

## PAULYNE WEI

When I was in my twenties, I had the opportunity of working on a cruise ship. One of my favourite contracts in the five years– the six years I was at sea was back in 1999 and we were sailing the Polynesian and the Hawaiian Islands.

When we had docked in Morea, it was a turnaround port, that was where we disembark and embark new passengers. Ordinarily, like in Fort Lauderdale or Miami, you would have shoreside staff to help check passengers on board but because Morea was such a small port, they didn't have that much staff so they enlisted crew members from the ship to work ashore.

I was working the boutiques on board at the time and they had selected our department to help welcome the guests on board. So we worked ashore until about 10 P.M. that night and my manager, who was also a friend of mine, and I were picked up by a dancer friend who had rented a car with a bunch of other dancers and whisked us away to a beach just about half an hour away and they had set up this *amazing* bonfire and they had food, and music and it was just so fun and when you looked up in the sky, it was like a blanket of stars because there was, like, no noise pollution, no light pollution. And we laid out our beach towels on the beach and fell asleep, about one o'clock in the morning.

In the morning when I woke up, I checked my watch, it was about 6:45 A.M., the sun had fully risen already, and I felt like I was being baked alive. It was *so hot*, I felt like I was *on fire!* So I sat up and I looked around because I had arrived the night before I didn't realize we fell asleep on a black sand beach (which I think was volcanic) and the sun was so hot that I had roasted and heated up the entire black sand beach.

I looked at my friends I'm like, "How are you not awake yet!" Like, I'm on fire! Eventually, they all slowly woke up and we grabbed all our stuff and went running off the beach with our flip-flops and our bare feet, we were just burning up. Then, we all hopped in the two cars that we had rented and drove around Morea for the rest of the day, cooling off in the beautiful grottos and waterfalls and got back to the ship around 5 o'clock in the evening to go back to work.

That was probably one of the best days of my life.