

November 21, 1956

Air Mail

Professor Bernard D. Davis
Department of Pharmacology
New York University
College of Medicine
New York 16, N. Y.

Dear Bernie:

I am writing you now at the urgent behalf of Boris Rotman. As you know, Boris took up a position in Chile last summer. Since that time his wife Raquil has been suffering an increasing disability due to a congenital hip ailment and her physicians have now advised that she return to New York for corrective surgery. This will necessitate that she and Boris live in New York for about 6 months beginning the middle of next March. In addition to a natural desire to continue his scientific activity, Boris is, of course, concerned about keeping his head above water financially. He has therefore asked me to do what I could to facilitate his finding at least a temporary position in the New York area. I am afraid I do not have many more details on his plans, and I have suggested to him that he communicate directly with a number of people who might be interested. However, I thought that you might have a special interest in an opportunity to have him in your laboratory for a fixed period of time, and so I thought I would write to you myself.

I think you've met Boris and are probably acquainted with some of his work so I don't have to give you a detailed reference. He did an outstanding job, of course, with Sol Spiegelman on the isolation of E. coli lactase and the identification of the carbon sources for its induced surfaces. Much of that work has not yet been published. He did an equally good experimental job in blowing up some of the nonsense about long-term adaptation in yeast. While he was here he was working, of course, on the problem of crypticity of lactase, and succeeded pretty well in blowing up most of the elementary notions that one would have to begin with. At the present time he has taken up interest in the penetration of DNA into bacteria but this is just a beginning project. Boris is an unusually skilled man in the laboratory and a very helpful person to have around, aside from the originality of his own work. His speech defect is probably the main obstacle to his having achieved much wider recognition. I therefore suggest him to you, Bernie, not only in a spirit of compassion but one of possible great advantage to your laboratory and yourself. If you are interested, and capable, of pursuing this matter further would you just communicate directly with him at the following address: Boris Rotman, Instituto de Quimica Fisiologica, Universidad de Chile, Borgoño 1170, Santiago, Chile. I am sure Boris would also be very appreciative of any other suggestions or references you might make for him.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL:nhm

P. S. I have been hoping to get a promised manuscript from you for some time. We are just starting a search ourselves for a broad category of wall-less mutants, but have so far had indifferent success (over)