

IN REPLY REFER TO

FILE NO. 37



## AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL  
Lagos, Nigeria; October 7, 1942

L-200 p 1/4

Hello, honey-lamb.

Well, I thought maybe my letter number 36 would be the last I would be writing you, as at that time it looked very much as if you might be leaving real soon. You can imagine - or can you? - my disappointment when Cap Roberts called up yesterday and said that he had just received a cable from New York saying that it had been impossible to arrange passage for you on that boat. Such is life! But I'm not at all discouraged. I am sure there will be another good boat in the not too distant future, and you will now have more time to get ready and buy all the things we are going to need.

However, before leaving the subject of transportation, there are just two points I want to make again: (1) You are only to come on a fast ship, making at least 20 knots; and (2) You must get your pappa's approval first. I'll leave it up to you to get it, but I hope you will send me his first name and address so I can write him a letter. I really should have done this a long time ago. I remember my Dad was rather annoyed because Janie's fiancé didn't write to him before he showed up for the wedding, but Daddy took it all very philosophically. "I guess times have changed", he said.

Now that you will not be going on the ship I had in mind, I wonder if you have had time to go to see Mr. Schroeter of PAA. You have mentioned in a couple of letters that all you needed was someone to offer you a job, and that is virtually what Jesse has done, although of course it has to have the approval of the head office first. Even if he can't arrange air transportation, perhaps he could help with the shipping angle. It would be so lovely, though, if some night I could go out to the Ikoyi Airport and watch a clumsy old Clipper plunk itself down on the Lagoon. I would be out on the first boat to meet you, and we would go ashore together. There is a beautiful terrace, leading down to a jetty sticking out into the lagoon. The embankment is planted with palm trees, and it looks like a Hollywood version of a tropical paradise. Of course, you would soon find out differently, but I think it is a good thing to have a pleasant first impression. But the main thing is to get here. Perhaps it will make enough of an impression if I am there to meet you - or am I getting too conceited?

When I last wrote, I thought it would be possible for me to come up to Takoradi to meet you if you come in there, but now I'm now so sure that that would be a wise idea. In the first



L-200 p2/4

place, while I hate to drag in the old money idea, it would cost me \$100 for the trip, not counting incidentals. Furthermore, as I know no one in Takoradi, I wouldn't be much help as far as finding accommodations, but would just double the work of Mr. Barney, the Barber Line Agent, who would have to do it anyway. So we will wait and see. But don't think it's because I don't love you, angel-puss. Maybe you've guessed by this time that I really do love you quite a bit - ~~maybe~~ maybe I could even say "a lot". And the reason is not far to seek. You are the most intelligent as well as the most beautiful, the most loving as well as the most lovely woman in the world. "The world" may sound pretty large a field, but I can only say that you combine more good features than any other girls I have ever met any place, any time. I love you and I'm going to make you mine. So there.

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I'm afraid I haven't been very systematic about telling you what I would like you to bring. I keep thinking of more and more things at the oddest times, usually when I'm not near my desk and haven't anything to write on. Then when I go to write, I can't remember things. I'm starting this a day ahead of pouch time so I can add on some more things tomorrow, if I think of them. Right after the last letter had gone off, I remembered that, although I had mentioned china and silver ware and glasses, I hadn't said anything about table cloths and napkins, which we also need. The table we now have is, I think, about ~~nine~~ six feet long. It can take six people easily, and we have had as many as eight without there being any ribs cracked as a consequence. For yourself you will need dark sun glasses. The house needs a lot of decoration, but I really don't know what you should bring, if anything, in this connection. I have the feeling that a person with a flare for fixing up places, like you, would improvise some very nice things out of local materials, but you will have to see for yourself when you get here. One thing occurs, however; some pictures for the wall would be fine, as there are none and none can be bought locally. It is especially hard to know what to do about the house, since we ~~may~~ may have to move out, and, in that case, I don't know how the furniture will be divided.

One thing just came to mind, back on transportation again. I mentioned, but didn't emphasize, in the last letter, that I would pay the ship's passage here. That is not just to take the strain off the \$1500, but because I have about \$600 here in cash which does me practically no good at all. As you probably know, only \$250 per person can now be imported into the U.S.; any excess will be confiscated, at least temporarily. So I would be very glad to put this \$600 to some good use, and paying your fare with it is the best use I can think of. And it will, I hope, give you enough money to buy all these things I am going to think of between now and tomorrow for you to bring. One caution: don't buy anything of high quality. Even if it isn't lost at sea on the way, practically everything, especially cloth and leather, goes bad in this hot, humid climate. Furthermore, prices are probably higher now than they will be after the war, and, as a person with a fixed income, it is better to save while prices are high and buy when the post-war slump is on. Of course, if we lose the war and



L-200 p3/4

comes the revolution, we won't have any money or anything, but I guess that is one of the risks we can't provide against very well.

