

STUART W. GENTLING

15 March 1983

Dear David,

So many things have happened to me since I last had contact with you that I scarcely know where to begin. At the moment I am involved in three projects; I am in the midst of remodeling my art gallery, preparing paintings for a gallery opening in May, and, of course, I am even deeper into the Bird Book^k project. After a great deal of reflection Scott and I have decided to postpone the date for going to press from June until early in 1984. We still have about 12 bird paintings to complete, and though we have many of these already drawn, we must concentrate upon having a show in May.

My attorneys insist that I can not collect money for the Bird Books until after I go to press and the books are actually published. This has placed a considerable additional financial burden on us which can be met only with the sale of paintings. Since Scott and I refuse to sell the bird paintings, that means that we will have to concentrate on our other pictures for a few months to bring in badly needed income. I have informed John Graves of our decision to delay the project for six months, and he welcomed having the additional time.

David, as Scott and I have gotten deeper and deeper into the many aspects of this complicated project it is becoming apparent to me that I am going to have to assume greater responsibility for the production of the book, and, I think, this will considerably alter the extent of your participation in the project. My attorneys are urging me for many legal reasons having to do with directly contracting with cabinet makers, paper suppliers, color workers and printers etc. that I would literally be riding herd over these people anyway. Also there would be an advantage in my direct involvement with those people, because I have assembled a very competent legal staff who are employed to insure proper performance by everybody in meeting their obligations to me. This would take the heat off intermediaries such as yourself. By taking a great deal of the responsibility off your shoulders I can help you by leaving you to practice what you do best — to concentrate on the design of the Book. This will make for a far more efficient handling of the project, for I will be the clearing house for all aspects of the publication process. The coordination of so many disparate

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elements is extremely difficult, and the chances for mix-ups are greatly increase^d if there are two sources of authority operating at the same time.

What I propose is this: that once we have arrived at an advance press date I will make sure that you have all the materials which you require, that all deposits and paper costs are paid, and I will make certain that everything that you order will be ready and paid for when the time comes. Scott and I are personally going to supervise the color work and the printing of the color plates. Your job is to choose the type facings, the paper and the design of the book. I want this to be your design, and I will defer to your taste when ever possible. I am presently looking at several printers, and in order to facilitate the project and to speed up the actual printing, I am going to use more than one printer. I have been reliably informed that it would take slightly more than a year to have any one printer handle the entire project.

As far as the boxes are concerned, I think that we may face our greatest logistical problems. You have no idea how grateful I am that you convinced me to follow this route, for the idea of boxing the text and the prints has met with unanimous approval. The problem is getting so many boxes made. All of the cabinet makers with whom I have talked are unwilling to undertake the manufacture of all the boxes. We may have to farm these out to several separate cabinet makers. Of all the elements of this enterprise the making of these boxes causes me the most sleepless nights.

There may be someone coming to our rescue, David. About a month ago I was called to Austin by Denny Ingram and Bennett Spelce, our attorney and public relations expert, to meet Jack Maguire, Director of the Institute of Texan Cultures, a branch of the University of Texas System. The Institute is in San Antonio, and Maguire was in Austin to attend a Board of Regents meeting at the University. After ^{much} maneuvering of his busy schedule he and his assistant came over to our to our hotel room to view about 15 paintings of the birds which I had brought to show him. They were extremely impressed and even more excited when I told Jack that John Graves was writing an extensive text (7,500 to 12,000 words) and that David Holman of " Wind River Press " was doing the design of the book. Both of them knew of your work well, and John Graves

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for the
color plates
only

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happens to be one of ^{Jack's} ~~his~~ very favorite authors.

After talking for some time about the sheer magnitude of this project he told me that he was a member of the commission appointed by the State to choose projects to celebrate the Sesquicentennial or 150th anniversary of Texas Independence. Because this book was printed by Texans, written and designed by Texans, and because it covers every geographical region of the state, containing many birds that were native only to Texas, and because of the physical size of the book — he thought that our project would be perfect to become one of the State's main art projects for the Sesquicentennial. He told me that he had looked at many projects but that this was the first one that really interested him. We concluded our meeting in Austin with an invitation to come to San Antonio to see the facilities at the Institute. I have just returned from that San Antonio Meeting and can confirm for you the following: that the Institute Of Texan Cultures will sponsor our book project with a major show scheduled for mid-October 1985. The birds and ^{some} of our other work will be displayed there until 1986, the sesquicentennial year, when the pictures will go on tour throughout the state for the remainder of the year or even longer. There might even be more than one exhibition. The originals might go to the major cities, while framed prints would go to the smaller cities and towns.

The Institute would handle all the book sales which we would allow and the same with the individual prints, and they would make the boxes, if so doing would not violate their state charter about competing with private enterprise. They would also do the crating and shipping. Jack Maguire then suggested that we might have the great seal of the state of Texas impressed upon the title page of the book. With such state-sponsored backing, David, all the books should sell out very quickly. The success and the exposure of our venture should greatly enhance the reputations and the careers of all who are involved in it. Remember that this book is the first of several books in which, I hope, we are all involved. The publicity and the success surrounding this first book should pave the way for successfully promoting and selling all our future books, especially among the rare book collectors.

Our book project must be submitted to the committee for us to receive final

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confirmation that the book will be the Sesquicentennial project. Maguire has led me to believe that that if he likes the project as he does, then it is only a matter of form for the committee to approve it. Much negotiating must be carried out until we have determined the limits of the Institutes's involvement and what it will demand of us, but one thing is certain, that the book will become historically famous and will form a very firm foundation for our publishing enterprises to come. David, let me know what you think about all of this. I am now going to write John Graves and tell him about the Institute's offer. I have kept the news from both of you for these past few weeks, because I wanted to confirm their offer with a second meeting. The enthusiasm and the excitement which they showed on our first meeting seemed simply too good to be true, but true it is.

Stuart