

Martha Johnson
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Aug 14, 1975

Dear Mrs. Eldon,

You really are a very charitable and generous person to thank me as you did for my most tardy letter. I guess that one of my basic reasons for delaying so long was my knowledge that my answer was going to be difficult and tough to pull out if I was honest about Bert.

You shouldn't feel guilty about not doing more for or with Bert. He was a very private person who, I felt, never truly revealed himself. Always a veil. Warm and friendly, yes, and certainly he almost always urged me to stay longer when I dropped in to see him, most often unannounced. But I always felt that there was a sign of relief on his part when I finally ducked through the cotton wood grove and yelled goodbye. I'm sure that when we were living in Ocean View in the forties that Bert was invited over for dinner many times and to the best of my recollection he never accepted. Perhaps you can tell me a different

aspect. Perhaps he always wanted to be in control, and if he were in the lens, there was no fear. But in someone else's house, there wouldn't be the independence and freedom that he so cherished obviously.

You have met, I gather, most of the people who were in Bert's will. What are the rest of them like? I know none of them. Crites, I believe, having met once but only a very brief introduction, and the rest of them are only names. Is there a common thread? What a beautifully enigmatic character he was. And so magnificently genuine. But he was capable of social hypocrisy if the need arose - not that there's anything wrong with that!

At any rate I checked with my ex-wife who has all the pictures that I took of Bert. She sent me a page of black + white pictures (I still had the negatives) and I made some enlargements of what were the best shots. They are being sent uncropped. I don't know what you need in the way of pictures so you can do whatever you want with them as there are a number of kids in the background - I have six - in all of them along with a seemingly omniscient adult. Use them as you will, and if you need additional enlargements, let me know and they will be forthcoming. Apparently there is only one color slide which is also enclosed. I

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thought there were additional slide but apparently not.

It's ironic that your letter (1st) came in February, as we were in San Francisco in October, then drove down the coast passing through Ades - Cadero on our way to Santa Barbara where I have a brother. It would have been a great treat to have met you then. When we shall have another such opportunity I haven't the vaguest idea, but I do get around the country and certainly when the opportunity occurs, I will be calling to announce my arrival as it would be lovely to meet you, your husband and your attractive daughters. And if we had a picture of my present family it would accompany this letter to but it doesn't exist. A void that perhaps we should fill.

Adding thanks and best wishes on what will be a tough but fulfilling job in making Bert into the three dimensional character he was.

Cheers,
Winston Johnson

P.S. Slide enclosed with the letter

