

Cambridge University Press & Assessment

978-0-521-89738-9 — The Letters of Ernest Hemingway

Volume 6: 1934–1936

Ernest Hemingway , Edited by Sandra Spanier , Verna Kale , Miriam B. Mandel

Excerpt

[More Information](#)

THE LETTERS
JUNE 1934–JUNE 1936

June 1934

To Arnold Gingrich, [1 June 1934]

Dear Mr. G:—

Enclosed check for 10⁰⁰ — as I understand I was betting you 10 at the prevailing odds — So if I had won you would have had to pay the short end of however less than 10. Ross was priced in the money —

Or do you see it the other way around and want 14⁰⁰?

Believe not as I offered to bet 10⁰⁰ against the odds that McLarnin would win —¹

Will bet 20 on him the next time if you say so — I'll bet 20 — You give or take odds.

Maybe would be (undoubtedly would be) better to see Ross — but where and when — He must be a great fighter — McLarnin was short a fight or two — or maybe three —

We caught 3 sailfish yest. all nice ones — Also a shark that took a 4th — Got about 1/3 of the fish back out of his belly —

Did you like the August piece? I worked very hard on it.² My wife³ liked it — She usually only likes them when they are good.

Not much of this stationery left nor many people I can use it on —⁴

Have another dose of AD this morning —⁵ Lousy nuisance — Weather is pleasant and cool here —

Write Alfred and say I said to ask him what the hell about his copy —⁶

What about Paul Gallico to do some pieces for you — He did one so-so I believe — But does damned good ones for Vanity Fair —⁷

Wont bother you further —

EH.

When do you want Sept copy —⁸

Am trying to make them Timely for the month they come out in rather than write a bunch ahead.

phPUL, ALS; letterhead: THE "GRIPSHOLM" INDIA CRUISE 1934 / ON BOARD M/S "GRIPSHOLM" / SWEDISH AMERICAN LINE

The conjectured letter date is based on EH's mention of an enclosed check for \$10; the canceled check, dated "June First [193]4" in EH's hand, survives in the Toby and Betty Bruce Collection of Ernest Hemingway (PSU–Bruce).

June 1934

- 1 On 28 May 1934, Chicago boxer Barney Ross (né Barnet David Rasofsky or Dov-Ber Rosofsky [sources vary], 1909–1967), reigning lightweight and junior welterweight champion, defeated Irish-born Canadian welterweight champion James “Baby Face” McLarnin (1907–2004) by split decision in a heavily promoted world welterweight title bout in New York City. In a letter to Gingrich of 25 May 193[4], EH had written, “I’ll lay you ten dollars on whatever the odds are at the morning of the fight on Jimmy McLarnin to win” (*Letters* vol. 5, 613). In his reply of [17 June 1934], Gingrich would assure EH that “our papers here said it was even money, so as far as I was concerned I would have owed you ten bucks or you me” (JFK).
- 2 In his 25 May letter, EH told Gingrich that he had finished a first draft of his next piece for *Esquire* on 20 May and would rewrite and mail it by 28 May at the latest (*Letters* vol. 5, 612). In his [17 June] reply, Gingrich would praise it as “probably the best piece we’ve had in the magazine.” It would be published in the August 1934 issue as “Out in the Stream: A Cuban Letter.”
- 3 EH’s second wife, Pauline (née Pfeiffer, 1895–1951).
- 4 EH wrote on letterhead of the *Gripsholm*, the ship on which he and Pauline had returned to Europe after their African safari (December 1933–March 1934), sailing from Mombasa and disembarking at the French Mediterranean port of Villefranche on 18 March.
- 5 EH suffered an acute bout of amoebic dysentery in January 1934 while on safari and was flown to Nairobi, where he was treated with emetine injections and wrote his fifth contribution to *Esquire*. The dysentery recurred in March 1934 while he was in Paris, about to return to the United States. EH’s “a. d. in Africa: A Tanganyika Letter” appeared in the April 1934 issue (“a. d.” signifying “amoebic dysentery”).
- 6 Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt, Jr. (1912–1999), wealthy American sportsman and owner of a horse breeding and racing operation in Maryland. After meeting him while both were on safari, EH wrote to Gingrich that Vanderbilt (“a good young kid”) “wants to write about racing regularly for *Esquire* if you want him to” (19 December [1933], *Letters* vol. 5, 565). In January 1934, Gingrich invited Vanderbilt to contribute to the magazine but later reported, “Alfred Vanderbilt never acknowledged letter. Suppose I should write him again?” (Gingrich to EH, 2 April 1934, JFK). Vanderbilt would not become a contributor to *Esquire*.
- 7 Paul Gallico (1897–1976), American journalist and well-known sportswriter for the *New York Daily News*. His essay in the March 1934 *Esquire*, “Keeping Cool at Conneaut,” described the misadventures of a group of sportswriters at a boxing training camp at Conneaut Lake Park, Pennsylvania. Gallico frequently contributed pieces on athletes and athletics to *Vanity Fair*, most recently “Break it Off: Nocturne in Wrestling” (April 1934).
- 8 In his [17 June] letter, Gingrich would reply that since the magazine always came out on the fifteenth of the month preceding the issue date, “our supposed deadline is the first of the month preceding that (i.e., July 1st for the Sept. issue which appears August 15th.)” However, he told EH, “if you’re ever jammed for time you can always take till the eighteenth so it reaches me on the twentieth. For September, that would mean July 18th.”

