NEW YORK UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
550 FIRST AVENUE, NEW YORK 16, N.Y.

DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY

OREGON 9-3200

February 13, 1967

Dr. F. H. C. Crick
M.R.C. Laboratory of Molecular Biology
Hills Road
Cambridge, England

Dear Francis:

We have been tickled by your recent paper in Nature on UGA. We tried a few times whether this triplet would code for anything with oligonucleotides of the type AAAUGAAAA...AAA and got negative results with both tryptophan and cysteine. As you may remember, the cell-free system misses the 5'-end triplet in such polymers but translates the others. It would be interesting if UGA indeed functions as a spacer triplet between genes. In some of my lectures I have been writing UAAAUG for the end and beginning of cistrons, respectively. Do you think it is going to be UAAUGAAUG?

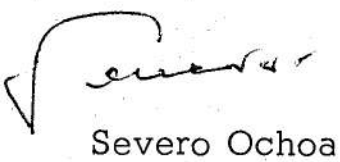
We have now good evidence that, upon translation of MS2 RNA by the E. coli system, both the coat protein and the synthetase are initiated with formylmethionine. We do not get intact maturation factor protein in vitro, probably because of nucleases in the system. We also have final proof for UAA as a chain termination codon. On translation of polymers of the type AUGUUU UAAAAA...AAA, the cell-free system forms formylmet-phe in good yields, as the free dipeptide released in the supernatant.

I am going to be in western Europe this spring and I am planning to visit England the last week in April. I would of course

like to take this opportunity to spend a day in Cambridge. Would April 27 or 28 be convenient?

With best regards, as always

Yours,



Severo Ochoa