

Oct. 6, 1975

Rear Mr. Johnson:

Thank you so very much for your prompt reply and compliance with my request. The pictures are splendid and show a Bert much younger and more vigorous than my last recollections of him. I am really pleased to add them to my growing collection.

I believe you are right in your assessment of Bert's need to be in control. Many times we invited him to our home, wanting to go to the dunes and bring him up here to Atascadero to have dinner with us so that he could see the English Lavendar he had given us flourish in our setting and simply so that he would have a visual picture of our home and family life. Sometimes he seemed right on the verge of accepting, but some inner reservation restrained him and, of course, it never happened. But he was very upset if anything kept us from keeping our meeting time with him and he would not let me leave the dunes in the last two years without an appointed time for our next visit having been entered on his calendar. When I found how important to him it was I wrote him if anything prevented the visit; nevertheless I was roundly chastised at the next one for failing him, disappointing him. I think the visits were ever so important to him.

The people mentioned in Bert's will constitute a broad spectrum of humanity. I have met about half of them thus far. Harold Guiton is a local realtor in Oceano who was reared in the area and knew Bert as a child growing up in Oceano. He tells me that he and his friends had names for each of the inhabitants of the Dunes. Bert they called "the giant." He knew him only casually until the last 3-5 years of Bert's life. Having a dune buggy and, therefore, access to the dunes, as he came to know Bert better he paid him regular visits and looked in on him frequently, transported him for grocery shopping, etc., and was a very dear friend to him by the time of his death. His wife is a lovely, quiet, rather shy lady. I met two of the forest rangers at the unceremony when we scattered Bert's ashes in the dunes. They told how each new ranger that came onto that unit was introduced to Bert, swore himself to secrecy regarding Bert's shack and signed their names on the inside of his shack door. They also did little favors for him. Millie Richmond is a dear friend of mine who, in fact, is the one responsible for my having met Bert. She at one time lived in Grover City and did errands for him and was his friend, although he was at times wary of her and said their astrological signs were at odds. She is a very intelligent, astute person and loved Bert. June Dutra, on the other hand, is a very plain unassuming grocery clerk from the store where Bert grocery shopped. I believe he mentioned her in the will simply because she did him favors as she would buy his special brand of bread at another store and keep it for him at Montgomery's Market when they stopped carrying his favorite Wheatberry bread. Also, she bought the large economy size of Bufferin for him as he relied more and more on it for pain toward the end kept it there for him. Bonnie Grimont is a delightful, intelligent and sophisticated lady who