June 1934

To Penson and Company, 6 June 1934

Key West, Florida

June 6, 1934

Penson and Company¹
8–10 Bridge Street
Maritime Bldg.
New York

Dear Sirs:

Enclosed please find a check for \$220. to cover the foreign and N.Y. charges on the shipments you are receiving for myself and Mr. Charles P. Thompson of this city.² Will you please send a detailed account of what these charges are as I understand these trophies and guns have been shipped prepaid to N.Y.

The guns are two Springfield 30-06 rifles made by Griffin and Howe of N.Y.³ A 12 Gauge pump action Winchester repeating shotgun made by the Winchester Repeating Arms Company in U.S.A. and a Mannlicher 6.5 caliber rifle, which I bought from Griffin and Howe in N.Y. in 1930.⁴ There is also a double barrelled 28 gauge shotgun manufactured by Darne in France imported into U.S. in 1930.⁵ This gun was brought in as part of baggage and duty was paid on it but I have no receipt for it.

This shotgun and the three rifles were exported by Mr. Charles P. Thompson as baggage on the Manhattan on 1933.⁶ Mr. Thompson met me at Havre and we sailed from Marseilles for Africa via Mombassa. We shipped the guns back from Africa because of the difficulty of bringing rifles through France.

The 28 gauge shotgun has been in constant use for 4 years. I should put its present value at \$60⁰⁰ The Winchester Pump action 12 Ga. Shotgun I took with me, exported from U.S., on August 4 1933 via Cuba, Spain, France to Africa as baggage.

With this information you can fill out the affidavit for free entry of returned American products and let me know what I should do about the gun originally manufactured in France but exported from U.S. I believe the Mannlicher rifle is manufactured in Austria but it was purchased by me

June 1934

from Griffin and Howe Inc. 202 F. East 44th Street N.Y.C. They will have a record of the sale and can furnish you with whatever information you need about the origin of the gun. I bought the gun from them in September of 1930.

