



The Truth About Cruise Ships – A Cruise Ship Officer Survives the Work, Adventure, Alcohol, and Sex of Ship Life

Jay Herring

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Chapter 1

I had been onboard my first ship for five days when I met a woman from Trinidad and Tobago in the crew bar. She was a black woman and she was overweight, maybe even a little flabby, but such a sweetheart.

“So do you have a girlfriend?” she asked, changing the subject.

“No.”

“Have you been with anyone on the ship yet?”

“Nope. It’s actually been twelve years since I slept with someone.”

“Come on now.”

“It’s true.” I said, and then told her why (more on that later).

“Hmm. That’s fascinating. You know, I used to sleep with a skinny white guy from England on my last ship. You remind me of him.”

“Oh, yeah?”

“He and I had lots of fun, and I never left him unsatisfied. I may not look it, but I’m actually a really good lover.”

“You don’t say.”

“I’ve been with lots of men in my day. I’m forty-one, after all. And in my years, I’ve learned exactly what men like and how to please them. And now”—she took a sip of her drink—“and now all the men I sleep with are extremely satisfied.”

I had always imagined athletic girls—especially flexible athletic girls—to be the best lovers. But this lady from Trinidad had me rethinking that assumption. Maybe it was just another one of the after effects of abstinence, but her voodoo mannerisms were now bordering on sensual.

“Would you like to have sex with me?” she asked, taking another sip of her drink. “We could go to my cabin right now.”

Woodrow.

I couldn’t believe how quickly the opportunity had presented itself. “I might be interested in that.”

“Might?”

“Yeah.”

“But not right now?”

“Yeah, not just yet.”

“Okay, well, you think about it and I’ll call you later this week.” She got up and left me at the table, alone with my thoughts.

My cabin phone rang at 8:00 p.m. two days later.

“Hi, it’s me,” she said. “How are you?”

“I’m good. How are you?” I responded.

“Good, good. Are you ready to do what we talked about the other night?” she asked, wasting no time on idle chit-chat...

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A finalist in the Global eBook Awards, this is a behind-the-scenes look at cruise ships in a way that's never been done before. Some of the stories are shocking, some are enlightening, but most are just laugh-out-loud entertaining. This tour behind those "Crew Only" doors will reveal:

- How romance on a cruise ship is unlike anywhere else
- The insane things passengers do
- Why alcohol is mandatory at sea
- How nude cruises compare to Christian cruises
- A first-hand account of damage from getting caught in a hurricane

Jay Herring was an American senior officer and one of the few who had physical access to the entire ship.

He's appeared on: The O'Reilly Factor, USA Today, Anderson Cooper 360, CNN, CNN International, Fox News, CNBC, CTV, The Associated Press, The Washington Post, ABC's Nightline, CBS This Morning, Geraldo Rivera, The Huffington Post, The Daily Beast, and Frommers.

The Truth About Cruise Ships – A Cruise Ship Officer Survives the Work, Adventure, Alcohol, and Sex of Ship Life Details

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Terri Sabol says

Fast and easy (just like the characters) read. As someone who likes to cruise, I found it fascinating, although the stories became very repetitive. He did try to give a little background to various behind the scene cruise topics (deck plans, excursions, meals, dry docks, etc)in addition to his personal escapades.

R says

Some interesting insight, though not as in depth as I had hoped. Cruised once in my life, probably won't again though not because of this book, it just isn't my type of vacation.

Dee Renee Chesnut says

This book was recommended to me by another passenger on a cruise ship.

This starts as an interesting memoir by a 28-year old man who decides an 8-month contract with Carnival Cruises is a better option for someone with an I/S resume than continuing to live with his parents when he loses his job and has not found another on land. The culture of working where you live and being on-call even when you are drunk deteriorates into anecdotes that might begin with, "I was so wasted when..." I recommend it to people who enjoy reading gossip about people they don't know.

Megankellie says

As an ex crew member, he captures why you would never ever ever ever want to go back on the ship. As another friend of mine said "well, I know I won't have to be homeless. i will always have a last resort." He also captures what happens to dudes on the ship, which is generally deeply upsetting and unsavory if you are a female used to guys who are fun and nice and good to talk to. Get ready for an uneasy, sleazy objectification catalog, which is totally real and gross. I once heard a cruise director who looked like Dobby, but wider, tell the on board comedian that he should date a waitress because they work so much they'll just want to do it and go to sleep, and as an added bonus, they'll go away. Early. Lots of dudes I know came off the ship with a wife. Not the ladies. Quite a mindfrock for ladies raised with feminism and "don't feel like you have to be barbie!!!" As the saying went/goes: "shiiiiiiip liiiiiiiife"

Robin says

Sorry, I can't help myself...

I'm not proud but I finished it. Some of the behind-the-scenes reporting was interesting but the author gave a little bit of TMI regarding his escapades with sex and drinking.

Leonel says

I am going to be on a cruise in a week so when I saw this book in my TBR pile, I just started reading it. I wish I could say that I learned a lot from it, factually, but I didn't. This book is more a memoir, but something in it felt not too personal, and on the "fact" side, I felt that a lot of the information were cut and paste from a Wikipedia page. I felt not an ounce of passion from his writing.

