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July 22, 1975

Mr. Angus D. Crites II
414 Mt. Lowe Drive
Bakersfield, California 93309

Dear Mr. Crites:

I have completed many interviews in preparation for the book I hope to write about Bert. Most recently I spent time with Bonnie Grumont in Long Beach last Sunday and then received a delightful, informative letter from Winston Johnson that offered much insight into Bert and related several very amusing and significant anecdotes that will enrich the book. He will also provide photos taken about 15 years ago.

However, I have yet to come upon photos of Bert in the gardens he so lovingly cared for at your home. Because he enjoyed the work so and because I remember the garden as a place of loveliness, riotously abloom with huge poppies, dahlias, and clumps of English Lavender I am eager to locate pictures of it when he tended it. Pictures with him in them would be marvelous. It seems I remember your telling me that you had many pictures taken over the years and that you would be pleased to share them. I know that it often requires much ~~shuttling~~back to ferret out photos one has taken over a long period of time and I hope my request will not be an imposition on you. I will be more than happy to pay the expense of having the pictures duplicated.

Also, it would be ever so helpful to get some of your impressions of Bert over the years as you are one of the few people who knew him over a long period of time. I realize that you rarely spent more than a half hour in his company at any one time, but perhaps you could fill in some gaps, help tie up some loose ends for me. I know, too, that you have little reason to come to this area now. Therefore, I am taking the liberty of asking if my husband and I might come to Bakersfield to visit with you some Saturday afternoon when we could make the trip and it would be convenient for you. I believe that your contributions would provide a continuity necessary to the book.

In Mr. Johnson's letter he mentioned that Bert had once sent him \$10 as instructed by the "Great Spirit." He in turn sent Bert a portable radio. I found that particularly thought provoking as Bert also sent us \$10 because we had "brought him so many gifts and the Great Spirit told him he should send it." I promptly returned the money with a note that expressed my belief that a gift is indeed not a gift if it is bought and paid for and I could not accept the money. Bert never mentioned the incident again. I find it strange that he did this and wondered if you had ever had a similar experience with Bert. I know that he was sometimes exploited by people and I find myself pondering if this was some kind of test which helped him to discern people's true motivations. I would appreciate knowing if you remember a similar incident in your relationship with him.

Any help you can give me will be greatly appreciated. So many people are enthused about the book and urging me onward that I feel the project gaining momentum and I am eager to begin putting the material I have obtained into some kind of coherent form. If we are able to find a mutually convenient time to meet I will be glad to

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share with you the photos I have gathered and give you an overview of the book I project. I look forward to receiving your reply.

Most sincerely,