(rep. via Ed)

File under S. Brenner

MRC
Medical Research Council

MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology
University Postgraduate Medical School
Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 2QH
England

telephone Cambridge (0223) 48011

telex - 81532

January 5 1978.

replied via Ed + Telex

My dear Francis,

I should have written ages ago but I have had a very hectic year and never quite found the time to relax to do it. I did try to telephone you on a visit to the States but they could not find you and I hope you got the message. Ed's imminent departure prompts me to send this note with him.

First I should tell you that I shall not be coming to Lerner's meeting. As you may have heard May was seriously ill last year and although she has recovered well I do not want to leave her alone for a week in the winter. However, I have arranged to spend a few weeks teaching in Arizona in late March and early April when Carla will have school holidays and I hope you will be willing to invite me to come to San Diego for a few days during this visit. I will do a small West Coast tour then having accumulated many invitations so it is likely that my travel will be taken care of. Could you drop me line saying which period is no good for you so that I could make some plans.

I have spent most of last year getting the genetic engineering going in the laboratory and we have made good progress on two lines. An excellent American postdoctoral fellow, John Karn, has got very good <u>in vitro</u> translation of nematode messenger and we have purified myosin messenger and will be cloning cDNA sequences

from it soon. A considerable fraction of our null mutants make fragments in vitro each mutant having a characteristic one. We did not see these in vivo so they must be degraded and I am pretty certain that these are our old friends the chain terminating mutants. We will be doing in vitro suppression on these to prove the point and also some protein mapping as well. These days one must be very careful to prove everything. As soon as we have a probe we will use this to look at the DNA and we plan to study a large number of null mutants by all of the methods available. I am confident that we now have all the methods to run a eukaryotic gene into the ground. We have also cloned tRNA genes from the nematode. This is a toy problem but it has got John Smith back into the lab. We have been able to keep his internal spirits up and the external ones down. Riccardo Cortese has put the cloned into the frog oocyte and seems to have expression from several of them. The pieces of DNA are quite small but we will be trimming them down to find the minimum size. The big thing that has happened last year is the resurrection of molecular genetics and the excitement it has generated. I have lots of other ideas for work in this field but it that can wait until I see you.

Lots of love to Odile; we do rather miss you here (especially me) Yours ever Sydney

PP/CRI/D/2/6