

(I had taken a nurse out and she said he had to see a doctor. He wouldn't go to one. By this time, the end of July, we had been going out every weekend, Gene shaving him, me cooking for him. I called another doctor who I heard might go out with me and he said he would have to go to the hospital because it was either malnutrition or cancer, and if it was cancer, as much weight as he had lost, it was already too late.) (It was the last weekend before he went into the hospital. We were going to Gene's folks soon. While we were there he told us to go out and harvest his garlic. I didn't even know this aspect of it until this arrived in the mail on Oct 4th -- I'll never forget it -- while we were out there he was going over a ledger, then when Gene went back in he shut it quickly and said, "It's not yet time for you to know about this.")

I know when we were out there that time (I think his birthday), Harriet and I -- he told her she was to have the picture and some other things they had discussed previously. He talked abt it as though it were an accomplished fact -- already stazted in the will. We went out on the Sunday of his birthday weekend -- I think it was Sat -- and brought him

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home goodies

and he wasn't feeling good then. Both Harriet and I noticed

he had changed so much, he'd lost so much weight. He was

having trouble with his legs, with his walking. So I wanted

to go again -- in July, I think. He was so psychic himself.

He kept saying he was going to go this year. He had been

saying that for the past year. And I think he knew. I

had this horrible feeling that would be the last time I would

see him there. I felt so bad, so depressed, it really bothered

me. It seemed so obvious to me. And I remember on his birthday

(While we were outside, when Gene went back in he asked him

to leave again. When we went back in he had written something

to Angus and had put it in an enveloped addressed to him.

He said, "Will you PLEASE see that this gets in the mail

today." He said it six or eight times before we left. And

to make sure Harold didn't know it was being mailed. I

did it, though I still don't know what it meant. But I wonder

if it wasn't something to do with his will.)

I felt bad, I guess like we all did, that I didn't go

out there more often. Because when I was out there and I was

with him I REALLY enjoyed it. For him and for me. I went

to see him before I left in April then I didn't see him until

the following March. I was traveling. When I was in Connecticut, I sent him a card for his birthday.

The first time I met Bert I was with Harriet. I don't know how we got on the subject of going out to see him. Maybe because I was interested in astrology and she said that she really knew a lot about astrology and I'd seen some of the things he'd done and brought her some of the mint tea. That's another joke. Did she ever tell you about the time -- you know, he dried leaves up on the roof, -- they wouldn't dry out so she put some in the oven. Well, if you do, I guess naturally they taste absolutely awful -- Bert laughed about it. I met him in '71 or '72. Everytime I went out there I went with Harriet because I couldn't find the place by myself. She went out to see him quite a bit. He never talked about his childhood or family. He was serious about astrology and he wasn't. If it got too heavy, he'd say, "Oh, it's just something to play with. . ." But talk about a through and through Gemini: He is a Gemini, a REAL Gemini, really.

They're secretive and they can change moods and change feelings
and as far as people relating to them he relates to you in

one world, he relates to Harold in one world, he relates to
each person in his own world. Each one in their own way,
just like facets in a diamond. It really surprised Harriet
about the will. He had such a diverse life, and you wouldn't
think he would, out here in the sand dunes and he has more
friends than any of us. A LOT of people knew him. Like
this girl that had been working our our office and went to
work for welfare said she'd heard about him and she really
wanted to meet him. Her husband was Director of Recreation
in South Co and heard about him from Kathy Jones and some
other people, so he went out to see the cabin. (Paula
Keesler). (He had almost that instantaneous rapport with
Don Williams and his wife, though I took Don out only once
then his wife went to visit Bert in the hospital.) (And
Bert wasn't at all sure he wanted me to bring an artist into
the dunes although I got his permission before I ever did it.
He was delighted once he got there. . .just delighted. I'm so
glad I did it now.)

I remember when we went out there -- not for his BD -- and that picture was up, and I KNEW Don Williams' work, of course, (My parents and brothers, all of us, have some of his sketches) and I said, "Don Williams did that, didn't he?" Bert said, "Yes, how do you know him?" I told him. I asked him if it would be all right with him if I asked Don if I could have a copy and he said sure. I knew nothing about his background. I wish I'd known about the service they were going to have for him. I found out about it afterwards. At first I was a little upset with Harriet, but she said she'd tried to get me and she found out about it only at the last moment, by accident. She felt badly that if she hadn't been at the right place at the right time, SHE wouldn't have known about it. I REALLY felt bad because I looked forward to it and even told my boss at work, I Don't know when they're going to have this, but when it comes up I HAVE to go.