Yours very truly,
Ernest Hemingway

JFK, TLSc

- 1 A customs brokerage firm in New York City.
- 2 Charles Philip Thompson (1898–1978), businessman and sportsman who ran his family's successful marine hardware store in Key West. He and EH became friends during EH's first visit there in 1928, and Thompson accompanied EH and Pauline on the 1933–1934 African safari, later serving as the model for the character Karl, EH's hunting companion and competitor, in *Green Hills of Africa* (1935).
- 3 The M1903 Springfield rifle was produced in the Springfield (Massachusetts) Armory for the U.S. Military and became available for civilian use in 1905. Its ammunition was improved a year later and designated "Cartridge, Ball, Caliber .30, Model of 1906." The resultant .30-06 rifle and cartridge were widely introduced to hunting by Theodore Roosevelt during his 1909–1910 African safari. Griffin & Howe, founded by New York cabinetmaker Seymour Griffin (1885–1966) and Philadelphia metalworker James V. Howe (1889–1969), specialized in converting the military weapon into a hunting rifle. EH acquired his customized Springfield .30-06 in June 1930 (*Letters* vol. 4, 313–14). For detailed discussion of Hemingway's firearms, see Silvio Calabi, Steve Helsley, and Roger Sanger, *Hemingway's Guns: The Sporting Arms of Ernest Hemingway*, 2nd edn. (Guilford, Connecticut: Lyons Press, 2016).
- 4 Founded in the late 1850s by Oliver Fisher Winchester (1810–1880), the Winchester Repeating Arms Company had become the dominant manufacturer of repeating shotguns by the early twentieth century. EH purchased his Winchester Model 12 in 1928 (*Letters* vol. 3, 420–23). In 1930 he ordered from Griffin & Howe his Mannlicher-Schoenauer Model 1903 rifle (named for gunmakers Ferdinand Mannlicher [1848–1904] and Otto Schoenauer [1844–1913] of the Austrian arms manufacturer Steyr), first using it to hunt in Wyoming that fall (*Letters* vol. 4, 371–74).
- 5 The Darne Company was founded in 1881 by French gunsmith Regis Darne (1853–1938), who in 1894 patented a double-barreled shotgun mechanism wherein the breeches opened on the rails so that cartridges could be inserted into the chambers (Calabi, Helsley, and Sanger, *Hemingway's Guns*, 241).
- 6 The *Manhattan* of the United States Line sailed from New York City on 8 November 1933, arriving in Le Havre, France, on 15 November ("Outgoing Passenger and Mail Steamships," *New York Times*, 7 November 1933, 47; "Foreign Ports—Arrivals and Departures," *New York Times*, 16 November 1933, 47).

June 1934

To Jane and Grant Mason, 10 June 1934

Key West

June 10 — 1934

Dear Citizens;

Awfully glad to get Janes letter and very sorry to miss Grant in Havana.¹ Thought we'd see you in Miami when went to get the boat but only as a recent visitor in the papers.²

The boat is good. Much better sea boat than Josies even and lots of confort moderno.³ Will go 16 miles and can troll all day on ten gallons with the little motor. Big motor uses about 15 in a days trolling but quiet as a watch ticking. Turn in its own length. Its swell below — lots of room.

Carlos⁴ wrote the month of May was fatal. June ought to be good at the end if this wind keeps up. It is cool here and blowing a big breeze since about a week. Gulf full of sailfish. We caught one that weighed 119 1/2 lbs (11 1/2) bigger than the Atlantic record.⁵ Been catching lots with the boat going out in the afternoon after working and coming in at dark. Been working hard and thank god no bloody visitors for about ten days.

Want to come over to fish as soon as get this work done and the big fish start. Am on page 100 and think it will run maybe another hundred. Maybe less.⁶

I sent Janes letter on to Pauline in Piggott where she had gone to prove to her family that she had gotten back from Africa. She left a week ago last wednesday for two weeks and hope she'll be back by the end of the week. Took old Mex with her and is bring[ing] Bumby back too.⁷

Outside of fishing and daily performance in the workhouse life very quiet here. Charles is wondering if he got rid of his impediments (wife only now since Hobo died)⁸ and became converted to catholick-cism if they would send him back to Africa as a priest. We met a priest who had just been sent there in the heart of the kudu country.⁹ That's his last hope of getting back.

Thanks for all the dope about the fish. The damned season is late on acct. of the south winds and the crazy winter with no current. Tuna just hit Bimini a week ago and a month late.¹⁰ Now the lousy hurricanes are starting. Wish we would gets lots of east wind and current and

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get the run of the little fish over and then have a fine july and august without hurricanes and what do you want for xmas Mr. and Mrs. Mason yourselves?

