

# PART 1: THINKING ABOUT SHIPPING YOUR BOAT SOMEWHERE EXOTIC? YOU MIGHT WANT TO THINK AGAIN....



Here we sit, **FINALLY**, docked at probably one of the most expensive per capita places on earth. What a contrast to our last stop and weeks of trouble.

To our port-side are mansions hidden behind miles of privacy hedges trimmed so perfectly that surely they use lasers and scaffolding to get them so straight. We are docked at the Palm Beach Public Docks, at the end of Lake Worth Avenue, Florida's equivalent to Rodeo Drive.

The beautiful people walk the drive, perfectly groomed and dressed in pastel colored clothes that are accessorized with expensive jewelry and heavy gold watches. The majority of people are, you might say, older, but look younger than their years, as their faces are stretched, with not a friendly wrinkle left to tell their life's journey. They stroll the streets past the likes of Hermes, Gucci and Tiffany, to name a few, arms loaded with rectangular shaped shopping bags with imprinted logos and bows, proof of their purchases from the expensive stores they've been to. And after shopping they may decide to have lunch in one of many shaded, flower filled cafe patios, nibbling on small portioned meals, like gourmet pizzas that cost way more than the ingredients. It's all so pretty and perfect and even the birds accommodate the surreal setting by flittering from tree to tree, singing lovely songs amongst the carefully placed purple

and magenta orchids that grow in overly pruned banyan trees.

Occasionally you'll see the token Latin maid in uniform, a simple black dress, with Peter Pan collar, cuffed short sleeves, and a white starched apron, an image that you have only seen in old movies. They are walking their employer's little fu fu dogs, dogs that have probably become more of an ornament than best friend to their masters. They are pups that seem to be pawned off to the maid to take them out and pick up after them. Even the dogs seem to have an air about them, overly groomed with mini ribbons tying their fur in little pony tails and smelling of perfume, all the while sniffing where they shouldn't and pulling the humans along from bush to bush proving they are the boss. Ziggy in comparison looks shabby with the homemade emergency haircut I gave him to keep cool in the Everglades and so did we.

To our port is a stack of mega yachts, their enormous bows perfectly lined up as you walk down the dock. Their lines are laid out in neat circles on immaculately clean docks. The yachts look like uniformed soldiers polished and pressed waiting for inspection with nary a spec of dirt or hard water spot to be seen on their reflective

surfaces. You rarely see the owners, except perhaps at night as they parade down the dock, the women in high heels and the men in crisp shirts and blazers, heading out to a fine local restaurant. They are dressed to impress. We are usually getting ready for bed when they leave and are awakened hours later as they return much less formal, in fact a bit boisterous, as we hear their loud talking and laughing, after imbibing in a few too many alcoholic beverages and oblivious to the loud slamming noise of the security dock gate behind them.

The crew are mostly young and good looking, dressed in matching golf shirts with their yacht name and logo stitched across the pocket area. They wear khaki pants and store their leather top siders neatly on the dock by the step to their particular yacht. They are quiet and reserved and constantly polishing something that's already polished, working on a yacht that never seems to leave the dock and waiting on people that don't really seem to notice them.

This whole scene and life style was quite the contrast to where we've been the last several weeks. Here is an atmosphere,

seemingly free of worries and everything is artificially beautiful and ours was quite the opposite. We sat quietly in our small boat as if nothing bad had ever happened and just glad to be away from the problems. We were simply content now to observe the beautiful life for the moment. Looking back now it all seems surreal, did it all really happen?



Just two days ago we were docked up the New River in Fort Lauderdale at Lauderdale Marine Center, not by choice but by necessity. I remembered this place well as we had stopped there with the Nordhavn a few years back after making the journey from the West to East Coast. It's a familiar stop for much larger boats than ours and mega yachts to get repairs and maintenance done. We were out of place in our little boat, by far the smallest here but it was the only place we knew to

come to after our sudden and unexpected breakdown.

I didn't like staying here then and knew I wasn't going to like it now. The docks are located almost directly under the Interstate 95. The noise and roar of the Interstate is never ending and the soot and smell permeates the air, the dock, the outside and inside of the boat and eventually you. Besides the freeway, the railroad tracks and railroad bridge are only yards away, also underneath the Interstate, and the noise of the rumbling train is amplified as it bounces off the undercarriage of the concrete bridge of the Interstate. Add to that, each of the many trains that go by are announced by what sounds like a loud air-raid siren meant to warn boaters, heading up or down the river, that the bridge will be closing.



