

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL
Lagos, Nigeria; September 17, 1942

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Dearest Love,

I have just been spending a precious ten minutes rummaging through (whoops!) your old letters trying to find the poem that begins, "A thrill of exaltation fills the soul ...". I finally found it, way back with a letter written in January. I think this one is probably the best from an artistic standpoint, but I still like best and carry around with me "This is the culmination and the triumph ..." which you handed to me on the dining porch of the Casa de Santo Antonio at noon on October 25, 1941. Ye Gods, what a lot of time has passed, and many letters through the mail. But the memory of that day will stay with me for a long time - as long as I have a memory. I was almost afraid to go to the Consulate that morning to see you. I didn't know what to do or how to act. I felt sure that, in the bright light of day, you would be ashamed of the love you told me about so early on that great morning, and that you would want to forget all about it, and would thank me not to mention it again. It never occurred to me at that time that you would be willing to do all that you have done since, just for me. I thought then, and still do, that I'm not worth it. Then I did go to the Consulate, and found you there with Mr. L'Heureux and some of the others. And at the first chance, I said, "Have you changed your mind?" And you said No, and I believed you, because your eyes filled with tears.

Then I got the martyr complex good and proper, and thought how sweetly horrible it was for me to find the girl I loved, and find that she loved me, and then have to say good-bye forever, as we both went on about our respective lives. Dearest my sweet, it took me a long time to convince myself that anything could come of it. Probably, if I could have, I would have run away, because you know how I hated to hurt Jimmie, and I thought if I were removed from the scene, you would soon forget about me. And then we went walking, and it turned out that you not only loved me, but you were willing to do something about it. What a moment that was, standing there on the Avenida da Libertade. It probably took some time to sink in, but the reaction was terrific, hope and fear, love and conscience, were tearing me apart. I wonder my face didn't quiver the way my stomach did. And I wondered whether you really knew your own mind, whether you were sure of your love. Then came the poem, at lunch. It was then I knew for sure that it was the real thing. No temporarily infatuated person could have written that. It came from way down deep inside, where you really have your being. The only person other than yourself and myself who has ever seen that

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bit of paper is Herve, ~~wh~~ our good Father Confessor. When he had read it, he only said, "It looks serious." And he was right. This love of ours is the ~~xx~~ most serious thing in life for both of us. I am living until the day when we are together, darling; and maybe that day will come, before Christmas, so we can keep up our motto.

And now, angel, here is a whole brand new idea, which, I must admit in all fairness, did not spring from my sterile brain. Last Friday I went out to see the Clipper off. As it had my last letter on board, it was a very important plane, although I won't pretend I go out to see every plane off that has a letter to you on it, as that would be too many. Well, while we were out at the lovely new Ikoyi airport, our new American clerk, John Burleson, of Texas, suh, arrived by B.O.A.C. from Leopoldville. John is the father of the new idea, although we collaborated on it.

He has just come from China, where he had been interned since December 7th. When he arrived at Lourenço Marques, he was assigned to Lagos, and took a Portuguese vessel, the "Mouzinho" from L.M. to Sant' Antonio, at the mouth of the Congo River. From there he had a hard trip to Leopoldville, but that's not the point. He also has a finacee whom he would like to bring out, but that's not it either. The point is that this ship was going to New York, via Lisbon. It will, presumably, return from New York to L.M., and it stops at all the Portuguese colonies in Africa. That means also Bolama. And you know who else stops at Bolama, don't you? PAA. Jesse Boynton says you would have no trouble getting from Bolama to Fisherman's Lake, since the hop is very short, and they can carry many more passengers than they can from Lisbon to Bolama. Once at Fish Lake, you should have little trouble in getting further. There is a Clipper from Bolama to Fish Lake every other week. Now, it only remains to find out when there will be a decent boat for Bolama. John said the Mouzinho was quite comfortable and would be O.K. for ladies. The only thing ~~ixx~~ I don't like about this idea is the possibility that you might have trouble finding a place to stay in Bolama while waiting for the next Clipper. I hope maybe the PAA boys, whom I have always found to be a very decent bunch, would look out for you. We have no Consulate there.

I have looked through the Manhattan section of the New York telephone directory for 1939 which we have, and I am unable to find any reference to the Companhia Colonial de Navigacao, which operated the "Mouzinho". I have written to Parry in Lisbon to ask him to investigate, and John has written to a friend in Lourenço Marques for the same purpose, but to save time, I suggest you write to the Portuguese Consulate General, 15 Moor St., New York City, and ask them to refer your letter of inquiry to the agents, whoever they are. That is also the address of the Portuguese Trade Mission, or something like that. Find out what ships they have like the Mouzinho or better, what the first class fare is, how much a cabin alone would cost, and, of course, sailing dates. And darling, before you do anything definite, I want you to ask your good, sensible father what he thinks about it. I'm sure he thinks you're a fool to think of coming to Africa and I'm a pig for allowing you to do it. I think it might be a good idea for me to write to your father, now

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that we are actually making travel plans. He has every right to expect to hear from me. Please send me his full name and address. I'm sure I don't know what I will say; it's dreadfully hard to write to a person you have never met about the most personal matters. But I will say something, and I will send you a copy of my letter so you will know the worst.

It occurs to me that it might be easier to investigate this Portuguese shipping situation through a Miami travel agency, and save yourself the trouble of writing letters. I'm afraid that's a point I can't give you any advice about; you know the local situation in Miami and I don't. Honestly, dearest, I think this is the best plan yet, because I simply cannot permit you to come by a belligerent vessel; the risks are still much too great. But I think a Portuguese vessel would be fairly ~~easy~~ safe, and I can't think offhand why they would be especially crowded at this time, except perhaps with Axis agents going home to report. It is very good luck, or may be, that John just happened to have come by that vessel; normally, it would have been much easier and quicker to go overland from L.M. to Leo. Now do your investigating quick like a bunny, and let me know what you find out.

I am sending a letter to Mrs. Shipley by this post thanking her for issuing the passport and asking for her benevolent assistance in case you need to change your validation.

There isn't much new here. Life goes on steadily. There is less work now that Burleson is here to share it. Browne, the Consul who was assigned here and who caught small pox in Leopoldville, has been reassigned to Accra. We therefore feel that perhaps we can get by with the office space we have at present, although I'm afraid when you get here you will find things very crowded and privacy rather restricted. At present, we are quite used to having people coming trooping upstairs while we are eating breakfast. Of course, if we got up in time, we would avoid this, but it isn't very nice anyway. Somehow, though, I just can't get too excited. Once you are here, things will work out, somehow.

The Atlantic Division of PAA has moved out of the mess and into another in the opposite part of town. Their places have been taken by a bunch of construction workers, and I think the boys will be happier by themselves. They are culturally a long way ahead of the African Division, as a whole. Last Sunday I was at the old mess for a showing of the British propaganda movie, "Next of Kin", which was the best propaganda film I have ever seen. It certainly impressed people with the necessity of keeping their mouths shut. Mac and I have been home every night this week, resting up for a very strenuous round of entertainment. I am catching up on TIME. And now, my love, before I shut my mouth, will you permit me to say, "I love you" just once more? Thank you. I love you, darling, very, very much indeed. You will be my woman and I your man and we will walk along through life together, being happy and sad, bored and tired, and just quietly contented together. We will never be alone again, dearest, once this awful wait is over. I hate it, because it makes you seem so far away. We need to build some more memories together, to restore the few that we have now. And, for the last time this letter, I adore you.