(Do you think Bert was ever married?) No. (Therefore, you don't think he ever had any children?) Giggle. That doesn't necessarily follow. He was such a character. When we went out there we'd always have him tell us what's in the offing,

-- did he ever talk about the whoopsy do aspects? -- (No.)

The whoopsy do aspect is when romance is in the air, I guess,

see? And when that happened he was afraid we'd get entangled

with some ne're dowell men. When we were out there once,

Harriet and I were just absolutely splitting because he

was saying to Harriet, "Well, your whoopsy do aspect is, well

you'd just better stay home and you'd better stay out of those

bars and stop driving that Porsche around because your woopsy

do aspect is just, well, you're going to have TROUBLE. He

was half serious and half joking. It was so funny.

We went to a conference down in Los Angeles shortly after

that and we passed this bar called the woopsy do and I said

we should at least go in there and get a napkin or something

and send it to him because it was so funny. I don't think we

did, but we should have because . . .

(Did he ever express regret to you that he hadn't married

and had a family?) Not directly. But he would enjoy childre

just like he enjoyed other people.

(Do you happen to know how he came to Oceano?) The version I

heard was that he had heard about this group that Chester Arther III

had out there and so he came out here kind of on the fringes of that. He was always kind of on the outside of that lot by choice. He didn't dig a lot of the things that were going on. And he knew an awful lot that WAS going on. He would talk about that. I kind of lost track of that because he knew quite a few people that were there then. Did Harriet tell you about Pete Thorpe? (No.) Well, then I'd better not say anything about it. That's between you, me, and the fence post. Bert knew of him, but Pete doesn't know it. He knew about the group and he might know indirectly about Bert.

He works in Probation and Bert knew of him and his parents and the whole thing, but that's not supposed to be known.

(Would it make it awkward for anyone if I got ahold of Mr.

Thorpe, but not mention names?) I really don't think you should. I think it would cause him anguish. He wouldn't remember anyway. Bert said, "Don't ever tell anybody."

(How do you think Bert came to choose his particular lifestyle?)

From what he said, he didn't like big cities. He didn't like the noise, he didn't like the confusion, he didn't like to see man's inhumanity to man. That's one of the reasons he came

out here. He was attracted to this group for whatever he'd heard about it. And he got very disillusioned with that apparently. He had some very ~~wierd~~ dire things to say about Chester Arther III. That he was very inconsiderate of other people and very much an egotist. There was some other fellow he talked about that was with that group. I can't remember his name. Maybe Harriet would remember, but he was one of the people he mentioned/a number of times that lived out there. There was one with that group that finally killed himself. The word gypsy comes up somehow. Maybe he was like a gypsy, or looked like a gypsy. I think he wanted to get away from that. I couldn't understand how he could just leave his work and not have any means of support and just reach 35 or so and just withdraw from society. I still don't know how he managed to do that. (He did work for Crites family for about 20 years.) That was just doing gardening and stuff. I mean work-work. . . a career type thing, a vocation type thing. I know he worked in Detroit for awhile.

(The last September before he died, I got this terrible cold when we were supposed to go see Bert. The time before that when we'd told him we would be there, we were a week late because of the heavy rains and since he always made us give him a specific date when we'd return, I felt we had to go, cold or not. I couldn't break my promise two times in a row. And he had been SO upset that we hadn't come. So this time when we got down there I had laryngitis so completely I couldn't even talk. He was really cruel to me that time when we went, and I was obviously sick. My friend Millie, told me after he died -- well, it was strange. He was always very good to me and we were very close whenever I went with my girls, or Millie, but when I took my husband he was very caustic and sarcastic, biting, to me. Millie's convinced he was jealous, which sounds utterly ridiculous.) No. No. (Then he wrote me an apologetic letter.)

(What did you think about his basic philosophy of life?)

I thought it was GREAT. I was talking to Paula about it.

