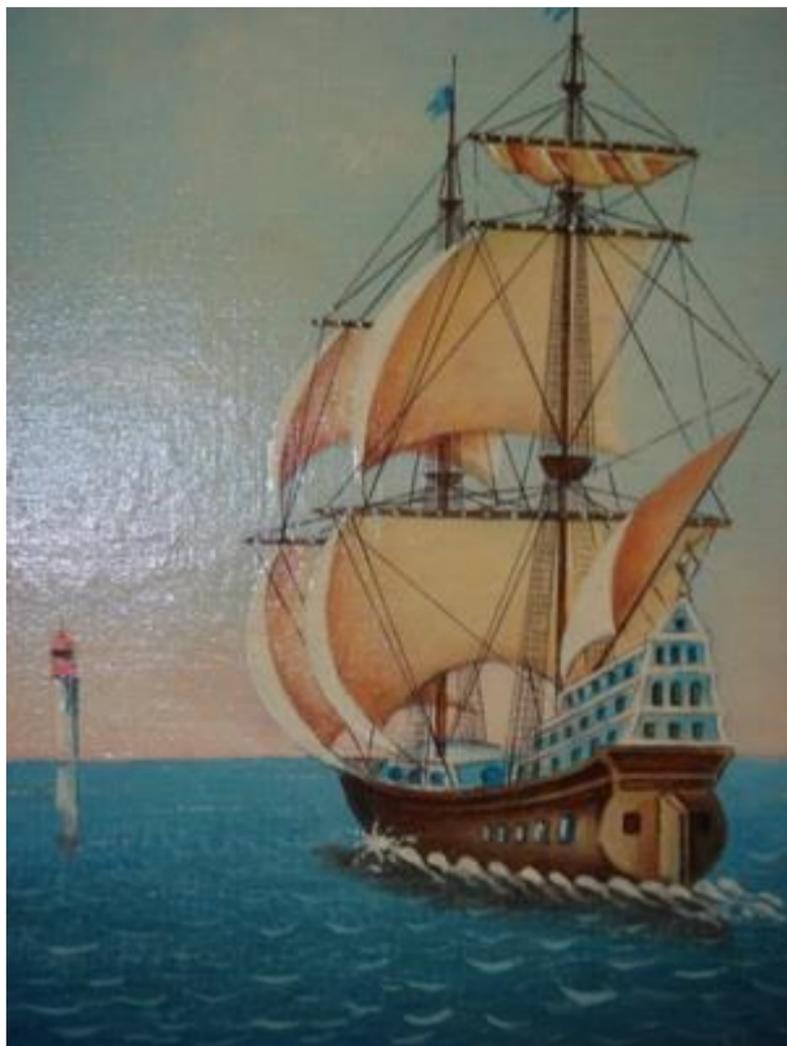


W. Wolmer
DAMNED VOYAGE



PREFACE

Dear readers! Everything described in this book happened in my life.

I tried to describe as honestly as possible events. For what? To dispel the halo romance behind which stern everyday life hides those, who have dedicated their lives to the sea.

Author

DAMNED VOYAGE

This time it all started without the usual troubles that accompany sending a sailor on a voyage – to go many times to crewing companies, humiliatingly ask young girls to be registered because I am a specialist, to give money.

– Hello? I need mister Vlad.

– Yes, it's me. I am listening to you.

– This is a crewing company «Globus». An electrician is urgently needed for the ship. Do you agree?

– What kind the ship?

- A seventy-one thousand-ton bulk carrier.
- How old is she?
- Fourteen.
- With cranes or without?
- Without. Panamax.
- How mach salary?
- Eighteen hundred.
- How long is the contract?
- Nine plus minus one.
- What kind of crew?
- Engineers and navigators from Ukraine, other Filipinos. Captain Greek.
- I'm only at home for three weeks. I want to be more.
- We urgently need to notify the company of your consent. You have two hours to think.
- Well, in two hours I will give the answer. I hung up. My wife was standing behind me.
- What, they call again?
- Yes.
- You haven't unhooked from the previous voyage yet. Tell them you're not ready. What got sick. Let them unhook.
- They will detach, but then I will have to crawl in front of them to find a place. Can keep half a year on shore.
- And let. Although you stay at home.
- Yes, but we need to pay for the education of our

guys, and in the future they need to earn something. For the same apartment for example. After all, the eldest son already has a girlfriend, she said.

– Yes, he has. But it is still unknown how it will end.

– We know what. And we need to be prepared for that. I don't want my son to wait for the apartment as long as I waited. Especially now, when the apartments not given.

– Or maybe he will find such a job where the apartment will be given.

– They give only to militiamen. Everyone else has to earn money for the apartment themselves. To police and to militiamen.

– How is it? What do the police have to do with this?

– Straight. Nothing is taken from anything, everything is obtained only by labor. If someone was given an apartment for free, it only means that someone paid twice as much as their own. And who can buy an apartment now? Either a sailor or a criminal.

– You've gone too far. After all, there is power.

– Power is an opportunity to dispose of other people's lives and property with impunity. Remember this and tell it to the children in class. Let them go to power, not to sailors. Then they will have money and apartments. Subtracting and dividing is much easier than adding and multiplying.

- They will grow up
- They will understand if God gave them reason.

But we're not about that. Do you intend to accept the offer?

– I have a choice only theoretically. Practically – no.

– You will lose your health and no one will need that money. You will bring everything to the doctors.

– Yes, it is very possible. But maybe lucky. And do not forget that every year it will be harder for me to go to sea. I'm already fifty.