Best to Tony¹¹ and all of you,
Ernest

phJFK, TLS; postmark: KEY WEST / FLA, JUN 10 / 5 PM / 1934

- 1 Jane's letter remains unlocated. While EH and John Dos Passos were visiting Havana in early May 1934, Grant had left a note for EH on Hotel Ambos Mundos stationery dated "3:30 P.M. 5/2/34," lamenting that he had missed him "today," saying that he had to "beat it to Miami for two days" but hoped to see EH when he returned, adding, "Jane gets back in a week or so" (JFK). A newspaper article dated 17 June 1934 reported that Jane, "who divides her time between New York, Tuxedo Park and Cuba, was just leaving for a sojourn at her Havana home" ("A New York Society Leader Shows and Discusses Her Clothes," *Philadelphia Inquirer Magazine*, 9).
- 2 In early April 1934, EH had purchased the *Pilar*, a 38-foot Wheeler Playmate cabin cruiser, at the Wheeler Shipyard in Brooklyn. On 8 May he left Key West for Miami by train to pick up the boat, which he piloted back to Key West, arriving on 11 May. On 9 May, Grant's photograph was in the *Miami Herald*, which reported that "G. Grant Mason, foreign representative of the Pan American Airways System at Havana," was promoting Florida as a summer vacation destination for well-to-do Cubans and other tourists from the Caribbean and South America ("Looks South for Summer Visitors," 8).
- 3 Joseph Stanford Russell (1889–1941), known as Joe or Josie Grunts, was the owner of Sloppy Joe's Bar in Key West (a speakeasy during Prohibition) and a former rum runner. EH had chartered Russell's 32-foot cabin cruiser, the *Anita*, for several fishing trips in 1932 and 1933. *Confort moderno*: modern comfort (Spanish).
- 4 Carlos Gutiérrez Ramos (b. 1878), Cuban fisherman and boat captain and EH's first mate aboard the *Pilar*. The two had met during EH's first trip to the Dry Tortugas in 1928; they met again in Havana during EH's chartered fishing excursion aboard the *Anita* (April–June 1932), and the next spring EH engaged him as fishing advisor for three months aboard the *Anita* for expeditions in the Gulf Stream off the coast of Cuba (April–July 1933). Gutiérrez would feature in some of EH's *Esquire* "Letters" and in his chapter "Marlin off Cuba" in Eugene V. Connett's *American Big Game Fishing* (1935).
- 5 On 23 May 1934, a record-breaking Atlantic sailfish was hooked by EH's friend and fishing companion, Jesuit priest Thomas McGrath (1886–1956); after Father McGrath grew tired, EH fought and landed the fish but could not claim the record because he had not hooked it himself (*Letters* vol. 5, 612–14). At the time the record for largest Atlantic sailfish caught on rod and reel was a 106-pound catch off Miami Beach in 1929.
- 6 By late May 1934, EH had written about sixty pages of a "long story," which would become *GHOA* (*Letters* vol. 5, 621).
- 7 "Old Mex" (short for "Mexican Mouse"), a nickname for EH and Pauline's first son, Patrick (b. 1928), derived from his original nickname, "Mouse." "Bumby," nickname for John Hadley Nicanor Hemingway (1923–2000), EH's son with his first wife, Hadley (née Elizabeth Hadley Richardson, 1891–1979).

June 1934

- 8 Charles Thompson's wife, Lorine Thompson (née Louise Epsy Carter, 1898–1985), was a high school teacher in Key West. Hobo was the Thompsons' dog (Patrick Hemingway, interview with Sandra Spanier, Bozeman, Montana, 10 October 2016).
- 9 In the 5 February 1934 entry of her 1933–1934 safari journal, Pauline wrote, "Galipo is a nice camp with kudu in back of us and a mission up the road. . . . The resident priests were on leave, and we found a rather lonesome young American one just arrived from America and not liking it at all" (*GHOA-HLE*, 231).
- 10 The Bimini islands (North Bimini, South Bimini, and smaller cays) lie about 50 miles due east of Miami, across the Gulf Stream from the coast of Florida. Renowned for deep-sea fishing, Bimini marks the westernmost part of the Bahamas, British West Indies.
- 11 Antony Mason (b. 1930), son of Jane and Grant Mason, whom they adopted in England in late 1932.

To Arnold Gingrich, 16 June 1934

CBH114 19 XC=KEYWEST FLO 16 306P

ARNOLD GINGRICH=

233 EAST WALTON PL=

NEVER HEARD WHETHER YOU GOT THE LAST ONE NOR ABOUT
TITLE NOR DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER HOPE YOU'RE OK

REGARDS=¹

HEMINGWAY.

Meeker, Cable; Western Union destination receipt stamp: 1934 JUN 16 PM 2 42

- 1 Within two hours, Gingrich's cabled reply would arrive in Key West: "FUNNY IT MUST BE TELEPATHY WAS JUST SAYING AM A BUM NOT TO HAVE WRITTEN ACKNOWLEDGING CHECK AUGUST PIECE AND LETTER BUT WILL DO SO AT ONCE" (stamped as received "1934 JUN 16 PM 4 52", JFK). Gingrich would follow through in a six-page handwritten letter to EH postmarked from Chicago the next day (JFK).