Someone to do what he did would either have to be very nuts or very sane. And I think that he was very sane. I think that

that -- of course, you said, not to idealize -- but, I think that Bert had . . . certainly he was brilliant. A man with the limited education he had, from what I understand he learned the English language when he came here. This was working, not by going to school. He had a fantastic vocabulary. He knew the King's English extremely well. He wrote out that lesson for me on astrology. . . well, he would have made an EXCELLENT teacher. (Do you still have it?) Yes. Somewhere.

The first thing when I got back from the year away, the first thing I said to Harriet was "When are we going out? I just HAVE to go out and see Bert." We went out within a couple weeks after I got back -- as soon as I could arrange it.

I thought he was very intelligent, very brilliant, and WISE. He could -- I think he was a psychic in that he could SEE people -- through people. That was one thing to me --

he could get rid of the phonies real fast. There was NOTHING about Bert that was phony. Absolutely nothing. He was sincere, completely sincere and honest. He knew things that were uncanny, He really did believe in astrology in a way. I remember one time he read something in my chart and

and he wouldn't tell me. And I KNEW that there was something there that he didn't like, or that upset him -- that he felt was tragic or bad, or something, and he didn't want to tell me. He would protect people, though he was usually outspoken.

He would pick up on other people. I know that Shirley, she met Bert through Harriet, I think. Bert was there SOMEHOW -- I guess he was visiting Harriet and this other gal, this older lady, don't remember her name, and she got this call that her husband had died and BEFORE the phone rang, or when it rang before they picked it up, he KNEW there was a tragedy there. He Just KNEW it. About his philosophy of life, the more I think about it, the more sane and realistic I think it was. He never hurt anyone and I think that in a sense he was fulfilled, he felt he was fulfilled. In whatever he felt his lifework was, or whatever he felt he was creating to fulfill his potential, or whatever. . . But I feel Bert could have been anything he wanted to be, done anything he wanted to do. When I FIRST met him -- and he understood this, thank goodness -- I sometimes tend to alienate people or feel aloof because I'm afraid, or shy -- not shy -- very

very wary of people. Of course Bert understood that. It was one of the things I dearly loved about him. He understood that, so if I was quiet or I didn't say anything, it wasn't because I didn't like him. . . . He understood that. I didn't have to explain anything. It was really great. I wish that he had -- in a way DONE other things, for himself, in terms of accomplishment. Maybe he had already though, in his life. We don't know. We don't know what his life was. Maybe he had already accomplished what he felt he had to accomplish, then he chose this way of life. (I don't think what he wanted to accomplish could be done in terms we think of. Did Don Williams' wife tell you what happened when she was there the Monday before Bert died?) No. (Well, he was in agony, as he was most of the last two weeks. The doctor walked in and Bert asked him for a little black pill. The doctor said, "Bert, you know I can't do that." He said, "Yes, you can. The doctor said, "No. You know I can't. Sometimes people think they want to die, but they can change their minds. After all, you've got a couple of more years." And Bert said, "A couple more years? I don't want a couple more years

... what difference does it make whether my headstone

reads "died at the age of 70 or at the age of 72?" The doctor looked at him soberly and said, "Well, I can't give you a little black pill. But it is time that you make things right with your Master." Bert became very adamant and upset and said, "I have no need of that. I've spent my whole life making things right with my Master.")

That's TRUE. That's absolutely true. I BELIEVE it.

Oh, I KNOW it's true. (I think that was perhaps his whole objective.) Sure. Well, he was -- did Harriet tell you when she was there? This minister came and she just about went under the bed, because this guy was talking about going to heaven and the whole shot and I guess the same kind of thing you were saying -- and Bert said, "Well, I'm going to a higher level of divinity than you are." Something to that affect, like only BERT could say it. He didn't raise his voice or anything, but he shut the guy up, and he's probably right. I really believe it. There's one thing, too, that he would always say: that would bother me. He would always put down reading the Bible, which I didn't really understand because I think that it's a fascinating philosophical book, metaphysical

book. He probably thought I was thinking like a fundamentalist, but I wasn't. Absolutely fascinating history book. ~~A~~ fascinating book. I'm sure he's probably read it from cover to cover.

