

IN REPLY REFER TO

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AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Hello, darling.

I am most contrite that I missed writing to you last week - the first time in a long time that that has happened. The cause was the approaching departure of Mac, which finally took place on Friday, December 11th. There was quite a series of parties, the final climax being one that Mr. Shantz gave the night before Mac left. There was lots to eat and drink, including Martinis made with real French vermouth - an almost unknown luxury these days. After the cocktail hour (which in this case was about 9 o'clock), a smaller and more select group came down here for food and more drink. It was tremendous. Everybody, including both the hosts, got delightfully squiffed, and there was much laughter and singing. The party broke up a little after one, but it was high time, since it started at 6:30. More people have told me since that it was one of the best, if not THE best party they have ever had in Lagos!

The next morning was, of course, a shambles. One friend of ours went to the office where he works and sat at his desk in a daze for about fifteen minutes, being unable to focus his eyes on anything. Finally his aimable boss came around, sized up the situation, and suggested he take the morning off. Which he did. I spent the morning checking over the latest changes to arrive in the Foreign Service List, that being the highest type of mental activity I was good for at that time. Mac wore colored glasses all day, although it was cloudy. Even Mr. Shantz, who had gone home comparatively early, didn't look as if he was accomplishing anything. In the afternoon I took Mac out to the airport, and found a couple of other fellows sitting in the chairs in the waiting room looking absolutely blank. They had gone out to take a plane for Kano, but there wasn't any, and they didn't have the gumption to get up and go home. Two good Pan American friends were also leaving that day for home, and they felt rocky too. Judging by the hangovers, it was a most successful party. Now don't get the idea that we do this all the time. If we did, we wouldn't enjoy it so much. Mac was worth a good party, and so were the Pan Am boys, and taking all three together, it made quite an occasion.

When the planes arrived, who should step off one of them but our old friend and intermediary, Capt. Jim Bledsoe. He was just as talkative as ever. He is a captain in the Army now. He said sorry he had ~~been~~ to miss you and your mother the time you called on him and his wife; I urged him to come and see us in Lagos some time.

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Another recent visitor was Bud Francis, who was leading a convoy of planes through. He arrived Friday, and we had dinner here Friday night. Due to engine trouble, he fortunately had to stay over Sunday, so we took him to Tarquah Bay for the day. We all had a grand time. Then in the evening, there was a Pan Am movie, "Tales of Manhattan", which we all enjoyed very much indeed. Bud told me that he had just seen another fellow from Newark who had told him that my sister had been home for a while. It seems Norman has been transferred to somewhere on the West Coast (of America, not Africa) and Janie was going to go out and join him. I still haven't had any confirmation of this from home yet, letters having been rather scanty recently.

Speaking of letters, yours of November 12th and 15th arrived together to warm the cockles of my heart. I do love to get your letters and the renewed thought of your love makes me warm and happy inside. They were both written just before your trip to Washington. The Department has at last deigned to inform us officially of your appointment, and the cancellation of Miss Iris Johnson. They didn't say how much salary you are to receive. I hope it is good and that we will be able to recoup slightly on the expense of your trip. However, I always say, it's worth it to have you here no matter what it costs. I hope you don't mind the idea of working here; I have the idea you rather wanted to get away from work and occupy yourself with purely housewifely functions. However, from what I know of Lagos, you will be much happier working. In the first place, we have no privacy during the day, a part of our apartment being used for office space. In the second place, the boys do all the work, and with a little supervision from you, they should be able to get along all right in the future as they have in the past. Thirdly, practically all the women in Lagos are working, all believing they should do something to help the war effort. There is a tremendous shortage of office help here, and if you didn't work in the Consulate, you would probably wind up in some other, probably less pleasant office. I think you are going to like it here, darling; I do, and if you were here, life would be very rosy indeed.

Before I forget, I want to ask you to bring a drip coffee pot. Now that Mac has gone, I have nothing but the good old fashioned kind, and the quality of the coffee has diminished enormously. I am also without silver since Mac left. I have borrowed some from the people who operate the dining cars on the Nigeria Railway, but it is pretty bad and may be recalled at any time. I imagine you have already taken care of that, as it is one of the things I mentioned before.

I think it was grand of your Dad to give you \$700 for a wedding present, and I will write him soon to thank him - I hope tomorrow. He certainly is a grand Dad to have, and I am most anxious to get to know him. You mentioned foodstuffs in your letter, and I thought I would mentioned roughly what we have on hand since Mac and I broke up housekeeping. First, the things we are short of: There are only 4 cans of Klim left; one can lasts two persons about 12 days, drinking only a small amount of milk a day.

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That doesn't seem right to me, as they are large cans, but that is what the boys tell me. We have only one jar of mayonnaise, 2 bacons, 5 cans peaches, 4 cans pears, no curry powder (curry dishes are very popular here), 1 can molasses, 1 bottle maple syrup, 4 jars preserves (for your breakfast, my dear), no breakfast food. I like cold breakfast food, but it has to be specially packed for this climate. We have been having Kellogg's All-Bran out of tins. I like all the standard breakfast food except grape nuts. Something I like and we have never had: oatmeal. There is absolutely none available in Lagos, and I would like very much to have some if you decide to bring food.

Now here are things that we have a lot of, and that you won't need to bother with: Jello, bicarbonate of soda, tinned butter (there are 13 5 lb. tins), extract of vanilla (10 bottles), crab flakes (20 cans, and we have lovely shrimp here), codfish cakes, which I don't like - any is too many; cranberry sauce (11 cans) tomato sauce (30 cans) bath soap (85 bars, but it goes fast) and cheese.

The other items in stock are sort of middling: baked beans, peas, chicken broth, Campbell's consomme and consomme Madrilens, 41 lbs. coffee, 8 cans Grisco, 8 bottles cocktail cherries (we could use some more) 11 plain olives, 12 stuffed olives, 6 bottles Angostara bitters (may be you could buy some in Trinidad on the way through) and one gallon vinegar.

One thing I forgot to mention among the things we need more of: Herhsey's chocolate syrup. If you put in an order, you might as well include a case or two of rum, ex bond of course. Get good rum if you get any, and we will introduce Daquiris and Bacardi's to Lagos. I think I have enough Scotch, gin, and rye for the duration, although it is appalling how rapidly it goes. All this is just to give you an idea of what there is on hand so you will have some basis to work on. Most Foreign Service people deal with Francis Leggett and Son; that is where all the above came from. If possible, get them to give you an catalog and order list with prices. They love to hand out lists without prices, and some people have been unpleasantly surprised at the resulting bill.

A tragedy has just happened. Our refrigerator has broken, and as it is of the sealed variety, it cannot be repaired here. It has to be sent home, and unless I can find a spare unit, we will be without a frige for from three to six months, barring accident. It is very discouraging. I love you.

Darling, my new year will be happy only as it brings us together. I have no other thought, hope or ambition. I live in expectation that any day may bring news of your departure, either direct or via Lisbon. Now THAT will be a day!

Your
William