– I remember, that's why I'm worried. But do as you know. We really need money. And the eldest will get married as soon as you leave. He's just afraid to tell you. I can feel it.

– Then everything converges and this offer is very timely. I accept her. Everything was decided. Everything is so that I have nowhere to go. And what about the fact that I stay at home for another month? You will still need to go more than once.

An hour and a half later the call again.

– Hello...

– This is a crewing company «Global». I need mister Vlad.

– Yes, it's me.

– Do you accept the offer?

– Yes, I accept.

– Are your documents in order?

– Yes.

– Then tomorrow at ten o'clock be with documents at us.

– I have a request for you. Please prepare a photocopy of the contract so that I can read it before signing.

– Well, it's possible.

– Goodbye.

– Goodbye.

That's all. You need to slowly collect things. I slowly pulled out from under the sofa my true suitcase with the inscription «MARLBORO» on the sides. Great thing for travel. When folded, it is no different from others, but if you dissolve the side «zippers», it grows to a height of almost a meter. In addition, it is equipped with wheels.

The next day I showed up at eleven o'clock to crewing. Checking the documents did not reveal anything that did not allow me to go on the voyage. I also liked the draft contract. It stated the number of working hours and hours of rest, compensation for damage to health and personal belongings, and even the fact that I was entitled to a day off. Later, I never encountered this point in other contracts. The director of crewing invited me to his office.

– Hello. Please sit down.

– I sat down.

– I reviewed the folder with your data. You have

proven yourself well in previous voyages. This time The Greek company asks to send an experienced specialist. It's a little alarming. The previous electrician was sent home two months later as inexperienced, although he had already flown twice and had good reviews. There is something wrong. The Greeks don't tell me much, but I'm not married the first day, and I understand more than they tell me. I do not doubt you as an experient, but please be careful, because most likely the captain of the ship is a sharp man.

The chief of the walkie-talkie will also go with you. Radio officer. He is from another town and will arrive tomorrow. Tomorrow you will meet with him and tomorrow at twelve o'clock the contract will be signed and you will receive travel documents. At the same time and get acquainted with your voyage companion. Did you understand everything? Questions?

– There are no questions, everything is more than clear. You could do it

tell me earlier.

– Then you would not agree to go on this ship.

– So it's true.

– See you tomorrow.

– See you tomorrow.

So that's it! The captain of this ship is a tyrant. Crazy captain. I'm great. This means that I will have to spend the remnants of nerves that I still have. And this

is the right way to a hospital bed. It is necessary to think carefully about possible options for misunderstandings in relations with the captain. And what can I really do? According to the terms of the contract, I must silently carry out everything that is ordered. In any case, I'm a loser. Crewing just covered his ass with my persona. I have to cast a shadow over Crewing company reputation.

«You must be honored with this» as they said at the Union. One can only hope for the support of the «white» members of the ship's crew. And what are they? Well, everything is in God's hands. Give up? It is possible. But these are unpredictable problems for the future, and I am no longer a «young man». In addition, I have given my word and it obliges me to keep it. The next day I met my voyage companion. Oleg. Radio officer. All life at sea. Medium-sized brunette, thirty-five years old. Fifteen years of difference is too much for our like-minded relationship. Signed contracts. All. All bridges were burned back.

Just a few seemingly ordinary pieces of paper completely change a person's status. A moment ago you were a free man and suddenly you became someone's property, you became a slave. According to the teachings of Karl Marx, there are two types of slavery – forced slavery (captivity, sale, etc.) and its highest degree – voluntary slavery. You give up this and that, and instead commit to doing whatever your master tells

you to do. If you get sick – go home. The company only pays if you need to pull a tooth. Do not treat, but only snatch. And only if you are very «lucky» – you lose an arm or a leg, or die, then the company will shell out and make some payments, but only after you can prove in court that you did it through no fault of your own. Strange state after signing the contract – you understand everything, but there is nowhere to go. It feels like you have become a rag and wiped your feet. Probably the same feels a frog that goes to the mouth of a snake. And why are you doing all this? For the sake of the family. An ancient law – if a penny disappeared in one pocket, it increased in another. Nothing disappears anywhere. If I want a little more in my pocket, I have to give part of my life for it. I will spend the next nine months in an iron barrel in the middle of the ocean. There is a plus in the contract. This is an opportunity to travel around the planet and you get paid for it. You have the opportunity to compare life in your country and in others. You can also communicate with many people from different cultures, with different levels of development.

The director of the agency shook our hands and said:

– I'm sure you won't let me down, you guys have already been beaten.

Mister Vlad will be the senior. He is an employee of the shipping office and knows the business. You are

leaving today at 8 pm by minibus from the square near the Opera House to Kyiv. Seats are already paid. Here are the travel documents: a ship's application in four copies, a waybill with the phones of managers in Tel Aviv and a letter of guarantee from the company. Tickets have already been ordered in Boryspil for your names. Come with these documents to the box office number eight and get tickets. Departure to Vienna at eight thirty in the morning. Tickets in Vienna are also booked. Receive immediately upon arrival. Departure from Vienna at eleven forty. At three o'clock you will be in Tel Aviv. There you will be met and taken to the port of Haifa where the ship is. The ship is called «Ivannis». When you receive your tickets in Boryspil, call me immediately so that I know that everything is fine. Questions?

– No. As usual.

– Then do not waste time, you already have little.

Good by.

I took the papers, reviewed them, and put them in a folder with other documents. We left the company's premises.

– Oleg, do you know the place where the bus leaves?

– Yes, I already left here.

– Then until the evening.

I arrived home at three o'clock in the afternoon.

– Well, are you leaving tomorrow?