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Tom ([00:00](#)):

Please note, the following episode contains mature language.

Leonard ([00:05](#)):

Oh my God. Oh my Lord. So here you go, Leonard Francis, boom. I was thrown into Penang prison.

Tom ([00:16](#)):

Penang Malaysia, 1985.

Tom ([00:20](#)):

Terrified, aged only 21, Leonard Francis, soon to be an integral part of the US Navy is festering in a Malaysian jail. Arrested for his part in an armed robbery. The brick prison is as dank in the 1980s as it was a hundred years earlier with rusted iron bars, peeling paint, and mold stained walls. The stench from open septic tanks where prisoners dumped their effluence permeates the cells. The tropical heat is overbearing.

Leonard ([00:49](#)):

This is a 1800 jail with stone floor, just a blanket. You don't have a mattress. And it's like probably a 10 by 10 or smaller than that. Eight guys in there, seven, eight guys, a bucket of a toilet. You have one little dinky light and a hole in the door. That's it.

Tom ([01:12](#)):

For a middle-class kid never wanting for anything, the mental strain is unbearable. He's crammed up against Kevin Barlow and Brian Chambers, Westerners arrested for heroin trafficking. Foreign media are camping outside as a diplomatic spat brews between Australia and Malaysia. Forgotten now, the pair's gruesome death by hanging was a subject of a Julie Christie film. During fitful sleep, Leonard is pursued by the hangman's noose.

Leonard ([01:41](#)):

The prison experience, it was traumatic because of everything that I went through and saw at such a young tender age.

Tom ([01:51](#)):

Grips by panic, Lennon's mother rushes back from England. With his father, they pull strings to help their son. Worried for his mental health, they get him moved to the prison hospital, but conditions are hardly better.

Leonard ([02:06](#)):

And then I was locked up with all the loonies and [inaudible 00:02:11] and sick.

Tom ([02:14](#)):

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Leonard seems to find his troubled past a source of amusement rather than shame. I can't help but see it as the same devil may care impulse that drove him to get involved in an armed robbery without a second thought or to embark on a career to corrupt the US Navy.

Leonard ([02:30](#)):

I think every Thursday, everybody who has a sentence, who has a corporal punishment, they get whipped. So after they whip, they come to the prison infirmary and put the [inaudible 00:02:43] in your butts. They start screaming, ahh... It chops into you, it's like cutting, slicing into you.

Tom ([02:52](#)):

Leonard was fearful for his life and grasping for anything to give him sucker.

Leonard ([02:57](#)):

I was praying and praying and say, "God give me a chance. Give me a chance."

Tom ([03:03](#)):

It was a Hindu holy day and a procession of devotees we're burning incense to their Gods.

Leonard ([03:10](#)):

It was like maybe two, three in the morning, I smell the incense. And this is the truth, the incense from a temple that was miles and miles away, it came into my prison, into my lockup.

Tom ([03:28](#)):

Near a breaking point, Leonard took it as a sign of divine intervention.

Leonard ([03:33](#)):

It was like a spirit, spirit of God, whether it was the Hindu God or what God, it came upon me.

Tom ([03:41](#)):

Then, after two weeks of anguish, Leonard was taken for sentencing. His mother, who had abandoned him, running from her abusive husband to England. Her maternal instinct fired by despair that her son was about to be hung, appears at his sentencing and pleads with the judge.

Leonard ([03:58](#)):

I think I was just so lucky. So my mother took the stand and mitigated and said, my son's a good boy, he was misled, misguided from friends. And she did a little crying on the stand. And I was lucky. I was blessed. I was fined like 20,000 for the guns and the bullets. And then I was let loose.

Tom ([04:23](#)):

In his mind, God performs a miracle, and like many people who have cheated death, Leonard, from this moment on, would fear nothing. I'm Tom Wright. And this is Fat Leonard, a podcast from Project Brazen. I've spent this past year talking to Leonard Francis who is now in detention in San Diego about his extraordinary life. In this episode, we're going to see how a young man from a shipping family, fresh off

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death row, starts doing business with the US Navy. And, in no time at all, becomes Leonard the legend to admirals and petty officers alike. We'll explore how Leonard made his fortune on the back of America's military expansion after the Gulf War and even more so following September the 11th. The US has pulled out of Afghanistan after spending \$1 trillion trying to rebuild that country. Leonard was a direct beneficiary of the forever wars. He was enterprising, but he thrived in a strange time. One in which the US feared for its very existence and military spending ran unchecked.

