

# Fax From Follett

Ken Follett  
PO Box 708, London SW10 ODH, England  
Phone 01 352 7759  
Fax 01 352 5168

Number of pages, including this one:

3

Thursday, 28 December 1989

U.K. time 2.46 pm

To: Al Zuckerman  
Writers House

Dear Al,

Many thanks for your notes. Here are some initial reactions.

I originally had Nazis involved in this - indeed, I contemplated bringing in Die Nadel - but like you I decided we are all tired of Nazis. However, as you have noticed, the Mafia represent the same mentality.

I like the idea of Spuntino being allowed to move freely among the other passengers. The airline might impose this condition on the FBI, in an attempt to conceal from the passengers the fact that they are travelling with a murderer. Nevertheless, perhaps his real identity will be revealed early

on in the flight; and their attitudes to him will reflect their attitudes to Fascism. These attitudes will all be transformed, to a greater or lesser extent, by the brutal reality of an encounter with the Mob; and so, if it's not too ambitious, the whole story will have something of the quality of a parable about Fascism.

You're right about Ted's plot. I will rewrite the outline so that his task is revealed to him during the flight. I also like the idea of having someone on board to make sure that Ted follows through, but I think this should be Tony Joe.

I haven't warmed to your suggestions about Harry. I like him the way he is. You are never keen on working-class characters but I hope to make Harry charming enough to intrigue even you. I might make him a little nicer, perhaps.

I might give Margaret a fiance who was killed in the Spanish Civil War. I like the idea of her father doing something illegal. Exchange control was brought in on the outbreak of war so he would have trouble getting his money out of England. My current idea is this: Lady Isley has, not a whole collection of jewelry, but one famous stone. In stealing this, Harry comes across a huge cache of uncut diamonds, or bearer bonds, or even gold ingots, that Lord Isley is smuggling out of the country; and of course he wants to steal that too.

I've been inside a baggage hold and they are not always full. However, I'm not even sure there was access to the hold from the flight deck, so that part of the plot is all very iffy anyway.

I don't think Michael and Diana can have the honeymoon suite. She would want to call herself Mrs Adler; but she can't,

because her real name is on her passport; and in 1939 that would be enough to inhibit any but the most brazen of women. All the same I must use the honeymoon suite! I just can't think how at the moment.

I like most of your minor ideas. Now I will get on with the rewrite. My thanks, as always -

Love,

Ken.