



Golbitz, Pat  
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105 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016

We Did It !

We did it!

EAGLES

EAGLES.

Dear Ken,

Here is a memo to you, a general critique of the book and some suggestions. I've included marginal comments made as I read the manuscript which I then typed.

I wanted you to have this first thing this morning because I know you're meeting with NAL today. I'm sending Elaine Koster a copy of my notes too, as I've done with the other two books. There's a copy for Al as well.

So when we go off to Texas you'll have everybody's comments, and you and I can really get to work.

Love,

Pat

PG: jw  
cc: Al Zuckerman  
Elaine Koster

Perot: 25-34, 38-41, 50-~~52~~ 63, 70-74, 77-80, 100-102, ~~106~~ 1281-133  
140-~~144~~ 146, ~~149~~ 151-155, 221-224, 240-243, ~~248~~ 256-259, 289-316-319, 329

Abraham: 1-6, 68-70, 80-82, 83-89, 103-105, 111-21, 137-139, 174-180, 182-183  
193, 204-205, 215-220, 229-240, 244-248, 259-267, 273-278, 295-298, 300-307

Harold: 184-186, 194-197, 278-280, 287-289, 298-299-307, 309-~~1~~

Howell: 133-137, 161-164, 187-189, 190-193, 202-204, 206-207, 212-213.  
228-229, 252-253, 320-326.

Paul: 7-13, 14-16, 37-38, 106-111, 146-149, 207-212, 215, 280-282.

Bill: 13-14, 16-24, 45-50, 122-127, 149-151, 198-203.

Balance: 170-174, 248-251, 268-271, 282-287, 307-309. (69, 75)

Perot's feelings about each of his staff.

Visual setting.

People's appearances.

Wants fantasy

What in your part did this remind you of?

Alan  
Fredette  
Betty - hair Staley

What is the dramatic function of this scene? Think of it give the information some other way.



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Ken,

The problem here is that you're dealing with fact that has to be as exciting as fiction, especially since *THE BULL AND THE PEACOCK* is an adventure, a story, such as one might read in a novel.

Fiction is carried by major characters through which readers experience the adventure. One of the things you haven't done here is focus on such characters. However, you are bound by the truth of this story, so you can't create a Vandam, or a Wolff or a Faber to carry off the book.

But you do have three major characters, and the story can fall rather neatly into three sections in which each of these characters becomes a major actor. I see the first part of the book as Perot's, with the mobilization of the rescue army. The middle part of the book belongs to Col. Simons -- the training of the men, the practice, the herding of the army covertly into Iran. The third part of the book belongs to Rashid -- and that includes the storming of the jail, the escape over the Turkish border into freedom.

This structure is there, under the surface, a natural shape. It would provide you with the means to create tension and suspense, to give cohesion to the story, which gets quite confusing. And most of all, it allows you to develop character -- that Follett specialty. Too many of these people in this story are faceless.

Of all the people in this book the most interesting is Perot. He is the most complex, the prime mover, and he comes to us with an a priori background of power, achievement, and stature. But you tell us very little about him. I keep asking throughout the manuscript to know more about Perot -- his reactions, his responses, his character. His complexities and contradictions are revealed inadvertently -- without the writer's awareness or comments. For instance, Perot claims that EDS is an organization of blazingly individual nonconformists -- yet the truth appears to be that he controls EDS like Mussolini did Italy and that his very whim is law. The EDS men follow him like a Duce -- even to the point of risking their lives in a job where such a sacrifice would never be expected. Disobedience (and that's the right word) does not occur to Perot's men. Notice that all the men he asked to join this mission volunteered -- I can imagine what would happen to anyone who did not.

And then there is Perot's mother! You have the beginning of a classic psychological portrait of a tyrant, a world-beater, who believes -- with some reason -- that there's nothing he can't do. And it all started with mother... Perot is a force for good here, but he's the kind who could easily go the other way.

You're limited, of course, by fact and because Perot is real and alive. Nevertheless he is the moving force in this book, on stage or off. Somehow you've got to make him more effective as a character, more manipulative, more felt. Even if you center action on three men as I suggested before -- Perot, Simons, and Rashid, Perot's influence would continue throughout. He's the one you must not lose touch with.

