

Orange, Texas
August 8, 1944

My dear Homer:

I hope this finds you as well as we are here at home. Also I hope that when you returned to sea duty you were not sent to any place as hot and dry as Orange has been this summer. In fact practically the whole United States is suffering the same way to the detriment of crops and cattle. Mr. Kerr says though that before July 27th he has had two frosts heavy enough to nip the potatoes. The fresh water fishing has not been so very good this summer, and the salt water is very, very spotty.

Nelda and I have bought a piece of property 116 x 420 feet down at Big Lake, La. and are fixing up an old house that we are going to move onto the place. At the present moment we are just cleaning up the weeds and undergrowth that has been accumulating there in the twenty years that it has been unoccupied. With gasoline and tire situation we have been confined pretty closely to Orange, having made one trip to New Orleans; and we hope to go up to the Colorado ranch sometime around the 20th of September when the leaves begin to turn and fall.

George Raborn, Denna Winn, Little Ann and the boy friend who was with Ann, were in an automobile wreck of the DeSoto last month. It moved a telephone pole, crushed in the front end of the car, broke the frame, Ann's foot, and the boy's back. Little Ann will get her foot out of the cast next week, Jack and Stalley and the boy's father took him home to Amarillo and we hope he is doing well.

We sold the Packard for \$1000.00 and gave you and Bill credit for \$400.00 each and kept \$200.00 for myself. This was community property, \$500.00 of it belonging to me and \$250.00 to each of you boys. I hope you are satisfied with the division. Bill wrote me to help Ida Marie get her a Buick and I found one for her which I think satisfies her.

Becky is just recovering from a heavy cold and is now working on her yard. She had a man work eight loads of fertilizer which I furnished into the front yard and is now hauling some dirt in the back yard. I suggested that she plow the edge of the ditch up and move the dirt over without hauling any because it would make the ditch much easier to keep clean after the San Augustine grass grew. But you know women. She gave Nelda and me a lemon pie that she had made for us and I want to tell you that her house looks as cute as a button. She has put some transfers in the bathroom and kitchen and the breakfast room porch and it is entirely distinctive. She has little Shuff putting in grass in her front yard which I showed him how to plant this morning and if she will keep the yard watered it ought to be a beautiful San Augustine lawn in no time.

You must have said something to Becky about P. L. Downs because she knew enough to ask me a lot of questions and contrary to your request, I could not lie to her.

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In this instance, Homer, I am entirely in sympathy with Becky's idea. Her words to me were "If Homer wants to give \$1,000.00 away, why does he not give it to me to spend on our home?". Homer, neither you nor I have ever gone back on a friend but friendship is not ever deepened by permitting people to get into our debt. I have known P. L. Downs for many, many years and he is a nice fellow and has always been friendly to me and I am sure he is friendly to you. I am perfectly sure that the \$500.00 you sent him was a great relief to him in his financial burden. I am perfectly sure that you will never see a cent of that returned nor will you ever see a cent of any additional money that you send him. I do not think that he is dishonest. I say that he has no way under heaven to repay any of that money however much he might like to do so. You have shown your friendliness and you could never be accused of being unfaithful to that friendship regardless of how great a favor he may have done you in the past. I am placing this entirely upon an up-and-up basis, but if it should prove that he were the type of man who would demand payment in money for some past favor he may have done for you, you will be paying blackmail all the rest of your life. Listen to your Dad now, Homer, when I tell you that I have the utmost confidence in your honesty and integrity. I sometimes doubt your judgment but only age and experience will perfect your judgment. There is not enough money in your and my account to right all the wrong that has been done in the world. Neither can we help every deserving friend that we have. Neither you nor I can run printing presses for money and the sooner all of us learn that, the better off we are. Enclosed is a blank check which you may send to P. L. Downs if you care to but I hope you will tear it up and follow the advice of both your wife and me.

Bill's address is as follows:

Lt. W. H. Stark, U. S. M. C. R.,
V. M. T. B. 134 - Mag. 11
Flight Echelon
c/o Fleet Post Office
San Francisco, Calif.

You will note a slight change from the last. I understand from Ida Marie that he has been made assistant Flight Commander with a group of his own. We understand also that he is being moved, but we don't know where. Little Red seems to be like his Father in that he is hungry all the time.

The two girls seem to be doing all right. Each one has her own individual problems with servants, housekeeping, etc. When you were here last I told you I would deposit \$250.00 each month into Becky's and Bill's account, and that with the allowance that Becky gets from you, should amply finance her. She has not gone to work and I have not said anything to her about it because that is distinctly your and her business. As long as she spends her time around the home she has plenty that she can do and whether she cares to take a job or not is not my say. She has the two cars, is driving the station wagon and has the two A books. As nearly as I can find out, she is supremely happy and I know she looks better in health than she has in a long time.

I hope you received the electric razor which I oiled up and forwarded as soon as I could get it packed. I think I have pretty well covered the water front and I can only say in closing as I said to you and Becky and Bill the night you told me that you and Becky

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were married - "Years ago your Mother and I adopted two small boys and into them and their lives we put all of our lives, our love, our thought and our efforts. If you succeed we are pleased. If you fail we are merely sorry that we did not make a better job. There is nothing in this world that can come between us which can erase the love and affection I hold for you, and nothing ever will." Homer, you are now a man and I further told you when you married that the Bible says "forsaking all others, cleave only unto the woman". I do not care to thrust ourselves into your lives, nor do we require any recognition other than that you choose to give. We stand ready at any time to do the things that you want done. We stand ready at any time to give you the best advice we can. Whether you accept that advice or not, it is up to you. When the war is over and you come home, we will be happy to see you. When you want us to go fishing with you, we will be happy to go, but I remember distinctly I did not want my Father to interfere. I also remember that a 21 year old boy always wonders how anybody as dumb as their Dad could have lived as long as he had, and at 25 we are surprised how much the old man had learned in the last 4 years. When you get to be 25 I hope I will still be here, and as long as I live remember that you are my boy.

Love

Dad

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