There isn't a how to book about becoming a contractor to the US Navy in a foreign land. It's a dirty secret in the Navy that its reliance on all kinds of shady characters to get the provisions it needs in far-flung corners of the world. After prison, Leonard saw an opening. The US Navy was building its presence in Malaysia, but no one had a permanent contract to supply the ships. Through his family's connections, he finagled invites to July 4th and other celebrations of the US embassy and he turned up a gregarious 300 pound presence in an ill-fitting suit and bad tie.

Leonard ([06:14](#)):

There was like this circle of Independent Day receptions where I used to go get invited and go and meet all these different [inaudible 00:06:24] introductions.

Tom ([06:28](#)):

Behind this facade of success, Leonard was struggling. After prison, he'd set up in a Chinese shop house, his office out front and a bedroom in the back. One night, a cobra slid over Leonard while he was sleeping. Leonard was busy sidling up to board officers and their wives like he was some personal concierge service extending invites to the best dinner spots in town or hooking them up with a sought after tailor.

Leonard ([06:56](#)):

They didn't demand for corruption, but they were entertained heavily by me. They were given gifts. They're always taken out, wined and dined, fine dining.

Tom ([07:08](#)):

Soon, Leonard got his first US Navy commission; to supply fresh food to the USS San Bernardino, a tank landing ship that had seen action in the Vietnam War. It was a minnow compared to an aircraft carrier, but it was a start. A high court overturned his acquittal and Leonard ended up doing another year in jail. But once out, he kept on working for the US Navy. You might think that the US Navy with its \$20 billion aircraft carriers, a professional officer class and Pacific headquarters in Hawaii would have no need for small operators like Leonard. But when pulling into a remote port, the Navy was just as dependent on the local help as the Clippers of yesteryear. In Navy lingo, suppliers like Leonard are actually called husbanding agents. In the past, the husband was a colloquial term for the master of a shipyard.

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:08:04]

Tom ([08:00](#)):

The husband was a colloquial term for the master of a shipyard. A damaged ship needed her husband. And often they were just like Leonard, mom and pop shops with connections to the local police and port mafia. Here's David Kapaun, a Navy officer who knew Leonard well.

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David ([08:19](#)):

Yeah, well, he was one of these husbanding agents, which is a necessary evil for the US Navy. He was probably one of the more unique husbanding agents in that he was gregarious and acted like an American and that seemed to endear him to Navy people.

Tom ([08:37](#)):

David has just been released from 18 months in jail due to his dealings with Leonard. We'll hear in a later episode how he's furious about the leniency shown to admirals who dealt with Leonard, but for all this, David's still in awe of the man's skills.

David ([08:54](#)):

US Navy does very well at sea. In port, they're kind of left at the mercy of people like Leonard to get things for them. So, yeah, the Navy supply officers and commanding officers appreciated that he was a go-getter.

Tom ([09:10](#)):

A sometimes overbearing presence, Leonard would wattle down the ladders of ships into the engine rooms and supply offices to trade gossip. He'd grown up on the docks and was just as comfortable with officers as with enlisted men. He knew how sailors on the Navy ships, just like in the commercial world, wanted their cut.

Leonard ([09:29](#)):

Shipping is full of corruption. You got to pay everybody off to get the business. So we would give cuts to the captain. Give commissions to the chief steward, the guy that receives the stuff, and he kind of puts the orders out. So everyone gets a cut and percentage.

Tom ([09:46](#)):

For Leonard, this point is crucial. It's going to be his justification for the events that unfold in our story. Like many fraudsters, he sees himself as purely transactional. He didn't invent corruption in shipping. It always has been and always will be a dirty game. Leonard was on the way up.

Tom ([10:09](#)):

Washington DC, 1991.

Dick Cheney ([10:13](#)):

Well, the Philippines, from a strategic standpoint, are important.

Tom ([10:17](#)):

Defense secretary, Dick Cheney, speaking to the Congressional Foreign Affairs Committee, faced a difficulty. The Philippines was threatening to throw the US out of its historic Naval base at Subic Bay.

Dick Cheney ([10:29](#)):

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One of the problems you quickly run into as secretary of defense is finding places where forces can train. We do a lot of that in the Philippines out of Clark and out of Subic.

Tom ([10:41](#)):

Subic Bay was home to thousands of troops, a ship repair facility, supermarkets, bowling alleys, and bars. When ships came back from months at sea, it was a great spot for sailors to relax. But now suddenly, the Navy was looking at other places in Asia for refueling, ship maintenance and R&R. Leonard was ready to pounce.

