

TOP SECRET

[Note written in pencil] For Family only – Dad,

Shandia

Jan. 2, 1956

Dearest Mother:

Just a wee note this morning before the plane takes off. We've had a good conference, with a good group of Indians from Arajuno, Pano, and Dos Rios. Fullers have provided the music for us (accordions and trumpet), Pete, Ed, and Jim have taken turns with the Indians in speaking, and in all it has been profitable. It's the biggest gang we've had in the house, and it's been fun. This morning Fullers will be leaving, then everyone will be going over to Arajuno except me. The fellows plan to take off on Wed. for the Auca trip, Lord willing. It has been very dry, so they hope to be able to land the plane on a beach down that way. If the beach is unusable, however they will go downriver by canoe two days. Rachel Saint is coming in to stay with me, but it will be a bit awkward, as of course she knows nothing at all about the attempt to reach the savages. So just what I will be able to learn by way of radio contacts, with her here, I don't know. I suppose Marj will have some sort of code worked out, but I don't know how dumb Rachel is supposed to be, and she will no doubt be suspicious. I am glad, however, that I will not have to be alone. I just finished *O Rugged Land of Gold*, and am ashamed of myself for ever groping about having to stay alone. Olive is not at all happy about Pete's going on his trip. The other night we three women stayed home from the meeting, and of course talked about the Auca trip. Marilou and I are at one with our husbands on it. We have faced the possibilities, and are resolved that the Lord is definitely leading. It is something which each family must decide for themselves, but Pete is always so undecided about anything, he didn't even tell Olive he planned to go till Christmas. Ed and Jim talked to him about it, but he seems intent on going. Olive has not been at all well, and is not in any state to have him leave her on such a trip. Well, it is their business, and we've all said our say.

Did I tell you that on the flights they have made the Aucas have returned their gifts? I guess I did. It is certainly fantastic and thrilling to actually handle feather head-dresses made by a tribe of people totally untouched by civilization. Nate swooped so low on one flight that the people ducked down on the ground. Nate said they could look right into their faces. There seems to be neither fear nor hostility manifested, and of course the idea is to always identify the fellows with the airplane and the gifts which have been dropped. The fellows will wear the feather headdresses on the trip, and Nate has already dropped to them (the Aucas) two or three sets of big portrait photographs of the members of the party, so that if they encounter the Aucas they will be recognized (we hope!). The Aucas have cleared a huge space back of their houses, and put a model airplane up on the roof of one house -- imagine. No doubt they thought the plane would land in the cleared space, but of course it is not big enough. They always beckon madly for the plane to come down. Only once has a lance been in sight when they have flown over, and

that was quickly hidden, so perhaps [sic] they are showing their friendliness that way. It is all very intriguing and fascinating, and we are wild to know what their reactions to all the drops have been. Did I tell you that an Auca was seen right near McCully's house one night when Marilou was there alone? An Indian who was staying with her saw him, and demanded a gun to shoot him with, which Marilou of course refused [sic]. We feel sure they know that the plane takes off from Arajuno, so perhaps they had come over ~~the~~ to spy, and see just what goes on there. Marilou went out looking for the man, and found a fresh footprint on their path at 5:30 a.m., but no other signs. Well, I must stop writing now -- Jim just sent word up that he will not be going over to Arajuno til tomorrow. Pete and Olive will stay till tomorrow, too, then, I guess. I'll answer the family mall later.

I am at perfect peace about Jim's going. The Lord has given direction, and confidence. to be glorified. I hope you will not worry. We are in His keeping and wqnt [sic] Him to be glorified.

With ever so much love,

Betty