I couldn't understand that. It kind of bothered me, because I thought with his philosophy he would see the -- with his methaphysical bent he would see the metaphysics in it.

The POSITIVE. I should have talked to him about that.

(It seems to me that from what he said, his family was probably in a very fundamentalist group -- it's not clear in my mind whether it was Dutch Reformed or a kind of catholocism.

Whatever it was, it was harsh.) That's possible. (He abhorred it. It may have been, that it turned him off on the Bible.)

It seemed out of character for someone who seemed to have so much understanding, such a peace and inner knowledge. And knowledge and acceptance of others. And I told Harriet this.

She said, "You know, what he's doing -- he's not putting down Christianity; he's putting down Churchianity." If anybody

LIVED Christianity, it was BERT. I mean, lived the PHILOSOPHY.

(Did you consider him incisive about politics?) He had a lot interesting things to say. I never really followed politics

so much, myself. He SEEMED to. He'd listen to the radio a

lot.. It would SURPRISE me no end to go there and see something

like THE GREENING OF AMERICA propped in the bookcase. It

surprised me that a man that lived out there and was so ~~seemingly~~

CUT OFF from the world was so TUNED IN to what was going on.

You talk aboa~~x~~ being SANE. You'd think someone would get a

little kooky, but not Bert. I felt his observations, about

politic situations, whatever, he really had it all figured out.

(What about his temperament? His sense of humor?) Again I

have to say he was a Gemini, because they can be so moody,

For one thing. You never argue with Gemini's; you know that.

(Laughter) He had a FABULOUS sense of humor. One thing, too;

that he had, in general, he was witty and had a good sense of

humor, but he would also -- he would know how to humor individual

people he was with. He would know how to say things to Harriet

that would just crack her up, or to say things to me.

Individually, he tuned into people that well that he could

say something to tickle their funnybone. (She said he had

quite a risque sense of humor, which surprised me.) YES! He

sure did! (I only saw glimmers of it ~~know~~ and then.)

Hey, when I first went out there, in fact, he was talking

about these things, saying things I wish I could remember, which just kind of broke the ice. They cracked me up.

He said, "HARRIET! She thinks I'm a dirty old man!" Harriet

got hysterical, absolutely hysterical, because he's really

the kindest man in the world, and she just got hysterical.

I wish I could remember some of the things he said, because

were almost literally rolling on the floor of that cabin.

(Incident about tape recorder and Donn and Crhis saying,

Can't you see he wants you to bring it?) I feared infringing on his privacy.)

He was strange in some ways like that. I didn't feel I knew him

very well that way, but I felt he knew ME VERY WELL. There

were areas where he could put up such a -- not that he was

being phony at all--but as though to protect himself, just

like this situation. You bring it and that's not good, and

you don't and THAT'S not good. . . Harriet went to see him

Thursday night and she said she'd be back to see him tomorrow

and she chuldn't because she got sick. I went to see him


Friday and said, "Harriet's sick, but she'll come to see you

tomorrow." Then I went to see him Saturday, either morning

or afternoon, I saw him three times that week -- I think that's



when I met you, that Sat or Sun. Then I went Tuesday and he was asleep and I didn't wake him because I knew he needed his rest. I feel badly now that I didn't.) (It was very bad by then. We went Tues evening and he woke up and said, "You came before work." I said, "No, Bert. It's Tuesday evening. He was very confused." That night I had brought him a book I'd ordered for him in May for his birthday and it hadn't gotten here. I finally got it. It was QUOTATIONS OF CHAIRMAN MAO. For some reason he wanted that and I had promised him I would read to him out of it. He would float in and out of consciousness. At one point he said to the nurse, "A pill. . . a pill!" I said, "Do you want a pill for pain?" And he said, "No. No. A pill. A PILL -- he couldn't even talk in sentences, it was such a labor for him to talk at all -- I said, "You want a sleeping pill so you can sleep?" And he sat up for a moment -- and that took an incredible amount of energy in his condition -- and he said, "No. No. A pill to live just a few more hours so that I can talk to my friends."



You must have just about gone under. (I did. I sobbed all the way home that night. I didn't know how much more I could take.)

