

IN REPLY REFER TO

FILE NO. 35



AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL
Lagos, Nigeria; September 25, 1942

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Sweet my love,

I have a secret to tell you. I love you. Isn't that unheard of? You are such a darling and I do love and miss you so much. I love the great disinterest with which you received the check, saying you would rather have a letter than a check every week. Darling, please don't be so impatient when the letters don't arrive on time. It is very rare indeed that a week goes by that I don't write to you, but it's too much to expect that they will arrive as regular as clockwork in these wartime days. I hope by this time you are happier on this score, as I have been writing very regularly since I got back to Lagos. We send off the mail to the States once a week, and there is always a letter to you in it. After that, I have no control over long long it will take to reach you. From the date of your last letter (September 6), you should have received my letter of August 27 very shortly thereafter. That was written the day after I received your first cable saying that the passport was authorized. No. 32 was written on September 4 and sent over with Wattsy. We heard that he arrived in very good time, so that letter too should have reached you only a few days after the 6th. What with all the suggestions for action in them, I hope that your urge to do something was satisfied. I certainly hope that your urge to travel will soon be gratified too.

Jesse Boynton tells me that he has written his boss about transferring you to the Atlantic Division at Lagos. We have no idea how it will work out; they will doubtless ask the permission of your division first. You might therefore impress upon them that it won't do any good to refuse to release you, as you are definitely going to leave anyway. You might also say that it would be a good way to insure that your talents would still be available to PAA, even though not in Miami. If you come over without their assistance, you will of course be free to work for someone else or not work at all, if you so desire.

I am most anxious to know what you find out about reaching Bolama by ~~the~~ Portuguese vessel, as I am sure this means of travel ~~was~~ would be fairly safe - much safer than anything else. If space is obtainable on a Portuguese boat, either direct to Bolama or with a stop off in Lisbon, you will need to start to work immediately on a Portuguese visa, as I have heard it take a long time to get one now. They will doubtless insist on your having a Nigerian visa first. I have arranged with the passport officer to authorize the ~~ix~~ issuance of a visa on my application instead of yours, and he will

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either air mail or cable it to Washington. He thinks you will have to send your passport to Washington to be stamped. However, don't have that done until we know in general how you are going to come. I am having the authorization sent air mail, as that should only take about ten days; if you need it in a hurry, wire and I will pay for a cable from here.

I don't think you need to bother much about writing King about your priority for sea passage. The boats arriving here have plenty of extra space, but please note that I have NOT yet said that you should travel by belligerent vessel, as it is still much too dangerous. Look at it from my point of view, darling. What would life mean to me if you were dead? How could I ever live with myself, knowing that I had selfishly permitted you to take such a chance? And what would your parents think? How could I face them? Dearest, as I have often said before, You are my first and only love. You are the only woman I have ever known who caused me to feel the way you have, who has ^{MADE ME} burn and tremble with love. You are all I have to look forward to in life; being without you would be like being lost in an endless desert, being doomed to wander for life in a trackless, waterless waste, and yet be unable to die. No, my love, it is bad enough to have you travel at all; you must come by some reasonably safe means or not at all.

There is one means which has been described to me as reasonably safe which I haven't mentioned before because I think the Portuguese boat idea is better. The General Accountant and Assistant General Manager of the Barber Line here is bringing his wife out on a Norwegian vessel which is supposed to be so fast that it is extremely unlikely that it would be hit. These ships run from New York to Takoradi in 11 days - actually only a little longer than it usually takes in practice to come by air. He just called me today and said that you might like to come out with his wife, and I said that I would tell you about it. The address is: Mrs. L. T. Bremmer, 107 Beacon St., Middletown, N.Y. It would certainly be nice for you to have someone to travel with, but I am still dubious about these Norwegian vessels, and I want you definitely to find out about the Portuguese ships first. If that is impossible, and your father consents, I guess you might look into this business. The person to contact is Mr. H. J. Finch, Barber Steamship Lines, 17 Battery Place, New York, N.Y. I believe that Mr. Finch is Vice President in charge of traffic, but I am not sure. I have a correspondence acquaintance with him and will write to him after you have found out about the Portuguese boats.

If it proves possible to travel by Portuguese ship, I think you had better wire me. Jesse says I can pay your fare from Bolama to Lagos here in U.S. currency. I have about \$600 on hand which is useless here, and I would be glad to get rid of ~~it~~ it in this way. Then your \$1500 would stretch a little farther. Don't hesitate to ask for more. I think I could raise another \$1000 without much trouble, and, my own love, you are worth every penny of it. Only, we shouldn't throw it away because we will need it when we set up house-keeping. They could probably issue you a statement in Miami to satisfy the Portuguese consul that you would be able to leave Bolama, once you arrived there. O dear, it is fun to make plans for once instead of just sitting around hoping, isn't it?

Saturday, September 26, 1942

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Honeylamb, Jessie has just brought me your letter of September 10th, and I am very unhappy to hear that you were unhappy because of the non-receipt of letters. As I think I said last March, it hurts me that you always assume that, if you don't receive a letter, it is because I haven't written one. Here I sit, pounding out letters on the typewriter, and you threaten me with a handsome co-pilot. Not that I think you mean it, because I really think you love me as much as I love you, or almost as much, anyway, but it always gives me a nasty turn. By the way, you never mentioned whether you had received the letter of August 27. If not, you should have known it was on the way, because of the gap in the numbers. I hope you have been just deluged with letters since and are running around in circles following up all the leads mentioned in them. I am not the least bit worried about whether or not you will be able to get here, but I want you to be safe, darling. You simply mustn't take any chances; if anything happens to you, I am absolutely done for. I have known all the time that you could get a passage through Mr. Finch, but I don't want you to go on anything except a very fast boat. They are knocking off the old tubs still, in spite of the optimistic news in the papers; we just heard of another one today. If you love me, dearest, please do as I suggest.

When you wrote your letter, September was just beginning; now it's ending, and we have been loving each other madly for a whole year. By the time you get this, it will have been almost a year since we have seen each other, since that bitter-sweetest day in my life, when we met at 11 in the morning at the bar of the Tivoli Hotel and sipped sherry for about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour. And then back to the famous Casa de Santo Antonio, of blessed memory. I guess you remember the rest as well as I do. I've often wondered since whether we were too timid that day. I had promised my conscience to be good, so I could look the world in the eye; that we have both been able to do. Then, too, it means that we have more ahead of us, more to look forward to. But I'm not always sure. Our stock of memories is so slim, and every additional bond is a help. But this is all theoretical. You'll get on a boat (neutral, I hope) and you will come to me, and we will be married in the Colonial Chapel at the foot of Broad St., Lagos - a prim, stone building, with a lovely green lawn and flaming tropical bushes all around. Padre Wright will read the ceremony, looking very drawn and ascetic, and then you will be mine forever, till death do us part. I like to think about it, darling. I can't turn it over too often in my mind. Maybe we will be able to go to Jos on our honeymoon - I have heard that it is a very nice place, with a lovely hotel run by the government. It is in the hills, and has a very brisk climate. They tell me the country there is a little like Scotland. But mainly, we will be together, from then on.

Thanks for the clipping from the Daily News. The picture resembles you slightly although it makes your eyes look as if they didn't match. Even a newspaper photo can't disguise the fact that you are beautiful, darling; sometimes I almost wish you weren't so beautiful, because it makes so many people chase you. At least, that attracts them in the first instance, and then they find out how nice you are in other ways afterwards. I'll admit I want you all to myself, so be good, angelchild. Your loving *William*

I brag about you all the time of how well you have done with PAA, but I'm not telling you so you won't begin thinking you're too good for me.

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