And so by this time, Subic Bay has closed down and the need for someone like you is getting bigger.

Leonard ([11:09](#)):

Yes. Yeah, it was growing, and they needed places to go to. So Bali was a spot that they wanted to go to.

Tom ([11:18](#)):

With its sandy beaches and famous surf, the Indonesian tourist island of Bali was a perfect spot for R&R, but there was no proper pier for large craft. The husbanding agent was an Indonesian woman who ran a yacht charter business, and she helped the Navy on the side.

Leonard ([11:34](#)):

Bali was like a little cartel.

Tom ([11:38](#)):

She paid turtle fishermen, poor bedraggled men, to sail out to the US Navy boats. And sailors climbed aboard using ladders thrown over the edge of their ships. It was an age old practice, but quite dangerous. In 1990, 21 sailors had drowned in Israel when the boat transferring them back to their aircraft carrier overturned in rough waters.

So the Navy battle groups were being provisioned by turtle hunting boats?

Leonard ([12:07](#)):

Well, water taxis, yeah. I mean, they had mom and pop operations.

Tom ([12:12](#)):

Leonard took a risk. He partnered with a local firm that was close to Indonesia's military dictator, and then he invested his own money to build a pier on government land. He needed to pay off all kinds of local politicians and bureaucrats for permits.

Leonard ([12:30](#)):

Boom. I opened Bali up. We started having close to 10 ship visits a month, and Bali started to be one of the hottest port of calls in the Pacific.

Tom ([12:41](#)):

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No one else was offering what he did in a faraway corner of the globe. He was learning about the power of monopoly, and he started to charge hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Leonard ([12:51](#)):

And it was very profitable because when the ships came in, back in those days, we made a very good profit out of the port visits. We did everything for them, from the food to the fuel, to the transportation, to the port's protection.

Tom ([13:08](#)):

Leonard was also a useful buffer, paying bribes to local authorities and allowing the US Navy to operate effectively.

That's gotten you a reputation with the US for achieving something that was useful to them and-

Leonard ([13:22](#)):

Yes, making things work.

Tom ([13:23](#)):

... making things work. And, also, as you said last time, you're the one that dealt with all the corruption.

Leonard ([13:27](#)):

Everybody, hand me outs, I am the bag man basically. I take care of all the dirt because there's so much of dirt there.

Tom ([13:37](#)):

Singapore, 1994.

Tom ([13:42](#)):

Leonard was establishing himself, a military contractor and confidence trickster. He'd figured out how to tap into the gusher of US defense spending. And like Jordan Belfort, the Wolf of Wall Street, he knew how to splash it around. He moved to Singapore, where the US Navy had a base, rented an old whitewash colonial bungalow and began to throw legendary parties. He didn't hold wars against a target, but there was this.

I read somewhere that you chew on glass as a party piece. Is that true?

Leonard ([14:15](#)):

Oh, yeah. Well, that's kind of my little party trick. I'm good at that. I've kind of mastered chewing wineglass, champagne glass, over the years. What I can do... I mean, I don't know how I do it, but it's like my mouth has become like Kevlar.

Tom ([14:35](#)):

Imagine Leonard, barely 30, chewing glass, surrounded by beautiful women and US Navy officers as waiters fill everyone's glasses with Dom Perignon.

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How do you go about procuring women for a party like that and hiring them?

Leonard ([14:50](#)):

Oh, we have a little network. We have a network of these all executive use, high-end. These girls rotate with the rich and famous. So they go out with all the tycoons, the royalty. Some of them are mistresses to very rich tycoons and aboard just want to have a little fun. So they just slide out and come and just look for some part-time boyfriends to bang with.

Tom ([15:21](#)):

I guess they were quite expensive, right?

Leonard ([15:23](#)):

Oh, yeah.

Tom ([15:24](#)):

[crosstalk 00:15:24] charging.

Leonard ([15:24](#)):

Yes, yes.

Tom ([15:26](#)):

Leonard hired beautiful women as representatives of Glenn Defense Marine Asia, or GDMA, his new company. Dressed in revealing outfits, these women waited on piers as Navy boats arrived and took care of officer's needs. Blake [Hertzinger 00:15:42], then a US Navy officer, remembers a fellow sailor telling him about the bacchanal that began as soon as a ship hit a port controlled by Leonard.

