

# Huntsville News

2111 CLINTON AVENUE  
HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA 35805  
(AREA CODE 205) 532-4500

LEE WOODWARD  
EDITOR

February 15, 1995

Charles F. Pfeifer  
Creative Film Management  
440 Park Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10016

Dear Chuck,

Here is the two-pager. It is heavy on argument and light on the visual scene possibilities. I could have mentioned, for example, the military flights taking off from Redstone Field, the temporary wooden barracks, the various 1950's Washington locales, the rocket test stands, and so on. But the main argument either compels belief or the movie falls apart: one man's heroic determination kept the pre-NASA rocket team together until it could prove itself. All the secondary themes, about the stupid and vicious inter-service fighting, the semi-parasitic relationships between the defense contractors and the Pentagon leadership, and the brutal realities of the Cold War of that era, will emerge in the dialog. It's all there in the transcripts. Only a tremendous compression will be needed.

In the beginning is the idea, obviously, but I should mention I have written four novels, mostly dialog, and some playscripts, back before I got mired into daily journalism. The latest novel, done with a Sunday-painter technique, took nearly three years of sporadic work on weekends, making me vow I won't do any more.

I should also tell you I am president of the Tallulah Bankhead Society, since she was born here and the woman who owns the building where Tallulah was born is my favorite co-conspirator around here, and that there is a helluva good movie, both funny and sexy, out of a year or so of Tallulah's life, either in London, during the 1920's, when she was the toast of the town, or when she made six films for Paramount (1931-1932) with terrible scripts.

But that's a topic for some time down the road. I also had a playscript about Frances Wright (1795-1852), one of the most interesting women radicals in U.S. history, which I would have liked to see Vanessa Redgrave do. Wright's politics were probably to the left of Redgrave's. I recently dug out a lot of good material about Wright in the Cincinnati Historical Society that makes me rethink the play as a deathbed retrospective of her life.

I will throw in my five-part series on Nickerson simply for the photos of the principals and a few good chunks of testimony. Some of the principals still survive (Dr. Ernst Stuhlinger, WVB's research director, Col. Lee James, who acted as courier for delivering the memos, and so on). Others will have to be re-created by photos. A good friend, Ruth Von Saurma, knows the entire rocket team and would be a great help in the project. If it goes.

Thanks for the encouragement.

*David Bowman*

Box 34 / Huntsville AL 35804