

DALTON TRUMBO *flm*

September 20
1948

Dear Elsie:

Apparently Sabinson likes the play, and so does Herman Shumlin, for they are presently negotiating for Shumlin to direct and co-produce. I discovered this in a telephone call from Sabinson. Apparently he is not a writing man, just phones. I have only one copy of the play, which I am having typed this week in several copies. I shall send one on to you the minute it is ready.

About the name: my wish was to remain absolutely anonymous, since I may be sent to jail, and I should like to keep some means of earning a living open. In my opinion, an editor might easily be frightened by my true name, and after I made the jug, might decide to deal with me no more. Thus at the very time when I should need a nom de plume most, I should not have one.

Perhaps I should have handled it differently at the outset. For example, have sent it to you together with a letter from Mr. Doyle. It would not have been too difficult to imagine that you had been completely deceived, and then in all innocence, you could have sent it out. Checks could have been made to Doyle and cashed by me here, and all would have been fine. The effect of that is what I had hoped to achieve, at least as far as the editors were concerned, for I do not trust trade secrets; and what one editor knows all will shortly know, and I am as vulnerable as before.

Please think about it. An editor who is deceived has committed no breach. But an editor who knowingly connives, who publishes with knowledge, may have. My problem is to find a name under which I can sell innocent fiction and thus support my family in case of real trouble. I think noms de plume have been used before---and with great secrecy---for less urgent and valid reasons. Anyhow, let me hear from you about it when you've made up your mind.

Regards,

Dalton