

The Story Of A Sea-Going Ingrate

JOHN J. SYNON

In unguarded moments, I find I am prone to tell tales of a day gone by. And whenever I do, some joker says I should write 'em not talk 'em.

But I don't know. Who would believe that stuff?

Who would believe, for instance, there once was a Seaman's Institute on Decatur Street, there in New Orleans, a place a beached young salt could get a bed for 15c; a magnificent place to loaf away the late, sultry evenings of New Orleans in August?

Who would believe it possible, so late as the 30s, that a horse-and-wagon could drive up to a seaman's bethel, at three in the morning, and who would believe a huge, gold braided Chief Engineer could put down the reins, crawl off, drunk as a lord, in search of a Black Gang for his engine room?

It happened, and I was all the crew he could get.

Scotty was 6'6", about 40, then, and some 250 pounds of knuckles. That, of course, was why he was driving the wagon. Vieux Carre cab drivers knew Scotty, sober, and they knew him, drunk. So, as there was never any question of their refusing him a ride up from the piers, so there was never any question of their riding him back. And since, with the witching hour, Scotty's legs always came unstuck, he had to manage transportation, somehow. What to do?

Simple. Go to the nearby French Market, strike up a friendship with some unsuspecting, wagon-driving farmer, drink him drunk, toss him in the back of his own wagon and — voila! There was transportation for the evening.

That was Scotty's original, ingenious, and unfailing method of getting back aboard after an evening on the town. That is what he did this night and that is how it was I who answered his plea to sign on. That wasn't the reason I agreed to go with him, it was the bottle he waved, that was the reason.

Scotty, I learned, has just brought his ship from the Mobile boneyard and since the crew that had ridden her over had come on a one-way ticket, once they got her docked they had taken the cushions back to Mobile. And Scotty was left alone, doubling in brass, Watchman-Chief Engineer, Some Watchman. Some Engineer.

It is about four miles, as I remember, from the Institute to where Scotty's old 12-knot tub-of-rust was moored and those four miles took some time to navigate; me, Scotty, the straw-hatted horse, the dead-to-the-world farmer, and the bottle. But we made it.

I voted to head for the fore-castle and the bunk, but Scotty felt duty bound, first, to see how his fires were doing.

The fires were doing pretty good, as it turned out. Only trouble, the water in the boilers had all turned to steam — Scotty had been gone for hours, too many hours — and she was about to blow.

Scotty would have stood by in any event, I am confident; he had moxie. Drunk, it was a breeze. Working within a pound pressure of being blown to bits, the two of us shut her down, eased her off — and in the morning I had job.

"Boy, you saved my life."

Scotty told me a million times, once we got the cobwebs cleared.

But, you know, Scotty was an ingrate.

I found that out on the way to Tampa. I was off duty at the time, "riding the rail", dreaming, watching the spindrift and the porpoises at play.

Porpoises are graceful things, and I got to wondering what their leader would do if I cracked him with a one-inch nut; I wondered if I could break his bobbing rhythm. There was a two-pound coffee-can full of such nuts, I knew, just inside the porthole at my elbow. So, I found out.

I suppose my bull's eyes had made that dolphin rear a dozen times — I had a good arm, once — and was having the time of my life cracking him when I spied the Chief Engineer, there on the bridge, behind me.

"Very good," he said, "throw 'em all; I'm counting; they're costing you fourteen cents apiece".

What an ingrate.

I quit when we got to Tampa. But who would believe a story like that.

December 15 Deadline for Coast Guard Cadet Applications

Eligible young men are reminded that Dec. 15, 1966 is the deadline for submitting applications to compete for appointment as a Coast Guard Cadet.

The 91st annual competition for admission to the Coast Guard Academy at New London, Conn., will begin with the Dec. 3, 1966 administration of the College Entrance Examination Board

Tests. Appointments are made solely on a competitive basis, with no Congressional appointments or geographical quotas. Application deadline for the tests is Nov. 1, 1966.