To top it off the Jungle Queen paddle wheeler goes past on a frequent schedule shuttling tourists to a nearby "jungle location" for a "jungle experience and buffet lunch or dinner" depending on the time of day. She puts out a wake as they always seem to be in a hurry, that along with some black smoke and occasionally a whiff of their holding tank that badly needs a pump out. It's a double decker filled with people that gawk at you as they go by and yell at you on the return trip as by then they are slightly inebriated. I never thought I'd be part of a tourist attraction, but during our stay, you could say, we and others at the dock were a side attraction.

The air from the yard is filled with the smell of lacquer from the painting booths. So that combined with the Interstate and the railroad smells and sounds, makes the whole area stink and incredibly noisy. Never, and I mean never, does it get quiet as there is always a loud rumble. It's difficult to hear what another person is saying without yelling and even then it's almost indecipherable. People would stop as they walked down the dock, making small talk which I couldn't hear. Eventually I just resorted to smiling and nod my head at them hoping they were saying something positive.

We ended up here not by choice as I said but were towed here out of necessity after breaking down on the busiest turn in the New River. The breakdown came on suddenly as we heard a loud ear piercing whine coming from the engine and soon we were at a dead stop, immobile. I quickly had to become a traffic director, standing awkwardly out on the bow, waving my arms at boats. I did my best to slow down the oncoming traffic to let them know we were having trouble. Larry was inside desperately trying to figure out what was wrong and trying get us out of the way of the boat traffic which was coming at us in all directions.

New River, if you don't know it, is a very narrow busy thoroughfare that winds it's way up river through the most congested area of Fort Lauderdale. We are always amazed at what goes up and down this





river. It's not uncommon to see huge mega yachts over 100 feet long being towed to boat yards such as where we ended up, all the while pleasure boaters, tour boats and water taxis navigate past them as if it was the most normal thing. We hailed Vessel Assist but they said they couldn't get to us for an hour and a half. We were told to anchor in the river, "do not tie up to a private dock!" Are they nuts? Who could anchor here, it's like the freeway during rush hour? The Jungle Queen for instance waked us as she went by at what seemed in this stressful situation piercing speed but the rest of the captains were very considerate and several captains yelled out to ask if they could help.



We managed to nudge our way, inches at a time, over to a newly built "private dock" of a house under construction. They had signs posted to "keep off" but what could we do?

So...go ahead and arrest us I think to myself! It wouldn't be the first time in the last few days.

To add to these embarrassing circumstances, it was about 100 degrees out and felt like 95% humidity as we sat temporarily straddled to this pier. I was trying to hold our dirty and very rusty boat off the piers to keep it from getting damage from the wakes and Larry was focused in the engine room trying to figure out what was wrong.

As we sat, we sweated in the humidity and waited. It was at this moment that I think we both realized how fully discouraged, frustrated, mad, and now humiliated we were. Not only were we broken down, our boat covered in dirt and rust, but the windows were plastered with signs saying THIS BOAT HAS BEEN ARRESTED BY THE FEDERAL MARSHALL!!

It was a humiliating.

I so wished at that moment that I had removed the signs before we set out from the liquidators but we just wanted to get the boat the hell out of there and didn't



want to take the time. Now I had an hour and a half to do nothing but pick away at them, peeling bits and pieces as we waited for Vessel Assist. At first I tried to take them off carefully thinking maybe someday I'd frame them someday as a novelty. It was a sick idea, and would only serve as a sad reminder.

## HOW DID WE GET IN THIS PREDICAMENT?

I guess this is as good a place as any to start tell this long story. We had used Yacht Path to transport our boats twice before and had no serious problems. There were

always a few delays but nothing we couldn't live with and, yes, the boats always needed a good cleaning when they reached their destinations, but no damage. There was no reason big enough for us not to chose Yacht Path again. Larry said he had read a couple reviews that were not favorable but there are always the complainers and the incidents didn't seem that bad.

I think the pain lies in the deception, lies and loss of good faith in people that really got to us down deep.

The problems began months ago but we dealt with them, focused on the positive and had faith that things would sort themselves out but at this moment hanging on to a restricted dock, broken down, rusty and dirty, it was the last straw. We didn't say anything but the silent looks we gave each other said it all. We both felt total despair. Larry can repeat the details and time line to the "T", like a document ready for court, but he leaves out the emotional, irrational side and that's where I come in to tell this nightmare so hopefully this won't happen to other boaters. Maybe they can learn something from our troubles and prevent people like Yacht Path from doing this again.

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