

9 October 1975

Donald Began  
c/o Goodliffe Neale Ltd.  
Arden Forest Industrial Estate  
Alcester, Warwickshire  
England

Dear Donald:

Many thanks for your note. Glad you liked the stuff for Triad. If you can't get the advert. text into a quarter page feel free to use a third, unless you feel it would benefit from cutting anyway, which is quite possible. I leave it to your best judgement.

I haven't got a recent picture of myself at the moment. All that I do have were taken at least a year and 50 pounds ago. However, I am lurching in a couple of days with a phototographer friend who has promised to take a few snaps of the new sylph-like self, one of which I will be happy to send you. Since said photographer normally specializes in limning children, you just may come up with one of the ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ year's choicer covers.

As to biographical background, you may use the following as it stands or write it up, yourself, just as if you knew me when:

My parents engaged a magician to entertain at my fifth birthday party and regretted it ever thereafter. That ~~was~~ was, to my ~~increasing~~ annually increasing horror, some 35 years ago, which is why I sometimes talk as if Prof. Hoffman and Pat Page were my contemporaries.

I first accepted money for perpetrating deception at the age of 13 or so. In legal circles this is called fraud, but we of the criminal classes, ourselves, refer to it as "turning pro." I remained pro for about 15 years, at which time, semantically speaking, ~~ix~~ I suppose you would have to say I turned anti.

Alongside the magic I ~~was~~ also trained for the theatre and worked as an actor, director and occasional writer in various American and European backwaters of the drahma (or "draymuh," as they call it those parts.)

About half of this time was spent in Chicago, which may explain why I write with such a funny accent. The rest

~~XXXXXX~~ of it was mostly c/o poste restante.

Ten years~~x~~ ago I joined the United States Information Agency as a foreign service officer, thereby becoming a quote diplomat end quote at some improvement to my standard of living but no great change in~~x~~ the essential nature of my activities.

Along the way I have been fortunate enough to acquire<sup>1)</sup> a wife named Carol who enjoys magic well done, is bored by it poorly done, likes magicians if they can talk about something else once in a while, and has the eye of a w hawk for a flickering finger. In short, an exceedingly intelligent woman. Unfortunately, she is no use at all to me as an assistant since I refuse to share the stage with anyone prettier than I.

Our four-year-old daughter, Alexandra, can already do the first half of all my tricks and she, too, is prettier than I am. It bodes ill.

But then, as I say, it has boded ill for 35 of the past 40 years, yet here I am writing all~~x~~ this barf ~~x~~ about myself and here you are reading just as if it weren't.

Funny world.

1) Being of the Liberal persuasion, she will not appreciate that verb, and rightly so, but once, as they say, a male chauvenist porker, always an M.C.P.<sup>2)</sup>

2) Also a B.A. and an A.I.M.C., in case you collect initials.

I look forward to seeing you. All the best.

Yours,

William Zavis