

THIS IS A STORY THE LIKES OF WHICH YOU HAVE NEVER HEARD BEFORE: MARTIN MCNALLY HIJACKED AN AIRPLANE AND DEMANDED \$500,000 RANSOM; DAVID HENLEY CRASHED HIS CAR INTO THE AIRPLANE TO DISRUPT THE HIJACKING; MCNALLY HIJACKED A SECOND PLANE AND THEN JUMPED OUT WITH A PARACHUTE; GARRETT TRAPNELL CONVINCED A FRIEND TO COMMANDEER A HELICOPTER AND RELEASE HIM FROM PRISON... READ A STORY SO INCREDIBLE IT SOUNDS LIKE PURE FICTION!

THE HIJACKER WHO JUMPED

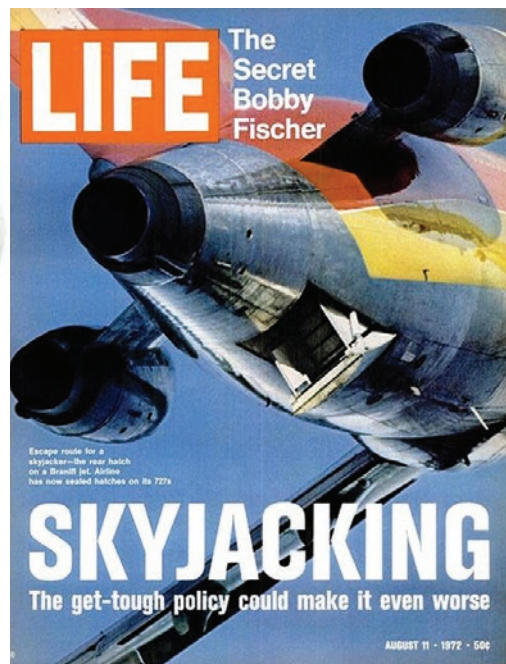
They were the most difficult and nerve-wracking moments of his entire life. The threats, negotiations and fears wore him out. He was delighted to be alone at last to carry out the plan that he had worked on so carefully for many months.

He took a deep breath and ripped off the brown wig that covered his head. Then he took off the leather jacket and white shirt—he had no further need for his disguise. Now he stood in his regular clothes: black slacks and a colored shirt. He shot one last glance at the long rows of empty seats that filled the Boeing 727, and then looked once again at his watch—it was very late... past 3:00 AM. It was the summery night of June 24, 1972, and in another few hours the sun would rise.

The hijacker, Martin McNally, gathered the clothing he had just removed and walked to the back of the plane. The special door at the rear was open and the stairs were in place. Trembling, he took a few steps forward but then recoiled in fear. He had never jumped from an airplane before. The sky was cloudy and all he could see was a thick darkness.

"Truth is, I can still turn back the clock," the thought flew through his head. He could turn around, walk back the entire length of the plane to the front cabin and surrender to them. He could lay down the large gun he was carrying, return the sack stuffed with \$500,000 cash and try to convince the FBI agents that it was all a mistake. The story of the bomb planted on board was a ruse, he never meant it seriously, and they might let him go back home....

"Nonsense," he quickly erased the thought. "It's too late. The entire federal government is now out to get me. If I surrender, I'll spend the rest of my life languishing in prison." Better to risk his life jumping from the plane than to face a bleak prison existence for the rest of his life. Rather than wait for his fears to overcome him again, he tossed his wig along with the rest of his disguise out of the open rear door. These were followed by several smoke bombs and the large submachine gun. The items were quickly caught in the stormy winds and carried far away.



The 1960s marked the "Golden Epoch" of hijacking. Despite the growing threat, the government failed to respond seriously. Here, newspaper reports warn that increasing security will exacerbate the situation.

McNally was the only person on the plane, aside for the flight crew and his one remaining hostage. They were all in the flight cabin, worrying about what the hijacker planned to do next. McNally donned his goggles and a parachute, tightening the straps around his chest and legs. He was careful to follow the exact instructions he had been given by the FBI agent a few hours earlier. Finally, he checked that the 40-pound sack containing the ransom money was bound securely to his body.

This was McNally's first parachute jump; in fact, it was the first time in his life that he touched a parachute! He pocketed a small handgun and began to descend the steps of the ladder. He clutched the sack of money tightly in his hand. As he reached the bottom stair, he turned back for one last look. His body shook back and forth in the powerful draft created by the airplane flying at 300 MPH. He felt like a flower caught in a hurricane.

The crew up in the flight cabin sensed a sudden change in the air pressure. In the

military spy plane that accompanied the airliner from an altitude thousands of feet above, an FBI agent noticed a tiny black dot separate from the rear of the plane and plummet at high speed.

The "Golden Epoch" of Hijacking

The 1960s marked the "Golden Epoch" of hijacking. Today, we take for granted the strict security and thorough searches implemented in most airports, measures which were drastically increased in the aftermath of 9/11. Back then, however, there was no trace of this heavy security. All you needed to board an airplane was a travel ticket. There was virtually no such thing as a passenger being searched before boarding, and removing one's shoes was unheard of. In some situations, you could even pay for your ticket once you were seated on the plane for your flight!

Even as the number of airplane hijackings rose, the government and airlines failed to initiate any serious effort to curtail them. One of the strictest measures they introduced was that the government trained airport ticket agents—the junior workers at the counters who greet passengers and check in their baggage—how to recognize potential hijackers by noting psychological and physiological symptoms. (This method has long been discredited.) Their effect was... nothing.

In 1970, the government finally began recruiting sky marshals to prevent hijackings. However, their limited number meant they could only protect a small percentage of the airplanes that took off from American airports each day. Other measures that were introduced proved to be completely worthless. In just four years, from 1968 to 1972, the world experienced over 130 hijackings!

Most of these hijackings were perpetrated by religious fanatics, political fanatics or just plain old fanatics, people with nothing better to do. Many forced the pilot to redirect the plane to communist Cuba as a political



Security was so weak that you could park near the terminal, walk inside and board a plane, as shown in this photo of Dublin Airport.



Today's airports are outfitted with sophisticated machines to prevent people with evil intentions from reaching airplanes.



Chinese security agents during routine commando training to free hostages on a hijacked plane.