Blake Hertzinger ([15:51](#)):

They pull in, they tie up, they step off the pier, and Leonard is standing there waiting for the captain with a set of keys for a luxury car sitting out front, brand new Mercedes. Walks out with him, pops the trunk and the trunks full of top-shelf liquor.

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:16:04]

Blake Hertzinger ([16:00](#)):

Walks out with him, pops the trunk and the trunk's full of top shelf liquor.

Tom ([16:05](#)):

At the ensuing parties, often in restaurants of five star hotels, Leonard was a larger than life presence. He would take over the microphone and croon Elvis songs as a crowd of inebriated Navy officers joined in. He made people feel like they were part of an exclusive crowd.

Leonard ([16:25](#)):

Love Me Tender is one of my favorite. That's for my mom.

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Tom ([16:28](#)):

Can I hear your voice?

Leonard ([16:32](#)):

No, I sing a lot from my heart. So I love to sing songs that are very meaningful and I have great memories of when I entertain and I really enjoy doing it. I don't have to pretend or not like doing what I like to do. I'm the kind of person, as you know, I go out of my heart and soul.

Tom ([16:51](#)):

Polite Singaporean society gossiped about this new arrival, a hulking figure in clothes that hung off him at odd angles. Leonard sought to play the role of respected business titan. He joined the prestigious Tanah Merah Golf Club and would take U.S. Navy admirals there, even though he himself didn't play. Leonard tried to settle down, marrying a Filipino woman with whom he had two boys, but he never stopped philandering and the marriage failed. He pursued an Indonesian fashion model.

Leonard ([17:25](#)):

I decided to go. Look at all these models, get excited.

Tom ([17:28](#)):

You met her at a fashion show.

Leonard ([17:30](#)):

Yeah. It's like when you go see Gucci shows, this show, that show. We get the front seat. It's so easy to meet up all the girls.

Tom ([17:40](#)):

The model who became his second wife charmed officers like Steve Barney, a Navy lawyer who met her on a number of occasions.

Steve ([17:47](#)):

These people seemed to be nice people. And when you're dealing with people in foreign countries that seem to understand and value what you do and they're pleasant people to deal with, it makes the job that much easier.

Tom ([17:58](#)):

Leonard learned Navy lingo and could pass for an American. He wore Navy style baseball caps with Glen Marine in silver lettering, stars and stripes neckties. And he had his cell phone ring programed to Lee Greenwood's God Bless the USA. He sponsored Navy balls in Singapore and became part of the U.S. community.

Steve ([18:15](#)):



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He waved that American flag very proudly and really presented himself as one of the greatest advocates for the United States Navy that we could have in that region. And that aspect of his relationship and reputation were undoubtedly valuable to him in developing his business.

Tom ([18:32](#)):

Eventually Leonard had opened a warehouse down on the water, complete with ITS own pier, and he began to do work for a range of bigger U.S. vessels: frigates, destroyers, and cruisers. Ship commanders started to write Bravo Zulu's for Leonard, Navy speak for commendation letters, which he used to secure more contracts. Often he'd return home to his Tony neighborhood in the early hours only to head straight out to work.

Leonard ([18:58](#)):

Because when I ran the business, I worked 20 hours a day and I could never sleep because it's just this mind of mine, it's always thinking. Even as I sit and talk to you, my mind's already thinking 10 years ahead.

Tom ([19:16](#)):

Gulf of Aden Yemen, 2000.

Tom ([19:21](#)):

On the morning of October the 12th, two suicide bombers in a fiberglass boat approached the USS Cole in Aden's Harbor.

Speaker 3 ([19:28](#)):

One week from today, October 12th...

Speaker 4 ([19:30](#)):

Station commanding officer... Suicide bombers...

Speaker 3 ([19:33](#)):

17 sailors died and 39 others...

Speaker 4 ([19:35](#)):

Attacked the destroyer as it refueled.

Leonard ([19:36](#)):

If, as it now appears, this was an act of terrorism, it was a despicable and cowardly act. We will find out who was responsible and hold them accountable.

Speaker 4 ([19:47](#)):

Never heard about these before Osama bin Laden.

Tom ([19:53](#)):

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As the Al Qaeda militants bumped up against the ships port side, they detonated the C4 explosives stashed aboard. 17 sailors died and 37 were injured. Leonard, however, stood to benefit in a major way. That attack, and the events of September the 11th the following year, created a once in a lifetime opportunity for defense contractors.

Steve ([20:18](#)):

It was a wake up call for the Navy that we needed to have a better capability to deal with those type of threats and areas that were outside of ports under military control.

