



0. JEROME DAVENPORT - Story Preface

1. WARD OF THE STATE

2. A WALKING PRESSURE COOKER

3. NAVY LIFE

4. JEROME DAVENPORT

5. YOU COME FROM SOMEWHERE

6. ANTWONE TODAY

Antwone Fisher was stationed with the U.S. Navy in Hawaii when he met Lt. Commander Williams. The psychiatrist's office was located in an office building at Pearl Harbor's submarine base on the island of Oahu. In this image, we see a Virginia-class attack submarine, the USS *North Carolina*, as it departs Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam to conduct routine operations. (Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Steven Khor; online via Department of Defense.) This is the type of view Fisher would have seen when he was stationed in the area.

Lieutenant Commander Williams (the inspiration for Denzel Washington's character 'Jerome Davenport' in the film *Antwone Fisher*) was a U.S. Navy psychiatrist. With an office at Pearl Harbor's Submarine Base, Williams was in the right place at the right time.

Fisher, however, wasn't expecting great things from his session with the Lt. Commander who was:

...black, for one thing, a large, bespectacled, middle-aged man who seemed worn down by the navy.

All business, but a bit ruffled in appearance, Fisher's new mentor

...had a much more serious, distant manner. But the thing that really drew my attention was the way he was dressed - like an absentminded professor, his ill-fitting khaki slacks bunched up in his butt and his white doctor's smock too short in length and in the sleeves. (Finding Fish, page 283.)

Displaying no emotion, Williams listened as Fisher told his life story. Since the session with the psychiatrist was NOT intended as the beginning of therapy, Fisher talked:

...this was going to be like a one-night stand. Why not let it all hang out? And I'd be gone in the morning. (Finding Fish, page 284.)

But Dr. Williams instinctively knew he could not let Antwone 'be gone in the morning.' Fisher needed much more than a couple of hours to work through his painful, abuse-filled past.

Forging a relationship with his patient, the Lt. Commander went well beyond the call of duty:

Since the navy didn't authorize him to offer ongoing therapy of this kind, he could only see me officially for one more visit. After that, we met unofficially and sporadically - for walks, coffee, or in the bleachers at a local ball field. Telling my story over a period of almost two years, in this fashion, sometimes with long stretches out at sea in between our talks, I had time to release my anger, slowly and constructively. (Finding Fish, page 284.)

As he traveled at sea, Fisher pondered the one question Commander Williams put to him that mattered the most.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/JEROME-DAVENPORT-Antwone-Fisher>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/JEROME-DAVENPORT-Antwone-Fisher>



Lt. Commander Williams' Office at Pearl Harbor

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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