Guides

THE ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

66TH STREET AND YORK AVENUE
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Dear Joshua:

After giving the matter some thought I find it most difficult to answer your letter in detail as you either fail to comprehend, which I doubt, or have rationalized away the issue.

First let me say that I would have given anything to have avoided this between us. I can only regret having given more than casual thought to protoplasty. Next, and let me be most clear about this, neither Rollin nor I ever suggested that you suppress your information. It was Rollin's idea to that you merely withdraw your ms until such time as we could discuss the issue face to face. I hold no promise from you about congealing the situation. You may do as your conscience dictates. This however was merely an expedient in face of your fait accompli. and not in the least related to the iss ues.

I apologize for anything I might have said about Demerec.

When I first told you about my "mysterious" reagent I had little to say as there was but little to say. You seemed only casually interested and in fact accused me of dropping the genetic for the more biochemical approach as soon as I tied up with Rollin. By the time Rollin saw you we had achieved a break through and I told him to tell you all about it. By this time I also began to tell the people around here and those that passed through. This includes [illegible]. Braun, Hershey, Ruth, Levinthal etc etc. My lab door was not locked. I didn't write to you as I had no knowledge of your "systematic" search for coli protoplasts. The grapevine as usual was effective and the expected people knew about them at CSH including Sol. He asked me for permission to mention their existence at Baltimore and as he knew about your success I couldn't say no without pointing to some issue between us which I am far from anxious to publicize. Anyhow we'll have settled this part of it by then.

Simply there were two unethical aspects to your behavior. One not informing of your original success at the time it was achieved and secondly and the more onerous sending me and already submitted ms.

You ask two questions in your letter which skirt about the hart of these issues. " Do you think I stole your ideas ". I can't ahswer this one for it depends on what level you are asking the question. But let me say what you did obtain; one the stimulus to think about protoplasts in particular reference to coli and secondly the knowledge that at leats a partial if not complete success had been achieved. Given this latter oftentimes half of the battle is over. I can think of innumerable exapmles but let me cite one in the particular frame of reference. At the very beginning of this all I wrote a letter to Caren. It concerned some phage and other mutual problems. As a PS I appended a cryptic note about making protoplasts in coli without really telling him how. He guessed

that I was doing it with phage ghosts, tried it and when it looked promising immediately wrote to me about it.(This was a technique I originally tried but found it difficult to stabilize the bearsts for more than short periods.)Note the difference in behavior however. Al wrote in his letter that the knowledge that protoplasts could be made gave him the impetus to try this not so wild guess.

The seeond question refers to your telling me preferentially about the technique. The preferential part was for you to decide,the telling me was a moral obligation. I don't care about being scooped, I expected to at any time because of the simplicity of my current technique. Let us look at this in another way. Say I'd not mentioned to you that I was working on protoplats and that you Sent me the ms anyhow, as you might have done. I would have been some dissappointed but not hurt. As it was this had all of the aspects of some of the things that one hears about amongst that lovely crew of Wisconsin biochemists not the kind of thing that should exist between you and me. I can only believe that you let your enthusiasm run away with you although again on the phone you denied other than casual interest. This latter to my mind is belied by your rush into print or asking Sol for cultures for comparative purposes. Look Josh, I know you too well, you don't do anything casually, neither do I, and you know that too. You didn't rush into print with lambda transduction, in fact still haven't published anything that wasn't known three years ago. You'd be annoyed if I sent you an ms about all of the things I might have done in this interval. We didn't rush the penicillin procedure #1 and were almost forced into publication. Nor despite your protestations about lack of personal property intellectual or otherwise send out, after their existence had been published, het or hfr stocks. When you talk about "private gardens" remember the"glass houses!!

Regardless of the above and regardless of whether my own work was any stimulus , when you got your brainstorm and carried it forward why didn't you get in touch with me so that we could compare notes perhaps perhaps even be of mutual aid , copublish if this seemed wisest etc , etc but don't send me an already submitted ms on something that you know I am workin on. Its insulting to say the least. You wouldn't like it and neither do I. Nuff said.

Protoplasts of coli can be made with lysozyme at pH 9. Swap y our lac exp for my phage exp and we've done the same things. Can compare notes when i get to Madison. Am flying to Milwaukee next Thursday and depending on family obligations will come to Madison either Thursday PM or Friday AM. Will call from Milwaukee.

Sincerely

Arthur