

Designs and Estimates
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BERGMANN & CO. ELECTRICAL WORKS

The most complete facilities
for all kinds
of Electrical Work.

Patentees and Authorized Manufacturers of

Artistic Electric Light and Combination Fixtures

All Appliances for the Edison Electric Light,

Office and Works: 292, 294, 296 & 298 Avenue B, Cor. 17th Street.

CABLE ADDRESS:
ACNOBERG, New York.

Annex Factory: 457, 459 & 461 First Ave.

New York, Nov 20th 1888

My Dear Edison

What I shall communicate to you
in this letter, I might say to you in person, but
when my feelings are as deeply involved as they
are in this matter, they might get the better
of my judgment and lead me to say what
I might perhaps afterwards find some difficulty
in explaining or substantiating.

This will not be the case with the statements
that I shall make in this letter.

On every hand I get the information
that your whole wrath has been concentrated
upon me. I am constrained to defend myself
and though I do not seek justification, still
I shall state my defense to you, if my
other result follows than that my communi-
-cation will bring to you a few truths, to which
you will do well to listen, as you get them
too seldom nowadays.

First you tell every one that you have
made me rich. Let us amicably review
the history of our business connection and

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In view of your having done so, I shall be as brief as possible and will not go back to the time when, a skilled mechanic, I first worked for you in 1870, for \$1.20⁰⁰ a week; but only to the time when I already had an established business of from \$35,000⁰⁰ to \$50,000⁰⁰ per annum and you first turned work into my shop.

You gave me your telephone work at that time, because, as you yourself told President Orton of the Western Union Telegraph Co. and others, you knew of no one who could do the work cheaper, quicker, and more satisfactorily and who generally was better acquainted with the details than I. Shortly after, or at about the same time, you sent Mr. Johnson to me after he had been floundering around in Shop after Shop trying to get Phonographs made to suit him both in quality and price.

From that time on, I filled a large portion of your experimental orders. The works will show that I charged less profit on your work than I easily got on all others

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My own time on it days, nights and
Sundays, none was reckoned. Besides I had
to wait for my money for most of it,
a year or more, which was no small hardship
for me then. I soon took payment of part of
the of in E. E. L. Co. Stock at $\$1,750^{\text{00}}$ per share
for which I could only get $\$900^{\text{00}}$ per share
a month later.

Up to this time, did I do you hurt
because you wanted to make me rich? or
because I did it as well and cheaply, or
more so, than any one else?

In October 1884 I bought the property.
I bought it at a big bargain and right from
the enemy - your enemies who, three days
later, when they saw who had bought it,
offered me $\$10,000^{\text{00}}$ to return the property and
cancel the contract. At the time I asked you
to come in as a partner in Bergmann & Co. which
you did and paid $\$38,000^{\text{00}}$ on the investment

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You have since drawn in profits and dividends
up to Sept 1st \$77,755.81 in cold cash. To this
is now added the value placed on the
property itself by the accountants viz:-
133 you share making the 1/3 purchased by
you for \$38,000.00 worth \$333,000. to which
add what you have drawn as above and
you get a grand total of over \$410,000.00
as the result of your investment of \$38,000.00
in partnership with me.

You moved your laboratory into the building
and the rental which I charged you was much
less than what it was worth or what any one
else would have had to pay. It was a pretty
good bargain for you. Bergmann & Co did
your experimental work at 40¢ per hour, for
the same kind of work we got them and got
now from 60 to 75 cents per hour

At this time also, you will recollect, I
again worked, days nights and Sundays.

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on Telephone Experiments, and together with
Mr Johnson made and secured patents not
only for improvements, but even for entirely
new telephones which you yourself thought
sufficiently novel to start an opposition company
out, as you advised me to do. I know that
I was not the one who reaped the benefit of
these inventions. I had not even the empty
honor of being considered the real author of
my own, when you negotiated with the
American Bell Telephone Co to dispose of them.
I do not know to this day what value
they placed on them.

