

XX June 1, 1960

Dr. Ernst Sorkin
State Serum Institute
Copenhagen S, Denmark

Dear Ernst:

I am writing the following in some haste, and in considerable confidence.

Stemming in large part from a personal connection with Carl Djerassi, who is coming soon to Stanford as Professor of Chemistry, and who is Vice-President for Research of the Syntex Corporation, I have agreed to accept some responsibilities in advising Syntex on the course of their future research. I hardly need remind you of the preeminence of this group in steroid chemistry. They have felt, for some time, the necessity of broadening their interests, and I have urged in particular that they consider (1) fundamental problems in the biochemistry of nucleic acids, and (2) the mechanism of immunity. These are obviously not unrelated to one another, and the later is a logical correlate of their present unique position in steroid work.

A particularly attractive proposal which I am discussing with them is the possibility of their establishing an advanced research laboratory in this area, perhaps even on the Stanford campus, on land which the university leases for this type of industry. If this materializes, and as an element that would bear on the issue, we have the question of the immediate direction of this program. Knowing that you have been on the lookout for some new possibilities, I am writing to ask whether you could conceivably be free and interested to accept a position as Director of Biological Research in such a laboratory. Syntex is in the midst of some constructive measures to give it a strong position in nucleic acid chemistry, and the close cooperation of such a group would be immensely valuable, as would your position vis a vis the University, and this does not exclude Djerassi and myself. Needless to say, I would not bother to write you if I did not feel that this was an unusual opportunity, especially for a drug company, which would afford ample opportunity for fundamental research, to which the development of commercially useful products would be a long-term parallel incentive. At any rate, if this constituted your major concern I would suggest your holding it for more direct discussion.

If you can give me a constructive reply, I would communicate with Dr. Alejandro Zaffaroni, Executive Vice-President of Syntex, to pursue the matter further. Fortunately, he will be attending the International Congress of Endocrinology in Copenhagen next month to give a paper, and this could afford an opportunity to continue the discussion.

With best wishes,

Sincerely