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Penguin Group (USA), Inc.  
375 Hudson Street  
New York, NY 10014  
ATTN: Alpha Books Division

Dear Penguin/Alpha:

I have an idea for a new book that I would like to pitch to you. It is *The Complete Idiot's Guide® to Complete Idiots*. The way I see it, there are a heck of a lot of idiots out there in the world. I encounter them every single day. I thought that I could compile a list of famous idiots (like the guy that tried to hang glide into the boxing ring with Riddick Bowe and Evander Holyfield and just ended up getting the tar beat out of him, or the guy who killed those people on the subway train and then tried to represent himself in court) and educate people on what it means to be an idiot, what it takes to be an idiot, and maybe impress on them why they do not want to be known as an idiot.

Next I could include a section on fictional idiots. These would not be real people, but instead would be composites of various idiotic characteristics or tendencies, such as: eating rat poison, shaving with a cheese grader, taunting big hairy apes in the zoo, running for the U.S. Senate, selecting a tight end and/or defensive unit in the first two rounds of your fantasy football draft, etc. The possibilities would be endless, and from these characteristics we could formulate all the different variables which make up the general idiot classifications in which all idiots fall.

What I need to know from you, first of all, is isn't it true that a book must have 37 pages before it can be considered a book and that anything less than that is really just a pamphlet? I had heard that once before in reference to a what most **good** authors could produce in about a **year**. I wondered if that minimum page requirement was standard at your publishing company as well. I understand that you have to have significant content before you can justify a price tag that even makes it worthwhile to make a go of it, but I think this is all really just academic here, because my idiot guide should easily top 37 pages.

But it gets me wondering how it is that such an arbitrary number of pages has become the industry standard. What is it about 36 pages that falls short, yet it is automatically assumed that 38 pages can hold its own? If you ask me (and I hope I am not insulting anyone there at Penguin/Alpha), I think that the person who started the arbitrary 37 page standard should be declared an idiot and have a page in this book dedicated solely to him (or her).

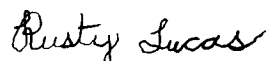
Anyway, I know that you have garnered an entire industry in your *Complete Idiot's Guide*® series and so I would certainly be willing to work with a team of consultants from Penguin/Alpha to help develop my ideas and to generate a framework of chapters and column inserts which best presents the material in a clear and concise manner so that any idiot can read and understand and enjoy his or her reading experience with this book.

Also, I am a writer, but I am not an illustrator or graphic artist by any means. One of the wisest things a person once said to me was “Know your limitations”. That guy was Mr. Medvidackovich. The irony of it all is that at the time I thought the guy was a real idiot. I’m talking about a prime candidate for a featured color insert in this project we are discussing right now. He once told me that I should know my limitations and not try to do things that I obviously could not. But you know, in this case he was right. I draw like a five year old. So basically what I am saying is that I do not intend to do any of the illustration or art design for this project. I would like to possibly have a say in the general design and layout, but I won’t be doing the actual art work on that aspect.

And if this works out, maybe I could work on a sequel book full of people like Mr. Medvidackovich. This would be something along the lines of *The Complete Idiot's Guide*® to *People Who You Always Thought Were Complete Idiots, But Actually Were Wise and Had Good Advice for You Whom You Should Have Listened To*.

Theoretically, this sequel book could include every single person who ever became the parent of a teenage child, but I would limit it to more famous and noteworthy examples. Just let me explain that the title above would not have to be the final title for the book. I know that we haven’t yet finalized our deal on the first book and that this second book would be contingent on the success of the first one. So I just want you to know that I haven’t put a lot of thought into the title of the sequel, mainly because the idea just occurred to me as I was writing this letter and I figured it wasn’t worth spending a lot of time to come up with the perfect title when it may never materialize in the first place. Know your limitations!

Sincerely,



Rusty Lucas

p.s. Do you know whether your publishing company offers any free articles of clothing for potential new authors or contributors? I had heard that they do that over at Random House, but I wanted to give you the chance to publish and market my idea first. If I could get a free baseball cap from you with the Penguin logo on it, that could very likely seal the deal. So think about that will you? It is a simple gesture, but it would show me that you are really dedicated to this project.