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Mann, Erika

o.O., 1961-02-16

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February 16, 1961

Miss Kay Brown
MCA Artists, Ltd.
598 Madison Avenue
New York 22, N. Y.

Dear Kay Brown; -

With God's help and every bit of power he endowed me with, I finally succeeded in airmailing ("registered special delivery") to Paul Sherman all the documents we so cosily chatted about on the good old transatlantic line. Mine has been a most severe trial, as I think you of all people will readily realize. In order - if possible - to alleviate FILMAUFBAU'S sufferings I have furnished said firm with a copy of my letter to Mr. Sherman. Had I not done so, they would have certainly refused to sign what they cannot but consider a "Base" rather than a "Basic" or a "German Motion Picture Agreement".

I'd like you to understand that - despite my letter to Mr. Sherman and although the new "German Motion Picture Agreement" differs slightly from the one prepared in New York - FILMAUFBAU should have declined, had it not been for three powerful facts:

1. We have been dealing with them for the past nine years during which period they produced screen versions of three of my father's novels: "Royal Highness", "Krull", and "Buddenbrooks". In doing so they have been sensationally successful, particularly so in the case of "Buddenbrooks" which attracted a number of spectators never remotely equalled in Germany after the fall of the "Reich". Within ten months no less than 11 million (west)-Germans had seen "Buddenbrooks" which is still going so strongly that new copies have to be made for the foreign markets. Although I'd written most of the stuff for "Royal Highness" and "Krull", I had not then signed as one of the authors. Concerning "Buddenbrooks" I was and ~~am~~ definitely ^{an} THE author which is why FILMAUFBAU do wish to ~~sign~~ sign on very friendly terms with me.

2. Just now we are negotiating two additional deals with FILMAUFBAU. Hence they are inclined to do us a favor or two provided their own interests won't suffer thereby.

3. In order to compensate the firm for what they are signing away the Estate has agreed not only to pay certain substantial amounts out of their own American "Krull"-earnings (if any...) hailing from both the show and the film (if any...). In addition, FILMAUFBAU have been granted the gratis-right to show "Royal Highness" for 5 years after the respective contract has expired.

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So you see, we have gone out of our way - way out! - in order to facilitate and expedite matters. Should our final efforts not suffice to satisfy Messrs. Rubinstein & Bloomgarden I should have to throw up my hands in bleak despair and leave it to them to sort things out. Perhaps they would, at this extremely late moment, like directly to negotiate with FILMAUFRAU. Should such be the case doomsday would have dawned.

Just as a final token for my extreme willingness to be helpful I enclose the original of the letter from FILMAUFRAU authorizing me with regard to Bloomgarden's use of the German screen play. You will notice that Herr Abich wanted me to ask for DM 6 000 at the very least but "if at all possible" for DM 10 000. I never did ask for the latter but took it upon myself to go in for 6 000, merely.

Kindest regards. Thanks again for all you have been doing and for all that - please not! - you still may have to do.

Yours very cordially,

ERIKA MANN