The Phonograph business was taken
away from this establishment, and I consider
that there was no justification for doing it.
No man gave no chance whatever though
you know that I was more thoroughly
acquainted with it than anyone else
excepting yourself, and it was given into
the hands of strangers. You have
made the accusation and spread it

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abroad that I sold my Phonograph stock
twice. I risked my own money when
I went into that speculation and bought
the stock and when I sold it again,
you accused me of selling it twice.
You know as well as I do that this
is not so. When you called me to Mr.
Lippincott's office. You complained that
Mr. Painter was squeezing you and I
told you that as far as I could prevent
it, your own deal should not be interfered
with, and that my stock would be at your
service to prevent anything of the kind,
if needed; and that I would be satisfied
with 1500 per share for it. When afterwards,
the contract was signed and the whole
stock sold for \$21.50 per share, and Mr. Painter
insisted on having \$2500 for his, I sacrificed
mine, and so that you could get your
payments, I took \$17.50 per share. You did
it do this because you told me that you
had me down for \$5000.00

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Of a piece with the taking away
of the Phonograph from here is the constant
encroachment that is being made on Bergmann & Co.
work by the other shops, and how far this
encroachment has gone you know as well
as I do. I think that you also know
how much of Bergmann & Co. would be in
existence now if I had not fought all their
attempts, as hard as I have.

I must not forget my connection
with the United Co. of which you are
personally the largest owner. You may
or may not know what I have done to help
it along. In its Councils and deliberations
I have always to the best of my ability
advised and acted for your best interests,
recognizing all the time, as I have stated
above, that it practically belonged to
J. A. Edison. I have acted as its Treasurer
since its beginning without remuneration,
and whatever others might have done in

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the same position. I know that its treasury was carefully guarded in my hands. Not only that, but I lent it when it needed it, the assistance of my personal credit and influence with the Directors of its banks and secured for it a line of discount which, at that time it would otherwise have been unable to get. I had not been and do not claim to have been any more responsible for the results which it accomplished than its other officers and directors but I have the gratification of knowing that my voice and vote are on record in its minutes on the side of whatever policies it has pursued with any measure of success and against many that would have probably resulted in the opposite.

So much for the manner in which we have treated each other in matters of business and money. I will go before any unprejudiced jury with the above

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Statement, every word of which is true,
and abide by their verdict as to whether
you are justified in the implication of
unfair dealing on my part, which contained
in the statement that you made me
rich and now find me ungrateful.

Second. Having dealt with what I have
done that is on record, and can be
proved, I cannot complete this communication
without stating what have been my motives
and aims in my dealings with you.
It is no credit to Langone to be honest,
but whatever virtue there is in such a
course is all the pay that I now have
for the way in which I have always
dealt in all matters that involve your
interests.

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When the Sprague Company was formed about 3 years ago, I had the opportunity of taking an active interest in the enterprise, and by investing a few thousand, of making a hundred thousand, I did not stay out of it, because, as I told Mr Johnson, and others, I had no faith in it, but because in this, as in all other ventures of this kind, I did not want to take a hand until I knew that you were in accord with the scheme; a fact which at the time I had reasons to doubt.

It cannot be a secret to you, for the fact is known to many, that Duquesne had had been solicited time and again by Regal Electric Light Companies to make for them the same kind of apparatus and appliances as they were making for the Edison System. It would have been unnecessary for them to make anything that the Edison System was using. They were so anxious (and are now) to secure our facilities for making and perfecting

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their own devices, that they would have
paid good prices, and as time has shown
their business would have been enormously
profitable. Has it a regard for your
interests or my own that kept me from
making a great deal of money in this way?

I do not hesitate to claim for the
work that Bugmann & Co. have done, and
the improvements which I made, and the
fact that rival companies could not get
our facilities, a large share of the
success which has been the portion
of the Edison business.

While on this topic, I also wish to remind
you that half of the business that has
been done by Bugmann & Co. had no
connection whatever with the Edison
Electric Light and that half too has
been by far the most profitable.

As for the money that I have made,
much of it has accrued to me as the
result of judicious investments in real estate.

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and other speculations which involved much
less work and care,

I have stood alone many times in the
history of the Edison Electric Light business and
defended your interests against sly plots and
schemes, and others, all those who can now
tell you that otherwise we would be paying
enormous royalties there to had I not foreseen
and defeated them.

Last but not least by any means,
I never failed to do for you whatever you
asked of me. That you know this is proved
by the fact that when you wanted assistance
particularly in a financial way, I believe I
was the first one to whom you came;
and how often my private purse appeared
to you to be that of the concern you did
not know and I dare say did not give the
matter a thought. I am not sorry that
you are no longer obliged to call on us.

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I am glad you are prosperous.

I made one great mistake however, it is true that I would make it over again under the impression that it was praise-worthy; but it was a mistake for all that, in my dealings with you. I ran the affairs of the concern which I managed on my own responsibility and according to my own judgment. The fact that they have met with some measure of success does not justify the course which I took.

