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To : Ken Follett

From : John Evans

Draft One of ADR is not easy to judge. The focus is better : there's no doubt now about the feminine interest, with Billie clearly the heroine, and Elspeth an excellent female antagonist. However, though I'm bearing in mind you'll now give it a more finished novel feel by tightening up dialogue and adding interior monologue, I sometimes felt I was reading a screenplay for a two-part TV miniseries.

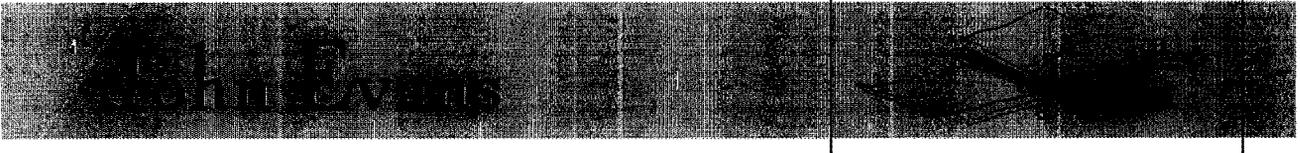
Why? No doubt the first launch postponement, halfway through the book, causes a hiatus; OK for viewers working their way into a new episode, not so good for page-turning novel readers. The postponement is too complete an ending to a tension-packed Day One. I think you need to create narrative drive that surpasses it. (For example, what if Luke were to get into real trouble in his raid on the Pentagon? WvB could still take the precaution of postponing, but the reader would wonder what will now happen to Luke.) I also think there's too much time spent on everyone deciding what to do after the postponement - sure feet needed here.

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The second reason for the TV feel seems to me to be pace. The long succession of brief action scenes leads us to anticipate a climax that is in fact far off. It's like fucking hard for ages without coming. (So I'm getting old.) The flashbacks provide relief in Day One; from Part Four on, I think we need more variety, more breathing-spaces.

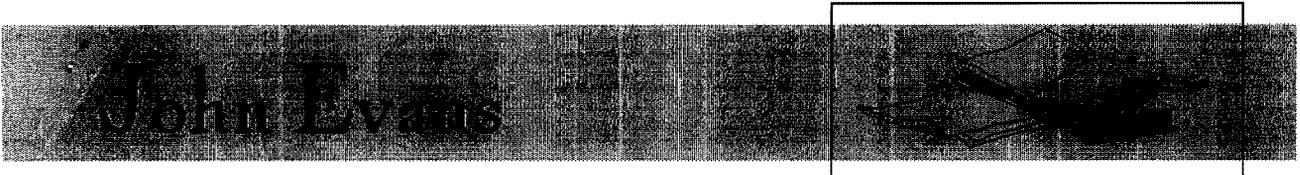
You might find some in the emotion the characters and their backstory may yet provide. Today's story isn't driven enough by yesterday's.

Here are a few comments under headings:

The flashbacks : I see what you mean by "shock and explain". I think it works [and I was less shocked than a first-time reader]. But I'd make the shock just as big as I could then cut to the fb without someone saying *I'll tell you what happened*. Even when we're curious about it, this kind of giveaway makes us feel *Here comes a flashback*.

As to contents, the Harvard flashbacks were convincing, the WW2 ones less so, and I thought the backstory between 1945 and 1958 was insufficiently explained.

The chapter intros on the rocket : good idea, but there are so many of them, and the details are so trivial, I found myself copping out of reading them in the second half. Can you get us to picture the rocket? Understand the [non-human] forces that want to make it fail, feel its vulnerability? Can



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you make the rocket a character?

Anthony : needs thinking through carefully. Why does he choose to be a Commie to piss his father off, then never piss his father off with it? Why does he go to considerable lengths to get Billie away from Luke, then make no attempt (on record) to get her for himself?

Your portrayal of him in 1958 is unstable. He's head of CIA's Dirty Tricks and a successful 17-year double agent, yet he and his henchmen are amateurish (on Day One in particular). His thinking about the Soviets is callow at one moment, solid at another. He's good thinking in *realpolitik* terms about Cuba (but don't forget, in 1958, Egypt, Indo-China, Algeria...) Anthony can be a convincing pro-Sov because he believes the balance of power is about to tip up thanks to a worldwide surge of anti-imperialism – an intelligent, informed analysis.

Elsbeth : Great. Her positioning at Cape Canaveral is A1. My only suggestion is that you deepen her motivation by making more of her gut feelings in favour of the underdog and the oppressed. [To form a head/heart contrast with Anthony].

Nik : He's good in the early scenes, pressuring Anthony. I understand you may not want to roll him on regularly like the Devil in a morality play, but he disappears for too long. I suggest he comes in on first postponement.