I hope that we will be able to go to Jos on our honeymoon, although it is too soon to count on it. Jos is supposed to be the coolest, healthiest place in Nigeria, and the Government has built a rest house there where government people can go on their local leaves. I never thought much about it, but recently I talked to a friend of mine in the British army who went there. He says it is really a grand place and the "rest house" is actually a very modern hotel. Rates are very moderate, since it is subsidized by the government. The only difficulty is whether I can get in there, since I am not a Nigerian Civil Servant. However, I imagine it can be arranged. I have 60 days leave coming to me this year, of which I have not as yet used any, so there should be no trouble about that part of it. By the time you get here, it will be quite hot, I should think; it is getting noticeably hotter all the time now, and I am very glad indeed that you like it that way. Of course, the heat is not extreme by any means, but it does get oppressive and sticky during the "winter". Another consideration is whether you will feel like undertaking the two day and two night train trip it takes to get to Jos. We can decide that when you have arrived.

Things are pretty quiet in the office these days. With our new American clerk, the work is so divided that no one has too much and we could actually quit at 5 o'clock except that we usually hang around from force of habit. There are some interesting developments going on here now which have brought in quite a lot of new people. I guess I will have to wait until you get here before going into more detail. Social life, after being very hectic for a while, has now quieted down. We have not been invited out all this week, and we are having some fellows in Saturday. The local representative of the Air Ministry at London is coming - a chap we are anxious to cultivate since he controls priorities on B.O.A.C. in this area. An R.A.F. doctor will also be here. There will be no ladies. We planned to go to the movies after dinner, but I have just noticed that the film will be "Broadway Melody of 1940", and I'm not sure whether I could stand it. We may just go out to the club and watch the dancing and listen to the music. Last Saturday was race day, and we had a bunch of PAA fellows and a few others in for lunch before. We all got very aimiable on old fashioned which were really good, and discussed the future of air transport. (The coming thing, according to our air-minded friends.) I found the races somewhat more than extremely boring. Races never have interested me, and apparently I haven't changed. I watched two, and came home and took a nap. I won on the only race I bet on, but very little, as I had bet on the favorite.

Friday, October 9, 1942

Even with Mac's help, I haven't been able to think of many more things for you to bring. Mac's cocktail shaker, the only one we have, has been broken, and we would like to have another. His glass. He suggests also a coiled-wire strainer, like bar tenders use. I have remembered that I have had practically



L-200 p 4/4  
original

no new neckties, and no good ones at all, since I left home in early 1940. Consequently, mine are getting a little bedraggled, and I think it would be nice if you would pick up some Palm Beach ties or ties of similar material. I have seen some beautiful color combinations in stripes on the necks of some people who left the states since I did. I ~~usually~~ usually wear green and brown with those linen suits I bought in Lisbon, and blue and gray with the white suits. Of course, who can wear almost anything with white. It would also be a fine idea to buy about a dozen 50¢ ties for distribution among the African staff, both clerks and houseboys. And I'll give you fair warning: any ties I don't like will be given straight away to the house boys, without any attempt at concealment. See ?

We are being threatened with some domestic difficulty which is putting to the acid test my belief in the rights of labor to organize and strike. The house boys of Lagos are organizing a union, which is all right. Only, being very simple minded individuals, they want to double their salaries or more at one fell swoop. We have been paying our boys rather well, and while we would not object to a reasonable increase, we don't have any intention of being held up by a bunch of monkeys, and neither do the other Europeans in town. They are trying to get the government to make a minimum wage law for them, but I do not think the government is going to do so because of the difficulty of comparing the varying lengths of service and degrees of efficiency of various boys. So the wage question is likely to become a free-for-all. If the boys strike, they will, of course, attempt to prevent any of the vast mass of ~~unemployed~~ unemployed boys <sup>for</sup> getting the jobs, and I wouldn't be surprised if they made life very difficult. In any case, they haven't fixed definitely yet on what they are going to demand, and perhaps it will be more reasonable than we think. I would be very sorry to lose Thompson, as he is a very good boy indeed, and up to now has always been very loyal. I do, however, resent his going in for this strike without ever having asked us for an increase in pay. Better hurry up, dear. You may be called upon to start cooking immediately upon your arrival.

I guess I will have to stop now; I have covered about everything I can think of to say, except, once again, I love you very, very much indeed, my sweetheart. October 11th will be a notable anniversary in the history of our relations, centering around a little episode on the elevator of the Casa de Santo Antonio, which I imagine you will remember rather distinctly. That was a great day. I wish you were here now, as I would like to do some more kissing right now. I haven't received any letters from you since you left Miami; I hope your friends in the mail room are as faithful as you are. I should think it risky to continue to address letters to me as PAA-Africa, since those letters will probably soon have to pass through the Army post offices. Just put "PAA Lagos". That should do the trick all right. Good-bye, dearest, till next week.

