

March 7, 1959

Laura D. Wilck Literary Agency,
14647 Dickens Street,
Sherman Oaks, Calif.

Dear Mr. Elliott:

Thanks for the two letters from you, received today regarding Sorority Row and The Lonely Road. But I must admit I'm a bit confused.

One of them makes a reference to "I wouldn't take Lou Cowan's talk too seriously" etc. I'm on unfamiliar grounds there, since the two letters of March 5 are the first I've received from you, and if a previous reference was made to him, it was in a letter that has gone astray. I meant the letters were the first two received since I sent the Sorority Row manuscript.

As to the percentage figure, as I wrote, I was trusting to memory of the telephone conversation. Undoubtedly you said 5 per cent for each of the three of you, in connection with your reference to two persons in New York. It is immaterial. Among my author friends--and all authors aren't located in New York or Southern California--I've heard varying stories but paid no attention to them. And I agree with you at the work necessary for any agent or writer, now days. And as I said you will not find me one to quibble. If you were speaking of 15 per cent and then an additional five per cent that is nothing to quibble about although it is something to be definite about as to future commitments.

I agree with you concerning Sorority Row manuscript, but new writers do not always follow hackneyed formulas. The character of Meri Ann is a sustained character through the book, which after all is more of a paper back type book than a flossy deal. Nor should it be something beyond repair, keeping a publisher back when it could be revised. However, constant revisions wear out flash and originality of writing. You will be better able to judge it when you finish the manuscript.

I mentioned in the letter of about a week or 10 days ago that The Lonely Road had gone through considerable changes and was ready for conversion into typescript now very shortly. Sorority Row underwent considerable of a change and was put into manuscript form and if the Lonely Road is finished in say four weeks, between the two of them will be something in the production line that the boys in Southern California can't match. Or can they?

I'm off today, there is tomorrow, Sunday and then I'm also off Monday. I suspect I'll have about three chapters of The Lonely Road in final typed form by Monday night. My work hours at home run more extensively than most writers. Even during work days my work hours at home run eight and ten straight hours, then there are whole days off when they run 18.

Besides, there's the time on checking, editing, slight revisions etc. the collaborator puts in to be considered.

About *Drummers and Dreamers*. I have my release as a writer, from Caxton's, not the release of the book. It went to Caxton's because they print that kind of material. After it had been tentatively suggested the manuscript was given a quick reading by Harpers and they were not interested. They know too much about Indians and the Indian problem. Yet since then the government, including BOTH HOUSES of Congress have reversed on Indian policy from a ten year old joint Senate and House policy which was unmovable. D and D got somewhere, even though a small publisher, and now the Indian problem has become a matter of Coast to Coast NBC (television), a version badly garbled; it has become a matter for Readers Digest etc. And Harpers ONE venture into that field almost brought a lawsuit on the heads of the publishing house through ignorance of their Indian experts.

Caxton, as you know made extensive circularization of D and D to various reprint fields. The book was "sold" to them on a straight royalty basis, but no one apparently wanted to touch it further, so I doubt about it being worth reconsidering, for a time. If it is not out of print now there are darn few copies hanging around. They never even tell you how many they print, but I know it is out.

If you have a real purpose for D and D I'll try and buy up three or four copies. A few scattering ones are around and Caxton may have a dozen or so. But this was not a book they were hired to publish. They took a chance on it and it took a lot of publicity to move it. It is still moving, slowly, at Northwest stores, but the trouble is darn few dealers really go out and go to work on the book or any book. It had a wonderful press and then, although they'd sell out the 100 copies they ordered, they didn't even bother to reorder. Most people coming in to buy don't want to order and then wait for a copy, not for a \$6 book.

Let me know if you really have use for the copies and I'll buy them and send them to you.

Also bring me up to date on Lou Cowan's "talk." Maybe the letter will come through or back to you.

You don't sound very encouraged by *Sorority Row*, but remember the paperback field. Also, remember we'll be willing to do what we can with it, but it may require a rest. Then too, I want to get *The Lonely Road* washed out of the way.

If you have a definite reason for it on a certain date, let me know. I have a week of "bonus" days coming, and could just about wash it off in that time. But typing is drudgery to me and it's easy to make mistakes. I want to do a good job on it.

Sincere regards, and thanks for the letters received today

Cliff Relander