

27 January 1976

Dear Russ,

Thanks for your letter of the 21st about the black bar/white bar. You may be sure that I did not discuss the deletion with Jason Epstein and that the question of a white or blank space was never even raised with me. Jason's concern was obviously to conceal Random House's capitulation to Belin and not to "protect" me. What does bother me is that each time the matter was discussed, Susan Bolotin came up with a new and different "decision" on how to make the deletion. At this point, whatever Epstein may have promised you, I do not feel any assurance that Random House will accomodate us, although they will clearly appease Belin.

The position I took with Bolotin was that Belin was bluffing and would probably not sue; that if he did sue, he would lose and would be spread over the front page, to boot, which is exactly what he did not want. She cited the Random House lawyers and wanted me to meet with the president of the company so that he would "explain" why RH had taken the decision to delete the sentence and use a black bar. I replied that the reasons ~~w~~ere quite clear to me and that I saw no reason to meet with the president of RH for further explanations. I also emphasized that the deletion was being done without my consent and over my protest.

I feel unhappy about this whole thing, as I know that you and Peter and Paul do also, but I do not see what any of us can do now without cutting off our noses to spite our face.

All the best,

*Sylvia Meagher*