<http://luhathoughts.blogspot.com/2014...>

Lisa Stone says

This book should have been entitled "The Author's Two Years of Debauchery as a Cruise Ship Employee." While Mr. Herring did paint a very vivid picture of what it is like to work on a cruise ship, he also included a lot of graphic detail about his own sexual escapades (and there are many). By the end of the book, I got his point that cruise ship employees live in a bubble unlike anywhere else in the world and engage in binge drinking and sex to pass the time -- a largely unhealthy environment -- and that Mr. Herring's decision to leave ship life after two years of this lifestyle was the best thing he could do. However, this point could have easily been made without the play-by-play of his sexual encounters. Also, the structure and format of the book was quite odd -- much of each chapter had very little to do with the chapter title itself. It was just a free-flowing narrative of the author's two years at sea.

Perhaps the best sections of this book are when he reads from his own real-time journal of being on a ship during a hurricane and when he explains how "dry dock" works (when ships are taken to a shipyard for overhaul, maintenance, and repair). He does a good job of explaining how cruise ships turn things around in just a scant few hours between the end of one cruise and the beginning of the next.

I listened to this book as an audiobook, which was read by the author. That probably made a bad book even worse. If you're interested in learning about being a cruise passenger, this book is probably not for you, as the author states up front. He does provide a lot of general information about ships themselves and a scant bit of info about some of the ports. The majority of this book is about his experience as a Carnival employee and the view seen from the crew areas of ships. If you daydream of cruise ship employment, this is probably a must-read.

Liz says

A behind-the-scene look at the life of cruise ship employees told by a real life jerk.

I saw him being interviewed earlier this year when the Carnival cruise ship broke down - his inner jerk was not present for the interview but was present throughout this awful book.

Simon Howard says

Herring gives an account of working as an IT officer onboard a number of cruise ships. He talks a little about his job, though these sections quickly become repetitive as he describes the same processes on several ships. He tries a bit of amateur anthropology as well, drawing conclusions as earth-shattering as discovering that people from the same country tend to stick together, as do those with the same job. But, perhaps surprisingly, the bulk of this book is about his sex life.

In fact, he times a number of the sexual encounters and reports their length to the second. As someone reading to find out about what it's like to work on a cruise ship, I can honestly say that I have no interest in the fact that his sexual encounter with a youth counsellor from South Africa lasted only 91 seconds, nor that his encounter with a Lithuanian lasted two minutes and three seconds. Frankly, I'm amazed that anyone was interested enough to publish these sections!

There is also a frankly bizarre chapter on booking cruises which appears to have been sponsored by a cruise provider, but isn't clearly marked as such, which is a bit disappointing.

I don't want to give the impression that this book is all bad. I did make it to the end of the book. There are some revealing insights in there. There are a few moments of humour. But my overall impression was one of this being a deeply bizarre and flawed book. The content could probably be edited and re-worked into a reasonable feature for a Sunday newspaper magazine - but in its current form, I really don't feel able to recommend this book.

Kristy Nash says

Enjoyable read

I enjoyed this book; it's an easy read. My husband and I have cruised a lot and I was aware of the crew bar which a lot of my friends did not know about.

My liver was hurting just reading about all the drinking!

Gretchen says

The book gives a little insight into what goes on behind the scenes. The crew works about 8 months straight without a day off, then gets 4 months to recuperate. This book will not persuade, nor dissuade you from going on a cruise. The title pretty well sums up the content of the book.

Alisa Kester says

The author did warn his readers in the beginning about all the drinking that would happen during this book, so I can't really complain about that. I just wish there had been a little more to it, *besides* the drinking. And oh yeah, the sex. Made me think that when I finally go on a cruise, I'm going to check into the employee

regulations first, and find one of the lines he spoke of that has stricter controls on their staff. Who wants to be stuck on a ship where all the staff is either drunk, sleeping one off, or hungover?

There were a few useful/interesting tidbits, but they were far and few between.

Brian Haddad says

The author is intelligent, but his writing is plain and simple. He offers his honest thoughts on life as an employee living and working on a cruise ship. If you are curious about what he has to say, I highly recommend you check out this book.

Interspersed throughout you will find funny stories and interesting takes on events in his life. I laughed out loud at least a couple of times during each chapter.

Kim says

Any insight to be gained via the anecdotes in this book are not worth putting up with the jerk author's POV. I'm not sure he even had a professional editor, as there were several grammatical and spelling errors. To sum up- gross.

Julien Chen says

The thing that jumps out pretty early on is that it's well written in my opinion, the author seems to have natural talent. The praise stops there. My God, as a previous cruise ship crew member myself for a few years I'm pretty annoyed about how bad he has made cruise ship employees seem. We're not sex maniacs at all, no one is stalking the passengers waiting to mount them, no one is drunk round the clock and work actually gets done. This fantasy could really have put a lot of people off cruising and off working onboard a ship which is a real shame because both of these are potentially living changing experiences. Also it's pretty self deprecating, I applaud anyone who can admit that they are as bad at sex as he is. I'm glad I read it but any realities detailed in this book have died with the cruise industry of the 90's