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[There's too much uncertainty about whether Anthony's cover is blown, and will he fight on etc.] Nik could intervene higher up in the CIA, or in army security, to gain Anthony temporary respite, then put even more pressure on him.

Billie : Much better, but she's gone a long way on the scale from wicked witch to everybody's mom. Can she be just a little more potent?

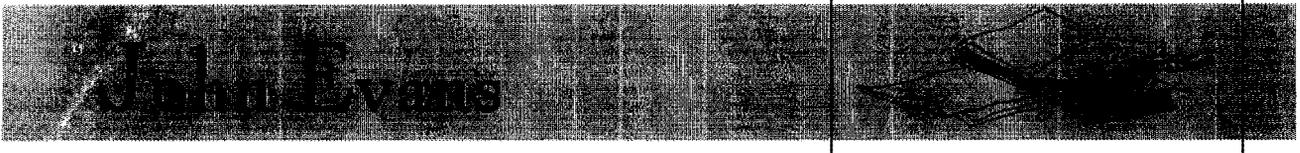
Her backstory from 1945 to 1958 is unclear. Luke rejects her. Doesn't Anthony try anything? Does she really marry Bern only for his conversational gifts, just as she'll have Harold for tuna bake and a hug?

In 1958, the backstory doesn't impact on today. How does she feel about those [wasted?] years? What new things does she learn? She and Luke don't even realize Anthony manipulated the abortion by lying about getting a message to Luke, and yet it's the heart of the matter.

Bern : Convincing. Pity you leave him in Washington. I expected him to come into the final conflict, and I think other readers will too.

Luke : Gripping in his Day-One fight against amnesia, he sags before becoming interesting again as he weighs up what he has learned about himself. [Good scene in his Huntsville home, realizing his marriage must be a fake].

He's inconsistent : is he a brainy, absent-minded boffin, a thoughtful,



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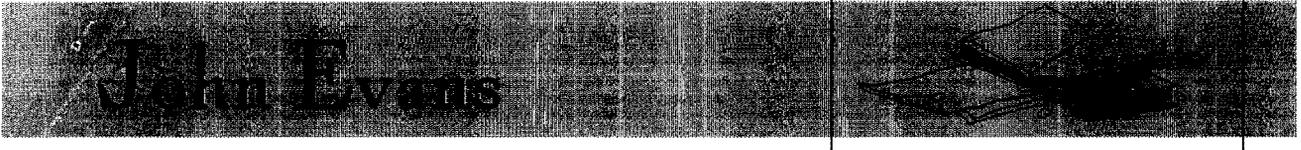
gracious man, or Steve McQueen in *The Great Escape*? If he's all of them, perhaps Billie should tell him so when he's searching for himself.

He and Billie, as suggested above, need to be stirred more by the past. What will be the effect on Luke of realizing Anthony treacherously caused the death of his child with Billie, then engineered years of separation for them?

Final scene : If there's no time for a big scene resolving dramatic issues between the major characters on the beach, something of the sort must happen just before.

La Résistance : the Communists didn't start before the others, they did nothing until June '41, by which time one or two "others" had pitched in. The "others" weren't all conservatives, they included the non-Communist Left. By late '42, De Gaulle managed to get himself accepted as head of this broad spectrum. Though there was friction with the Commies, I don't think it's historical to have your Reds show up at the train heist shooting their popguns. They could simply appear in greater numbers and ask for their share of the booty. Luke could still conclude Bern tipped them off.

The US and Britain obviously didn't want a Communist uprising in France, but they weren't backing De Gaulle much either. [FDR thought he was a dangerous dictator.] Until late '42, the US in fact backed Pétain ["My



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dear old friend", said FDR]. American spooks in North Africa before the landings [like Anthony] were not working for De Gaulle, but in hopes of helping Pétain "resist". They may (?) have cleared Darlan out of the way at Christmas '42, but not to let De Gaulle in; they favoured General Giraud.

Straight after the landings, De Gaulle and his staff moved from London to Algiers. The Free French still had offices in London, but you'd need a good reason for Elspeth to be set to liaising with their prickly secret service.

I don't recall if Luke is chosen for France because he speaks the lingo thanks to maman. [What are his feelings about his mother's country?] Bern must also speak Fr; maybe he picked it up [fast] during a stay in a French "transit" camp after the International Brigades retreated over the Pyrenees. Should Luke have the time of his life as an undercover agent in France? In fact, it was one of the nastiest, most dangerous things to do in all WW2.

Do you know exactly when the American secret service became known as OSS ? [1942, 1943?]

The typescript is on its way back to you. I jotted down notes on first reaction, then came back to add here and there. Some are on minor points, but I hope they'll be useful.

Very best wishes,