

REPLY REFER TO
FILE NO. 27



AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AMERICAN CONSULATE
Accra, Gold Coast
July 20, 1942

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My sweet,

I didn't know how right I was when I wrote you last week that you might receive a letter from me in Accra on day. Just as I thought, Andy's situation got worse and worse, and very shortly after I wrote last we got another wire specifically requesting Mr. Shantz to send either Mac or me up to help him until assistance could arrive. Once again I volunteered to go, and this time Mr. Shantz accepted my offer. I left Lagos Thursday, the 16th, and Andy was at the airport to meet me, smiling more broadly than usual. From that time on I have not had an idle moment. It is like Lagos was during the time I was there alone, only possibly even worse.

We have been going at it hot and heavy, and I can say without exaggeration that my being here has been an enormous advantage/ for Andy. He has mountains of unanswered correspondence piled up on his desk, and about half of it has now been transferred to mine. The main difference between here and Lagos, as it was before, is that here there is practically nothing to work with. They have one typewriter that is fit to use (this one), and I wouldn't even get near it if it weren't after midnight. The way things have been going, I don't think it likely that I will have any other chance to write for some time. I asked about sending a cable but due to the extraordinary circumstances prevailing here, the sending of private messages is not permitted. So it will have to be a letter, and not a very long one at that.

If I ever get back to Lagos, (and I sincerely hope I will) I will really appreciate what it means to work in an office that has blotters on the desks, stationery, carbon paper, rulers, erasers and about forty-'leven other things that make an office go. And, at the same time, I can appreciate what Andy has been putting up with all this time. He hasn't always had even this degree of comfort. He has one thing we haven't got: a good white stenographer. She is a Mrs. Millar, and her husband is with the Gold Coast police. She is a very eyesome morsel, and I'm sure you would be jealous if you could see her. However, you wouldn't need to be, because I am your exclusive property, to have and to hold, now and forever.

The change of type indicates a change of day. It is now July 23rd. Just as I was writing the above, the army cipher man who was doing some messages with our code, finished his work and I closed up shop. As it was about 1:15, I didn't try to do any more

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on the letter at that time. Since then, every day has been full until an advanced hour in the evening. It isn't always that we can get an Army cipher man, and usually I have to do the dirty work myself. This is one of the typewriters I mentioned above as not being fit to use. It certainly isn't. It must have been on the Gold Coast for about 20 years, and to say that it has seen better days would be a terrific understatement. The insides are all covered with rust, and, as you have noticed, the type is all out of line. However, it is sufficient to permit me to say that I love you just as desperately as ever, and that I hope the time may soon come when we will really be together. I have just seen a copy of a despatch to the Department from Mr. Shantz regarding my temporary detail to Accra, saying that he expects that I will be needed in Lagos and urging the Department to take steps soon to give Andy the necessary assistance. He pointed out that Andy is already due for home leave and added that I soon would be and requested the Department to keep that in mind in dividing up the Foreign Service personnel who are just returning from Japan. The Department has promised to send a clerk or vice consul for Accra and another Consul and a clerk for Lagos. Actually, they have the order mixed - dear old Department. As I wrote before, Accra is the big center now, and they should have at least a Consul, Vice Consul and one American clerk who can be used either for ciphers or as a confidential stenographer here at Accra. All we need at Lagos is a good clerk to replace those two dud women we have working for us. Well, I guess we will just have to wait and see. Anyway, I hope his mention of the fact that I will soon be due for home leave will do some good. For this reason, I am anxious to have Andy go home as soon as possible, as there is no chance of my getting leave until he has gone, since he has been out longer than I.

I haven't had any letter from you since the one of June 29th, or any other mail either. Today a pouch came up from Lagos, probably mailed this morning, and they would have sent any mail up. I'm wondering about where you should address your next letter. As I don't expect to be here more than a month at the most, it would depend to a certain extent on when you get this and when you write next. Leave it this way: if you send letter by regular or company mail, send it to Lagos; it will only lose a couple of days that way. If it come by special courier or by Department of State pouch, address it to Accra, as the "courier" would probably stay over night here outbound as well as home bound. I am very anxious to hear whether you have got the divorce out of the way and what you did about the passport. I do so wish you could come over! You would certainly enjoy life here in spite of what the lady with the baby said. By "here", I mean Lagos, since there isn't anyplace to live here. I wish I would get a wire that you were coming; maybe I could arrange to fly up to Fish Lake to meet you; wouldn't that be fun? What a shame that it's so hard to get east from the U.S. There is no particular trouble about getting a passage from here to the States. The last Leopoldville Clipper cleaned out all the non-priority passengers in Lagos, and recently a couple of missionaries got air passage from Accra without dif-

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ficulty. I keep hoping maybe the situation will improve; and perhaps it will. Who knows? A year ago it would have been impossible to fly to Africa at all, and now look at it!

I have just had a struggle with the mean, wretched, filthy ribbon of this antique, broken-down machine, and it has not improved my temper to any extent. Andy is not an easy person to work with, and it's a good thing that I'm as easy going as I am. I think I can stand it better than most, but it's a bit wearing at times. He has certainly had to put up with a lot since he has been here and has done a very creditable job. Even with a trained staff and adequate equipment, he would have had his hands more than full, and it is a miracle that he has been able to stand it without some kind of a breakdown. I think I would have been a wreck under similar circumstances.

The weather is very cool and pleasant here at this time of year. I imagine it is much pleasanter than it is in Miami. I am sitting now facing an open window through which a faint breeze is blowing. It was light when I started, but now it is dark, except for a bit of light caused by the moon, which isn't in sight from where I sit, facing the West and you. Certainly no one has had any reason to complain during the last couple of months, except possibly that it rained too much in Lagos. A fellow told me last night that there were seven inches of rain in one day in Lagos towards the end of June, but during July there has been much less rain and there is more chance for my towels to dry out so that they don't all smell like wet dogs. There is one thing about this house you might not like. Several times every evening, bats come in and soar around through the room - everything is open to the air, of course. I don't like bats at all. They are among the few animals that I don't get along with. However, they haven't flown in anyone's face yet, and Andy welcomes them because they sweep up the mosquitoes when they come in.

Gosh, I guess just coding telegrams doesn't give a person much to talk about, especially since the subjects are all unmentionable. I really don't know what to say, except that I need you even more than usual, being in a strange place. I find it very tiring being a guest all the time. Except for the desire to help out, I would be happy to return to Lagos tomorrow; as it is, the first week has gone by, so it won't be too long until I go back. I wish that you were coming - but then, I said that before, didn't I? We will be a fine couple, darling. Maybe neither of us are very forceful or pushing, but I think when the two of us are together, we will have one good unit of courage between us. Actually, you must have a great deal of courage, sweetheart, to have made the decisions you have had to make. I have been the one who has been lacking. I think, though, when we are together, you will give me the backing I need to sort of stiffen me up a bit; I would do much more for you than I ever would for myself. I hope I will get a chance to prove it soon.

And so, good night, darling. I love you very much.

Your William