On Saturday I went to see him twice. I went back to see him -- and like I said, I had talked to Harriet and she was sick -- she had the flu -- she didn't know WHAT she had -- and he said to me, "When Harriet's going to go to the hospital?" XX I said, "Harriet's not going to the hospital. No one's mentioned the hospital." And he said, "Yes. Harriet's going to the hospital." He KNEW. Before she did. I was just floored. The thing that got me upset was they weren't taking proper care of him. You know, he was there four or five days and didn't have a bowel movement because the nurses wouldn't get off their ASSES and do SOMETHING. I asked Harold if the doctor couldn't do something for him. THAT brought things on faster. Well, OK, he wanted to end it when he wanted to end it. BUT they didn't have to put him through that suffering. They just didn't want to jBOTHER. And of course he wasn't having proper bladder evacuation either so he could get uremic poisoning, probably affecting him, too.

They had that blanket thing lumped up under him so it was hurting his back. I was furious, so I talked to Harold because I couldn't find the doctor. I told Harold he was going to have to do something. It was bad enough to see him the way he was, but to have additional suffering because they weren't taking care of him right. . . So I went to my friend's house and I was jumping up and down and yelling and screaming about this and she just looked at me like she thought I was crazy. When I first went in there he looked so bad I could hardly recognize him. I just stood there and held his hand and I didn't know what to say, and he said, "She doesn't know (to Harriet) what to say, but that's OK, I understand. . ." Talk about CLASS. He KNEW what I was feeling. Of course, Harriet had been through it with her husband and she was relaxed, but he was telling her it was OK that I didn't know what to say.

In that sense, she and Bert were really tuned in to each other. They had a very good understanding. And she knew exactly what Bert was going through. She knew exactly what to say to him and what not to say.

(What do you think he valued most of all?) Of course I think

he valued people. . .he valued his friends. He valued his

philosophy, his peace of mind, he wouldn't give up. He

must have been a very STRONG man, to live the way he did.

He was lonely, very, very lonely, always lonely. Even when people were there he was lonely. Because they couldn't live within his soul, his experience. But he did that by choice, so his strength and independence he valued. He wouldn't have been able to live that way if he didn't. (Do you think that his visitors were pretty important to him?) Oh, yes. On my trip I wrote to him a number of times, as often as I could. I made him goodies when I was here because he liked sweets. I made him a batch of butterscotch brownies or something like that. He really thought that was great.

(Did you ever suspect he had some independent financial means?)

It OCCURRED to me. A number of times, because that he could

quit whatever kind of work he was in and take off and live

this kind of life, even though as you say, he wasn't paying

rent or utilities or anything. . . But he DID have to buy

food. (He made about \$65 a month when he was working for

Crites.) (They wanted to keep paying him that when he quit, but he absolutely refused, so as far as I know, Social Security was IT, but he didn't have that when he was younger, of course.)

It had to do with his peace of mind. It never seemed to bother him or occur to him to worry about would he have enough money for food or fuel. . .he never mentioned it. That takes a heck of a lot of peace of mind. Of course, Harold would take him things, I would, and Harriet did. (So did we.)

He would go over to Harriet's and chop wood for her. . .

(Did he go visit many people?) Not many. Crites. Apparently he had gone up to see that Shirley. He said that Shirley had a very dangerous woopsy do aspect. . .giggle.

(What about music) He enjoyed classical music, listened to it regularly. . .which was great by me, because I enjoy it, too. (What kind of people did he look up to? What kind of food did he like? I didn't even know much about his eating habits. . .) That bothered me. The last couple of times we went out there, he wouldn't eat at all. We wanted to cook something for him, and he said, " Don't bring me anything.