Your opening is very slow. Too much explanation and filling in. You may have to start with an episode further into the book and then backtrack. Zoom into the two Americans feeling the cell bars slam as they are locked into an Iranian jail....the call to Perot

informing him that two of his men were imprisoned by the Iranians. Something like that, but dramatic.

where exactly!

where exactly?

Towards the end when things speed up and the plot thickens I had a sense of confusion. I think it comes from too many characters doing so many things in different places. And what makes this worse is that the characters come in from nowhere -- we don't know them, they are faceless.

Coburn is a character I had trouble with -- I was never absolutely clear as to why he seemed to be taking charge so often.

— which? which?

There are long stretches -- too long -- where there's no excitement, tension -- just lots of detail and explanation. Too many of the people have no personalities. The women particularly are lifeless, like dolls. All 1950's home and hearth types without individualization, aspects that would take them out of category. You've got to make Bill and Paul more vivid. They are the reason for this whole caper. They were always shadowy to me.

The ending needs a lot of work. The story is really over when the mission is accomplished. The last chapter should be an epilogue and I don't like the last sentence about the Col. His romance with the stewardess isn't really pertinent, unless you make it so.

I realize this critique is general, but we are all limited by the facts. I can't ask you to create a Faber. The true story though has all the elements of good fiction. It's a challenge, and if anyone can do it, you can.

FOLLETT

6--Was there any dismay among the people who did leave? Was it all so orderly? No fear?

9--What does Paul look like? Does he have an accent? Is he from Texas? Where? He appears to be very American in a foreign land.

25--Now you're getting a real tone. This man we see.

32--All this because of the little boy? Perot's enormous involvement in the Vietnam POWs--it seems to me that Perot's one-man war is more complexly motivated and you haven't given us a clue to it--just a simplistic reason. Also, the rescue attempt of the POWs by Col. Simons led directly to the subject of this story--the second, successful rescue by Perot and Simons. You must give the character of a man who would do this, and build a bridge between the two events.

33--Great quote about John Wayne! We can use!

101-- What did the wives know at this point? Or were they not told? Either way, it's interesting, because it looked like a suicidal mission. I'd like to hear from those wives. Was the tie to the company stronger for these men than the tie to their families? My guess is that if the wives knew--or found out later--they'd be horrified. But maybe women (wives) play a different role with these men. They probably do. Unquestioning keepers of the home fires and all that. Like the Col and his wife. And all this could be quite fascinating.

114--Where were the safe houses. Why were they safe? Weren't the Iranians suspicious? And if the apartments were rented by Americans, how could they be hideouts? All very unclear. Also, I would like to know what Iran looked like now, and how did it feel to Americans on the run? Want some color, some specifics.

Follett

129--Fascinating about Perot and his mother! I wish you could tell more.

143--But ~~isn't this bribery~~ this isn't bribery, it's ransom. Didn't they think of that? At this point, I began to think "They want their rescue caper and no one is going to take it away from them."

144--All this doesn't ring true. That may be the way it happened, but for the story's sake we have to know why this solution was so summarily dismissed. Iranians don't play by rules, they know that--they were ready to risk their lives at a rescue attempt--and they go all prissy at "corruption." It doesn't add up.

145--Meanwhile, what was the Col doing about this change of jails? It's not been mentioned so far what this transfer means to all those well-practiced escape plans. (In fact, the new jail takes the story out of Col simons' hands into Rashid's, who is your third major figure.)

148--Is "delightedly" the right emotion for such a situation? Descriptions of Paul's emotions make Paul sound like a child. I'm not getting a picture of these men, outside of the Col and Perot. Pace is lagging.

150--Why on earth should EdS have a "dress code?" All this--the kind of ~~o~~bedient adulation regarding Perot, the abiding by rules even if they're whimsical, does not fit the earlier picture of EDS as a company of independent, individualistic people. You--at the writer--can't have it both ways. And there a lot, a whole lot, you're not telling about Perot!

151--Ross leaving prison in Iran is an anti-climax. Sounds like leaving a party. What did Ross think? Feel? After all he had done to get there.

153--I like the Col. He's your most successful character so far.

FOLLETT

155-- Good! Tension at last!

