

1670 Cerro Gordo
Santa Fe, N.M. 87501
Aug 20, 1973

Dear Dr. Porter:

I hope this is not the twentieth letter of this type you've received and read today. I fear it may be, and if so, my apologies. The letter's purpose: to ask you to consider me for a position as apprentice/employee/technician when, and if, you are in need of help at your studio and darkroom.

Currently, I am practicing law in Santa Fe, as general counsel to the State Department of Education. I have a B.A. and LLB from the University of Virginia and moved to Santa Fe four years ago to become a law clerk on the New Mexico Supreme Court. Thereafter, I worked as an Assistant Attorney General, being Mr. Norvell's environmental law expert for a while. I've been with the State Department of Education for a year now.

While I was in Law School, I spent one summer at the Rochester Institute of Technology in Photo-Illustration. It was the most challenging and fulfilling period of my life, but I had only one year of law school left, and when I finished, I felt obligated not to waste my education and to support my family. So, I left photography behind rather than going back for more schooling. Seven years of higher education in a row had been enough, anyway.

But I haven't been totally idle in photography. I share a darkroom in Jesuque with Charles Harrison, which we built. Having this available merely increases my frustration, however. Although the practice of law is materially rewarding and sometimes challenging, it is not providing me with the

satisfaction I think is possible from a creative endeavor. The practice of law is certainly not creative.

I am now at a turning point. At thirty, I have achieved professional excellence and a fair financial success, with much greater financial potential available in private practice, ~~if~~ I choose it. But all of this has not provided the satisfaction that my experiences in art and photography have provided. So, at this turning point, I wish to turn away from law and to photography.

I moved to Santa Fe mostly for the physical (and spiritual?) beauty of the area. I spend many hours in the mountains, in the Grand Canyon, in our wilderness. To reflect these places and moments gives me great pleasure.

Obviously, I've viewed all your work possible. Two things about your work appeal to me: the subject matter (a simple way of seeing that allows complex nature to be viewed simply) and the technical perfection. I suppose that I could take my cameras to nature and find my subjects, but I don't think I could ever reach the level of technical perfection that you've achieved without much exposure and tutoring. That's why I ask for the opportunity to work for and study with you.

One reason I find law frustrating - I am a perfectionist. The law business cannot tolerate such a person, because we count the hours. If you don't care about the time necessary to accomplish a task, then you end up rushed

by clients who are not interested in a "perfect" work product. But your prints are the product of a perfectionist — a man of patience and technical excellence. I want to be able to create with the same spirit of perfectionism — of demand for excellence.

This kind of letter has a tendency to get very long — unnecessarily so. If you are in need of a Lab technician (like Jorge Ficke, to whom I've talked about his work with you) or would take an apprentice and are willing to talk with me specifically about such a position, please write or call me. My home phone is 983-2248, and work is 827-2931. As you know from your own experience,

What I propose to do is a complete change in my life. I only wish to do it if I can have a mentor whom I admire to teach me. I'm wise enough to know how little I know. And school, at this late date, is out of the question.

I am at your disposal.

Respectfully,
C. Emery Cuddy Jr