



The party was fun. But it's over. And sometimes the morning after costs more than the fun did the night before.

# The Party's O

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**W**hile going through A-school, I was a section leader in my barracks. One Friday night, I was sitting in my room playing cards with some buddies when the fire watch came in. He told me his relief was drunk and in no shape to assume the watch. I looked at the watch bill and saw that his relief was my former roommate.

This young man was ahead of me in school and was very sharp. He, like me, was slated to go to Advanced First Term Avionics, or AFTA. This school would get us our first crow, and make us third-class petty officers. I couldn't believe this guy was drunk. I thought maybe he was just sick.

As soon as we got in his room, I could smell the booze. I tried to wake up the Sailor but couldn't stir him. I could let him sleep it off and use a super to fill the

watch, or turn him in. I had only a few minutes to make a decision.

All the time, I was trying to figure out the right thing to do. Would it be fair to the rest of the duty section to let him slide? I could make him pay for his being drunk with more watches, or something like that. Then the fire watch told me this had happened before. That helped me make up my mind.

Since he was in such a stupor, the Sailor probably should have had a drunk watch on him. However, I didn't have the authority to make that call. I didn't want to be responsible for this guy dying in his rack. I decided to call the duty barracks petty officer (DPO). He was already in his rack and wasn't happy that I woke him up. When I took him to the young Sailor's room, I noticed the DPO brought a broom with him.

Once in the room, the DPO took a mighty swing with the broom and slammed the handle down hard on the bed, just inches from the head of the passed-out sailor. The smack on the mattress was loud and sharp. The Sailor didn't budge. The DPO dropped the broom, and in one quick move,

whisked the Sailor to his feet. Once on his feet, the Sailor's knees buckled, and the DPO started with a verbal onslaught that could wake the dead. He was talking a mile a minute. All I remember hearing was, "Be in my office in three minutes." Then he stormed out of the room.

After seeing what the DPO did, I wondered if I had made the right decision. I took care of the watch in question and tried to talk with the DPO, but got nowhere. I was feeling bad about turning in my friend. Other guys told me that I had done what I had to do and not to worry about it. That was easier

said than done. It would have been so simple to just look the other way and let the sleeping Sailor lay.

Some months later, I moved on to AFTA as a PO3 and ran into the Sailor I had turned in. This was the first time I had seen him since that night. He was still an airman and was cleaning the barracks. We talked, and I learned he had lost his school and was on his way to the fleet. Now I really felt bad. Right before we parted, he surprised me by saying, "Thank you." I couldn't believe he was saying this. He had lost so much; how could he thank me?

He continued by saying that he had always had a drinking problem, but no one had done anything to get him help. He said that I was the only one who had made him face his problem. That's why he was thanking me. He said he now was a much happier person and in control of himself. I had always thought I had destroyed his future, but now I was hearing that what I had really done was give his future back to him.

**After seeing what the duty petty officer did, I wondered if I had made the right decision.**

We all can look back over our lives and remember those people who never held us accountable for our actions. We all have had teachers who let us slide. Did they really do us any favors? When we got to the next level, we had a harder time because we did not have the proper foundation. We've had supervisors who didn't make us learn the ropes, or the right way to do a job. Did they help us get ready for promotion? Even parents who try to make life easier for us sometimes rob us of important lessons.

We can't turn a blind eye to those who appear to have problems and think we are doing them a favor. We can't cover for them and hope for the best. There comes a time when you have to make a decision about what is right or wrong. When that happens, I hope you look past the peer pressure of being a "stand-up guy." ❏