. Priest and Judy now are fully fleshed out, interesting and multi-faceted characters; and the secondary ones such as Star, Melanie and even Brian Kincaid all work well. I have only a few notes; and these, I think, can wait until you get the manuscript from the copyeditor who may point out the same things; but since I've made these notes, I'll send them along in any case.

On page 138 you give us information which repeats stuff that is found earlier in the book. And I question your use of the term, the Mob. It's used usually to refer to specific groups of Sicilian origin found almost exclusively in East Coast and Middle West cities. I'm not aware of any such group operating in San Francisco or Los Angeles; and I think what would work better would be the name of some specific criminal outfit which operated in that city during the period in question. X

On page 216 we again have some repetition of information which you provided earlier. ?

On page 236, I find myself wondering if Paul Beale was a rice eater? I have the sense X that earlier in the book you said he was not.

Bones arrives at the commune with a woman and a child; and we meet him several times thereafter, mostly after having had sex with Star in her cabin, but there is never any mention again of the woman and her child.

On page 435 we learn that Judy carries a blonde wig and that earlier in her career she has done a lot of undercover work and surveillance. I suggest that earlier in the novel, perhaps when

we first meet her, we should learn that she has indeed been an undercover operative, etc. and has done all these daredevil things, but now she's moving or hopes to move into higher management.

I'm glad that you gave the Governor of California a name, but in the course of the novel, he has three different ones. Any one of these will do.

On page 450 I had the feeling that Judy's analysis was just a little too clever and too insightful; and I found myself wondering if that shouldn't be cut. Or better, it should contain some wrong conclusions.

On page 451 Bo had not yet arrived when she mentions the name Stella Higgins and that that name seemed familiar, so that his suggesting that she search the database doesn't quite compute. She needs to make that comment in his presence.

The text also contains a number of Britishisms which I'm hoping the copyeditor will catch. Two of them which I remember as I dictate this were your uses of the word "sweets" instead of "candy" and the word "wardress" instead of "matron."

I particularly loved the way you tied the ending into the beginning. I don't remember whether or not that was in the first draft, but it really works so beautifully.

I'll be in London briefly on June 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> on our way back from Australia; and it might be a good thing to spend an hour or two kicking over ideas for your next project, if you're going to be in town then. So, let me know. And again, bravo on the really superb work!

Warm wishes,  
Al