I was told that I did not see you often enough, but I thought that I had your good will, if not your friendship and that I could run my own affairs and look after your interests in Bergmann's without continually dipping into your ear, nursing your little shobbies and blowing my own horn to you, as I am told many others do. On the contrary rather than do this and carry complaints to you, I have stood slyly and insidiously. But when you got

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Complaints against me, which was not
seldom I am sure. I feel that the
decision was against me before my case
was heard.

That I thought you should see and
know, as for instance, New devices
and improvements on old, wherever they
were important enough. I sent to you,
but I have good reason to believe that
many of the important personal letters,
which I thus sent to you, were reached
your hands, but were filed away, and
many of my samples you never saw.
They were mislaid (?) by subordinates,
I suppose, whose ambitions were not
helped by your recognition of any value
in my work.

I can close fittingly by referring to
the only evidence, or perhaps I should
say want of evidence, that I have

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If any desire on your part to signify
that you appreciated or thought worth of
anything that I did,

For two years I managed the affairs of
Bergmann & Co for \$5000 a week, and paid
my Expenses out of my own pocket, too.
But you were troubled yourself to suggest
any of the gradual additions that have
been made to my salary since then.

I was left, when faced by a sense of
injustice to myself and my family, to
ask for that compensation which was
clearly my due

Now I have told you some of
the things which I have done for you.
What have you done for me? Only this,
that you gave me an opportunity to
do some of your work. I think
I can ask of you now, one thing
more and that is that you will
turn over to me your pocket money
and call off your barbers.

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I do not want this misunderstood - I do not want any favors - I never did and do not now, but I leave the right to demand that I be let alone. All this of which I have now relieved my mind has worried me a long time and in the face of all that I have thus plainly recorded, I am puzzled to account for your always having taken such a stand against me. Perhaps even this letter may afford further opportunities for ridiculing and picking me to pieces, but whether it does or not, the cold facts that I have therein recorded cannot thereby be wiped out.

Regarding the stock of Bergmann & Co that I have sold - No one can question my right to dispose of my own property, and it has not been sold, as is rumored, because I purposed going into an opposition concern, but simply because I have been squeezed so hard that the pressure

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became too much for my comfort and I
was tired of playing the foot-ball for
others.

You have been trying to get control
of this business and I have not wished
to hinder you from doing so. If I had,
I would not have sold my stock to your
own people at the price that I took for
it; and you had better now find
someone to look after your interests in
this concern, whom you have my
suspicions against, as a short time
ago, you said you had against me,
and who can do so better than I have
done, for I do not intend to remain in
charge of it any longer.

I send you this statement of facts
in the hope that it may contain
some of which you have still never

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had no knowledge, and not for the
purpose of starting any controversy and
remain

Yours truly

S. Bergmann.

Call Address "Edison, New York."

From the Laboratory
of
Thomas A. Edison.

Subject, _____

Orange, N.J. Nov. 23, 88. 188

Copy

My Dear Bergmann, -

Your letter received. I have never yet said anything that I would not say to your face. 1st. I never said that I had made you rich. I never used that sentence in connection with any of my associates who have got rich. The person who says I did tells you falsely. 2nd. I have told you what I thought of you to your face and never any addition to this statement has been made behind your back. 3rd. You never had any legal or moral right to the new phonograph or to manufacture it. I took up this subject in my own Laboratory, paid for all the experiments and now manufacture it myself. 4th. No encroachment on the understanding regarding division of work between the three shops has ever come to my knowledge. 5th. I have never tried to control your Company; have the same shares now that I had a year ago and no more; have not furnished a cent or helped by loan any other to get control. ^{Don't want control} I consider it the same of cheek to sell me that I am or ever was ~~suspicious~~ suspicious of you in running the Company, when I have never been there in two years or made any inquiry ~~whatsoever~~ whatsoever, although a 1/4 owner; this action refutes

any statement you make.

I have always done everything to help every one of the boys; I have always been glad they were getting wealthy; the more they made the better it pleased me; I am glad you are well fixed; would not do a thing to prevent you making money; all the money you have you made yourself by your ability; that you had a chance to exercise that ability was due to me; you have been worked up to a state of dam foolishness by your enemies, of which you have a very choice and extensive collection.

Your action with Lippincott cannot be defended on any known ground of commercial usage and is a thing which will in the future be a source of regret to you. You are too fierce to make money. Whereas, your standing in the city where you live and die should have been your first consideration and money afterward.

