

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL
Lagos, Nigeria; September 10, 1942

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Dearest darling;

Your letter of August 26th got here on September 7th, which is pretty good time for these days. I should have warned you that my mail will be coming more slowly now, as it will go directly through the Department of State. I wish you would let me know how it works out.

I'm sorry that I hadn't given you more of an idea of what to do if the passport were granted. Honestly, I didn't think there was much of a chance that they would issue it, and I'm afraid the chances of getting air transportation are equally slim, or more so. I am enclosing a copy of a letter I have written to Mr. Burke, who is chief of the Division of International Communications. Linton Wells, of whom you may have heard, was here recently for several days, and we had many good talks. As it usually does with sympathetic people, the subject of you came up, and he told me to write to Mr. Burke and gave me permission to use his name. I do not know what, if anything, Mr. Burke will be able to do, since, after all, the question of priorities is entirely up to the Army in the last analysis. That is one constructive move. The other is that Jesse Boynton is writing to the personnel chief of the Atlantic Division, who he claims is a good friend of his, and asking him to request the appropriate official of the Eastern Division to consent to your transfer to Lagos. I have promised Jesse that you really would work if they brought you out, and that it wasn't just a gag on my part to get transportation. I made that promise knowing that you have spoken often of devoting yourself to domestic affairs once we were married; on the other hand, knowing life in Lagos as I do, I don't think you would be happy here if you didn't work, since all white women here are working on something. As I mentioned in the letters to Mrs. Shipley and Mr. Burke, they have a conscription law here under which any woman who isn't working can be compelled to. All the house work and cooking is done by the boys, and many people I know say they think the women in Lagos are healthier now that they are all working and have less time to sit around thinking how dull it is and how terrible the climate is, etc. Besides, I know you will be glad to work if you can get transportation that way.

The third string in the bow - having the O.S.S. ask to have you sent out, has fallen through. They say that, even if you were appointed, they probably wouldn't send you out by air. So that's that. Besides, I'm not at all anxious to have you work for that bunch, although it might be useful from many points of view.

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Don't mention to anybody that the possibility was even suggested, as the whole business is very hush-hush.

I think you were very wise to have written to Mr. Jester, and I hope that he is back from leave and will be able to make some helpful suggestions. I think he will do anything he can. Be sure to let me know what he says. Have you ever written to Herve? I have forgotten whether I told you that I finally got a letter from Parry in Lisbon. He said that they had been extremely busy with the evacuees, that it was very hot, and that he is anxious to get home leave this Fall. There wasn't a great deal else.

I have gone a long time without telling you how much I love you and how desperately glad I am that I picked the most faithful, as well as the most beautiful and the most loving girl in the world. I not only love you, my dearest, I admire you from the bottom of my soul. I admire your courage and your ability, which first got you a job and then moved you right along in it. I know perfectly well that you will get to Lagos, unless I get home first, that we will be married and have a beautiful life, and, as I have said so many times, we need never be alone again. That is what I am really looking forward to - never being alone, never feeling without anybody to confide in. Your being with me will change my whole outlook on the Service, I am sure. Now I can anticipate transfers with pleasure instead of horror, because you will be there to go with me. This is love, dear, the real thing, no fake. Nothing else could have taken us as far as we have already gone along to road to reunion, and I ~~am~~ am sure that it will carry us through.

I wonder if you have talked the matter over again with Mr. Zalduondo, working on the line of a transfer within the PAA system? It is true that as a simple non-priority passenger, you wouldn't have much chance of getting here, but I hope Mr. Z. will not try to convince you that the company doesn't get employees out here, because they do. One arrived from the States about the first of August, after I had left for Accra. You might argue that your being here would free one of the valuable male employees for duty elsewhere. If you work on the transfer from your end, you may connect with the results of Jesse's letter. I have asked him to send me a copy of it, but he said it would be in the form of a company memo, by which I gathered he isn't anxious to let me see it. If you had evidence that they wanted you in the organization here, would it help? You will have to let me know about these company matters. After all, I don't know much about the way things are organized.

I guess the above covers 1) and 2) of the four questions you asked. The money question should have been answered by the bank by this time. I don't think there will be any hitch in that. Let me know if you need any more filthy lucre. Isn't it a good thing that I have always had posts where I could save something? Otherwise, finances might be more of a problem. Now, about boats, I am not going to tell you who to get in touch with about boats until we have exhausted all other possibilities, and until the submarine menace has abated. I have in mind some comfortable, fast boats which I will fall back on if necessary, but I should think your folks would have a fit. You see, dearest, you are much too precious

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to take any chances with. You are unique in the world, the only one of your kind, and the only woman I love. Nor have I ever met anybody whom I think I could love the way I do you. As you know, there are loves and loves, but this, for me, is ^{IT}, the only overwhelming, overpowering love I am likely ever to know. And so, dearest, while we can't avoid risks, we don't want to take any unnecessary ones.

I have just received a rather peculiar letter from Mrs. Shipley. After acknowledging the receipt of my letter, she says, in best Departmentalese: "Although the Department strongly advises against Mrs. Jones proceeding to Lagos, nevertheless a passport is being issued and forwarded to her". And that's all. I shall write and thank her. I think it is just a ~~proforma~~ waiver of responsibility. Was there anything in your letter about the Department advising against the trip?

Getting back to finances again, you might be pleased to know that my little trip to Accra netted \$295.75 in per diem. Since my expenses were only a little higher than usual, we can consider that practically pure profit. However, I still think I earned it, as the special detail was not an unmitigated pleasure.

You remember in my letter of August 27th I said that we were so crowded for office space that it looked as if Mac and I would have to give up our apartment and go elsewhere. Since then, we have been trying to find a place to move to. Mac has been looking for a house for months, without success. Finally they decided to ask one of the local contractors if he could put up a temporary building or buildings on a plot of land in Ikoyi facing the Lagoon where the Clippers land on which the Consulate has been planning to build a permanent house after the war. The contractor advised against building a bamboo shack, as he said the termites might have it within six months, although I think that is a little exaggerated. He proposed to build bungalow style houses out of iroko wood, which is hard and more or less termite resistant. There would be one building with a lounge and dining room, and any number of detached bungalows with two bed rooms in them. For three such places (for six people) plus the central building, he wants about \$9000! We all think that is an awful lot to pay for something that will have to be broken up in two or three years. The situation is further complicated by the fact that our military and naval associates have no idea whether they or other representatives of their Departments will be staying in Lagos. It would take about two years to pay this amount off in rent at our usual rate. So we are completely at sea again. The only thing I insist on is that I will not move out of the apartment until another place is provided. And I am asking them to take into consideration the fact that you will soon be with us, and make plans accordingly.

Business for the Atlantic Division is picking up. A special Clipper is arriving tonight with some 40 passengers, and this letter should depart with it. It looks as if ~~FAA~~ Africa was having to yell "Unââe" on the Fish Lake to Accra run, at least for the moment. There are all sorts of rumors around about changes in the set-up, but you have probably heard them and they would be censored anyway. I wish I could talk to you without having the feeling that someone was peeking over my shoulder all the time. I want to say, "love you" just to you alone