

July 16, 1957.

Dr. Henry S. Kaplan  
Stanford University Medical School  
Webster and Clay Streets  
San Francisco, California

Dear Henry:

We were delighted to hear that you had decided to buy that lot on the campus and I hope that our inclination to find a place nearby will be as successful. Pete Webb told us that you had asked Stone to build your house and this will be an exciting thing to watch. I was very favorably impressed with Webb; our visit went smoothly and the irritations of going over all these tiresome details were reduced to a minimum.

Dr. Seymour Benzer, who has been at Purdue, is planning to leave and when he heard about our interest in moving to Stanford, and later our decision to go there, he told Mel Cohn that he would be extremely receptive to an offer in a biophysics division at Stanford. You probably are aware of Benzer's work. I regard him as one of the most brilliant and experimentally effective people I have met. He was trained as a physicist and, according to one report I heard, a remarkably good one. He decided to turn to biology and like many other physicists who develop such an interest, he moved over to microbiology, particularly its genetic aspects. His first work was in Paris in Monod's laboratory, where he tackled a problem that was admittedly impossible to solve and proceeded to solve it. This involved the determination of whether bacterial populations during the course of induced enzyme synthesis behaved homogeneously. He then returned to Purdue and his work during the past four years on the genetic fine structure of bacteriophages is regarded by some geneticists as the most original and important during the past decade. In this work he did most of the experimental operations with his own hands and developed ingenious assays which like Lederberg's replication technique have been informative and useful to others.

He is going to England next year to work with Crick on X-ray diffraction and I know that he is very devoted to pursuing genetics at a molecular level. Mel tells me that he has an offer of a professorship at Hopkins, but again would much rather go to Stanford because he prefers its geography, which includes its proximity to Cal Tech and Berkeley, and now would also like to be close to our group. I'm told he can get complete financial support from outside sources to maintain a small group which would include a student, a fellow and a technician. These details have come to me in an indirect way and would of course have to be checked. I wrote to Dr. Twitty of Benzer's availability and he informed me in a letter that he

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knew of no available places at Stanford. Presenting the possibility of his filling the job on which you asked my advice is like suggesting Mickey Mantle when somebody has asked you for a utility outfielder. If this suggestion seems incongruous, please let me know and I will try to come closer.

With fond regards,

Sincerely yours,

AK/McK

Arthur Kornberg.