

August 11, 1951
LST 1077
FPO, SF
Posted marked San Diego, August 11, 1951

Addressed to:
Judge James W. Broaddus
K.C. Court of Appeals
12th and Oak
Kansas City, 6, Mo.

Dear Mom & Dad,

Monday, Chief Hospitalization Mosher (sic?) went ashore in the morning and stayed 'til about 3:00 in the afternoon. The petty officer on watch at the quarterdeck says that he was sober when he returned. First thing he did was to get a .45 automatic from the guard mail petty officer. This was not suspect. He said he wanted to field-strip it. Then he drew a full quart of 190 proof ethyl alcohol from the exec. There was nothing unusual about this either. It's on board for medical purposes and he's drawn about 4 quarts in the last six months. It is used in prescriptions.

About 6:00 in the evening Chief Gunner Mate Clifton sent the messenger on watch to find me and to say an emergency.....(line not available in the copy).....was up at the bow. I ran up to the main deck and Chief Clifton told me that Mosher was drunk, had the pistol, and he had several remarks about doing away with himself. Luckily, he had locked the pistol in his safe while sober and was now too drunk to open it. When I got down to the pharmacy, the yeoman, Anderson, was trying to open the safe. Chief Mosher was there telling him the combination as best he could but Anderson couldn't open it. Mosher greeted me in friendly fashion and wrote down the combination for me. I tried it once or twice and it wouldn't open. Then I tried varying the number of turns and about 15 minutes later got it open.

The pistol lay inside nestled among enough narcotics to give every Chinaman in California a buzz. I took it out and locked the safe. My first object was to get rid of the gun and there was none there to give it to so I walked into aft crew quarters. At the door Chief Mosher jumped me from behind and tried to get the thing back. I threw it to the nearest sailor and called for help (Mosher weighs 228 lbs.). Two seamen grabbed him and he immediately became meek as a lamb.

Chief Clifton asked me for permission to try to calm him down and I said "O.K.". They went(missing line on the copy).....stateroom to let my heart return to normalcy.

About half an hour later I was feeling better and I went below. Chief Mosher stuck his head out of Chief's Quarters and asked to talk to me. I went in and he apologized profusely. Said he was sorry and that I would have no more trouble with him. His remarks were perfectly coherent but his articulation was still bad. Clifton, Mosher, and I or two, sat there a while and talked. Mosher joined right in and seemed all right. Then he said he was going to go to the head, left the table and disappeared to the rear. A seaman ran in and said Chief Mosher was seen headed topside. The man on watch has a gun!

Clifton and I started after him at a run. I as in the lead and as I got out the door on the main deck and turned left there was Mosher right in front of me, headed our way, gun in hand but pointed down at the deck. I grabbed the barrel with both hands and hung onto it like a vise while others grabbed his neck and arms. Finally, he let go of it and we found there was not a round in the chamber.

He calmed down again and promised to be good again but I had had enough. Radioed for an ambulance, and sent him to Balboa Naval Hospital. He was still there this morning, under guard and observation. Refuses to talk to anyone.

The bottle of alcohol was found in a gear locker in the Chief's head. About 1/5th of it was gone, but that was enough. 190 proof is more than double the strength of ordinary hooch.

I've heard dozens of stories about men going berserk on board ships and shooting the place up. Always it results in a court martial for the captain and officer of the deck so I'm feeling lucky. It could have been so much worse all around.

Such things as this make Navy life rather distasteful.

Love,
Jimmy

Brondura
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FPO, S.F.

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HIRE THE HANDICAP
AIR MAIL
IT'S GOOD BUSINESS

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