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Dear Jim,

Thanks for your letter of September 20. Everything is as we agreed, i.e., I will serve on the Committee, etc.

Regarding being very disturbed by my remarks to the N.Y. native, let me make a few points:

1. It is surprising to me that you can be this thin skinned, when at the very time of this interview CDC persisted and still does in using "LAV" in all published works, despite your assurances and Fred Murphy's of otherwise. Why did you push for the HTLV-III so early if this would go on? Even in Sendai just a few weeks ago CDC was all "LAV". Last week in a meeting in Europe on tumor viruses, in a crowded discussion late at night, I was asked by two Fins and one Italian why CDC is so hostile to NIH and to me, particularly at Sendai. Worse than the pushing of "LAV", look at the comment by the "unnamed official" of CDC, an AIDS expert -- stating how outrageous it was that CDC had to go to the French to get the virus! Obviously, this insult to me in Science is far worse and injurious to me, and of course, not accurate and not straight-forward because it is the unnamed CDC official of AIDS. To us this reads Jim Curran whether it is you or not. Look at People magazine and the quote of the "AIDS Virologist", which I subsequently learned was Don Francis. These are, of course, only the most recent of several past remarks. Jim, it is nice to hear of favorable comments made by you to friends of mine quite openly, but the non-open statements made to media and other scientists is still somewhat of a problem. What I would prefer to see are deeds, i.e., statements in the scientific literature or favorable statements in the Press by the mysterious unnamed CDC AIDS expert.

2. Now, let me focus on the comments you circled. (If you have problems with underlined comments, I'm not sure why, e.g., "etiology is solved", was underlined. It is true. It is solved. Don't you agree?) You circled the point about the blood transfusion data. I simply answered his question. He knew there was this kind of data available for a long time. He asked me why we did not publish it. I said it had to do with patient information and probably the need for CDC to have their people do the assays too. He asked when it would be published and at that time I truly had no idea, and told him to ask you and CDC when and to ask you why we had not yet written it up. More information was needed. It was not meant as an insult or innuendo. You underlined my comment that things were getting better. Why? He said he thought CDC hadn't dealt with AIDS as they should. I told him I really don't know, but in our relations things were much better. It is simply shortened to: "They're getting better. They have to get better." I believe I said "things" not "they are" getting better. In any case it is true. Things were bad.

The animal model statement is underlined. Why? It is true. It is not useful at all but meaningless in an argument for etiology as I have told you before. Incidentally, there is a mistake there. He said I said it is not needed in an immunological disease. I never said in an immunological disease.

Finally, you circled the "alcoholic" remark, i.e., sex drive. Jim, this is true. I said this, and I apologize to you. I thought much of this was not for publication, and I certainly did not mean to embarrass you. In fact, D'Eramo was openly saying much the same thing to me over an extended period of time. My comment was something like, Oh, yeh, I heard about this too from Jim Curran who said it is like chronic drinking. I really did not mean to cause you any problem, and I truly hope it has not.

Finally, I thought the ICAC meeting went very well and enjoyed your talk.

Best regards.

Sincerely yours,



Robert C. Gallo, M.D.

RCG:tas

P.S. We were on the same side of the fence in the Wash. Post. Bennett was not.