I won't need it." It would make me shudder. . . He liked vegetables...and he liked that cracked wheat bread. (Right. I used to take him that.) And peanut butter. And when we cooked that pot roast for his birthday, he was yelling and screaming "get out of my kitchen" type thing -- I didn't know HOW it was going to turn out -- he was just a crack up like someone invading your kitchen, you know. It was the funniest thing you've ever seen. (Did you fix it on THAT stove?) Why, yes we did. We fixed the whole thing on that stove. He had this pan and it wouldn't fit in there and we had to kind of twist it around and fit it in there and we put a little water in it and he had all his own spices. . . We added carrots and potatoes and in another pan he made some broccoli. It was REALLY good. It was fabulous. And I guess when we had gone out there I had gotten some -- made some cookies and we'd gotten some fresh strawberries and he just thought that was great. We went out at 10:30 or 11 in the morning. The only reason we left was it was getting late. I really enjoyed that. That was before I went on my trip, then I was gone the whole year. I came back in March

of '74. But, he was such A BIG man that when he was healthy, I think he must have eaten quite well. (What do you think bothered him most of all?) I think he had FEARS out there -- fears of the very kind of thing that happened -- fears that he would get sick, that something would happen to him and he wouldn't get help out there. Or that kids or something would come in there and try to rob him, or harm his property. Which to me was sort of incongruous, it was the only thing about him that was . . . Bert seemed to me to be a man that didn't fear anything . . . he had such a sense of inner peace -- he wasn't afraid of anything -- individually, he wasn't afraid of anything. He was afraid of circumstances. But not of people. (Why could you understand it when I said Millie said she thought Bert was jealous when Gene was with me? Why did you understand that?) Well, I think jealous is a friendship-way. His friends are special to him. . .very possessive. . .and maybe he thought if he acted KIND to you maybe your husband would get jealous and say you can't go see him anymore or something. . . No way he wants that so he's got to pretend, oh well, be mean to her. . .You know,

that type of thing, and also because -- jealous, not in a petty way, because Bert had too much acceptance of himself and too much . . . maybe it was fear of losing you, or something. Losing your friendship. Or a fear that having such a wonderful family, wonderful husband, she won't come back, she doesn't need me, so well, ~~what~~hell kind of difference does it make thing -- kind of feeling sorry for himself. (Did he ever express regret to you over the lifestyle he had chosen?)

No. (Did you know he was knowledgeable about the stock market?)

I had had heard things. . . he mentioned things to Harriet when

I was there, and Harriet has some stock and I'm KIND of interested

in it, I'm not in it, but I might like to, but I'm not THAT

interested in it, so I didn't really pay too much attention.

(During the time you knew him did you see any marked changes in him?) Of course the physical appearance is obvious.

Toward the end he seemed to talk more about "going upstairs"

and this sort of things. I felt with his philosophy he looked

FORWARD to it as an adventure, a further adventure or continuance

of his life. (Did he tell you he thought there was life after

death?) In a way. He didn't say it directly, but I had a

feeling that he did. Because he would say he was going up there and this sort of thing. He talked about it as if he'd be an alive person when he was up there. Really, I had that feeling. You know, because he had lived his life very calmly, but and I think as an adventure, in a way. Not to be real exciting and swashbuckling, but I had the feeling that he felt it/^{an}adventure. There was someone he called the Queen of Hearts, I don't know who he meant and being shy, I didn't ask. Maybe Harriet would know. He said she'd propositioned him and he just didn't know WHAT do do. (What do you think his feelings about nature were?) No. I know that Bert thought an awful lot of Harriet. (What did you personally value most about Bert?) His understanding. His sincerity. I felt comfortable with him whether I felt like talking or not because he understood. (Why was he important to you?) Because of the values he personified?) Yes, I guess so. It's hard to say. He had such a deep sense of inner peace. Of course he's the one that really got me interested in astrology. His philosophy, his understanding, in some ways I would like to be like Bert, to have that inner wisdom, that

sense of peace, and that ability to really understand people,
which came, of course, from really understanding himself.

I think of all the values that he had that I had thought

about before and then seeing them personified in him. I'd

like to acquire them for myself. And seeing, it, too, in some-

one like him, also seeing someone that was cut off, or made

the choice to get out of society, It was not running away.

At first I thought maybe he was running away from something.

Maybe from the noise, but not really. Not really. Because

what he was running INTO was a hell of a lot heavier. than what

he ran away FROM. Being confronting himself ALL THE TIME.

The reality of escape is keeping busy, work like hell.

And he had to live with himself ALL THE TIME, he had to face

himself ALL THE TIME. Boy, that takes a helluva lot of

strength. That's why I say I KNOW he was a very strong man.

He was a AVERY Religious man. Not as a dogma or a doctrine,

but as a PERSON. He was a very religious person.