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Excerpt

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June 1934

To George Eustis, [c. 18 June 1934]

Care L. K. Liggett¹

185 Hammond Street

Chestnut Hill

Mass —

Have arranged for boat fishing prospects good² regards Hemingway

JFK, ACDS

EH wrote this response in black ink at the bottom of Eustis's incoming cable sent from Brookline, Massachusetts, and stamped as received by Western Union in Key West "1934 JUN 18 AM 10 59."

- 1 Louis Kroh Liggett (1875–1946), American drugstore magnate. In a cable of 13 June, Eustis had directed EH to reply "CARE OF L K LIGGETT" at the address given here.
- 2 On 18 June, Eustis had cabled "THINK TAR[P]ON OUT OF KEYWEST IS OUR BEST BET," saying he would arrive on 21 or 22 June and adding, "IF YOU CAN ARRANGE FOR BOAT WILL GUARANTEE NOT TO BOTHER YOU IF YOU ARE WORKING" (JFK). In a cable dated 2 June, Eustis and his wife, Grace, had invited EH and Pauline to "do some cheap fishing" with them and asked what EH would suggest (JFK). In subsequent cables of 8 and 13 June, Eustis had expressed regret that EH could not join them and asked his advice about fishing in Cuba (JFK).

To Pauline Pfeiffer Hemingway, [c. 19 June 1934]

Mrs Ernest Hemingway

Piggott Arkansas

From now writing to Hotel Windsor Jacksonville¹ wire when you'll get there Love to all Ernest

JFK, ACDS

EH wrote this cable draft on the back of an envelope addressed to "Mr. Hemingway / Whitehead Street / City" and postmarked from Key West on 18 June 1934 at 5 p.m. The letter he was "now writing" to Pauline, dated 19 June 1934, follows in this volume.

- 1 While she and Patrick were visiting her parents in Piggott, Arkansas, Pauline wrote in a letter of 17 June that she would travel to St. Louis the next day, pick up Bumby there on 19 June, return to Piggott, and start back to Key West with the boys on 21 June, arriving home on Saturday, 23 June (JFK). En route they would change trains in Jacksonville, Florida. The Windsor Hotel, opened in 1875, occupied an entire city block in downtown Jacksonville.

June 1934

To Pauline Pfeiffer Hemingway, 19 June [1934]

Tuesday — June 19

Good Ole Mama:

Today your up in St. Louis getting old Bumby who I have a feeling we are going to have to do considerable work on — Finally had a letter from him — spelling — orthography — neatness 400% worse than last year — Hadley certainly is a lousy influence on him¹ [*EH insertion*: in some ways] and theres no chance of getting him ahead because as soon as you teach him anything or start him going well — back to the same sloppiness again — Hope he's not as bad as it seems — But this is the first time she's had him write me since before last Christmas — 6 months — I calls it lousy — Too busy with her social life I guess — It is a shame to see a good kid ruined by sheer sloppiness —

Worked hard yest. Am on page 137 — Going to write this morning and then go out in the boat this pm.

Havent heard yet whether Carlos coming this Wednesday or not — He's to wire —

Barometer high now but wind was in the west and last night hot as can be —

Lorine leaves for Ga. tomorrow —

I really think Charles is going bughouse maybe — Cant fish anymore even — The slightest thing to do sends him into a dither of rapidly moving in the wrong directions incompetency —

Sunday went sleepy as hell after getting to sleep on a hot night toward 5.A.M. to 7 a.m Mass — Then fished in the gulf with a big breeze and plenty of sea — but the sea dropped off with the wind in the pm — with Charles — Lorine — the Jacksons and Bra's friend Oliver — (Oliver and Leicester sick)² — Jackson and Charles and Les had 7 sailfish strikes — no catchem — The sight of the sailfish seems to paralyse Charles mental processes and he jerks the bait out of their mouths — Jackson caught a 41 lb Dolphin — biggest we've ever seen even — Huge male with a giant head as big as a Scoop shovel [*EH insertion*: Josies record was 35 lb.] We caught 9 Bonitas and 7 more dolphin [*EH insertion*: Some very big] and