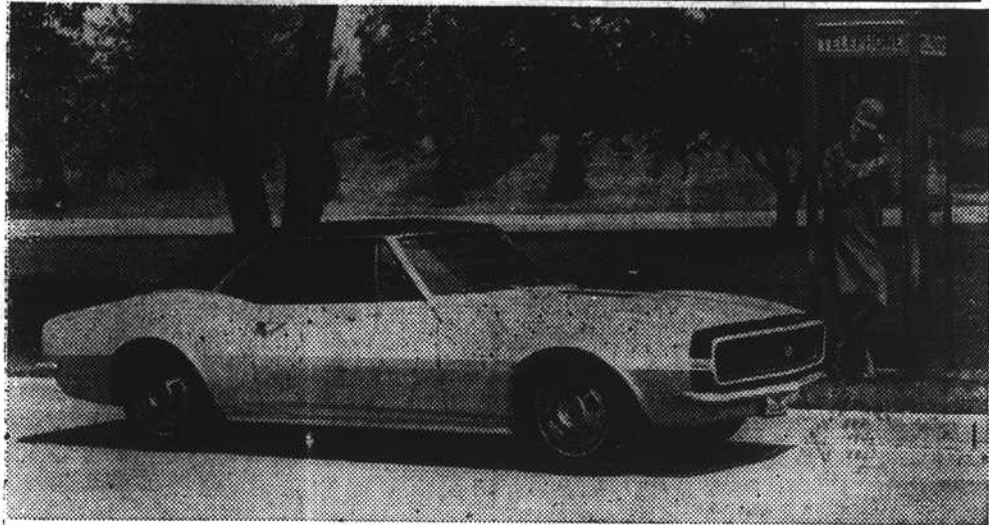
An applicant must be an unmarried high school senior or graduate who has reached his 17th but not his 22nd birthday by July 1, 1967. Applicants must have earned 15 units by June 30,

1967, including the following units: Three in English, two in algebra, and one in plane geometry. Applicants must be in excellent physical condition, between 64 and 78 inches in height, with proportionate weight, and have at least 20/30 in each eye, correctable to 20/20.

Additional information and application forms can be obtained from high school guidance counselors or by writing to the Director of Admissions, Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn., 06320.

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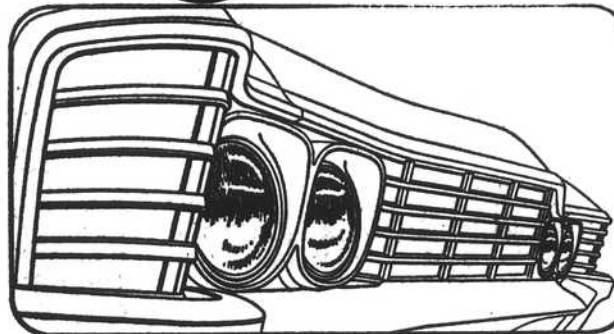
The all new CAMARO will be built in sport coupe and convertible models (Super Sport shown above). The Camaro line incorporates many sprightly options that include concealed headlamps behind a lattice grille which opens and closes when lights are turned on and off, plus a hood with simulated louvers and a wide "bumble bee" paint band on the nose. A 350-cu.-inch V8 engine is used in the Super Sport version of the CAMARO.

'67 Chevrolet

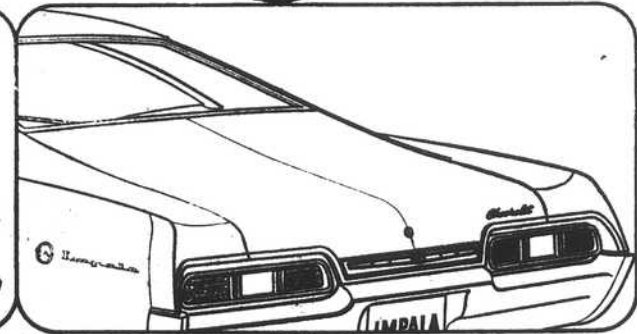
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