Tom ([20:36](#)):

It's easy to forget the panic in the months and years following September the 11th. I was working back then for the Wall Street Journal in Southeast Asia. We regularly covered attacks by Al Qaeda affiliates on Western targets. Islamists bombed nightclubs in Bali and a Marriott hotel in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. A guy whom I knew from a pickup soccer game lost his legs. Danger was around every corner and the Navy mandated its husbanding contractors to build a floating perimeter around their ships. Nothing like this existed. And Leonard got inventive.

Tom ([21:13](#)):

What's the ring of steel.

Leonard ([21:15](#)):

The ring of steel is the barriers, the steel barriers that protects the ships from the ship borne attack. Like what happened to the Cole.

Tom ([21:24](#)):

He started with a Jerry-rigged solution, purchasing hundreds of 55 gallon drums, the kind used for storing liquids. And he strung them together with cables to create a floating perimeter. GDMA ran patrol boats inside and outside of this secure zone, watching for would-be Al Qaeda attackers. Later, Leonard upgraded to steel barges rigged together with heavy cables.

Tom ([21:46](#)):

They're around the ships in the sea and on the shore?

Leonard ([21:49](#)):

Yes, yes. They stand off like 40, 50 meters offshore. You've got to anchor them down. You need to bring a floating crane. It's a massive operation.

Tom ([21:59](#)):

Some in the Navy weren't taken in.

Bruno ([22:02](#)):

Our office nickname for him was Earthquake, big boy. If they say he is 350 pounds they're being incredibly generous. He would arrive in the office in a chauffeur-driven Mercedes and he was so huge he

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couldn't sit in the passenger seat. He was in the back seat. So part of our office entertainment was watching him emerge from the Mercedes. And then when it was over to try to tuck back in.

Tom ([22:30](#)):

Bruno Wengrowski, a former U.S. Navy contracting officer in Singapore, felt Leonard was always playing angles.

Bruno ([22:37](#)):

He makes you feel included in the conversation, at least when you're engaging with him one on one, but you really have to keep your guard up.

Tom ([22:46](#)):

Right, because he's trying to get something.

Bruno ([22:49](#)):

Yep.

Tom ([22:50](#)):

I know what Bruno is saying. In my hours of talking to Leonard, I felt the same way. And as I've said before, we need to be on guard. What's he trying to get from us? During one aircraft carrier visit to Malaysia, Bruno balked at the \$680,000 that Leonard proposed to charge to erect a protective barrier on land, basically 40 foot high containers, stacked three high. Bruno knocked his price down by two thirds.

Bruno ([23:18](#)):

When I'd have face to face meetings with him, he would say, "I know you don't like me." And I would say, "Leonard, it's not a case of liking you. I find you very entertaining and you really have your heart in the right place to try to take care of the fleet. But I think you overcharge and I trust you as far as I can throw you."

Tom ([23:36](#)):

Leonard needed allies, people who would insure the Navy didn't ask too many questions like pesky, Bruno Wengrowski. He found such an officer in Lieutenant Commander, Edmond Aruffo. Aruffo, an Italian American in his mid-thirties was even taller than Leonard, six foot four, with greased back short hair and blue eyes. He was a seventh fleet protocol officer, which meant he'd fly into a port before the arrival of a U.S. Navy ship to work with the husbanding agent.

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [00:24:04]

Tom ([24:00](#)):

He'd fly into a port before the arrival of a US Navy ship to work with a husbanding agent to get everything ready. Steve Barney, the top lawyer for the seventh fleet worked closely with Aruffo.

Steve ([24:10](#)):

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I'm a lifelong Boston Red Sox fan. But Ed, he's kind of almost a stereotypical New York kind of a guy. By that I mean, he's bold, he's outspoken, he's engaged. And a lot of those characteristics.

Tom ([24:26](#)):

Soon after joining the Navy, Aruffo was selected for an officer training program. Within 15 months, he was named Junior Officer Of the Year in the Western Pacific. But for Steve, there was something off about Aruffo.

Steve ([24:39](#)):

I've got to admit to you that I maybe have a bias because of his New York thing and I'm a Boston guy. But there's something about Ed Aruffo that I just don't feel comfortable with. Maybe it's just the spidey senses were saying, "It just doesn't feel right. It doesn't feel right to me."

Tom ([24:53](#)):

Steve had good reason to distrust Aruffo, although he had no idea about what was really going on. Aruffo, who has pleaded guilty to conspiracy to defraud the United States and is awaiting sentencing, had gotten to know Leonard a few years earlier, while on R and R from a guided missile frigate. Leonard says he entertained Aruffo and other officers arranging dinner, drinks, and prostitutes.

