

Character Autobiography

Juror No.8

Solomon Fitzroy

Born in 1926 to an Irish family in New Jersey, Solomon has lived most of his life at sea in the company of men. His father, Ephraim Fitzroy, worked as a welder for the Federal Shipbuilding and Drydock Company throughout the Second World War, while his mother, Eileen, worked as a nurse for the US Coast Guard.

After finishing high school with honours, Solomon enlisted in the Navy Hospital Corps, serving on board various Navy vessels in the Mediterranean and Caribbean. Following the outbreak of war in the Korean peninsula in 1950, he served aboard the light cruiser *Juneau*, one of the ships his father helped build, where he tended to the sick and wounded in multiple instances of naval combat against the North Koreans. Thanks to his reliability, resolve and stern disposition, he reached the rank of Pharmacist's Mate Second Class.

However, despite his distinguished service, Solomon's navy career ended badly when a sexual affair with a senior officer was discovered during shore leave in California. Deemed "unfit for service", the allegations of homosexuality ruined his prospects in the Navy and he received a Blue Discharge in 1952.

Shortly after, he returned to New Jersey and angrily clashed with his parents who could not accept Solomon's sexuality. Feeling utterly rejected, Solomon moved to a small apartment on the corner of 25th Avenue and 86th Street in Gravesend, Brooklyn, where he found a job as an orderly in a care home. Unfortunately, he struggled to adjust to civilian life, and his ever-worsening alcoholism made it hard to hold down a job.

Finally, in late 1954, he moved back to New Jersey and secured a position as a deck officer on a private freighter with the Pan-Atlantic Steamship Corporation operating out of Port Newark. Not wanting to fail yet again, Solomon took his new role seriously and found the discipline and responsibilities of leadership helped give him the power he needed to sober up and get his life back on track. His navy experience and level-headedness made him popular among the crew and earned the respect of the Captain, and he found himself quickly promoted to First Mate.

When not at sea, Solomon ostensibly lives the life of a bachelor, where he spends his free time smoking his pipe while reading contemporary American poetry and hardboiled crime fiction. For the past few years, he has also used his time on shore to volunteer with at-risk young men in Manhattan and New Jersey, as well as leading group therapy sessions for current and recovering alcoholics.