

STUART W. GENTLING

12 July 1982

Dear David,

Sorry that I haven't gotten in touch with you before this. Scott, Bill Beck and I ended up having taken a 1,500 mile trip down to the far South coast, then back up the coast into the piney woods of east Texas. We studied many species of shore birds with which we were unfamiliar. We got some good photos of both birds and landscape subjects, and we retrieved a number of plant specimens as well. In all it was a very successful trip. When we got home we immediately set to work finishing up many of our previously unfinished pictures plus two new pictures (the Ivory bill Woodpeckers, and the American Oystercatcher). Both are quite beautiful. In all we have completed seven pictures since we have returned. Scott and I have a goal of completing thirty paintings by the end of Summer. In the meantime, however, we are going to have to paint for a two-man show for the Fall opening of our gallery, and this, I am afraid, will take more time out from our birds than I wish. Nevertheless, I feel fairly certain that we will finish all the paintings on schedual. The rest will be determined by how long John Graves takes to do his part of the project.

I just received a good letter from John, and he continues to be excited about the project. He is up to his eyeballs in literary commitments and emergency ranch work to repair recent flood damage, but he says for us not to give up on him. He feels that the project will not only be beautiful but meaningfull, and to do his best he must give the project a great deal of thought. John Graves is a very careful and deliberate craftsman, and he can not be rushed. I hope to be seeing more of him in the next few weeks . I'll keep you in touch about his progress.

Thankyou for your preliminary figures. They are very close to what I thought they were. At this date I have already sold more than enough books to pay for the project, and I am now taking it easy on pre-selling them

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until I get a better idea about how much we should really charge for the book. David, I know that we will have to get together several times by phone or in person to hammer out the details for the book. As far as picking the right paper is concerned, the rag paper that I want must be light enough to be bound (weight-wise) and the surface must be as highly finished as possible. The mat surfaces usually associated with rag papers absorb the colored ink to such an extent that the reproductions often appear washed out, and the darks and dark accents are never dark enough. Fortunately in the past few years there have been a number of significant improvements in surfacing the new rag papers, and much better results can be achieved. We might think about using a fine machine-made paper for the reproductions and then use a fine hand-made paper for the text. This is going to be largely your decision. I want you to know, David, that the design of this book is to be your work of art. That is the way Scott and I want it to be. This book is to be the product of four separate artists — Scott, You, John Graves, and me, and as much as all our work is to be in many ways intertwined, I want the four separate contributions of the artists to be apparent. Of course that does not mean that we will not be working closely together, and that Scott and I will not feel free to make suggestions. Nevertheless, we will make no decision contrary to your personal wishes and will rely on your ^{instinct} for what is right. When this book is done we want you to feel that it is as much a part of your art as it is of John Graves and us.

In your budget estimates you did not mention the marbled endpapers that Jim Tapley was going to do. He told me he would charge \$10.00 per book. Perhaps you know some one who can do it more cheaply. With Tapley it is not the cost that I am worried about; it is the fact that he seems to ^{be} unable to bring a project in on time. He doesn't seem to have much money of his own so that a contract with a penalty clause (though I would have him sign one) would probably be of no use to us. I will give all of our customers a general time frame in which they can expect to receive their books, but I will also give them in writing a fair warning to expect some delays. You and I will work out our time schedule for the deliveries and

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we must make every effort to abide by it or both our bitts will be on the line. Every craftsman that you and I work with must be made aware of this and to sign the appropriate instrument to insure compliance or expect some sort of penalties.

David, how are we going to package this book? I would like to have them individually boxed, with a linen covered custom-made box for every book. I know that we are talking about a great deal of extra work and money, but, if you consider that the book without the box will cost about \$250.00 per volume and that we will be charging at the least \$2,500.00 or ten times our cost, I think that we should consider that we should have the book boxed in a manner befitting its value. Let me have you thoughts on this. I want this book to be very successful, because it will pave the way for other books that we will create together. I am quite willing to take a little less profit to insure a finer product.

As far as money is concerned. About three months before we go to press I will collect the down payments or in many cases, the full amount, take a loan out for the remainder, if need be, so that all the funds will be in our possession which we will need to initiate the project. I will set up a separate escrow account specifically for the book, and I will choose an accountant specifically for this project. All bills and financial obligations will be handled by me personally. Both you and John Graves will have complete and confidential access to all financial records, to both income and outgo at any time with or without informing me. You and John will probably have to come to Ft. Worth at the appropriate time to meet our accountant so that he or she will know the parties involved. There is going to be a lot of money involved in this project, and I want to keep everything as simple and as clear as possible.

I would appreciate it if you could get me John Chalmer's address. I think it is important to keep him in touch about our project. His enthusiasms and willingness to help, I think, will make him a valuable ally in aiding our project in the months to come. I would like to send him a set of our bird

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prints so that he can get an idea of what we are doing.

Well, I guess that is just about all that I have to say for now. If you have any observations about this letter or about the project in general please let me know. As I told you, I am laying low about pre-selling the book until we figure out just how much we should be charging for it. Still, I get about an order or two a week from people who are beginning to hear about the project and want to get a book. As I said also, I do not feel good about promoting the book until all of our paintings are completed. When they are done I would like to have a couple of mock-up copies of the book made with the proper boxing, binding and thickness and, if possible, a printed frontis page to show prospective customers what the book will look like. I will have Bob Wharton, the Kimbell Museum Staff photographer, take color photos 11" by 14" of each painting. I will glue them into the book and I think that this will make a reasonable facsimile. Let me know if it is possible to print up a frontis page for the book.

I hope all at home are well.

Stuart