Leonard ([25:16](#)):

Aruffo was this overbearing, he was Italian. He was always getting himself in trouble. And he had a Japanese wife, his second wife. And he was like a real party animal.

Tom ([25:30](#)):

When Aruffo later became the force protection officer in the Seventh Fleet, the two got together to make sure the Navy used the Ring of Steel on every occasion.

Leonard ([25:38](#)):

A made a lot of money when Aruffo was in Seventh Fleet, because was the force protection officer. So Aruffo would write all of the force protection plans for all the Seventh Fleet ships. And everybody had to use the Ring of Steel. So literally, the military's force protection became the golden goose for me.

Tom ([26:01](#)):

Now, was that corruption or did they need that force protection?

Leonard ([26:04](#)):

Well, it is a yes and a no. I mean they could mitigate it, but if a captain or an Admiral would say, "I need it," nobody can challenge it.

Tom ([26:15](#)):

In a Facebook message, Aruffo denied playing a crucial role in the use of the Ring of Steel, pointing out the Seventh Fleet command in Japan ultimately was responsible for decisions about security. In a separate phone call, Aruffo said he never took bribes for personal enrichment. In the post 9/11 world,

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everything was on steroids, subprime lending, house prices, billionaire wealth, and of course the military. And like American defense contractors who made millions in Iraq, Leonard built his own dynastic fortune. In the end, the Navy paid whatever Leonard was asking, sometimes over \$1 million for a ship visit and his profits started to pile up.

Leonard ([27:01](#)):

Like I said, you don't need to overcharge the Navy, they give you their money. They'll just give you money for free. I mean, if anybody's got a defense contract, you're good for life. Because the military overall, whether it's the Navy, Marine Corps, Air force, every branch, there's no one that has due diligence, fiscal. Because it's not their money, it's Uncle Sam's money.

Tom ([27:29](#)):

By now, Leonard's life started to look like an episode of Keeping Up With the Kardashians. He built the largest luxury car collection in Singapore. How many cars did you have?

Leonard ([27:41](#)):

In Singapore, I had over 20 cars.

Tom ([27:44](#)):

He moved into a 70,000 square foot mansion at 40 Nassim Road, the most expensive street in Singapore, a former colonial bungalow, beautifully restored with multiple swimming pools, servants quarters, and a landscape garden. It was worth around 130 million dollars and previously had housed the Saudi Embassy. Leonard was renting, but thanks solely to the US taxpayer, he had enough cash to make an offer. Every Christmas, his staff mounted a light show on the lawn at his mansion that cost a fortune, drawing visitors from all across Singapore and landing Leonard on the local TV news.

We've been talking a long time. Now I'm just trying to get you to reflect on like what you might have done differently. Because we agree that you did a good job, and actually, a lot of people have checked it out and the Navy agreed with this too. But you are also living on Nassim Road, with a hundred thousand dollar Christmas lights and a fleet of 20 luxury cars. Didn't you go too big? Didn't you take out just a little bit too much?

Leonard ([28:47](#)):

Well, I think, that's part of success. You know, that's part of life. I mean, you look up on differently, glamorously the Navy looked at you differently and success comes at a price. What am I supposed to do? Just go live a humble life? Oh no, absolutely not. I'm a bigger than life kind of person. You know? You know what the rappers have, all the sports personalities and Hollywood guys. But I did this like 15 years ago.

Tom ([29:24](#)):

Imagine the scene, Leonard, dressed to the nines, spread out in the backseat of a militarized Hummer, like some rap video kingpin. It's a ridiculous image, for sure. But one funded in its entirety by America's feverish and misguided response to the threat of terrorism.

Coming up on Fat Leonard, we'll be diving into another key factor in Leonard's meteoric rise, the deep and abiding culture of misogyny in the us Navy.

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Paula ([29:56](#)):

I would say there's just this gray area, where the military culture has always viewed women as second class citizens, as property, as a reward when you get into port, to rape and pillage, even now. There are these strongholds of misogynistic military men that still want to take me down. Men that believe I ruined the military.

Tom ([30:29](#)):

Fat Leonard is a production of project brazen in partnership with PRX for audiation, the executive producer is Sandy Smallens. Mark Lotto is the co-producer and story editor. The producer is Ireland Meacham. Mixing and sound design is by Matt Noble.

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