

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

To Kirk Douglas Office _____
 From Mark Rubin Office _____
 _____ Office _____
 _____ September 25, 1970 _____ 19 _____

Subject ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST

Dear Kirk:

Anne has told me that you have given Freddie the okay to unload CUCKOO'S NEST, or at least explore these avenues. Don't you think that you might be throwing your hands up in a moment of uncertainty. Someone is going to make either one of the worst or one of the best films out of this first-rate material. Unless you are 100% certain that you have had it with CUCKOO'S NEST in all capacities either as actor, director or producer, then you might hold on to it a little longer. You then can make your decision on CUCKOO'S NEST when you finish LIGHT AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD. This decision should be made when you are not under the pressure of acting, producing and trying to set a distribution deal, and maybe then you will be able to concentrate exclusively on the pros and cons of your upcoming involvement with CUCKOO'S NEST.

CUCKOO'S NEST with a Fred Haynes (ULYSSES, TROPIC OF CANCER) or someone like a Joseph Strick to direct made for under a million dollars with a sensational "New York" selected cast, has a good chance to capture a healthy audience. Of course, there are no guarantees.

Whether or not a nurse can order a lobotomy doesn't have to be an insurmountable story point. After all, this is fiction. People watching or reading CATCH 22 (CUCKOO'S NEST is of the same literary quality as CATCH) are not expected to question the film or book on its historical accuracy about World War II and the Italian campaign. The events in both books exist on different reality planes. CUCKOO'S NEST would not be a documentary look at a mental institution and some of its inmates, but, as you have said, a metaphoric microcosm of what goes on in the real world, "the combine". The fact that a nurse can order a lobotomy works in the material's favor.

Anyway, I think you should wait to unload CUCKOO'S NEST. Remember, the popularity of the book is still on the upswing and the San Francisco play, despite its director and cast, is still turning people away.

Of course, if selling the book will be a relief to you, then you should do it so you are free to concentrate on new or more provocative material. It is just that there are very few properties newer or more provocative than CUCKOO'S NEST.

Best,
