



18 February 1976

Miss Laura Gilpin  
409 Camino del Monte Sol  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Miss Gilpin:

Your letter to Ms. Eje Wray was brought to my attention. In turn, I discussed it with the Press managers at our weekly meeting. While we share your concerns as expressed in your letter, we also found reason for distress that our internal procedures for book jacket review had not always worked properly. This, unfortunately, speaks belatedly to the issue of books being sold with a jacket which does not satisfy the author.

We very seldom seek an author's opinion on the design of books or jackets; this is a practice common to every publisher known to me and members of my staff. There are several reasons for this among which are tight schedules and the abdication of our judgment on matters to which our sales destiny is tied.

You were not aware of our general program related to the redesign of many Press book jackets. We decided upon this in relation to a desire to enter new (and old) markets with contemporary and fresh looking books. For example, we are now actively selling into the California market and look to the East--to use an expression often used in other circles--for greater sales activity in New York and Boston. Repackaging is, of course, nothing new in (or out of) publishing and sometimes it provides new life to titles.

I realize that your upset is due to not the redesign, per se, but how the redesign was performed. Frankly, I can readily understand your concern over the use of silhouettes, but I cannot be as supportive on the selection of the deceased boy's photograph. One could argue that any use of the photograph, in or on the book, is a desecration, but I would have to argue that any internal use is justification enough for use on the jacket. I would find it hard to believe that the jacket use is a greater violation than your use within the book.

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Having said all of this, I am left in a quandry that perhaps time alone will resolve. It may sound like a simple process to redo the jacket when, in fact, it is not only costly but nigh impossible. Every unsold copy of your book lives within a shrink wrapping of cellophane which would need opening for a new jacket to be wrapped on the book. Since that act would require us to either re-wrap (in cellophane) the books at the bindery or allow an excessive number of damaged books to result. At times like this, one must look to an author for understanding while offering assurances of our intent to correct things at a more propitious time.

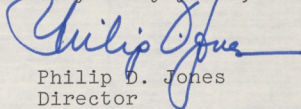
We shall do the following: I have asked Steve Rice to supply old jackets to bookstores requesting them as long as our supply lasts. In particular, he will see that the stores in Santa Fe are first on the list for such treatment on a first come, first serve basis.

In due course (about two years), a reprinting of the book will enable us to reconsider the jacket design. Since we now know your concerns, our designers can be more attentive to the particular nuances which, apparently, we overlooked. As a professional photographer, you can, I am sure, understand my reluctance to limit their freedom of action in giving your book the best effort their talents allow. That's how we work around here and I like to think it is, present difficulties notwithstanding, the best way in the long run.

You have been patient and courteous through all of this. I admire that and appreciate it. We assure you of our best intentions and should your "retrospective" work become ours to publish, I feel confident that you will recognize that our standards and skills are in keeping with the talents of our author.

Our best wishes.

Very truly yours,



Philip D. Jones  
Director

PDJ/cea