

The square where we sailors were dropped off had the oddest old elephant statue for a central focus. We speculated that it was there as a remembrance of elephant trading with Africa in the old days. Why else would such a monument be featured? From that square we could make it to the boulevard. Entertainment consisted of walking and window shopping. There was no strip for sailors here, and only a few houses of ill repute over off the beaten track by the opera house. The women were tough looking again as in Naples and I couldn't find any appeal in them. For sightseeing it was almost all architecture. They preserved an old pre-christian amphitheatre in the center of town so the location was of an ancient origin. The park was nothing much to talk about, but was shaded and relaxing. They had a one legged swan in a pond for a zoo. That was all there was to do, unless you like movies in Italian. The bars were all stand up affairs, for the most part and the sidewalks robed up about 100:00 pm. Again a lot of fine looking native girls who were not easy to talk to and did not seem inclined to fraternize with us.

By this time I was writing of my trouble to my folks. Things really looked grim for me. I told them to write my senator and get me off the ship before something happened to me. It was no joke to me. When you think of all the possibilities there are of being lost at sea at no particularly announced time it is sort of frightening. With the catwalks in the fireroom it is real easy to drop a heavy wrench on someone's head while he is on watch. There are plenty other ways that you invent when you are in such a situation, steam leaks, fuel explosions, and equipment explosions, and boiler flarebacks that could be easily set up. I was in constant fear and my psychology was being tampered with, so I was either in a zombie like state or finding myself in a situation where I had to defend myself physically or verbally. It is no way to live.

I went to mast within a few days and it was quite a spectacle. I had quite a lineup testifying against me. The chief engineer, the B division officer, the B division chief, the fireroom supervisor, and the second class who wrote me up were all there. I tried to explain the fact that I was assigned to ER04 and the petty officer who was ordering the day I was wrote up for disobeying an order did not have a real claim to using me. I also said I couldn't handle the oil king's orders and this second classes orders at the same time and I thought this second class overreacted because all I was doing trying to get all the people giving me orders to settle down and assign me a task one person could do. Try as I might I couldn't do the work of two people. The guy who wrote me up said I used the word nigger in reference to the way I was being treated, but there was no witness to that, it was heresay, and his stripes were used to make me a liar. With all the harrassing going on I might have said piss, shit, and fuck too, but who cares; that was used against me and the Navy system considered that evidence, and piled that on. Each of the chain of command testified that everybody was complaining about the way I worked, I knew it was the dopers in charge of me who felt uncomfortable because I didn't dope and so did they. It was politics and the dopers wanted me busted out of the division. The ships captain asked the division officer and chief engineer about my extra-cirricular activities like PR work, and the suggestion on boiler efficiency testing and said that he couldn't understand why a fellow such as myself should be getting such bad reports since I had made petty officer and all. The response was mawkish and that line of reasoning sort of fell to the side. The outstanding things I accomplished while on board didn't outweigh the systematic trumped up disciplinary problems the division created.