

September 22, 1965

Dear John,

I have just made a magnificent and extravagant gesture by turning down an excellent, "once in a lifetime" job at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at La Jolla. The work would have been building up the invertebrate collections and gathering materials for lab instructors. Best of all, they offered a smashing salary of \$7,500 per year. I think you are the last person in the world that I will have to explain why. The biological collector is a free man with a chance to think, to be independent. I work like mad when the tides are right or when the jellyfish are running. Other times there are long periods of inactivity and I have the time to sleep late, or to write. It is a life suited to my temperament and I enjoy it. That is reason enough.

The price of such a life in financial ruin, I suppose. I have never been able to make any real money at collecting, but as the old, worn-out proverb says, "You can't have everything." Ed Ricketts learned to live with it, I guess I can too.

Please forgive the bother of ~~my~~ having my aunt call you. From your last letter, I thought you would be out of the country, Ireland perhaps, and that I might miss you on my trip up North. I've been so deeply involved in my work that I haven't had time to write anyone, so at this point the phone is essential. I am in desperate need of illustrations for my Collector's Handbook, and I want to take you up on your offer to use the unpublished prints and line drawings from the Sea of Cortez.

Your idea of using a polaroid camera is an excellent one, but I'm afraid not financially practical. The initial cost of the camera, ~~and~~ close-up attachments and films, I find are astronomical and therefore out of the question. As far as scientific and literary grants go, I am anathema to the people who give them out. I was highly amused at the Guggenheim's dole system: they gave piss pots full of money to tedious English professors to write biographies and analysis about Mark Twain, Joseph Conrad and John Steinbeck, and in reality, ~~thenn~~ if those authors and your self had applied for a grant, they would have been

told to go sit on a block of ice. The whole thing is a farce and I have given up on them.

I must face practical mm matters. Right now I am facing a real problem: I have a \$200 order for stony coral, Astrangia, but how do you expand the polyps. Magnesium sulphate is great, they expand beautifully until you pour formalin on them, then slowly surely and irrevocably they withdraw into their limey skeletons and die. By any chance did you and Ed ever find any magic formula for relaxing and killing them? Next to writing, I think preserving contractile invertebrates is the quickest route to ulcers.

I shall be in New York on October 2nd and hope you ~~may~~ can spare me an hour or two. Please write to me at: 318 East 11th Street, New York, 10003.

Sincerely,