

8/13/69

Dear Ron,

Long ago I learned that agents are silent and writers stew, unless agents think they have a real good thing. So, if I am disappointed at your silence, I am not surprised at per. But I would like a word.

John Friedman phoned last night and told me of your return. I presume you have no less than the usual disarray and chaos following long absence. When you need surcease from that, I offer it.

I have completed the enormous "addition" to COUP D'ETAT dealing with Ray/King (and Foreman/Hile/Henes, please believe ~~xxxx~~ me!). It is two and a half inches high! I'd estimate not less than 125,000 words, and I'll probably add a few as I read and correct, after which my wife will retype.

If I can entice you, the weather here usually permits swimming until about Labor Day, and we have a spare bed. I'd like you to read what I have done in your multiple roles, only one of which is literary agent.

I can pass no opinion of the writing, not, after my experiences, would I trust my appraisals of the commercial possibilities. On the content, you by now have an estimate of how I work, what I do, whether or not my writing stacks up, and I say this is definitive, overwhelming and important. I do believe that with the appropriate parts of the COUP you should by now have read, there is a significant book that need not be hurt by good editing. It should have excellent commercial possibilities.

Then there is the unaccepted offer to do a book with Jerry Ray. It is still open on both ends. I do not know what he could or would say, how dependable it would be. If he does have something that should be heard, and that can be readily determined by inviting him here and taping long conversations, what a switch it would be! He is a virulent racist, NSRP and all that, close to Stoner, hating Jews more than blacks - and we are both, you and I. This is a man who assumes responsibility for a large share of his brother's troubles, has a record not inconsistent with being part of a conspiracy. With this alone and the natural beliefs of a persuaded racist, in his own words, do you see a book, a book in which there would be the futility of a defense of racism and its ~~xxxx~~ attendant costs and suffering for the racists themselves? I think he could say what you and I would want to as we could not, for all his lack of education. For all his lack of knowledge of such simple things as punctuation, capitalization, syllabification, he is lucid and speaks and writes fairly grammatically. And he has promised me what I doubt he can deliver, access to his brother in jail and Stoner.

I await your word, if not your presence.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg