

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL
Lagos, Nigeria; July 11, 1942

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My dearest,

Yes, something new has been added! Yesterday afternoon we got a wire from the Department saying that this office had been raised to be a Consulate General. We received the news with mild elation, well tempered by the knowledge that it doesn't solve any problems to change the designation of the office, nor does it increase anyone's pay. As a matter of fact, the good old Department is, as usual, a few months behind the times. At present, and probably for the duration of the war, Accra is by far the more important place. I have mentioned before some of the headquarters which are located there: the U.S. Army Ferry Command for the West African Sector, PAA-Africa, ~~xxx~~ and the G.O.C. the British Army, West Africa. Now, in addition, Lord Swinton, the new minister in residence for West Africa is making his headquarters there, and consequently the Governors' Conference has moved there from Lagos. That means that practically everything except the commercial firms, which are of distinctly secondary importance during the war, is located at Accra, and if a Consulate General was to be established, that is the place to have it.

There is one big drawback from the practical point of view, however. That is the housing shortage. The staff of the Governors' Conference groaned that they were going to have to live in barracks, and Mr. Shantz has no desire to leave his very comfortable house in Lagos to live in Accra, which, as I said in my other letter, is a rather unattractive place at best. He thinks, therefore, that, if necessary, he will commute up to Accra whenever necessary for consultation, and maintain his residence at Lagos. I hope this will work out well.

In the meantime, Andy is absolutely swamped with work. He has sent off about three telegrams to the Department and several despatches, and they have promised to send him an American code clerk in the near future, but that was months ago and nothing has materialized. Yesterday we got a letter from him saying that he absolutely could not carry on the work without assistance. He is right, because he probably has as much to do now as we do, and there is only himself to do it, with an untrained staff. After thinking over the question during the lunch hour, I concluded to volunteer to go up there for a temporary period, with the emphasis on the temporary, to help out until something turns up. I made my tender after lunch, but Mr. Shantz has declined and decided to telegraph the Department once more, asking them to state when it will be possible to send some one out. He said in his wire that he could not spare anyone from this office without prejudicing our work here. Until we get some reply from Washington nothing will be done, but don't be surprised if you begin

to get letters from me in Accra one of these days.

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You may wonder why I made this offer in view of my well-known views on Accra. Well, Mac has been very dissatisfied because he does not feel that he is doing his best for the war effort. I do not feel that way about it, or to a lesser extent, because I cannot think of anything else I could do which would be much more useful. Maybe I'm conceited, but I don't think I'd make a good private in the army, or a good officer either. The same goes for the Navy. I have had four years of experience in this job. The Department is unable to get any more young men; they will have to get along with what they have for the duration. It was definitely stated in the Foreign Service Journal for June what I had understood was the case; namely, that the Department will not accept any resignations for the purpose of entering the armed forces, or for any other reason except age. Therefore, as I see it, I can be most useful by sticking to this job. However, inside the framework of the Foreign Service, I want to be as useful as possible, and that is why I offered to go to Accra. We will see what happens.

I always wanted to be at a Consulate General. Now the Consulate General has come to me instead of vice versa.

Darling, I am sending you in this cover letters to the Passport Agent in Miami, whose name, I believe, is Barker, and to Mrs. Shipley, chief of the Passport Division of the Department. I guess you will believe I love you all right when I say that I have never worked on any letter in my life so hard as this one to Mrs. Shipley. I hope it doesn't appear labored, but it certainly is. I made the first draft about two weeks ago, and I have been working on it in the evenings after work whenever I had a chance. I revised the first draft and typed a second, much as I hate typing. Then I got Mr. Shantz's advice on it and made some more corrections. Then I started painstakingly to type the final letter. Much to my annoyance and in spite of extreme care, I made several typographical errors and rubbed a hole in the paper trying to erase one of them. So the next evening I gritted my teeth and started through it again. The first page only had one mistake (that I noticed), but the last page had four or five. So today I have retyped the second page, and if I ever see that letter again I will scream! I hope it does the work.

Now, the procedure is this: As soon as your divorce is finished, get a certified copy (in fact, better get three), collect any information you have about the number and date of issuance of your old passport and go to see the Passport Agent in Miami. Tell him what you want and don't be discouraged if he laughs. After all, if Ma Shipley can let three missionaries come over, she ought to let you. Be sure to see Mr. Barker, if possible. Not knowing when your previous passport was issued, I don't know whether you will have to apply for a new one, a renewal or just a revalidation. Anyway, make out the necessary forms. They will probably have to be sent to Washington. If so, send the letter to Ma Shipley along in a separate envelope marked "Personal". You can either send it with the application if the Agent is willing or, better, through the mail timed to arrive at the same time, approximately. You will note that I am sending a copy of the letter for you, and you will also note that I have mentioned Herve as a reference. I think it would be a good

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idea for you to write him and ask for his support, not only with Mrs. Shipley but also with the Personnel Division. I will write to him along the same lines soon, and incidentally ask what ever happened to the suitcase I left in Lisbon for him to bring home.

That will be the first round. Then we will have to wait for an answer from Mrs. Shipley. If negative, we will have to decide whether it is worth-while to go in for a second round. Well, darling, here's the ball; it's your turn to run again. (Department of Mixed Metaphors) You have no idea how much I am hoping for success. All I have ever said about how much I love you and need you is still in full force and effect. I have had the same experience you mention in your letter of June 29th - that of waiting always for someone else to come, of always wondering whether you would like a certain situation. That happens very, very often, and especially when I take your picture out of my pocket ~~at~~ to kiss it good-night before I go to bed. I think over what I have been doing that evening and wonder whether you would have enjoyed it and think how much more enjoyable it would have been if you had only been there. I know of no reason in the world why we couldn't be beautifully happy in Lagos, and in our apartment, too. Much as I like Jim Bledsoe, I take a poor view of his saying the apartment was ghastly. And after I invited him in for drinks, too! Now that you mention it, though, maybe it's my fault. I seem to recall that when I took him through he said it was wonderful. I said not to tell you it was too good, otherwise you might be disappointed. But I didn't expect him to say it was ghastly.

Good old Captain Jim was here yesterday while the plane was refueling. He called me from the airport and said he had some things for me, so I jumped into the car and tore out to the airport at top speed, nearly knocking the stuffings out of a couple of natives on the way. I got in there just as ~~when~~ Jim was walking out on the field to get into the plane. I yelled at him and just had time to dash back to the car to get the cigarette box and ash-trays, which I hope you have now received. That should give you about six ash trays now, of various types, including the little bowls I sent before. Tell me frankly what you think of this West African work, because if you like it, I will get a serving tray of the same metal with similar designs. The work is very crude, but I like it better than most of the other things they make around here. They have the further advantage of being light ~~of~~ air travellers to carry.

Thanks a million, darling, for the pen, the trunks and the needles. The first is already in use and is most satisfactory; the last are now beating out some lovely music upstairs; the trunks have yet to be worn, but they look fine. It was lovely of you to get them, and mighty nice of Capt. Bledsoe to haul them all over the world with him, too. I expect, dearest, after we are married and even before, there will be lots of things for you to do for me. I warn you that I am one of the laziest humans alive, and I love attention. I also love you, much more. Incidentally, I was able partially to repay Jim for his many kindnesses by delivering some items for him to the man with whom he used to stay while in Lagos. You might call him and say that Mr. Hall was most appreciative.

Sunday, July 12th

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My eyes got very tired last night so I quit. There seems to be more than usual to say this week. I forgot to thank you also for the tooth brushes, which will come in very handy. They have them here, but nothing like the ~~snappy~~ quality that we are used to, and for about twice the price.

Our car has now arrived and is fixed up for circulation. It is a very nice job, if I do say so myself. I told you before that it is a 5 passenger Chevrolet coupe, deluxe model, 1942. It looks snappy, although if I had had any choice, I would not have ordered a black one. The principal attraction is the white-walled tires. How they happened to have white-walled tires on it I don't know, as they stopped making them a long time before tires in general were put out of circulation. It makes the car look very chic, and I have received many compliments on it. I am sure you will like it. I plan to keep it until it is possible to replace it, i.e., until the end of the war, unless the gas rationing becomes absolutely impossible, in which case I suppose no one would buy it. I even plan to have it shipped home if I get transferred next year after we are married, although I could sell it here for a handsome profit at this point. What the market will be like next year, I have no idea. Incidentally, the despatch agent in New York, the highly efficient Mr. Fyfe, paid for the transportation, thus saving me about \$300 on the original estimated cost. The total expense including boxing and insurance (no small item) was \$1050, approximately. This would be a good place for you to learn to drive, if you want to. There isn't much traffic and there are several places on the road where one could practice.

My sweet, that was a very good point you made in your letter of June 29th, about whether we would be strangers when we meet again, and whether we would have to fall in ~~fall~~ ^{love} all over again. The idea has occurred to me several times, but I have never been worried. I imagine that when we first get together, it will take a little time to catch up on each other's experiences during this long separation. You have met a large group of people that I don't know, and I have done the same. Cap't. Bledsoe (bless him) is about the only new friend that we have in common, and he isn't much good as a means of conveying impressions about how both of us are living. I don't think, though, that this will make us strangers to each other. For one thing, we were together a great deal of the time in Lisbon, especially after I moved into the Casa de Santo Antonio. We had all our meals together, worked in the same office, shared the same shop talk, the same bull sessions and the same amusements. I don't think during that time that we missed more than five meals together (excluding breakfast, of course). In other words, we saw a lot more of each other than people usually do when they are "courting". Further, since we weren't "courting" in the usual way - since neither of us ever thought of such a thing until the wee small hours of October 25th - there was little strain or artificiality in our relationship, except that imposed on both of us by being in love without the other's knowing it. It was much different from the usual round of "dates" and so forth that usually precede an engagement. Neither of us have changed in the meantime in any fundamental way. We are the same people we were then. If we grew to love each other then, in spite of all the obstacles in the way, I do not see how we could fail to continue to love each other when we meet again.

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Here is another thing. It isn't as if we had been cut off from all communication with each other during this time. We have been writing at least once a week all the time since we left Lisbon, except for the time we were traveling. I have talked over things with you in my letters very frankly and more fully than I have with any other person. You know more about me and how I feel and think than my colleagues and friends here do. Of course, letters are a poor substitute for personal contact; they present a thin, lifeless version of our lives, as from a worn out piece of carbon paper. But they help. I know a little about the Blissés and Mr. Bishop, even though I have never met them. If I meet them in Miami, they will not be complete strangers, although I have no idea what they look like. Similarly, ~~we~~^{you} know something about Andy and Mr. Jester and Mr. Shantz, even though you haven't met them. We are sharing our lives to the fullest degree possible under the circumstances. Therefore I think that we will not be strange to each other or have to fall in love again. For a while ~~you~~^{we} will have to go on our old stock of memories, and spend lots of time telling each other about things that have been left out of letters. Then we will gradually build up new memories of our ~~own~~ own, and a common fund of experiences: standing in lines together, going through immigration, taking trips, as you said. And the past with its haunting memories will gradually pass into the background. I'm not worried at all, darling. I am sure that I am in love with the real you, not a special Lisbon manifestation of you. We will just take up where we left off and pursue the development of our characters together, until we are finally merged into the one indissoluble ~~unit~~ unit, Us, Unltd. I have complete and absolute confidence in it, just as I am completely sure that I love you with a love that will never die, spanning time and distance.

My dearest, I have been so busy talking that I haven't gotten around to telling you about the receipt of your letters, except indirectly. The letter of June 2nd (by ordinary air mail) came July 2nd. The one of June 6th by the same means arrived on June 29th. The letter of June 17th (Company mail) came July 1st, and the letter of June 29th, by "special/courier" came, as I said before, on July 10th. That makes the courier best, with 11 days, company mail next best with 13, and the regular service worst of all. As long as you can use these special channels, they are much better. You have never told me whether my letters which come via New York have been opened. We put a stamp on here "Accepted for transmission" and signed by one of the officers, which is supposed to insure that the contents are not of a nature to give away any secret information. In practice, this is left to the discretion of each officer who writes a letter. He is presumed to be able to tell what can be written and what not. Your recent letters by open mail ~~are~~^{were} all opened, allegedly in Miami, but nothing has been cut out. I guess we are more interested in Us, Unltd., than we are in discussing political matters.

Which reminds me that I haven't duly responded to the above mentioned letters. Last week I went back to some of the older ones. I am most happy to know that you have accepted my proposal of marriage, even though contingent on your Mamma's and Poppa's approval. May I know when and if they give their consent? Did you by any chance ~~forget~~ that I married you last October, Quaker style? You are the only one who is holding back. I took you for my wife

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and now it only remains for you to make the response. As I recall that hectic and horrible night, you said nothing at the time, but only kissed me very lightly. And I gave you my watch as symbol of ^{my} vow, there being no ring. That, my dear, is a night I am not likely to forget soon, if ever. That was, as I have said before, the time when we crossed the threshold into a new life, when our old associations definitely dropped away. From that time no going back was possible.

Right now I am looking at your paragraph on your lunch with Mr. Grossman, the super-boss. Here is an idea. Could you find out whether there is any possibility that the company would send you out here if a request for you were made by the local organization? It would be understood that the company would not provide room or board. I think, although I am not sure, that I could wangle such a request. So far, Jesse Boynton, the Senior Representative, has said only that if you were here, they would be very glad to have you continue to work for PAA. I'm not even sure that Jesse ~~xxx~~ has authority to make such a request; it would probably have to go through Accra, and that might cause some difficulty, although I could rely on Andy to help push it. Anyway, it's an idea. Looking at the chart of shipping losses in the July 6th issue of TIME, I am sure that I don't want you to come by sea, although I know a ship which has good accommodations on which it would not be hard to arrange passage.

I must admit that it gives me a thrill to think that you were jealous of poor Pamela Taylor (whose name I had completely forgotten until you mentioned it). Maybe you didn't know that I thought Pamela talked too much and had a pretty high idea of her own importance. It would be an exaggeration to say that I never gave her a second thought; I don't recall ever having had a first thought. I can imagine that if that was all it took to make you jealous, there might have been several occasions. I remember one time particularly when Jones was urging me to go out with Nell Russell. I believe I said I thought she was a nice person, etc, etc., but that somehow she just didn't ring any bells. Didn't you ever think it was funny that I never asked any girls out for our parties? I suppose that would have been the usual thing to do to "balance" the party, and I'm sure Jones thought it was very strange indeed. The fact remained that I just didn't feel the need of any more company. You were quite enough. I felt at home with you; I wouldn't have if I'd had some other girl to look after. I think I said once before that I am not a man who has to have feminine company at any cost. There are plenty like that: Jester was one. This doesn't necessarily mean that there are any improper goings-on; that again depends on the individual. For instance, there is a doctor here whose wife and children are in Scotland. He gives the best parties in town and has the most attractive women. He is always surrounded with them. Yet I have never heard any word of scandal about it. He just likes to have women around, that's all. You're the only woman I need, darling. Until you come along, I can get along beautifully without the company of any of the local belles. I'm not saying this because I think you would mind if I went out; I know you wouldn't, but I just don't care about it, that's all.

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This has absolutely got to be the last page. I got a letter from Daddy on the 8th dated June 15th saying that Janie had been married two days before. Perhaps you have heard from Janie herself by this time. This is the first intimation I have had that the big event had really come off. I am sorry that they didn't let me know sooner as I would have liked to send a cable, although I don't know what good that would have done. Bud Francis, whom you may also have seen on his way back to Africa, got there in time to act as an usher. Apparently the letter which I wrote on June 7th hadn't arrived by the 15th; I wouldn't expect it to. All I could send Janie was a check for \$50, which will probably be of more use than a lot of wedding presents. Dad said Bud Francis came to see him on a Friday and said he had had dinner with me the Thursday before. You must have seen him just a few days after he left here. Unifl I have flown back myself, I won't be able to believe that it is possible to get home in such a short time. It seems like a very long time to me, because I was travelling six weeks after I left Lisbon to get here. I hope when Janie gets settled down, she will have time to write to me. Daddy says Norman didn't get to Newark until 3 a.m. on the day of the wedding, and they had a rehearsal in the morning. At that rate, it seems likely that, contrary to custom, a large part of Saturday night may possibly have been spent sleeping.

We have just passed through the worst part of the rainy season, and it was much as you discribed it in Florida. For the last two weeks in June, though, it just rained all the time, by the bucket. As a result, the carbon paper now being used on this letter has a very fine coating of mould on the back. Towels were quite a problem: once used or washed, they refused to dry out and consequently smelled like wet dogs most of the time. The worst is over now, though. Today is overcast, but it hasn't rained. Mr. Shantz, Mac and some others have gone to Tarquah Bay, but I refused to be diverted from this letter. I felt as if I had a lot to say to you.

Yes, love, the first anniversary of our meeting will be rolling around very shortly. It has now been just over a year since I left Milan; a year ago today, I was in Rome, and a very lovely place it was, too. As I remember it, the first time I met you was one Saturday night at the Casino in Estoril. It was the second Saturday I had been in Lisbon, which would make it August second. I was with Hervé; you were with Jones and Bill Henry and his wife. I would like to be able to say that you made a tremendous impression the first time I saw you, but it wouldn't be true. I just thought you were pretty, nothing more. I think Hervé remarked afterwards that you were a nice young couple. You said that although you hadn't met me before, you had seen my name in the files, and asked if I minded if you called me Krieg, William, since that was the way you were used to seeing it. The next time I saw you was Monday in the Consulate, sitting on the bench in the waiting room. You looked very kind and friendly, and we talked a little about France. You told me about the fad of talking "Petit Negre"; since I couldn't (and can't) understand straight French, the dialect, or affectation, or whatever it is didn't amuse me very much. I think the first time we began to get acquainted was on the boat trip from Cascais up to Lisbon. We spent the whole afternoon together, and as a result of that I asked you and Jimmie to come to dinner with me the next Saturday. From then on, things moved pretty fast. I don't remember when I first realized that I loved you. It wasn't sudden. It just grew on me. I suppose that

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the reason I didn't realize it sooner was because the idea of doing anything about it never occurred to me. I just slowly came to know that you were exactly the kind of woman I had been looking for always. That you combined all the qualities I most wanted. I was naive enough even to mention it to people, and I often told Jones how lucky I thought he was. Maybe the night when we walked together, hand in hand and sang "Blue Hawaii" softly to ourselves was the time when I couldn't conceal it from myself any longer. I could feel sympathetic waves just streaming out from me and enveloping you; in uninhibited persons this takes the form of taking the other party in one's arms. Naturally, nothing like that was possible, and, as I have often said before, until the fatal morning, I never had the slightest idea that you had any interest in me other than the most platonic friendship.

There were lots of little things that served to put me off the track. For instance, I remember one Sunday when we three went for a walk with Flip. He and Jones got somewhat behind while we steamed along in front. You kept looking back all the time to see that they weren't too far away, and it annoyed me slightly to think that you couldn't stand to be away from him for even a few minutes, or that you were afraid of me in case we got out of sight. Darling, as you told Hervé after it all came out, you had been a good actress. You certainly fooled me completely. But, however it came about, the end is the same: I am completely yours and all that is of me. I hope that you are equally mine. I shall try unceasingly to make you happy, and I will love and honor you always. It is my fervent prayer that I will not prove inadequate to the dream you have built up around me; I hope you will not be disappointed when our dream becomes a reality. I find much that expresses how I feel in the song, "You are to me Everything". The words and the music both ~~fit in~~ fit in with ^{the} nature of my love for you. You are, actually, everything to me. You are the first woman who has ever cared whether I jumped in the lake or not (except Mother, of course). You are beautiful, you are attractive, you are intelligent. You are the epitome of what every man dreams about. But never, in my wildest fancies, did I ever dare to hope that you could love me. Sometimes it still seems too good to be true.

Well, my pet, this colossal letter has occupied the greater part of the week end, including the time I was going to write home in. For some reason, I have felt like talking with you today, and I have had a lot to say. I hope this rambling hasn't bored you, especially all the reminiscences. That's a part of the slender stock of memories we have to live on, until we can start out together to create a new life which will in time furnish us with more memories.

I love you very much indeed, and as for forgetting you, will the earth forget to revolve around the sun?