



26 September 1997

Joan Shenton  
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A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Joan Shenton', written in a cursive style.

Fran and I have read your latest treatment, for which our thanks.

You say that you feel that you are very near to what we want. We have all, I know, tried might and main to make this so but, for a variety of reasons, I'm afraid I don't think this is yet the case.

The fundamental problem, as we have discovered by stages during the course of this long development, is this: almost all these tests, in their methodology and their sophistication, have changed significantly over the ten years and more that AIDS has been identified. It is thus very difficult to find a "bottom line", a static yardstick against which this story can be measured and on which it can therefore be built. Every time we think we have found one it just seems to slip through our fingers as our knowledge increases.

As I'm sure you recognise, I can only – and should only – commit money to projects that I have confidence in intellectually. Try as I will, I am not currently in that happy state on this. Personal feelings, concern about your financial state, have to take second place to that.

So what Fran and I have proposed is that we ask someone with experience, someone whom you could trust, to devote themselves for a short period of time to seeing whether they can assimilate the information, ask the necessary questions and discover a way forward. That is time that Fran and I – with the best will in the world – simply don't possess.

That really is the only way on which we would be prepared to proceed. Perhaps you'd like to give this further thought and come back to us.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'David Lloyd', written in a cursive style.

DAVID LLOYD  
Head of News, Current Affairs and Business

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