

*Proffman to close*

April 17, 1950

Dear Dr. Benjamin:

Enclosed is a copy of a memorandum in which you were interested for such confidential use as you might care to make of it.

With kind regards--

Sincerely,

Leo Szilard

wv

December 29, 1950

Dear Leo:

Here are a few of many possible references on sleep, most of them of little theoretical worth. Except for some electroencephalographic publications, which I am not including, there has been little of value published in recent years.

For a general survey I would recommend the fourth edition of Wiggers' Physiology in Health and Disease, published by Lea and Febiger. The best general review is that of N. N. Kleitman: Sleep and Wakefulness, University of Chicago Press, 1939. Also fairly thorough is v. Economo: In Bethe Handbuch der norm. u. path. Physiol., Julius Springer, Berlin, 17:591, 1926. Two shorter worthwhile references are: Kleitman, et al., Am. Journ. Physiol., 105:574, 1933 and Grollman, Am. Journ. Physiol., 95:274, 1930. More later if you need them.

Dave Hawkins tells me that he spoke to you over the phone in Chicago. As you know, things went relatively well. His legal expenses were high, but he still does not know whether he wishes to accept any ~~me~~ financial help from his friends. Accordingly, I am not as yet returning your contribution for which, whether he accepts it or not, Dave is most appreciative.

I look forward to your next Denver visit.

With warm regards,

John

1155 East 57th Street  
Chicago 37, Illinois  
February 13, 1951

Dr. John Benjamin  
Child Research Study  
Colorado General Hospital  
Denver, Colorado

Dear John:

Enclosed is a clipping from a recent issue of Science. Even though the term "research director" is rather obscure, on the face of it I should assume that they want an M.D. and that they would take nothing else. If, however, contrary to expectation they would be interested in a man of my type (and particularly if this position would be compatible with maintaining a satisfactory relationship with your Medical School), I would make a point of stopping over in Denver in the first days of March (which I might do anyway) when I go to the West Coast.

Should you think that there is any point in doing so, perhaps you might call up Dr. Hurst and drop me a line afterwards at my Chicago address--1155 East 57th Street, Chicago 37.

You might perhaps think that I ought not to be interested in this position even if the hospital would be interested in me, and you might be right about this, but there are also weighty arguments to the contrary.

With kindest regards--

Sincerely,

Leo Szilard

*File Borauk*

October 17, 1958

Dr. Leo Szilard  
1155 East 57th Street  
Chicago 37, Illinois

Dear Leo:

Your letter disturbed and distressed me; but I am glad, given the circumstances, that you wrote. I am distressed for two people, you and Ted; and with two people, Bob Livingston and myself. My distress with Bob need not concern us too much here, nor is it very great. As you know, I like him and respect him highly. On receiving your letter this morning, my first reaction was one of shock at the idea that he had violated what was clearly meant as a completely confidential personal communication, given, I thought, purely in his interest. On second thought, however, I realize that he has been through a period of severe strain in connection with the unexpected difficulties arising about your appointment; and that this, when combined with his completely justified eagerness to have you in his program, along with his strong liking and respect for you as a person as well as a scientist, may have impelled him to share with you what I had told him.

My distress with myself is much greater, in spite of my conviction that no unconscious negative motivations lay behind my communication to Bob. I feel that my mentioning what I did to him, even though positively motivated, was not only unfair to you, but also betrayed a confidence of Ted's. Since I receive many of these from him, and of course from many others also on a personal as well as on a professional level, and since I am reasonably sure I have never violated a confidence of either sort, I am somewhat aghast at the realization that I did so in this case. To be sure, when Ted mentioned to me his feeling about your working on the ageing problem, it was not specified as confidential; but it should clearly have been so treated. If his feelings were in any way justified, repeating them could be damaging to you; if not justified, it could be damaging to him; if somewhere in between, damaging to both of you.

On a strictly personal level, I hope Bob L. told you the context of the discussion during which I made the comment I did. I hope also that he repeated what I stated: that I was absolutely certain, and thought Ted was too, that no question of character or of scientific ethics was involved. The communication took place in the course of a private discussion between us on the possible background of the administrative squabble about the terms of your appointment. The question arose as to why a certain number of people had reservations about you as a working colleague, in spite of the universal recognition of your most unusual creative and analytic capacity over a wide range of scientific fields. I suggested that this might be due to the fact that some people perceived you at times as tactless and even as somewhat intrusive in relationship to other people's work. Whether justified or not, I have heard this criticism voiced by others than Ted, and quite independently of him; and there is no doubt that you are

so perceived by some, although most certainly not by all. My own opinion as to why this is so is that it is derived from a combination of your obvious pleasure in your own powers (Functionslust) with a genuine enthusiasm for ideas as such, and an unusually great capacity for producing them, sometimes when they are not wanted at the moment. (You will remember the incident some years back when you referred to the footnote in Ted's first PHAS paper, thanking you for your suggestion, as "punishment" for what he, and I think you, too, perceived as an unintentional intrusion.)

As regards the body of your letter, and your request for me to look into the matter: I find your statement as to what actually happened entirely convincing, and thank you for sending it. Since I was certain anyway, and so told Bob L., that there was nothing "bad" in your behavior, it leaves the question of Ted's perception of intrusiveness on your part an open one as far as I am concerned. Whether, as you suggest, this is primarily a question of his own psychology, or whether it is in part justified by previous experiences with you, or by such things as your frequent contacts with Cody Webb while he was working for Ted, or by other factors unknown to me, I am not now in a position to say. Ted is out of town at present, but will return shortly. Much as I dislike taking the matter up with him, I of course feel entirely obligated to do so. In the meantime I should like to stress that I feel reasonably certain that he would not have told Bob or anyone else about his feelings in this matter, which makes my responsibility and culpability all the greater for having said anything. I am sure you know the extent of Ted's admiration for your abilities, as well as his gratitude for your stimulation and help in the past, which he has always fully and publicly acknowledged; and I hope this incident will not destroy what remains good in your relationship. If my own very close personal and professional friendship with Ted is at all strained, which I do not think will be the case, that will be another unhappy outcome of my indiscretion. Finally, I sincerely hope that our own friendship, which although not a close one in that sense, has many real values for me, will in no way be impaired.

I shall write you again after talking to Ted, or call you to arrange an opportunity to talk with you in Chicago or Washington. I shall be in Chicago on November 6th or 7th, in Washington from November 17th to the 19th or 20th.

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,

John D. Benjamin, M.D.

JDB:ku

cc: Dr. Livingston

cc: Dr. Puck