

AMERICAN CONSULATE

Santos, Brazil, October 15, 1943.

CONFIDENTIAL

Air mail

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NN3-26-83-11
By LZK NARA. Date 4-4-77

Subject: Illness of John P. Cairns, Jr 3rd Assistant Engineer, and unbecoming behavior of T. Atkinson, 3rd Assistant Engineer, both members of the crew of the American S.S. Davy Crockett.

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
WASHINGTON.

Sir:

I have the honor to enclose, for the Department's attention, a copy of an extract from the Official Log of the S.S. Davy Crockett and a copy of the Master's statement concerning the illness of John P. Cairns, Jr. 3rd Assistant Engineer, and the behavior of the 3rd Assistant Engineer T. Atkinson.

On September 26, 1943, while in hospital undergoing treatment for a mental disorder, John P. Cairns, persuaded by Atkinson, jumped or fell from a window in the hospital which resulted in the following injuries: fracture of the collar bone, complete fracture of hip bone, and rupture of the pelvis of the left kidney. His condition at this writing is reported to be fairly satisfactory, but there is a possibility of secondary complications setting in.

Atkinson, who is said to exert some influence over Cairns, was away from the ship most of the time in port drinking heavily and was arrested by the local Police but was returned to the ship on sailing day.

In view of Cairns unconscious condition he was not discharged and the Master was ordered to report full details of this matter to the appropriate authorities immediately upon his arrival in the United States.

Respectfully yours,

Arthur G. Parsloe
American Vice Consul.

Enclosures:

- Copy of extract from Official Log
- Copy of Master's statement

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To safeguard the security of the information contained here, please initial and return to Intelligence for filing when it has served its purpose

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SS Davy Crockett
Santos, Brazil
September 27, 1943

Copy of Official Log Book
Statement Regarding John P. Cairns Jr 3rd Asst. Eng.

Port

September 27, 1943

On Sunday Afternoon, September 26th, 1943 I was notified that there were additional developments in regard to J. Cairns, Jr 3rd Assistant (See Page 34 & 35 of the log).

It appears that the 3rd Assistant Engineer. T. Atkinson visited the hospital in which Cairns had been placed and represented himself as the Master of this vessel in order to gain admission. When Atkinson was recognized as not being the Master, he was refused entrance due to the fact that the doctor had requested that the patient should not receive visitors several days ago.

After being refused admission. Atkinson left the hospital lobby and went around to the side of the building and called to Cairns. Cairns evidently recognized Atkinson's voice and being unattended at the time opened and raised the window of his room and either jumped or fell from the window a distance of about 25 feet. The special nurse in charge of Cairns returned to the room just as Cairns left and reported the matter immediately. When the patient was brought back inside the hospital he was immediately examined and while no broken bones were apparent. It was certain that the man suffered severe internal injuries due the fact that he was spitting blood and also passing blood in his urine.

Cairns was given several injections because of a weakening pulse and after several hours he finally rallied.

The doctor is of the opinion that it will be several days before the extent of Cairns injuries can be ascertained or the man able to receive treatment.

In regard to Atkinson, after this latest incident occurred and he returned onboard I restricted this man to his quarters, while I again returned to the hospital. He was violent and obusive, and threatened several of the officers during my absence. I was notified of this at the hospital and Atkinson was brought there in custody of the local police and Mr. Fagen, 3rd officer. The Consul was notified of this man's condition and as he was not in need of medicinal attention it was decided to place Atkinson in jail for the night. This was done and he is being kept there until the vessel is ready to sail.

In closing I wish to state that Atkinson exerts some evil influence over Cairns but lack of time prevents a more detailed account of Atkinson's behavior. However, it is my attention to report

fully

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fully to the U. S. Naval Observer at our next port of call, charging Atkinson with the additional injuries of Cairns. In the event of the death of Cairns, I fully believe Atkinson should be charged with manslaughter.

(Signed) John S. Fagan
3rd Officer

(Signed) C. L. Kilsch, Master

(Copy)

SS Davy Crockett
Santos, Brazil
September 25th 1943

Statement Regarding John P. Cairns

Subject man left the vessel on Monday afternoon September 13th and did not return until Saturday noon September 18th. When this man left the vessel he was in apparent good health.

When Cairns returned onboard he was unfit to resume his duties. He first appeared to be suffering from a "hang-over" or delirium tremens but later this man showed signs of mental disorder.

On Tuesday evening September 21st, he became obsessed with the idea that he was being persecuted by the members of the crew. On inspection it was found that this man was crawling around the deck of his cabin, searching for wires leading to a dista-
phone as he believed his quarters were "tapped". We attempted to quiet this man by persuasion but our efforts failed.

At about 3 AM on Wednesday September 22nd, Cairns escaped from his cabin and jumped overboard. He swam about the harbor for nearly an hour and was then brought back onboard. After being returned onboard, I spent several hours with this man trying to console him but to no avail. He repeatedly stated that many members of the crew were trying to kill him and that he intended to "murder" them first if the opportunity presented itself.

The vessel had been laying at anchor up to this time and at about 6 AM on Wednesday September 22nd, was moored and immediately afterward this man was sent ashore for medical treatment. The doctor, in whose care we have placed this man states that this engineer has been continuing his previous actions and it has now become necessary to place Cairns in a Straight-Jacket.

So now, with the vessel preparing to sail, I deem it unwise, for the safety of the crew, vessel and also Cairns, that he return onboard. And, inasmuch as the man in question is unable to reason for himself, I do not find it advisible to attempt to pay him off and in lieu thereof will leave a credit account with the local agent.

C.L. Kelsch, Master
SS Davy Crockett