157--Now you've got to the women--what I asked for earlier. Maybe it should go earlier?

159--They sound like army wives!

160--These women are beginning to sound rather soapy. Didn't any of them get mad? At Ross, at their husbands? (If this were fiction you could make them rage, or something equally strong, instead of these lady-like, going-to-the-hairdresser emotions.) There is necessarily a lack of women in this story--the wives are your only chance to give the book that dimension and color that both sexes provide.

167--Good. Simons even thinks in character.

167--Why couldn't Bill and Paul ~~not~~ fly into Kuwait? They were Americans. Why wasn't a friendly nation safe? Safer than Iran? I'm confused.

180--<sup>y</sup>ou really give it to Bryezinski! Good!

184--Good meeting with Simons and Rashid. The story now really becomes Rashid's.

186--Rashid is a terrific character, like someone from your novels. Did you feel freer in writing about ~~thinx~~ him than the others?

188--Talk between American alwyers, embassies, etc--this kind of description gets mechanical and I feel there's too much of it. There's not enough action.

189--Shorten all this if you don't actually need it. I don't think you do.

190--Instead of this kind of description (Khomeini loyalists and Javadan Brigade fight) could you ~~xxxxxxx~~ convey it--dramatize it--in an incident that would tie directly to the story?

--4

FOLLETT

~~XXX~~

191--More of the same.

196--Rashid addressing his rag-a-tag army in front of the jail is great!

218--Can we see how Bill and Paul feel? Can you liven up? It is, after all, the whole point of the story so far--getting them out of jail. Simons is wonderful--Bill and Paul are shadows.

221--Perot says, "That's great," and his wife says, "That's good" at the news of the jail breakout. Surely something more than these responses! Perot's mother told him to risk his life for these two men! That's involvement! If this were a novel you'd milk every bit of juice out of this moment.

222-Perot packs his suitcase--that's much better. But change earlier part, or add something.

235--Idiosyncracies--that's what these characters could use!

240--What happened to the dog? If they kill him, readers will hate it!

They better have a life-and-death reason and be sobbing while they do it!

245--Third paragraph is a repeat.

247--I like Rashid!

249--Aren't they doing a lot of flying in and out of places you can't get in or out?

259--And how did he feel about that? It's the first time, as far as I can see, that there was nothing that Perot could do.

FOLLETT

~~xxxxxx~~

267--Waht was the Col doing in all this?

272--I'm confused about who all these men are. Who's the Clean Team, the Dirty Team, who's flying all over the place, etc.

275--~~xxxx~~ Are they still in Iran? How come they are getting an armed escort out? Did I miss something? Or was the explanation to the Iranian soldiers that the American~~s~~s wanted to go home to their families enough? If so, why ?

280--Rashid is great and now center-~~xxxxx~~ stage. The Col has just about disappeared.

282--There's Simons! I guess if I go back and re-read Ill find out--and remember-- why the Col wasn't with them. But I shouldn't have to do that.

285--If Simons is with the Dirty Teams I don't they should be forgotten for so long.

286--At the turkish border: "the only thing to do was to go into Iran and look for him." But weren't they safer in Turkey, no matter what? The point of the mission is to get out of Iran! The turks weren't looking for them to put them in jial. The Turks weren't having a revolution. So they made it to freedom and are planning to go back.? This is not clear.

287--This Rashid is something! Always psyching out people and being right!

288--Fabulous! Perot should put Rashid in charge of EDS. But I suspect that wouldn't work. Rashid is too strong, not a conformer. Perot wouldn't like that.

295--Are the guards helping them or hindering them? Are they there to get them out of the country or keep them in?

304--What! Who is he? (The man who kissed Raahsid at just the right moemnt to save their lives.)

FOLLETT

305--Is the Col losing his cool? (He asks for a hacksaw)

314--"The feeling of freedom." Is the adventure over?

317--Simons is not longer the hero of this story. (See other notes)

320--I think the story ended on the last page. Chapter 14 could be an epilogue.

321--Too many facts--like a listing. Whree's the story?

329--I'd cut this (Col and Stewardess) unless you can tell more--or turn it into a drama that shows the full recovery of the Col. Otherwise seems spurious.

And the last line, "But that's another story," doesn't justify its inclusion unless you build.