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Department of Genetics

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Department of Chemistry
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Cambridge, Mass.

Dear Colleagues:

What can I tell you about Francis Crick that the world doesn't already know? Do you really think you can lure him from paleo-Cambridge? I envy you the opportunity.

Perhaps the only thing you may have to fear the (mistaken) impression of is this: his contribution in analysis of DNA structure was at once so simple and so immense that some may wonder if it weren't just a one time stroke of lightning, a flash in the pan. Can you believe he's "that good"?

Well, I think so. He's one of the most exciting and informative people I know, and he has a grasp of a fundamental orderliness in the chemistry of living organisms that rates him, in my own opinion, as one of the most profound thinkers and greatest scientists on the contemporary scene. At any rate, every conversation I have with him is a lesson and a treat at the same time.

I wish there were some way to beat you at your own game and try to lure him out here, but I suspect that if there is any other place he'd leave Cambridge for it would be Cambridge. It will be Britain's loss if you succeed, but we may feel the gain even across the continent, and to some extent share it with you. I am sure his leaving Britain would generate some pain and resentment, but if the old fogies at Cambridge don't know better how to treasure perhaps their outstanding scientist, it may serve them right.

If this serves to nourish his own productivity as well as Harvard's prestige and our mutual advantage, all success to you. You might as well be done with it and see him move to a position where he'll no longer be distracted about thinking whether to move.

Can I say more?

Yours truly,

(Handwritten signature)
Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics